



Asia  
Society

# In Solidarity We Rise!

How U.S. Companies  
are Supporting Asian Pacific  
American Employees and  
Strategies to Improve

## Asian Corporate Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2020

## About Asia Society

**The Asia Society's purpose is to navigate shared futures for Asia and the world across policy, arts and culture, education, sustainability, business, and technology.** Our mission is to foster insight, encourage engagement, elevate regional voices, inform and educate new audiences, address complex – and where necessary – contentious challenges, engage in creative problem-solving, and help deliver real solutions for the benefit of all. As a global network of centers who share a common vision, we actively collaborate with our centers and partners across Asia and the world. The Asia Society also provides its members an opportunity to become part of our global network to help shape a prosperous, sustainable, and secure future for us all.

We are dedicated to identifying future pathways for Asia and the world which enhance peace, prosperity, freedom, equality, and sustainability. Asia Society provides a platform for dialogue and encourages a diversity of views as we try to find the most effective ways forward. Mindful of cultural differences, we hold that each perspective should be heard with temperance and respect in order to enhance cross-cultural understanding. We will never shy away from the hard questions facing our world. We value collaboration with government and non-government institutions in forging common approaches to otherwise intractable problems. Ultimately, our values remain anchored in the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – international covenants which have been accepted by all nations and governments across every region of the world.

The Asia Society seeks to reflect these values in the way in which we go about our work. We celebrate creativity, competence, courage, and excellence in developing innovative responses to real-world challenges that deliver measurable impact. We encourage a positive, supportive, and respectful working environment which rewards civility, inclusivity, collegiality, and teamwork across all our disciplines. We expect adherence to the highest ethical standards from all our staff, including honesty, integrity, transparency, accountability, and prudence in the effective use of the precious resources we are given to do our work. We are committed to the principles of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in all our work and across the workplace. We have zero tolerance for any form of discrimination. We are an independent organization which has no affiliation with any government. Asia Society takes no institutional position on individual policy challenges. The views expressed by our staff, fellows, experts, report authors, program speakers, artists, board members, and other affiliates are solely their own.



**Asia Society is proud to present the 12th annual Asian Corporate Survey, the premier global survey on best corporate practices in equity, inclusion, and opportunity for Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander American talent. This year's survey is especially timely and important, and provides new and powerful ideas on the challenges, and opportunities, facing the Asian-Pacific American (APA) community.**

The 2020 Asian Corporate Survey identifies the challenges facing this community, which today are more complex and vital than they have ever been. The survey's findings will be core to the success of today's leading brands and companies. This year's survey incorporates three new areas of focus, including companies' responses to the COVID-19 crisis, and racial equity and social justice issues, which were brought front and center for all of us by the recent wave of Anti-Asian hate. This year's survey also took a deeper look at how companies are supporting the development of skills for a younger generation of APA employees. In this report, we showcase the transformational work of companies who are successfully impacting workplace culture, placing diversity and inclusion at the center of their workforce.

The success of this work lays in large part with companies such as AIG, Chevron, Goldman Sachs, Marriott International and Medtronic; they have been true pioneers in raising up this work to critical effect. I want to extend my deep thanks to all our corporate partners, without whom, this endeavor would not be possible. We are inspired to have their continuing vision and commitment. My thanks also to our other supporters in this endeavor, our Global Talent and Diversity Council, and the employees who take the time to complete this survey each year. This work is possible because of your support and participation.

A tremendous effort has gone into putting together the 2020 survey and report, and I would like to acknowledge our Survey Administrator and Knowledge Partner, Dr. Juliane Blazeovski at Hypothesi, LLC, for administering the survey, aggregating vast amounts of critical data and overseeing its analysis during the writing of this report. I would also like to thank the judges for reviewing all submissions, and Lisa Grey from two shades of grey, for designing the report. Finally, my thanks to the Asia Society team led by Chris Belisle, our Executive Director of Corporate Relations, for their highly professional and first-rate work in shepherding this important process.

The Asia Society has an important responsibility to be a powerful voice for the Asian-Pacific American community. The Asian Corporate Survey continues to be a powerful opportunity to do everything that we can to promote diversity and inclusion as a daily reality, and not just in theory. This has been our mission for over 65-years, and it is needed today more than ever.

**The Hon. Kevin Rudd AC**  
President & CEO, Asia Society  
President, Asia Society Policy Institute  
26th Prime Minister of Australia



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Advises Asia Society on how best to leverage its public voice in the area of global talent and diversity leadership, and to regularly share best practices on the leadership challenges their companies face in global talent and diversity.

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“

Marriott International’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is a business imperative that has proven to be even more relevant in the most challenging times. It inspires a culture of engaged associates who live our core values and take care of our communities, our guests and each other.”

— **Tony Capuano**, Chief Executive Officer, Marriott International, Inc.



## About the Asian Corporate Survey

Now in its twelfth year, the annual survey is a national benchmarking study aimed to fill a critical knowledge gap relating to the growth, development and advancement of Asian Pacific American (APA) employees. Each year, two separate survey instruments are utilized to collect the perspectives of APA employees and employers from a range of America's Fortune 500 companies across multiple industry sectors. The combined evidence provides a robust narrative supported by quantitative and qualitative evidence. This evidence speaks to the APA employee experience in today's top performing companies, and when examined at a deeper level, reveals why some companies rise above the rest and illustrates specific strategies for attracting, developing and retaining APA talent.

### New This Year!

The 2020 update of the Asian Corporate Survey added THREE NEW TOPIC AREAS!

In addition to the dimensions assessed annually (Diversity, Professional Growth, Employee Resource Groups, Work-Life Insights and Overall Satisfaction & Belonging), the 2020 Asian Corporate Survey included timely topics such as companies' response to the COVID-19 crisis and racial equity and social justice issues, heightened by recent racially motivated tragedies. This year's survey also took a deeper look at how companies are supporting the development of workforce skills for APA employees under 40 years of age.

### Survey Methods

Ten major U.S. based companies participated in the 2020 Asian Corporate Survey, with data gathered from each company's Diversity & Inclusion leaders and 503 Asian Pacific American employees.

The employee survey was administered online and contained a set of items for each of the

dimensions mentioned above, rated on a 6-point response scale (1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 6 = "Strongly Agree"), as well as some open-ended follow-up questions. The employer version of the survey, completed by the Diversity & Inclusion leaders at each company, required companies to provide narrative descriptions of their policies and strategies related to a similar set of categories contained in the employee survey.

Asia Society retained a third party, Hypothesi Applied Research and Evaluation (Hypothesi LLC), to collect data, conduct the statistical analysis, and synthesize the qualitative and quantitative data to generate the insights contained in this report. The judging panel for the awards process consisted of six diversity and inclusion experts who were not affiliated with any of the participating companies. To preserve anonymity and fairness, judges evaluated the company applications (employer version of the survey) under blind review.



# Employee Survey Demographics

For the purpose of this survey, Asian Pacific American or "APA" refers to individuals with ethnic backgrounds from one or more of the following countries or regions: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Native Hawaiian, Nepal, Pacific Islands, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Tibet and Vietnam.

**503**

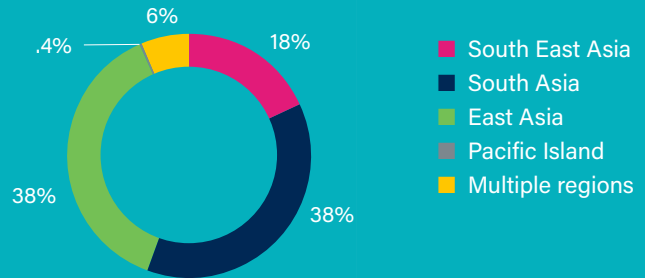
Asian Pacific American Employees



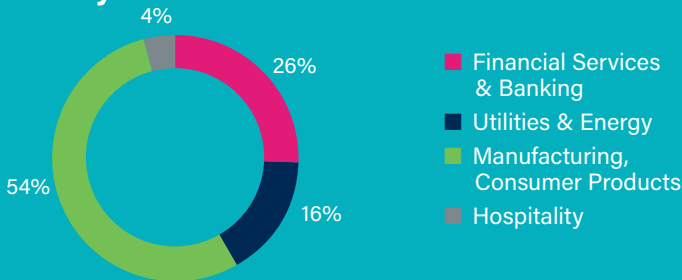
**10**

Major U.S. based companies participating

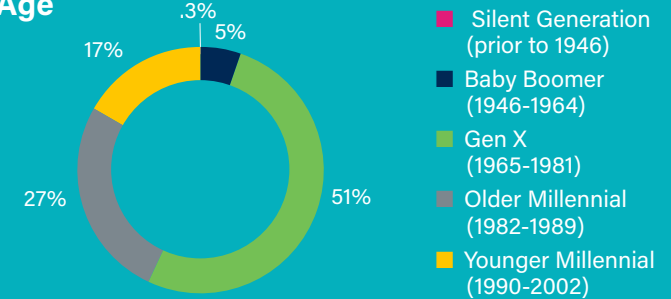
## Region



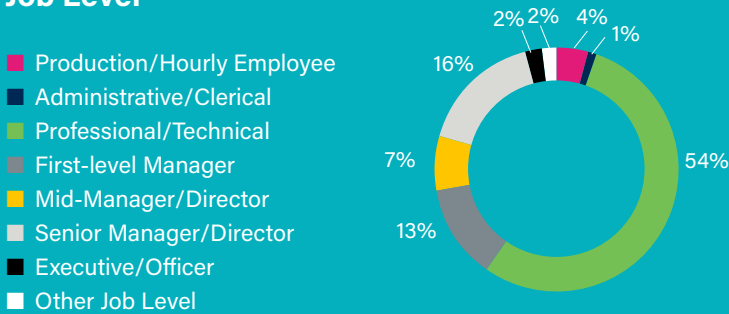
## Industry



## Age



## Job Level



## Gender



Female **51%**  
Male **48%**  
Transgender **0%**

1/4 of respondents did not indicate

## Generational Status

First Generation APA **63%**  
2nd Generation APA **32%**  
3rd Generation APA **2%**  
4th Generation APA **2%**  
Other Generational Status **2%**

## Education



HS Diploma **4%**  
BA **39%**  
MA **46%**  
PhD/MD/JD **11%**

## Additional characteristics of the survey sample

**71%** have lived in the U.S. 20+ years  
**95%** are either very fluent or native speakers of English  
**51%** of those who were born abroad came to the U.S. over the age of 20  
**45%** are senior leadership or on a leadership track  
**68%** have been with their current employer for 5 or more years  
**6%** are multiracial  
**3%** identify as LGBTQ  
**2%** have a disability  
**1%** are veterans



## Snapshot of Key Findings

### A need for continued focus on Professional Growth:

- Companies have consistently struggled to provide opportunities for promising APA employees to obtain targeted career development support, particularly professional growth practices that lead to C-Suite positions (Professional Growth was the least favorably rated dimension by APA employees – a consistent trend seen over several years of administering the Asian Corporate Survey).
- APA employees report struggling to gain visibility and recognition for success, which leads to them being under-recognized and less likely to be thought of when opportunities come up.
- Building relationships with supervisors, who were viewed as critical gatekeepers to being selected for high visibility tasks and stretch assignments, was viewed as a struggle for APA employees due to cultural differences and frequent turnovers.
- The largest proportion of participants mentioned mentoring, sponsorship or coaching programs as being the most beneficial for supporting their professional growth, yet finding well-matched APA mentors and sponsors was also perceived as a significant challenge.
- APA Employees who were members of their company's APA ERG were more satisfied with professional growth opportunities than those who were not active members, suggesting that ERGs play a critical role to connecting employees with various forms of formal and informal support for career advancement.
- Looking specifically at early career APA employees under 40, at least 1/4 did not feel that the mentoring, sponsorship and other programs needed to advance their careers were satisfactory or that career pipeline progression for APA and other diverse employees is a priority at their company.
- Professional growth was the strongest predictor of overall employee satisfaction and belonging, meaning the more satisfied an APA employee is with the career growth and development opportunities within their company, the more committed they are to staying there. This finding provides additional incentive for companies to address weaknesses in their professional growth strategies for APA employees.

## Response to the COVID-19 crisis and issues of racial equity and social justice:

- Although all companies surveyed noted comprehensive strategies for keeping their workforce healthy and mobilizing resources to support employees and vulnerable communities (reflected in employees' 97% satisfaction rate with their company's response overall), approximately 20% of those surveyed indicated that the response may not have adequately addressed racism toward Asians or APA employees.
- Analyses revealed differences in COVID-related perceptions by region, with APA employees of East Asian descent expressing less favorable views of how their company addressed racism toward Asians. Furthermore, a larger proportion of APA employees of East Asian descent felt that the COVID-19 crisis had a negative impact on their sense of belonging among co-workers.
- While APA employees tried to make the best of the "work from home" situation due to COVID-19, (e.g., some reported that Zoom meetings sometimes made it easier for them to speak up), many reported that virtual working had a negative impact on networking and their sense of belonging.
- With regard to racial equity and social justice issues, APA employees expressed a need for solidarity with other ERGs and a concern that the heightened conversation on equity will be fleeting noting that empathy during a crisis is different than meaningful action that will lead to real change (action vs. rhetoric).
- Examples of how to enhance critical conversations related to racial equity, subtle and overt bias and racism were presented by award winning companies, illustrating ways to include employees across all ethnicities to promote healing and change.
- Companies were successful in ensuring that their communications to employees and the public showed sensitivity to issues of diversity, but approximately 30% of those surveyed indicated that their company did not adequately engage APA employees in the larger conversations related to racial equity (71% favorable rating).





**Supporting the Development of  
Workforce Skills of APA Employees  
Under 40**

**Medtronic**

*Runner-Up*  
**Chevron**

**Overall Best Employer for  
Asian Pacific Americans**



*Runner-Up*  
**Medtronic**

**Outreach and Inclusion to APA  
Employees during the COVID-19 Crisis**

**Medtronic**

*Runner-Up*  
**Goldman Sachs**

**Most Innovative Employer**

**Medtronic**

*Runner-Up*  
**Chevron**

**Outreach and Inclusion to APA  
Employees related to Racial Equity and  
Social Justice**

**Medtronic**

*Runner-Up*  
**Chevron**



## Recruitment & Selection

**Medtronic**

## Retention

**Medtronic**

## Employee Growth & Advancement



## APA Employee Resource Groups



## Marketing to APA Consumers & Investors



## Supporting APA Women

**Medtronic**

## LGBTQ+ APA Employees



# Moving Forward

Moving forward, companies must take steps to better support and leverage APA talent. This involves moving beyond the rhetoric of equity and translating it into meaningful action plans that address the ongoing barriers as well as increased racism faced by APA employees, heightened by the COVID-19 crisis.

## Potential opportunity areas for organizational leaders to positively impact APA employees:

- Focus on professional growth: Continue to develop and grow early career APA employees and do not overlook individuals in technical roles.
- Increase availability and time for mentoring, allowing APA leaders to share their professional growth journeys through the lens of APA cultural values.
- Increase transparency for how promotions and job changes are decided; Challenge assumptions about what represents leadership capability and seeing the impact of other leadership styles.
- Require all employees to take training about unconscious bias and how micro inequities can seep into the workplace, paying special attention to the intersection of bias with selection for promotions and high visibility assignments.
- Charge executive leadership to sponsor ERGs (APA and others) to provide guidance and make connections with senior leadership across the organization; highlight the role of the ERG in connecting employees with various forms of formal and informal support for career advancement.
- Engage ERGs in meaningful ways in recruitment processes and as valuable contributors to business strategy development and outreach to Asian and APA customers and communities.
- Be aware of nuanced cultural differences among subgroups of APA employees and critically examine representation of key groups (e.g., East Asians) in important Diversity and Inclusion metrics.
- As work-from-home continues into 2021, consider the differential impact this may have on employees and how it may pose both unique challenges and opportunities for APA employees in terms of their sense of belonging, professional development, career trajectories and other work-life experiences.
- Take steps to move leadership's public statements condemning recent events into meaningful action plans that engage employees across all ethnicities to promote healing and change related to racial equity and social justice.

# Survey Production Team

## Survey Administrator, Statistical Consultant and Knowledge Partner

### Hypothesi, LLC

Established in 2007, Hypothesi's primary mission is to provide efficient, high-quality program evaluation and data analysis capacity enhancement across multiple industry sectors, with an emphasis on education-related and career pipeline development initiatives. As the CEO of Hypothesi, Dr. Juliane Blazeovski (Ph.D., University of Michigan, Combined Program in Education and Psychology) is committed to providing rigorous program evaluations that are sensitive to cultural and contextual factors, designed to build internal evaluation capacity, and are meticulously tied to a program's underlying mission statements and objectives. Dr. Blazeovski has expertise in research and evaluation methods and has over a decade of experience serving as an external evaluator for federally funded grants as well as privately funded program evaluation projects, including those focused on diversity and inclusion, for non-profits and Fortune 500 companies (e.g., Google, Asia Society, Buck Institute for Education, Sylvan Learning). Articles including Dr. Blazeovski's statistical work have been published in peer-reviewed journals such as: Educational Psychologist, American Journal of Community Psychology, Social Service Review, Journal of Behavioral Medicine, Journal of Public Child Welfare, and the Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning.



## Development of Survey and Production Lead

### Christopher M. Belisle

*Executive Director of Corporate Relations*

Asia Society

## Graphic Design

### Lisa Grey

*Principal + Creative Director*

two shades of grey

# Judging Panel

Special thanks go out to our judges who dedicated several hours of their time painstakingly reviewing the information provided by the corporate participants, highlighting innovative practices deserving of recognition, and deliberating the assignment of awards.

**Ravi Aurora**

SVP, Global Public Policy and Community Relations  
Mastercard

**Umran Beba**

Chair, Asia Society's Global Talent and Diversity Council  
Partner  
August Leadership

**Donald Fan**

Senior Director, Global Office of Culture, Diversity & Inclusion  
Walmart

**Jeff Lin**

Co-Founder  
ADMERASIA

**Eric Mitchell**

AVP, Diversity & Inclusion  
AT&T

**Cherise Myers**

Senior Manager, People Department, Organizational Design & Development  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)





To learn more about Asia Society's diversity and inclusion-related efforts, please contact Christopher (Chris) M. Belisle, Executive Director of Corporate Relations, at [cbelisle@asiasociety.org](mailto:cbelisle@asiasociety.org).

[AsiaSociety.org](http://AsiaSociety.org)