Employers’ Opinion on Legislation of Standard Working Hours
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According to a survey conducted by the Public Opinion Program of the University of Hong Kong (HKUPOP) in 2010, although the average weekly working hour has dropped from 51.3 hours in 2006 to 48.7 hours in 2010, it still exceeded the optimal work time of 40 hours recommended by the International Labor Organization (ILO). Apart from long working hours, many employees in Hong Kong also suffer from irregular working hours that disrupted their work-life balance.

In fact, many developed regions, including the United States, France, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan, have had legislation of standard working hours ranging from 35 to 48 hours. It is called for the Hong Kong government to set standard work time as 44 hours per week. To collect employers’ opinion towards this motion, MRC collected data from a representative sample of 366 employers via telephone interviews.

Each respondent was asked the standard question:

“Do you support the legislation of standard working hours as 44 hours per week?”

The data collected were statistically scaled up to arrive at the following findings.

- **Support**: 45%
- **Neutral**: 40%
- **Oppose**: 15%

45% of the employers were in support of the legislation while 15% were not. 40% did not show any preference.
Company Size Comparison

Companies in Hong Kong can be divided into 3 sub-groups according to their sizes as follows:

- Small-size – company’s total number of employees less than 50
- Medium-size – company’s total number of employees from 50 to 200
- Large-size – company’s total number of employees more than 200

Large companies showed the strongest support towards the legislation of standard work time of 44 hours per week. This motion was supported by 65% of employers from large companies and 49% from small companies, but only by 19% from medium-sized companies. Although the majority of employers from medium-sized companies were neutral, they comprised of the greatest portion of opposing views.
According to the industrial composition of Hong Kong, companies are divided into 5 business sectors:

- Administration & Business Support
- Professional Services
- Banking & Financial Services
- Wholesale & Retail
- Logistics, Trading & Manufacturing

Among all five business sectors, the Administration & Business Support sector was the most favorable to the legislation of standard work time of 44 hours per week – with 70% agreed and only 2% disagreed. Over 50% of employers from Banking & Financial Services, Logistics, Trading & Manufacturing and Professional Services sectors took a neutral stance. Overall, supportive opinions overrode opposing ones.
Further Analysis on the Professional Services Sector

The Professional services sector is further divided into 5 sub-sectors:

- Accounting & Auditing
- Advertising, Marketing & Design
- IT & Telecommunications
- Legal Services
- Property & Construction

The Accounting & Auditing sub-sector was heavily inclined to the enactment of standard work time of 44 hours per week. Secondly it was the IT & Telecommunication sub-sector that was composed of 54% favorable opinions. For other sub-sectors, there were more neutral views than favorable ones. Generally, the majority either agreed or stayed neutral towards the legislation of standard working hours.
About MRC

MRC was founded in 1987 and since then we have been focusing on developing HRMS solutions and being partner of entrepreneurs in the region. Today, we are one of the leading service providers in HRMS solutions, and there are over 500 companies in Hong Kong, PRC Mainland, Taiwan, Macau and Asia Pacific enjoying the benefits from MRC’s HRMS.

Our services & products include:

- HR System
- Payroll Localization
- Employee Self Service
- KPI & 360 Performance Evaluation
- Industrial Survey

Our Mission is to deliver to our clients and business partners the best quality products and services, so as to ensure the effective and efficient achievement of their human capital objectives. With over 25 years’ experience in the HR field, it has always been our pledge to provide the latest employment market trend and information to both job seekers and employers.