

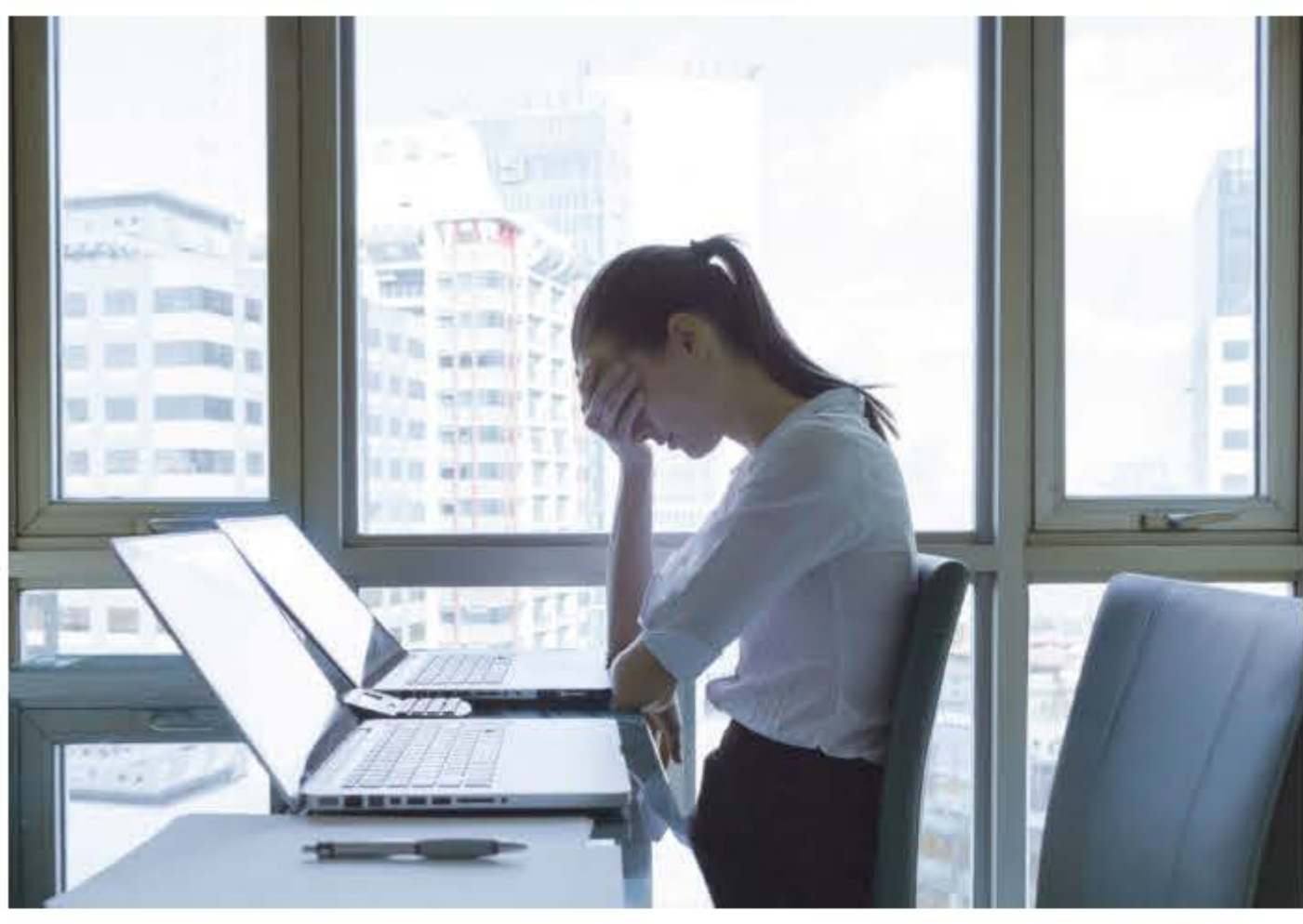
Home > News > UAE News > UAE bottom in work-life balance poll

News UAE News

UAE bottom in work-life balance poll

Mahak Mannan - November 21, 2016 127 0

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Twelve-hour shifts have become the norm for many UAE professionals as they struggle to find work-life balance, according to recruiters and workers.

Employees spoke out as a survey placed the country at the bottom of 11 nations. More than 1,300 professionals were polled.

Salary benchmarking firm Emolument found 56 per cent of UAE respondents said their work-life balance was 'awful'.

Some 22 per cent said it is 'satisfactory' and another 22 per cent said their work-life balance is 'great'.

Work-life balance by country

Country	Awful	Satisfactory	Great
France	29%	44%	27%
Switzerland	33%	45%	22%
USA	37%	38%	25%
UK	38%	42%	20%
Ireland	38%	44%	18%
Italy	44%	50%	6%
Germany	45%	45%	10%
Singapore	47%	36%	17%
Hong Kong	48%	33%	19%
Spain	55%	30%	15%
UAE	56%	22%	22%

The expat hubs of Hong Kong and Singapore also fared badly, while France, with its 35-hour working week, came top.

"In countries such as UAE, Hong Kong and Singapore, which are at the bottom of the table, companies offer top salaries to expat employees – but also expect high commitment in return," the survey's authors said.

Consultants at "clients' beck and call" were the unhappiest, with HR workers second. Michael Gilmore, Managing Partner at Cooper Fitch, a Dubai recruitment and HR consultancy, said many professionals complain hours are getting longer, particularly in construction.

He said: "A lot of people are expected to work six days a week, for long hours. They are ready to work for five days a week on a lesser salary, but employers do not agree to do that."

"The market is down, which means employees have absolutely no choice but to work when expected. In the past years, if work hours increased, so did salaries... now you are expected to work for longer, with the same, if not a lesser salary."

"A lot of senior position employees have family here and complain that they sometimes have to work seven days a week. This leaves them no time to spend at home."

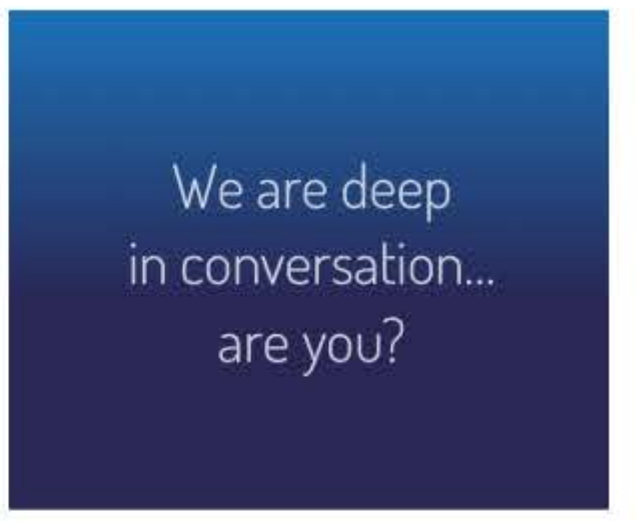
Some firms are rolling out bonus schemes to motivate employees, said Gilmore, which he said is likely to be a trend in 2017.

'I FEEL HAGGARD'



Former Abu Dhabi teacher, Manpreet Matharu, 33, originally from India, said 11 or 12-hour days is not uncommon. She decided to quit when she was expecting a baby. She said: "I used to work from 6am to 5pm every day and sometimes longer, fulfilling bus duties, being a class teacher, making lesson plans, extracurricular activities and more. "Mentally I was thinking my life had stopped, it revolved around the school and kitchen only."

Electrical engineer, Waheed, from Pakistan, said he sometimes works more than 20 hours a day. He said: "We are often called upon at different sites to work overtime and fill in whenever necessary. "It makes me feel haggard, but we cannot do much about it. I have worked more than 20-hour days. It leaves me no time whatsoever to spend on myself, I just end up sleeping whenever I get free time."



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Mahak Mannan
 Trainee reporter and passionate Liverpool FC fan Mahak lives and works in Abu Dhabi, turning her hand to everything from interviews with sporting legends to digging up the latest community news.