

Press release
August 2016

Major sporting events cause Australian workers to call in sick

- 87% of Australian Human Resources managers say it is likely that at least one of their employees will call in sick the day after a major sporting event
- Australian employees are more likely than their international counterparts to call in sick after a big sports happening, according to their HR managers
- 42% say hosting company events to watch sporting events increases employee engagement and 40% say it improves employee motivation

Sydney, 9 August 2016 – Australians are more likely to call in sick to work the day after a major sporting event than their international counterparts¹. According to independent research by specialist recruiter [Robert Half](#), Australian companies are anticipating a potential increase in the number of workplace absences with the upcoming season of international sporting competitions.

Almost nine in ten (87%) Australian Human Resources managers say it is likely that at least one of their employees will call in sick or make an excuse for skipping work the day after a major sporting event, with 22% calling it “very likely”. Australia is – together with New Zealand – at the top of the international list, followed by Brazil (84%), Chile (80%), Austria (78%), Germany (76%) and Switzerland (75%). The Netherlands (61%) is the country least likely to have their employees call in sick.

While many Australian companies appear concerned about employee absence being linked to sporting events, many are embracing such occasions and using them as an opportunity to engage and motivate employees. Just under half (42%) of Australian HR managers say hosting company events to watch major sporting competitions increases employee engagement, while 40% deem it to have a positive effect on motivation levels. Almost a third (31%) believe such company events increase employee loyalty.

David Jones, Senior Managing Director Robert Half Asia Pacific said: *“Australians love their sport, however it’s important not to let the sporting season fever disrupt employee performance. While time differences might not always work in Australia’s advantage, workplace absences can place significant pressure on a company’s productivity levels.”*

“As a compromise, companies are often looking to host company events to watch major sporting competitions. While watching sports during business hours can impact a company’s workplace productivity, organisations increasingly understand the added value of such events. Having an engaged and motivated workforce that recognises the importance of team spirit can have a significant influence on achieving business goals which ultimately impacts a company’s bottom line in a positive way.”

“Such international sporting competitions are also an opportunity for employers to show their flexibility towards employees. Allowing staff to come in a bit later or leave early so they can watch a game is an ideal way to position the company as an employer of choice,” **David Jones** added.

¹ The independent survey was carried out in April 2016, surveying 1,675 HR managers in 12 countries – including 100 Australian HR managers.

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Notes to editors

About the research

The annual study is developed by Robert Half and conducted in April 2016 by an independent research firm, surveying 100 Human Resources managers in Australia and 1,575 HR managers worldwide. This survey is part of the international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management and trends in the workplace.

About Robert Half

Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialised recruitment consultancy and member of the S&P 500. Founded in 1948, the company has over 325 offices worldwide providing temporary, interim and permanent recruitment solutions for accounting and finance, financial services, technology, and administrative professionals. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Mount Waverley, Perth and Sydney. More information on roberthalf.com.au.

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[6 dos and don'ts of joining the office sports team](#)

Whether you're a serious athlete or enjoy boosting your endorphin levels with a dose of team spirit, joining the office sports team is a welcome alternative to an afternoon at your desk. However, it's important to remember to keep your professional anxieties off the field.



[Understanding the 10 Cs of employee engagement](#)

Motivate your team with the 10 Cs of employee engagement, which have been mapped out by Professor of Organisational Behaviour, Gerard Seijts, and Doctoral student, Dan Crim. According to research from Aon, only 62 per cent of Australian employees are currently engaged in the workplace.

For more information

Gabrielle Nagy
Public Relations Manager Robert Half Asia Pacific

Courtney Howe
Citadel Magnus

gabrielle.nagy@roberthalf.com.au
02 8028 7751

chowe@citadelmagnus.com
02 8234 0111