

Australian bosses have their heads in the sand

By Leon Gettler, The Age
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Bosses are not as on the ball as they would have their employees believe.

Photo: *Supplied*

Employers might be kidding themselves if they think they are running a great organisation, a report has found.

But then, more than half are avoiding finding out what their employees really think of them.

The study by global human resources and recruitment firm Hudson found that 75 per cent of employers believed their employees could identify why their working conditions were so good. Furthermore, 81 per cent of employers said there was no gap between rhetoric and reality and that what they promised and what they actually delivered to employees were pretty much the same thing.

Trouble is they had little evidence to back it up, and they seemed to be in no hurry to find it.

In the survey of more than 8000 Australian employers, only half had any systems in place to evaluate the workplaces that they ran. When asked if their company had a systematic process for measuring its reputation as a workplace, only 49 per cent said they did, 33 per cent said they didn't and about one in five (17.5 per cent) said they didn't have a clue.

The potential gap between what employers believe and reality seemed to loom larger with the findings of a separate survey of 2500 job seekers.

According to that survey, 63 per cent of job seekers said their employers had failed to deliver on the promises made when they joined up.

Because the findings of the second survey evaluates job seekers and because many of the respondents might be disillusioned with their job, the results might be questionable as there is the possibility of a biased sample.

However, the Hudson Report said the findings could point to some dissonance between employer perceptions and employee realities with almost half the companies failing to even measure their reputations and a large number of employees looking for another job.

"Accordingly, these results raise the possibility that many organisations currently operate under a delusion, or a misguided impression," the report said.

The bosses seem to be flying by the seat of their pants without systems in place to check staff views

"They may think their employment brand is working for them, when in truth it is missing the mark and possibly even working against them."