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Cisco named best employer of 2016

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Cisco Systems has taken out the title for best employer of the year at the Aon Best Employers awards lunch held in Sydney.

In its sixteenth cycle, the Aon Best Employers program is an Australian and New Zealand accreditation and research program looking at the people practices of high performing organisations. In 2016, a total of 14 Australian and New Zealand organisations have been accredited as Aon Best Employers.

Adrian West, Cisco Systems head of HR Australia and New Zealand, says, "I am thrilled that our continued efforts to create a great place to work have been recognised through this prestigious award.

“In a fast-changing environment, developing a culture of trust and transparency, along with workplace flexibility, gender equality, recognition of achievement and philanthropic programs, has enabled strong business performance.”

The 2016 Aon Best Employers Australia and New Zealand insights revealed Aon Best Employers have greater levels of gender equality in leadership, with twice the number of female leaders in middle management and above, compared to numbers of female people leaders at other organisations.

Aon Best Employers also outperform other organisations, with a 6% median revenue growth and twice as many highly engaged employees.

The insights also revealed that workplace flexibility is the new normal, with 73% of employees surveyed by Aon reporting they have the flexibility to modify their work schedule to address personal situations. Organisations that are not open to flexible work are falling behind the rest, according to Aon.

In addition, 87% of the Aon Best Employers have a specific communication strategy in place to communicate flexible work arrangements to all employees.

All accredited organisations offer both formal and informal work flexibility, including working remotely, flexible working hours and part-time work.

The 140 organisations and more than 83,293 employees surveyed also recognised the importance of ensuring their employment brand is aligned to their external market brand, and consistently works to improve the employee experience.

In this way, Aon Best Employers attract and retain top quality to their organisations, with 77% of employees at Aon Best Employer organisations delivering on their employment promises, compared to 55% at other organisations, according to the company.

“Cisco has claimed the title of Aon’s Best of the Best Employer 2016 for its high levels of employee engagement and culture of trust, effective leadership and communication, flexibility and autonomy given to employees and focus on giving back to society,” says Reetta Makinen, Aon Hewitt head of engagement Pacific.

“The company has exceptional communication practices and strong leadership to connect employees to the organisation’s purpose and keep them constantly up-to-date with company’s performance and market trends,” Makinen says.

“This year’s report revealed that 100% of Aon Best Employers rate their strong culture and engagement as a core competitive advantage. Through exceptional people practices, Aon Best Employers engage employees to stay at the organisation, speak highly of their employer and strive to deliver discretionary effort for the organisation,” Makinen says.

The findings highlighted that Aon Best Employers manage performance through setting clear expectations that are aligned to business strategy. The report revealed that 80% of managers at

Aon Best Employer organisations set clear performance expectations with their employees, compared to 67% of other organisations.

“In addition, 93% of Aon Best Employers still believe in their performance management practices and effectively measure and reward individual impact on people and business outcomes.

“This is indicative of the fact that performance management isn’t obsolete per se, but rather the execution in other organisations often does not stack up to that of Aon Best Employer organisations. Aon Best Employers do performance management exceptionally well,” says Makinen.

Other key findings from the 2016 Aon Best Employers Australia and New Zealand Study:

- Aon Best Employers have more than twice as many ‘highly engaged’ employees than any other organisations, driving increased discretionary effort across the organisation.
- Aon Best Employers maintain consistently high levels of employee engagement, regardless of employee age group.
- Aon Best Employers understand that leaders must be engaged to create high levels of engagement and performance inside their teams.
- Aon Best Employers are successful at engaging employees throughout their tenure, regardless of time spent at the organisation.