LIFE AT WORK AWARDS 2015

Celebrating organisations that advocate good work-life practices

Pages 4-11

Lady boss
Empowering women to take charge in the workplace
Pg 03

Pg 04

CEO CHAMPION
Managing partner of KPMG in Malaysia walks the talk

Pg 12

FLEX AWAY
Reaping the benefits of both worlds through flexible work arrangements

THINK HARD
Does being open-minded indicate that one has no opinion?
ACHIEVING THE RIGHT BALANCE AT WORK

FOR years, it has been said that a content workforce is a productive workforce. We’ve all heard the talk. In fact, many of us have heard the talk so often that it has become little more than white noise as we plough on through our daily tasks.

We can say it “together,” The key to a happy workforce is a work-life balance that ensures the well-being of employees.” It’s easy to become cynical – especially for those regularly working away at 10pm on a Friday, wondering when, exactly, work-life balance that ensures the well-being of employees.

FOR years, it has been said that a content workforce is a productive workforce. Indeed, organisations are full of great ideas on how to maximise well-being and foster cultures whereby employee needs are met alongside company goals – but, in some cases, these ideas are left as they are. The Life At Work Awards shines a different light on the subject.

Through the initiative, we are given insights into the valuable work being done by a number of companies in Malaysia to transform great ideas into standard practice. Here, businesses are leading by example through programmes such as flexi-time, placing diversity and inclusion at the top of the agenda, and – not least of all – recognising the inherent leadership qualities within women, and providing them with the opportunity to grow and develop within senior roles. Certainly, there is more work still to be done, but it’s to the credit of those organisations leading the way that the ball is rolling on work-life practices and picking up pace rather nicely.

Till next week, SANDY
Editor
Leaderonomics.com

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We are committed to providing content that engages and inspires our readers. If you would like to suggest a specific theme or topic on leadership for us to explore, contact us by email at editor@leaderonomics.com

WOMEN – BORN LEADERS?

By SARA YEE
sara.yee@leaderonomics.com

STRENGTH and leadership can be found in anyone. Focusing on women, I would like to look at the ways leadership can be cultivated within anyone, especially women, with examples of leading women from around the globe. Jenny Holloway, chief executive officer of Fashion Enter – a social enterprise working for the betterment of the United Kingdom’s fashion industry – has made waves across the globe, and is in partnership with clients like ASOS and Marks & Spencer. Looking at this particular case, we dig deeper into the lessons one can learn from this social enterprise.

A PERSONAL TOUCH

Holloway greets every person by name and sees the entire team as a huge collaboration. Adding that personal touch to work – greeting people by name, genuinely getting to know your employees, and little acts of kindness towards them – can go a long way. Not only does morale go up, but personal touches bring a level of relationship whereby you establish the kind of connection with others in the workplace that some might only expect to be found outside professional relationships. Little things that most people take for granted are key to better relationships and happier people.

A STEP TOWARDS THE LIGHT

The samples, of which Holloway helped to realise, spurred her to think of ways to streamline garment production in a factory. Despite that, results were not immediately forthcoming, and she felt a sense of naiveté. Success is never something that’s immediate, but becomes possible the moment one sets about working towards it. This shows that it’s not just about pushing through, it’s also about looking at the potential outcomes and if the current methods will see them manifest, even if it takes time.

PEOPLE FIRST

When asked by the interviewer in an article about her proudest moment, she replied, “There are so many, but I really think I’m proudest of the staff we have.” It’s clear she views her people as her top priority. In any place, it is the people who matter and it is the links and collaborations we make that brings about the best – it’s not just synergy, it’s an essential part of who we are. No person is an island.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Lessons in leadership are found in everyday life, and Holloway’s example stands as one of many women who have made their way through determination and a human heart. Taking away what is important and sharing that knowledge is the candle that spreads the flame to other candles but in doing so does not lose its light. Why don’t we start with ourselves?

The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

According to Towers Watson’s Global Norm Database, women are still in the minority in leadership positions, especially in the workplace, which translates to a 36% decrease in the number of women managers globally. Malaysia experiences the same gender disparity, with women making up 31% of managers, despite the Government’s efforts to empower women. Malaysia has seen the rise of female labour force participation, from 46.8% in 2010 to 53.6% in 2014, with the 10th Malaysia Plan’s agenda to promote gender diversity in the workplace.

The most engaged managers – male or female – effectively balance collective welfare and individual drive.

Focus for Men
- Individual drive: Involvement and advancement; engaged managers master relational skills.

Focus for Women
- Collective welfare: External integrity and healthy relationships; engaged contributors master stress/balance challenge, while engaged managers drive for empowerment.

INCLUSION IMPACTS SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT DIFFERENTLY FOR MEN AND WOMEN

What are the key drivers of sustainable engagement by gender?

Managers
- Unique drivers by gender

Contributors
- Unique drivers by gender

All Employees
- Common drivers by gender

Source: TW 2014 Global norm database, 350,000 employees across 27 global companies

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Managers
- Empowerment
- Leadership
- Relationships
- Image
- Goals

Contributors
- Empowerment
- Leadership
- Relationships
- Image
- Goals

All Employees
- Empowerment
- Leadership
- Relationships
- Image
- Goals

WHAT AWAITS US TOMORROW?

Fostering an inclusive culture with authentic leadership

Many women from various levels of the organisation face difficulties with workload (46% of women disagreed that workloads were manageable). The Towers Watson 2014 norm study revealed that women’s work engagement was more drastically affected by work-life balance and stress, compared with men, especially at the non-managerial level. The differences in engagement drivers identified in the study suggested that both genders are “locked” in fairly traditional gender roles early in their careers. While women focus on the collective (building relationships and the company image), men tend to focus more on empowerment and career.

Providing flexible work arrangements

Some of the primary factors preventing women from truly engaging in their work are, as mentioned, balance and stress. Companies that foster inclusion and sustainable engagement are active in providing programmes that enable flexible work hours, flexible benefits that fit the needs of different employee groups, as well as opportunities to return to the workforce after taking career breaks. With the issues and concerns of women clearly laid out, together with tried-and-tested solutions employed by notable companies, it is imperative that we – as employees, managers, or business owners – put in the best of efforts (and creative thought) into making gender equality a reality.

Caring about diversity and inclusion

In order to help women thrive in their work and engage in management positions, it is important to identify how inclusion engages women and men up the chain.

In conclusion, authentic leaders and management play an important role in fostering an inclusive culture with authentic leadership, providing flexible work arrangements, and caring about diversity and inclusion. This will help in promoting gender equality and creating a better work environment for all.
As the boundary between home and work blurs, there is a growing need to achieve work-life effectiveness for better productivity and business sense. The Awards calls upon employers to step forward and share their workplace practices that enable their employees to achieve work-life integration.

One-week paid time off is to ensure that everyone at KPMG, employees and employers alike, are not working or checking their work emails. We’ve encouraged them to take this opportunity to go on holidays, rejuvenate and spend precious time with people who matter in their lives. We understand that the only way employees can really take a good break is to make sure their bosses go on holiday too.”

Johan shared a personal experience, describing when his wife told him that women generally want to achieve a sense of financial independence and remain part of the workforce, even after settling down and becoming mothers. With this insight, he truly understood that many talented women in the marketplace sometimes feel pressured to choose between career and family.

He said: “Organisations need to recognise that our country will eventually lose out if these great female talents leave their jobs for good. You will certainly risk losing your people if they discover other companies that provide better flexibility at work.”

“Thanks to the collaborative efforts by our People, Performance and Culture team, we have realised the national target of achieving women representation at senior levels. Thirty per cent of partners in KPMG are women.”

When your people are well taken care of and enriched professionally, they will be much more motivated to give everything they have to help their company meet objectives and realise its overall vision.”

Enhancing Diversity Work-Life at KPMG

More than 50% of heads of department are women, with strong representation in key roles.

Formalised the implementation of flexible work arrangements.

Flexibility to work less than KPMG’s standard full-time hours, i.e. work shorter days or work fewer days weekly.

Options for career breaks of more than six months to up to one year, apart from unpaid leave.

“Happy to be given the opportunity locally, regionally and globally. The leadership support and guidance to me and the team, in view of the complex situation and large scale global client issues has been a key enabler to our growth,”

“Proud to be given the recognition that I have contributed to the success of KPMG. I would like to thank the leadership team for the opportunities given, and for their confidence in me to scale the team to scale to greater heights.”

 hamburg, chief executive officer, KPMG in Malaysia, awarded CEO Champion

“Impressive leadership, a real enabler to our growth.”

Enterprise scales up business and business that require more than 10 hours of one-week office closure, starting in September 2015. The change forms part of their “Inspire Confidence and Empower Change” initiative, which is likely to be the talk of town amongst competitors, and even other KPMG offices worldwide.

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**BEST MALAYSIAN ORGANISATION**

**WINNER**
- Formalised flexible work arrangements, with options for staff to work on fixed flexible schedule, flextime, part-time and flexible work location, amongst others.
- Women Mentor Women programme is a structured mentoring and coaching programme designed exclusively for women to develop effective future leaders amongst women as well as raise their performance level.

**FINALEST**
- 45% of board members at hospital level are women, 38% at executive committee level.
- Implemented telecommuting with the IT team, where employees can work from home two days per week.
- "Let's PINK Possible" campaign enhances a healthy lifestyle by providing:
  - Free mammogram screening.
  - "Quit Smoking Challenge".
  - "BMI Challenge".
  - Daily catered healthy lunches.
- Childcare leave for employees with children ages 12 and below is available, being an extension of the employee's medical leave entitlement.

**BEST INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION**

**WINNER**
- Support women employees such as enabling nursing mothers to send their milk to their babies at the fastest time possible. Pilot is in the United States with review for possible consideration in Malaysia.
- Established "Women in IBM Network Group" (WINGs) to inspire and enable women to achieve their full career and leadership potential.

**FINALEST**
- Customised work schedule which is a hybrid of flexible work schedules to cater for global teams across time zones.
  - 4 hours afternoon
  - 4 hours night
- Introduced a new recruiter goal to proactively drive diverse hiring, whereby every recruiter is to float one female candidate to their selected hiring manager per quarter.
- Specific diversity and inclusion targets to hire 28% women in technical skill-pool and 50% in the commercial skill-pool.
- Raising awareness of sponsorship of senior women leaders in all business units, with the country chairman having several senior women leaders under his sponsorship.

**BEST LEAN ORGANISATION**

**WINNER**
- Women’s Mentoring Circle to tap on each other's experiences and thrive together.
- Implemented Career Comeback Programme (Care – IHS Career Relaunch) to recruit women professional who took a career break due to various reasons to help facilitate their transition back to the workforce.

**FINALEST**
- Introduced the Maternity and Paternity Support (MAPS) portal which supports employees who are expecting mothers and fathers to manage a smooth transition to parenthood.
- Has a local diversity target of more than 50% women at top management levels.
- Target to have a workforce that looks, thinks and behaves like their customers, with recruitment metrics for gender and age and talent planning metric which tracks percentage of women in critical roles.
- Diversity and Inclusion portal with resources, tools and techniques to provide better insights.

**SPECIAL MENTION FOR WORK-LIFE BENEFITS**

- Introduced four weeks of paternity leave and 16 weeks of maternity leave on full pay.
- Monetary bonus is given to all new parents under the Baby Bonding Bonus Scheme to facilitate the bonding between parents and children.

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Diversity and inclusion
Recruitment target
Diversity and Inclusion portal with resources, tools and techniques to provide better insights.

For more information on Life at Work Awards, visit flexWorkLife.my/events/life-at-work-award-2015
Key highlights of participating companies

DKSH
- Pitched Flexible Work Arrangements with the HR team to introduce the policy organisation-wide in June 2015. Start and end time of working hours can vary between 7am and 9am or between 4pm and 6pm.
- Expanded part-time work to a wider group beyond the support functions, tapping on flexWorkMy portal to advertise vacant positions.
- Maternity leave extended for a further 30 days immediately following the 60 calendar days, and Care’s Leave to care for family members.

PETRONAS
- Ancestor of the world’s first women in aviation sector, which will also monitor success factors for women in engineering/quality role in aviation.
- Employee Assistance Programme provides GE employees and their spouses/dependents with access to support ranging from psychologists, finance experts, medical experts, wellness coach, etc.
- ‘Who Do You Know’ programme raised the employee referral rewards for female candidates to increase the number of women in the organisation.

KPMG
- Officially formalised Flexible Work Arrangements in February 2015, which includes reduced and part-time work arrangements depending on specific needs, such as seven-hour days, six-hour days, half-day, four days, three days and 2.5 days per week.
- One week closure annually, which is paid time off from work to enable staff to rejuvenate, as part of the “Inspire Confidence and Empower Change” initiative.

GE imaging at work
- Developed an internship programme for Women in Aviation sector, which will also monitor success factors for women in engineering/quality role in aviation.
- Employee Assistance Programme provides GE employees and their spouses/dependents with access to support ranging from psychologists, finance experts, medical experts, wellness coach, etc.
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Carlsberg
- Flexible work arrangements has contributed to a positive increase between 2% and 4% in the areas of employee engagement, culture and work and development, bringing it to a strong 75% engagement score.
- Employees can request to work from home for up to two days a month.
- Time-off of two hours granted on ad-hoc basis to allow employees to attend to personal needs.

infineon
- Discounted prices offered to employees in selected childcare centres.
- Prioritised women in recruitment and succession planning for engineering and executive roles.
- Female employees in managerial positions are put through specific leadership programmes including female leadership forums, language programmes and internal coaching.

Motorola
- The Women’s Business Council (WBC) launched a “Women to Watch” platform to recognise and raise the visibility of high-achieving female employees and reinforce the importance of gender diversity at all levels.

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More than 50% of heads of department are women, with strong representation in key roles including the first female partner as head of advisory and first female partner as chief information officer and head of information technology advisory of KPMG Malaysia, who was appointed as head of APAC Cyber Security.

Pharmacies
- Implemented staggered hours with the option to commence office hours at 8am, 8.30am and 9am.
- Designation carpark for expecting mothers and plans to set up a childcare centre.
- Female CEO with 50% female direct reports.

Virtual office initiative at PETRONAS ICT enables more than 250 employees to work away from the office at any convenient location.
- Implementation of Mother’s Room focusing on design and facility improvements to 37 Mother’s Rooms to make them more comfortable and functional.
- Introduced the PETRONAS Returnee Programme, which provides the option to return talents who left to attend to family matters.
- Option of applying for an additional 30 consecutive dates of maternity leave on half pay.

PETRONAS
- Maternity Protection Policy (to be fully implemented by 2018) provides female employees the minimum maternity benefits, which include the right to re-retain the same job or equivalent after maternity leave, flexible work arrangements and the option to take reasonable breaks to breastfeed.

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Nestle
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In collaboration with
MAYBANK

INCREASING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY FOR FUTURE GROWTH

MAYBANK emerges as the winner of the Best Malaysian Organisation category for the second year running. The largest Malaysian bank with global presence in 19 countries, continues to enhance its Work-Life policies year on year and has made significant progress since 2013.

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (FWA)

A key feature of the Work-Life Policy is the formalisation of the Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA). Sixty-seven per cent of the population now on FWA are women since its formalisation in 2013. This initiative has enabled Maybank to retain its talents, some of which may have otherwise decided to leave. The FWA is part of Maybank’s Work-Life Policy and is the formalisation of the Flexible Work Arrangements Options What it means

- Fixed Flexible Schedule (Staggered Hours)
  - Employee’s weekly pattern remains consistent, but is other than the department’s standard schedule.

- Hostime
  - Employee may individualise his/her start and end times of each work day/week, but continue to maintain the number of required hours or total effort in a given week.

- Telecommuting or Flexible Work Location
  - Employee may choose to work from an alternative work site on a regular basis, e.g. work from home or from alternative work location.

- Reduced Hours/Converting to Part-Time Employment
  - Employee may request to reduce the number of hours or convert to part-time employment on a temporary or permanent basis.

Eileen Low Sui Ping
Maybank Group Community Financial Services, Menara Maybank

“Before I discovered Maybank’s FWA programme, I often came to work late, which reflected poorly on my performance. It was a challenge to be at the office by 8:45am because I have to take care of my sibling, who requires intensive medical attention. Thanks to the FWA programme, it has given me work-life balance, by allowing me to provide care for my brother as well as pursue my career with the bank.”

One of Maybank’s human capital priorities is to focus on driving greater diversity on the leadership bench. Women representation in management positions has grown from 38% in 2009 to 46% in 2014 whilst women in top management positions increased from 15.68% in 2009 to 31% in 2014.

The higher women representation at senior levels is a result of focussed efforts, including incorporating targets in the Maybank Talent Review and Succession Planning process, which set out to identify and surface women talents and successors for talent programmes, as well as to assume larger responsibilities. These efforts have shown positive outcomes, with an increase in women in the succession planning pool for critical positions from 19% in 2010 to 35.1% in 2014. In real numbers there was a marked increase of 168 individuals in 2013 to 264 in 2014. This improvement can be attributed to the Group’s targeted diversity initiatives such as the Women Mentor Women (WMW) programme and Women Mentor Women Council, amongst others.

GREATER REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The women’s agenda in Maybank is executed through the Maybank Women Mentor Women Council and it aims to increase the number of women in top management. The Council works within the current structure of the Bank to increase representation of women in top management and has five targets to deliver in 2015. The targets include the successful appointment of qualified women into a minimum of 30% managerial position vacancies in the year, and also breakthroughs in business derived from insights on women, for example women’s financial and purchasing patterns and needs.

VISION

To inspire Maybank women, and empower them to draw on their own unique leadership qualities that will enable them to elevate to the highest levels of leadership.

Some of the key strategic priorities of WMW Council include:

- Appointment of women into CEO positions within the Maybank Group
- Increase the pipeline of women into management roles across the Group for sustainability of female bench strength
- Businesses to leverage women’s insights to building impactful business ideas
- To increase and build mobility of women into international positions in all geographies where the Group operates.

For more information on Maybank’s initiatives, please visit flexWorkLife.my/resources/care-studies

Eileen, who has been working with Maybank for four years, has taken advantage of the FWA programme.

Eileen Low Sui Ping
Maybank Group Community Financial Services, Menara Maybank

From 38% 2009

To 46% 2014

Within the current structure of the Bank

2.27% 2011

31% 2014

31% 2012

31% 2013

Percentage

Year

2011

2012

2013

2014

Women Mentor Women Council

The programme is a structured mentoring and coaching programme to develop effective future leaders amongst women as well as raise their performance level. It is part of reinforcing the Bank’s culture of mentoring and coaching, as well as designed exclusively for women across the Group. Launched in late 2013, this programme has paired 35 women mentees with 35 mentors from senior management as a mentor.

Women Mentor Women Council

The programme’s purpose is to provide insights on women, for example breakthroughs in business derived from women’s financial and purchasing patterns and needs.

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IBM MALAYSIA

BUILDING A CULTURE OF TRUST AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

FOR IBM, winner of the Best International Organisation category, diversity and inclusion is a way of life. IBMers leverage their diversity and differences for innovation, collaboration, and client success.

WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION
IBM respects personal obligations and offers flexibility programmes to help women integrate work and life schedules or duties. Changing careers in IBM does not have to mean changing employers. The organisation will do its best to accommodate the demanding needs of women to achieve work-life integration.

IBM’S FLEXIBILITY PRINCIPLES & OPTIONS
IBMers Have Options on How, When & Where to Work: Flexible Work Options (FWOs)
Building a culture of trust and personal responsibility across all relationships is one of the key principles of IBM’s flexible work arrangements.

ADVANCING WOMEN IN IBM
IBM places a very high value on its women workforce to help them succeed across their professional and personal commitments. About two-thirds of IBM’s women executives are working mothers – clearly demonstrating that IBM women do not have to choose between a career and motherhood.

IDA KAMARIA GHAZALI
Leader – HR Shared Services and HR Global Accounting
Ida has been with IBM for over 18 years. She started her career as a consultant and progressed to leading the HR consulting practice in Malaysia. Since then, she has moved to leading the HR Delivery Centre with over 300 employees.
Currently, she wears three-hats as IBM Malaysia’s HR shared services leader, HR global accounting leader, and as president of IBM Malaysia’s Women in IBM Network Groups (WINGs).

“As a single mother, I needed flexibility to juggle my commitments with my two young boys. Between ferrying them to and from school and looking after the daily home affairs, I felt I needed to be in 10 places at once. Thankfully, my leaders, locally and globally, were supportive and entrusted me to craft a working arrangement that best suited my needs. At the end of the day, it is the work I deliver and not where I deliver it from that matters. IBM gives me the flexibility to pursue both my personal and career goals without sacrificing one for the other.”
– Ida Ghazali

WOMEN IN IBM NETWORK GROUPS (WINGs)
IBM Malaysia established a business resource group to drive women’s agenda and initiatives within the company. The group, globally recognised by IBM, was aptly rebranded as Women in IBM Network Groups (WINGs) in November 2014.
WINGs has a mission of inspiring and enabling women to achieve their full career and leadership potential, through activities planned around three pillars: Empower, Educate, and Expose.
WINGs programme include networking events, media outreach, and mentoring with Global IBM Executives.

For more information on IBM’s initiatives, please visit flexAtWorkLife.my/resources/case-studies

IBM Malaysia announced the appointment of Chong Chye Neo as managing director on Sept 1, 2015. The appointment is historic, as she is the first woman to take on the role of managing director since IBM’s establishment in Malaysia in 1961. Chong was at the Life at Work Awards on Sept 9 to celebrate IBM’s win, and shares with us her journey to the top.

Was the position of managing director planned out for you?
I didn’t plan for it, but I believe there is a time and place for everything. The timing for this position couldn’t have been better as I just sent my younger child off to university abroad. If I was offered the role five years ago, I would have had second thoughts as both my children were in high school and needed my time and attention. Now, I have the time to focus fully on the business and work closely with my teams to create greater value for our customers.

Did you have any role models, mentors or sponsors?
I have been fortunate to be mentored by some of the best leaders and managers throughout my career in IBM. They instilled within me the importance of courage, integrity, tenacity and trust to get the job done. In my early years, my late father and great-grandfather were my role models. My father coached me to be the best that I could be in anything that I chose to do. My great-grandfather taught me compassion.

What were your key challenges in getting to the top?
Balancing priorities with ambition was a challenge. Working professionals have different priorities at different times of their lives. It was not different for me as a professional, a wife, a mother and a daughter, to balance priority with ambition. No-one can decide for another person which is more important. Only the individual can decide for himself or herself. And timing really matters.

IBM has been your only employer, what has made you loyal to IBM?
I did work but briefly in another company before joining IBM. In IBM, you are not limited to a single career path. It is a 390,000-strong organisation across 150 countries and every IBMer has the opportunity to select a profession and the flexibility to change professions as they grow with the company. I started my career in IBM as a systems engineer and, as I grew in my career, I had the opportunity to take on roles in marketing, various distribution channels and sales across multiple industries and product lines, as well as management roles at the country and regional levels. IBM also allows its employees to take leaves of absence (LOA) to attend to personal or family matters.

I am thankful that IBM has granted me LOA twice and to return each time to roles that were interesting, challenging, and allowed me to continue to grow with the company.

What would you advise women who’ve just started out in their careers?
My advice would be:
1. Build a strong foundation for yourself. Work hard, team well and develop deep competencies in your chosen field. And more importantly, demonstrate your capacity as a reliable employee who delivers results.
2. Grow your network within and outside the industry that you work in, to understand how it works and how you can contribute effectively as a professional.

CHONG CHYE NEO,
Managing director, IBM Malaysia

JOURNEY TO THE TOP

Brought to you by TalentCorp
DIVERSITY MATTERS

THE appointment of Vimalawati Ramasamy (fondly known as Vimi) in January 2015 as the first Malaysian female managing director at the Penang-based “Centre of Excellence” for IHS Malaysia is a testament that diversity is top of mind at this MNC. The Universiti Sains Malaysia alumna speaks with great enthusiasm about her role, and being a pioneer in her field is nothing new to Vimi as she was also the first female test equipment development engineer when she started her career at a large MNC in Penang. Since joining IHS, Vimi has spearheaded various programmes to encourage women to grow and develop in their careers and to promote a diverse and inclusive working environment at IHS.

DIVERSITY IN THE WORKFORCE AT IHS

Women make up 54% of IHS workforce in Malaysia, with recruitment of women maintained at more than 50% in 2013 and 2014.

Over 50% of newly promoted staff in Malaysia are women.

Women’s Mentoring Circle targeting women managers and high potential women to build a circle of women leaders who can tap on each other’s experiences and thrive together. Each mentoring circle is sponsored and run by a senior leader who meets with their mentees every other week.

Set up the High Potential Senior Women Leaders (HPWLS) which aim to understand the needs of women employees and create specific programmes to develop them to take up leadership roles.

Diversity Training is provided for leaders to create awareness and understanding of diversity issues and to promote a better appreciation towards the need for diversity.

Diversity Focus Group is set up to introduce diversity in the office. This takes into consideration that people are more inclined to express their opinions about sensitive issues in small groups.

Various flexible work arrangements, family friendly facilities and work-life benefits are made available to allow employees manage work-life integration, increase productivity and maintain employee engagement.

Through various initiatives, IHS Malaysia successfully promotes a diverse and inclusive corporate culture.

IHS GLOBAL MALAYSIA

AS one of the world’s leading energy companies, Shell faces similar challenges as other employers on the need to have a balanced gender representation. Shell aims to create a workforce that mirrors the communities in which it operates, which will help them to better understand and build relationships within the communities. Diversity is also regarded as a necessity for sustainable growth and provides a platform for creativity and innovation.

Shell faces similar challenges as other employers in the Oil and Gas sector in recruiting and retaining female talent. The Oil & Gas industry is generally perceived as being more dominated and not seen as an industry of choice for female talent. As a result, there is a limited talent pool of senior technical women and a shortage of women role models. Given this situation, Shell has in place specific programmes to achieve 50% female workforce and 20% female representation in senior management.

SHELL GRADUATE PROGRAMME

BUILDING FUTURE FEMALE LEADERS

As one of the world’s leading energy companies, Shell recognises the importance of a diverse workforce with a balanced gender representation. Shell aims to create a workforce that mirrors the communities in which it operates, which will help them to better understand and build relationships within the communities. Diversity is also regarded as a necessity for sustainable growth and provides a platform for creativity and innovation.

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SHELL GRADUATE PROGRAMME (SGP)

The Shell Graduate Programme is tailored to the needs of each skill pool and discipline and focuses on personal and professional development of graduate hires. Each area has its own tailored development framework based on a standardised global Shell structure, with the eventual aim of creating highly competent, professional and best in class leaders.

IN SEARCH OF REMARKABLE GRADUATES

Discover What You Can Achieve at Shell

Apply today at www.shell.com.my/careers

In their effort to increase the intake of female graduates as a means to build the pipeline for future female leadership, Shell revisited the attraction and recruitment initiatives to be more targeted and female-centric.

• Appointing current Shell female leaders as Campus Ambassadors, and also to be role models.

• Having special engagements about careers at Shell with female students in universities.

• Prioritizing female candidates in the selection process whilst maintaining meritocracy.

• Creating a Diversity and Inclusion (Di&I) recruiting excellence toolkit to upskill the recruiters to become experts in Di&I recruiting.

• Putting in place scholarship targets and increasing focus on female students.

THE OUTCOMES

The focused campaign has proven to be successful, with a significant increase in female graduates hired into the Shell Graduate Programme, and 50% of the technical graduate hires in 2015 are female. Additionally, of the female graduates hired since 2007 into the Shell Graduate Programme:

• 25% are now in Mid to Senior Management.

• 64% in Managerial or team lead equivalent positions.

The Shell Graduate Programme is an example of a successful programme which is making progress in meeting Shell global diversity targets, i.e. percentage of women in senior leadership, percentage of country leaders and continuous improvement with respect to workplace inclusion.

ABOUT IHS

• An innovative Career Comeback Programme to facilitate women returnees to return to the workforce, co-funded by TalentCorp.

• ICARE consultants (career returners) are an extension of the Global Direct Sourcing team.

• IHS to provide necessary support including technical and product training, and assigning them to mentors and buddies to facilitate them back to work.

• ICARE consultants are given the flexibility in working hours and work location.

• ICARE consultants get paid based on their deliverables, measured by the number of shortlisted resumes and successful hires.

Prashanthini Sunderan, a Subsea Controls Engineer on the Shell Graduate Programme, who worked on the commissioning and start-up of the Gumusut-Kakap deep-water installation off the coast of Malaysia, the first of its kind for Shell in the country.

“I found I was doing real work and making a contribution straight away. No one is thrown in at the deep end, though. When you’re new you’re given guidance and you can ask for feedback if you need help. I also had a technical coach assigned to me.”

“Brought to you by TalentCorp

For more information on Shell Malaysia’s initiatives, please visit flexWorkLife.my/resources/case-studies

For more information on Shell Malaysia’s initiatives, please visit flexWorkLife.my/resources/case-studies
FLEXIBILITY MATTERS
MOVING TOWARDS A FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE

By SALIKA SUKSUWAN
editor@leaderonomics.com

I started my career as a school teacher, encouraged by my late mum who strongly believed that teaching is the most suitable profession for women, as it allows one to spend more time with family. Unfortunately, most of my teaching days working long hours. Fuelling by curiosity, I ventured out of the school grounds into the corporate world and more than 10 years later, I found myself opting for flexible work arrangements (FWA) in a professional services firm, going into the office three days per week.

I appreciated the flexibility when my daughter was born and the flexible arrangements made it possible for me to manage my career while learning to cope with being a new mother, so I continued working on FWA for five years. As a beneficiary of FWA, I am absolutely sure that it’s a win-win arrangement, hence I have spent considerable amount of time and effort on secondment at TalentCorp advocating FWA to human resources (HR) and business leaders.

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (FWA) DEFINED

FWA provides alternative working schedules which differ from the traditional working day and week. The Life at Work Awards 2015 highlights employers such as Maybank, IBM and Shell which provide various options of FWA for their workforce, such as part-time reduced work schedule, fixed flexible schedule, telecommuting, leave of absence, compressed work week and job sharing.

Case studies and research show that employees are healthier, experience less stress and are more productive when they can make choices about how, when and where they work. Although this seems rather obvious, there are many perceived barriers to implementing FWA, which is still a new concept in corporate Malaysia. At TalentCorp, one of our areas of focus is to share best practices and explain why FWA doesn’t have to be complicated or costly to implement. I will discuss some of the common problems posed to us.

PROBLEM STATEMENT #1: We don’t know if employees on FWA are working

Allowing flexibility at work requires a shift of mindset from thinking that presence at work is a reflection of productivity. With clear performance goals, managers should pay more attention to the quality of work outcomes rather than the number of hours spent in the office. Ultimately, trust is a vital ingredient for FWA. Just like medical leave, which may be subject to abuse, some employees may take advantage of the flexibility given to them.

Needless to say, employees should be counselled and they are likely to be average or poor performers. To mitigate the risk, some organisations decide to introduce FWA as a privilege to reward and retain good performers, rather than an entitlement for all staff.

The Attorney-General Chambers, for example, implemented the Phase one of their work from home option to selected employees based on criteria such as excellent annual performance appraisal, high level of discipline, integrity and independence.

Another example is PwC, Malaysia, which introduced FWA policy more than a decade ago as a retention strategy for FWA employees with strong performance ratings. The policy has evolved over the years to a “Work Life Plus Programme” which is made available to all staff.

PROBLEM STATEMENT #2: How do we explain to employees who are not on FWA

Ravin Jessuthasan of Towers Watson, in his book Transformative HR puts across an interesting point that “HR traditionally has taken a “peanut butter” approach to talent, by which, HR investments are similar – spread like peanut butter across different roles and employee groups”.

He explains that like marketing, HR leaders should start thinking about segmenting their employees and considering how employment features such as working hours, pay and development might affect individual behaviours differently.

Whilst business leaders are accustomed to segmenting our customers based on product offerings, we should also consider providing our employees a customer-like experience, catering for their different and diverse needs. By the same token, FWA isn’t a “one size fits all” option.

The FWA eligibility can be made available for specific roles. IHS, one of the winners of the Life at Work Awards 2015 is embarking on a new resourcing model with a group of recruiters who are women returnees. They can work from anywhere, any-time, and will be paid based on short-listed candidates and successful hires.

FWA options can be made available for specific circumstances. The newly appointed IBM managing director (MD), Chong Chye Neo, went on a Leave of Absence (LOA) twice in her career to attend to family matters.

In the IBM article on Life at Work Awards, the first female MD explains that she’s appreciative of the LOA policy, which provided her with opportunities to continue growing her career with IBM after returning from her career breaks.

PROBLEM STATEMENT #3: Our workforce is not ready for FWA

Rather than defer the implementation to a time when the organisation is deemed ready, some Malaysian employers have started with small steps and a trial period.

Eco World, for example, piloted staggered starting hours for a specific period during the school holidays in November 2014, to gauge the readiness of the organisation and their staff. The pilot phase was well received, and there are now plans to enhance the scope of the FWA options.

Large organisations like Maybank and KPMG have taken the bold step to formalise their FWA policy which have been practised over the years on a case-by-case basis. By formalising their FWA and incorporating it as part of their HR policies, these organisations have moved to the next stage of the flexibility at work spectrum, progressing from individual accommodations to having policies and programmes in place (see Figure 1).

Formalising FWA will ensure consistency of its eligibility and the way in which it is being managed, rather than leaving it to the discretion of line managers.

Besides enhancing employer branding, an FWA policy will encourage employees who need to have some flexibility to have a conversation with their managers before they decide to tender their resignation, by which time it is often too late.

FLEXIBILITY AT WORK AS THE WAY FORWARD

The decision to pilot or formalise FWA may not pose too much of a risk, considering that approximately 98% of organisations have not terminated any flexibility programmes, based on the World at Work survey in 2013. Globally, organisations which participated in this survey with established workplace flexibility reflect that it has a positive or extremely positive impact on engagement, motivation and satisfaction.

Despite the success stories and best practices, only a small percentage of companies in Malaysia has FWA policies, and only 10% of listed companies plan to enhance or implement their FWA within a year (see Figure 2).

Evidently, a lot more needs to be done to change mindsets in corporate Malaysia to be more receptive to flexibility at work.

Providing FWA can help create a supportive work environment in which both employers and employees will thrive. This will eventually become the “new normal” for conducting business, in response to what our workforce is asking for.

HR and business leaders in Malaysia have to either move with the times, or get left behind in retaining their high performers or positioning their organisation as a preferred employer.

Malaysian employees are far behind in flexible work arrangements (FWA) compared to international organisations.

Another example is PwC Malaysia, which has just completed a two-and-a-half year secondment at TalentCorp. She invites employers to approach TalentCorp, or visit the flexWorld.my portal to learn from best practices to enhance their work-life policies and provide a parent-friendly environment to the Malaysian workforce.

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Source: Leveraging Workplace Flexibility for Engagement and Productivity, SHRM (pg. 8, 2014)
A MIND OF YOUR OWN

DOES BEING OPEN-MINDED INDICATE THAT ONE HAS NO OPINION?

By ALVIN DAN
alvin.dan@leaderonomics.com

YOU may have heard people say, “Be open-minded, look at it from another point of view”, which suggests looking at other options or opinions rather than focusing on just the one in front of you. Then there are adages like, “Tough times don’t last, tough people do”, which encourage the person to keep grinding on with the initial idea he or she had.

So which works? Being open-minded or being stubborn? How do we know when one would work and when the other would be the better choice?

I personally believe that when we arrive at this crossroad, we should look at this particular advice: “Knowledge is having clarity of facts and truth, wisdom is the ability to put knowledge to good use.”

So it really isn’t the question of whether being open-minded or stubborn is better, but which is most useful at that specific point of time.

Here are some thoughts about both open-mindedness and stubbornness that will help clear the air and hopefully help you make better decisions in the future.

LETTING GO OF CONTROL

Open-mindedness is about allowing the experiences of others to affect or challenge our own worldview and beliefs, and this process sometimes brings us to question the very core of who we are.

Because there are other opinions that enter our minds, we have to be strong in understanding our own standards of values and beliefs, then weigh them against the new input.

Faith or belief that is unchallenged is as good as dead. A reasonable doubt is necessary in order to test the foundations of our own beliefs, just like how silver needs to go through intense fire in order to be refined.

A fun tip: If you’d like to know how a silversmith knows when a silver is fully refined, it is when he sees his own reflection in the molten silver.

Being open-minded does not mean that I blindly accept the opinions of others, as I believe that there’s a distinct difference between what is allowed to enter our minds and what is approved to stay.

Wisdom and a certain gentleness with the other party is required, as we ultimately want to accept the person for who he or she is.

When a new opinion arises, the listener evaluates and reviews his own conclusion regarding the issue, and considers if the new option is worthy to be reviewed, kept or discarded – all the while practicing a state of understanding with the other person.

Being open-minded does not mean a person has no opinion. In our mind, we are slowly but surely weighing all the options and suggestions, until we come to a conclusion.

Before I start talking about stubbornness, compare these two sentences:

1. In his stubbornness, he achieved his goal.
2. In his perseverance, he achieved his goal.

After reading the above two statements, you probably see the stubborn person as an old hard man who finally gets what he wants by being adamant in his ways and opposing any other ideas against it; or, you may have conjured the image of a donkey relentless in pulling along its cart.

The person who persevered, however, may be seen as one who triumphed over obstacles and challenges to get what he wants, much like a marathoner who finally crosses the finish line.

But we often forget, that while we put positive or negative connotations to those words, both the characters achieved their goal regardless.

YOU JUST KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

I always remember “stubbornness” being the go-to word, used especially for children who do not listen to instructions given by their parents.

And yes, while I do agree that there are negative connotations towards the word, stubbornness can actually be an important part of life, as it brings focus to what needs to be considered and the method we would like to achieve a certain goal.

For starters, stubborn people are more decisive in their actions. Such a person has an understanding of self-identity and worldview, and the difference with open-mindedness is that they have built barriers in order to safeguard against other influences.

It’s important to note that not all stubborn people are close-minded; however, it is a self-directed choice.

Stubbornness is a precursor to perseverance. Stubborn people have strong convictions and are not easily swayed by circumstances or critiques.

They know what exactly they want, how exactly they want to get there and they rarely settle for anything less than what they have in mind.

The only problem that may arise is when the idea or value is misplaced in the first place. Then it would take a big challenge for the people around to convince them that there are other paths to take.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Regardless of what you choose, to be open-minded or to be stubborn, the most important thing is to realise what would be most useful in the current situation.

As humans, we sometimes think it needs to be one or the other, but think about it: why can’t it be a choice of adapting to what you need to be?

After all, having knowledge of both aspects means you have the flexibility of choice of the matter.

Also next week

Keeping emotions at bay?

5 common myths of great workplaces

Kiran Bedi on her leadership journey

A glimpse into parenting workshop

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