

Implementation Guide for SMEs to Adopt Tripartite Standard on Recruitment Practices

1 Introduction

Adopting fair, merit-based and inclusive hiring practices can allow employers to have a wider pool of candidates to recruit from, hence increasing their chances of finding the most suited person for the job and strengthening the organisation.

This implementation guide is crafted to be aligned with the specification in the Tripartite Standard on Recruitment Practices and it provides practical references which SMEs could consider to adopt fair and objective recruitment practices.







The implementation guide focuses on three areas:

- a. Job Advertisements
- b. Job Application Forms and
- c. Interviews

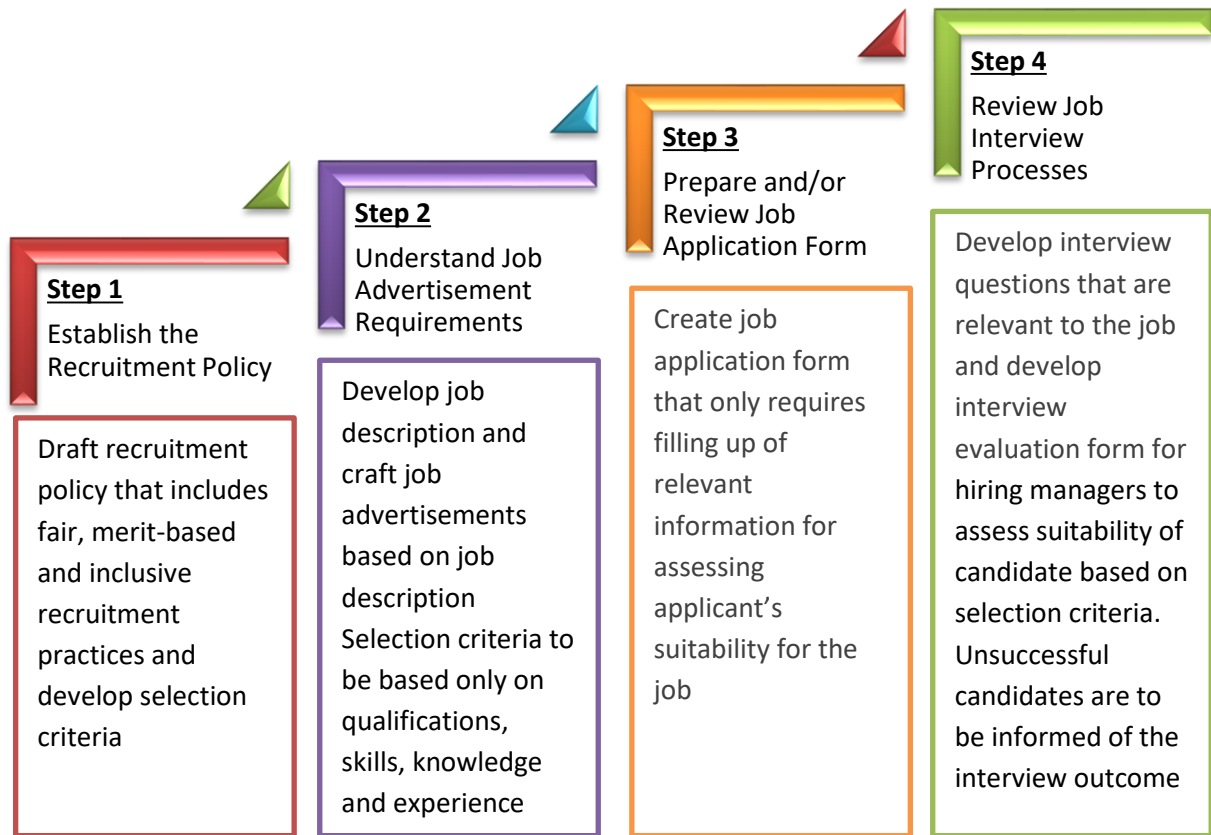
Content

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Checklist for Signing Tripartite Standard on Recruitment Practices
- 3 Steps to Implement Recruitment Practices
- 4 Step 1 - Establish the Recruitment Policy
- 5 Step 2 - Understand Job Advertisement Requirements
- 6 Step 3 - Prepare and/or Review Job Application Form
- 7 Step 4 - Review Job Interviews Process
- 8 Case Studies

2 Checklist for Signing Tripartite Standard on Recruitment Practices

-  Job advertisements state only selection criteria that are related to qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience required for the job
-  Job application forms require only information relevant to assess an applicant's suitability for a job
-  A set of relevant and objective selection criteria is used consistently for shortlisting and selecting candidates
-  A proper record of the interview, assessment process, test (if any) and job offer made is kept for at least one year
-  Unsuccessful candidates are informed of the outcome of the interview
-  HR practitioners, line managers and supervisors who have recruitment responsibilities are trained to conduct fair and unbiased interviews

3 Steps to Implement Recruitment Practices



4 Step 1 - Establish the Recruitment Policy

4.1 Draft Recruitment Policy

- Put in place a policy that should include:
 - (a) Statement of commitment to fair, merit-based and inclusive recruitment practices
 - (b) Processes, guides and reviews to ensure job advertisements, job application forms and interviews undergo rigorous internal checks to ensure objective recruitment policy

Recruitment Practices Policy

1. Introduction

The organisation has adopted the recommended good practices in the Tripartite Standard on Recruitment Practices. In particular, we will implement fair, merit-based and inclusive recruitment practices.

2. Job Advertisements

When a job vacancy has been identified and approved, the job position would be advertised on website, online job portals or in the newspapers. The advertisements would state only selection criteria that are related to qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience required for the job.

3. Job Application Forms

The selected applicant would be requested to fill in the job application form only when selected for interviews. Information from the job application form is used to assess the applicant's suitability for a job.

4. Interviews

Hiring managers and staff use a set of relevant and objective selection criteria (refer to Annex A) for shortlisting candidates. A proper record of the interview, assessment process and job offer made is kept for at least one year. Hiring managers and staff are to inform unsuccessful candidates of the outcome of the interview.

4.2 Develop Selection Criteria to be Put into Policy

- Identify requirements based on job description, job specification, job grade and attributes
- Identify key personality traits and skills sets which are important to the success of the job
- Establish a list of selection criteria through qualifications, experience, skills, knowledge and relevant soft-skills such as communication, leadership and interpersonal skills etc.

Annex A

Selection Criteria

The list of selection criteria is to help hiring managers and staff make hiring decision on the basis of objective criteria that are applied consistently and fairly to all candidates. Hiring managers and staff could choose from this list of selection criteria where applicable based on the job description and job specifications.

- Qualifications
- Experience
- Technical / Functional skills
- Abilities
- Attributes
- Team work
- Leadership
- Communication
- Interpersonal Skills
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Motivation
- Problem Solving Skills
- Analytical Skills
- Creativity
- Customer focus

Note: This list is not exhaustive

5 Step 2 - Understand Job Advertisement Requirements

5.1 Develop Job Description

- A job description defines the place of the job in the organisation and the contribution of the job towards achieving organisational or departmental objectives
- It explains what is done on the job, how it is done and why it is done

Components of a Job Description

1	JOB TITLE Indicate the functional title of the job (e.g. Production Executive, Restaurant Manager)	6	OTHER REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS Job titles of all posts the job holder is expected to report to
2	JOB LEVEL Indicate the job level within the function (e.g. Executive, Manager)	7	OVERALL JOB OBJECTIVES Concise description of overall purpose of the job that distinguishes the job from others, establishes role of job holder & defines contributions job holder makes to the function
3	DEPARTMENT Indicate the department's name (e.g. Purchasing, Production, Sales)	8	CORE RESPONSIBILITIES Identify main activities/tasks, categorise task up to 10 main activity areas, define accountability, state purposes of activity
4	LOCATION Identify the location where the job holder will be based (e.g. Singapore, Tuas, Loyang)	9	JOB SPECIFICATIONS Identify qualities & job requirements such as qualifications, experience, skills & knowledge
5	REPORTING TO Job title of the Manager/Supervisor whom the job holder will be directly reporting to	10	KEY DELIVERABLES Identify what the job holder is required to deliver on the job (e.g. hit sales targets, meet safety standards)

Source: Singapore National Employers Federation and Spring Singapore, HR Capability Toolkit – Recruitment & Selection
Download from <http://www.hrcapability.sg/tool-kit/> (A2.1 Writing a Job Description)

Sample Job Description

Job title	Receptionist
Job level	Level 3 (Non- Executive)
Department	Corporate Services
Location	Singapore
Reporting to	Office Manager, Singapore
Overall job objectives	Responsible for manning the reception area by providing timely and efficient services to visitors and employees.
Core responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for handling all incoming calls courteously and professionally by providing accurate information to the callers. Receive all visitors professionally and to assist them with enquiries on behalf of the company. Ensure the tidiness and cleanliness of the reception area and meeting rooms at all times, including the guest toilets. If necessary, liaise with the service providers to clean the common areas when there is heavy traffic. Maintain and update the meeting rooms schedule and this must be uploaded to the public folder for viewing. Responsible for sending and receiving mails and sorting them according to the respective departments. Keeping records of all registered mail and sending the registered mail to the post office. Liaise with the courier company on local and overseas courier service requirements by the line managers. Responsible for maintaining and updating the local and overseas telephone directory in a timely manner. Assist overseas visitors to book accommodation at the corporate hotels and provide any ad hoc services requested by the overseas visitors. Verify all overseas travel applications (OTA) by ensuring that the requests comply with the HR policies. Verify all travel expense claims by ensuring that employees attach the original supporting documents and approved OTA to the travel expense claim form.
Job specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCE "O" level certificate or ITE certificate. About 4 years of front office administration experience, with good telephone skills. Demonstrate ability to handle work professionally, independently and efficiently with a strong customer service mindset. Possess effective organisational and follow-up skills, paying attention to detail. Good interpersonal skills and able to interface with all levels, internally and externally, in a professional and responsive manner.
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient and professional office services are provided by the management office or service providers and the reception area and its surrounding common facilities are kept clean and tidy. The meeting rooms have all the necessary equipment and they are well maintained. Timely and accurate verification of employees' claims, ensuring compliance to the HR policies and guidelines.

Prepared by: *Janice Cheong, Office Manager*
 Date: *8 February 20xx*
 Updated on: *10 February 20xx*
 Approved by: *John Tan, Corporate Services Director*
 Approved on: *16 February 20xx*

Source: Singapore National Employers Federation and Spring Singapore, HR Capability Toolkit – Recruitment & Selection
 Download from <http://www.hrcapability.sg/tool-kit/> (T2.2 Job Description (Sample))

5.2 Prepare for Job Advertisements

- Craft job advertisements based on information in the job description
- Indicate selection criteria based only on qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience

Job Advertisements



Job advertisements state only selection criteria that are related to qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience required for the job

Employers should avoid using words or phrases in the job advertisements that could be perceived as discriminatory such as

- Age
- Race
- Language[^]
- Gender
- Marital Status and Family Responsibilities
- Religion
- Nationality

[^] If the job advertisement specifies proficiency in a particular language, employers should provide the reason why language proficiency is required on the job

Refer to TAFEP's website <https://www.tafep.sg/job-advertisements> for information on words or phrases to avoid in job advertisements

Sample Job Advertisements

1. Print Advertisement

<Company Logo>

<Name of the Company>

About the Company: Include details such as company's mission and objectives>

<Position>

<**Job Description** e.g. Reporting to the HR Manager, your primary focus will include managing employee relations matters, performance management and staff rewards and recognition programmes. You will be working closely and independently with line staff on these roles. In addition, you will also be required to recommend changes to existing policies and schemes whenever necessary>

<**Job Requirements e.g. educational qualifications, required experience and any other competencies required for the role**>

- Degree in Human Resources with at least 5 years of relevant work experience
- Results-oriented team player with the ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills with a desire to strive for continuous improvement
- Self-motivated, independent, committed and resourceful; with initiative and drive to deliver organized and meticulous work
- Proficient in Microsoft Office applications>

Please send in your resume with expected salary (optional) to:

<The Hiring Manager>

<address>

Source: Singapore National Employers Federation and Spring Singapore, HR Capability Toolkit – Recruitment & Selection
Download from <http://www.hrcapability.sg/tool-kit/> (T2.4 - Job Advertisement)

2. Online Advertisement

<Position>

Key Information

[location] / [package] / [Industry of focus]

Company Background & Job Purpose

Our [business type] requires an experienced HR executive to join our Human Resource team for an immediate start. The successful candidate will work in a dynamic team with line staff on these roles.

Duties & Responsibilities

Reporting to the HR Manager, key deliverables will include:

- Managing matters concerning employee relations
- Performance management programmes
- Staff rewards and recognition programmes.
- Recommending changes to existing policies and schemes (when necessary)

Education & Qualifications

Degree in Human Resources

Experience

At least 5 years of relevant work experience

The successful candidate must be a results-oriented team player, and have the ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment. He/she will have strong interpersonal and communication skills, with a desire to strive for continuous improvement. In addition, the candidate has to be highly self-motivated, independent, committed and resourceful with the initiative and drive to deliver organized and meticulous work. It is expected that he/she be proficient in Microsoft Office applications.

If you are the person we are looking for, apply now!

Source: Singapore National Employers Federation and Spring Singapore, HR Capability Toolkit – Recruitment & Selection
Download from <http://www.hrcapability.sg/tool-kit/> (T2.4 - Job Advertisement)

5.3 Advertisement Channels

- Decide which channel(s) to advertise the job
- Examples:
 - (i) Newspapers and magazines
 - (ii) Community Development Council (CDCs)
 - (iii) Employment agencies and online employment portals e.g. MyCareersFuture.SG¹
 - (iv) In-house advertisements e.g. company's website
 - (v) Employee referral programmes
 - (vi) Recruiting interns from university and polytechnics

¹ <https://www.mycareersfuture.sg/> and <https://www.myskillsfuture.sg/>

6 Step 3 - Prepare and/or Review Job Application Form

6.1 Create a Job Application Form

- Application form should contain:
 - (a) Job title / job position
 - (b) Personal information
 - (c) Employment History
 - (d) Relevant/Professional Qualifications
 - (e) Other Information
 - (f) Referees
 - (g) Declaration and signature
 - (h) Optional questions

Sample Job Application Form				
(A) Job Title / Job Position				
Position applied For Position Title: _____				
(B) Personal Information				
Name (As in NRIC or passport): _____ [Please underline surname]				
Address: _____ Postal code: _____				
Contact no : _____ Email address: _____				
(C) Employment History				
Date		Firm/Institution (in chronological order)	Position Held	Key Responsibilities
From	To			
(D) Relevant/Professional Qualifications				
Date		Qualifications Attained	Awarding institution	
From	To			

Sample Job Application Form (Cont')	
(E) Other Information	
Notice required (to end present employment): _____ (Weeks) Reason for leaving : _____	
(F) Referees	
Please give details of two referees whom we may approach for references	
1. Name	: _____ Designation: _____
Organisation name: _____	
Contact no: _____ Email address: _____	
2. Name	: _____ Designation: _____
Organisation name: _____	
Contact no : _____ Email address: _____	
(G) Declaration & Signature	
(1) I hereby give consent to my data being used for the purposes of recruitment and employment.	
(2) I declare that the information provided in this application and the attachments (if any) is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that I have not wilfully suppressed any material fact. I accept that if any of the information given by me in this application is in any way false or incorrect, my application may be rejected, any offer of employment may be withdrawn or my employment with the Company may be terminated summarily or I may be dismissed.	
Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____	
<small>Source: Fair Recruitment & Selection Handbook by Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Practices (TAFEP) Page 22 & 23 Or https://www.tafep.sg/job-application-form</small>	

6.2 Review Job Application Form

- Ensure job application form only requires filling up of relevant information for assessing applicant's suitability for the job

7 Step 4 - Review Job Interview Process

7.2 Develop Interview Questions and Interview Evaluation Form

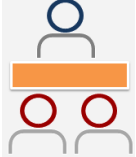
- With reference to the selection criteria developed (in Step 2), prepare a list of interview questions that are relevant to the job
- Develop an interview evaluation form to help hiring managers and staff to assess candidate's suitability based on selection criteria

Sample Interview Evaluation Form							
Name of applicant :		_____					
Department/Position :		_____			Date: _____		
		Not applicable	Not acceptable	Below average	Average	Good	Excellent
1	Communication (express thoughts well, listening skills)						
2	Appearance (dress sense, body language)						
3	Response (mental alertness, logic, rapport)						
4	Attitude (courteous, shows enthusiasm, go extra mile)						
5	Initiative (independent, resourceful, industrious, motivated)						
6	Maturity (responsible, objective, self-discipline)						
7	Leadership & teamwork (activities, office held)						
8	Knowledge & abilities (competency, tech skills)						
9	Overall assessment (consider all the above factors)						
Strong Points:		_____					
Apparent Weaknesses:		_____					
General Comments:		_____					
Recommend for offer:		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> KIV <input type="checkbox"/> No					
Overall rating by interviewer(s) 1 (Poor) to 10 (Excellent) :		<input style="width: 50px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid red;" type="text"/>					
Interviewer's Name		Interviewer's Signature			Date		
Status of offer – to be completed by HR							
Date of acceptance:		_____					
Commencing date:		_____ Approved by: _____					
Other remarks:		_____					

7.3 Train Hiring Managers and Staff

- Train HR practitioners, line managers and supervisors who have recruitment responsibilities to conduct fair and unbiased interviews
- Ensure that unsuccessful candidates are informed of the interview outcome

Interview Questions



Important Tips

- Ask questions that allow candidates to talk and provide information as required
- Should questions which may seem discriminatory be asked, the reasons for asking should be explained to prevent misunderstanding
- Use open-ended questions – what, when, where, who, why, how or describe
- Use close-ended question only when necessary to have a definite “yes” or “no” answer
- Use probing questions - E.g. What happened after that? Was there an occasion when you and your team members didn’t work out well?
- Use situational questions - E.g. If you are in this situation as the supervisor, what would you do?
- Use competency-based questions – E.g. Describe a time when your communication skills made a difference to the situation.
- Use behavioural interview questions – E.g. Share with us how you handled a difficult situation at work.

Refer to <https://www.tafep.sg/examples-non-discriminatory-interview-questions> for a list of ready interview questions

Source: Fair Recruitment & Selection Handbook by Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Practices (TAFEP)

Training Programme for Interviewers

- Fair Employment Practices
- Fair Consideration Framework
- Employment Act
- Tripartite Standards

Employment Legislation & Guidelines

- Responsibility & accountability
- Challenges faced
- Expectations

Hiring Manager’s Role

- Planning & Preparation Phase
- Interaction Phase
- Evaluation Phase

Recruitment Process

- Questioning
- Listening
- Types of interview questions

Interview Techniques

- Types of biases affecting effectiveness of interviews such as unconscious bias

Awareness of Biases

Source: Fair Recruitment & Selection Handbook by Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Practices (TAFEP)

7.4 Draft Offer Letter

- Draft offer letter and ensure that key employment terms are issued to new employees

Key Employment Terms

From 1 April 2016, all employers must issue key employment terms (KETs) in writing to employees who:

- Enter into a contract of service on or after 1 April 2016;
- Are covered by the Employment Act; and
- Are employed for 14 days or more. This refers to the length of contract, not the number of days of work.

When should the written KETs be given?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preferably before the commencement of work ➤ No later than 14 days after the start of employment
What are the written KETs to be provided?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Full name of employer 2. Full name of employee 3. Job title, main duties and responsibilities 4. Start date of employment 5. Duration of employment (if employee is on fixed-term contract) 6. Working arrangements, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Daily working hours (e.g. 8.30am - 6pm) ○ Number of working days per week (e.g. six) ○ Rest day (e.g. Saturday) 7. Salary period 8. Basic salary - For hourly, daily or piece-rated workers, employers should also indicate the basic rate of pay (e.g. \$X per hour, day or piece) 9. Fixed allowances 10. Fixed deductions 11. Overtime payment period (if different from item 7 salary period) 12. Overtime rate of pay 13. Other salary-related components, such as: Bonuses/Incentives 14. Type of leave, such as: Annual leave / Outpatient sick leave / Hospitalisation leave / Maternity leave / Childcare leave 15. Other medical benefits, such as: Insurance / Medical benefits / Dental benefits 16. Probation period 17. Notice period
What forms can the written KETs take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hard and/or soft copy (printable) ➤ No need for all the KETs to be given in one document ➤ Common KETs (e.g. leave policy that applies to a group of employees) can be provided in an employee handbook or on the company intranet

Note: For sample employment offer letters, you may refer to the 2 resources below:

1. Singapore National Employers Federation and Spring Singapore, HR Capability Toolkit – Recruitment & Selection, download from <http://www.hrcapability.sg/tool-kit/> (T2.9 – Employment Letter – Permanent Employee)
2. TAFEP’s website <https://www.tafep.sg/offer-letter>

Please seek proper or legal advice when drafting your company’s employment offer letter.

Source: Download KETs sample form from <http://www.mom.gov.sg/employment-practices/contract-of-service#key-employment-terms>

7.5 Inform Unsuccessful Candidates

- Ensure that unsuccessful candidates are informed of the outcome of the interview
- Draft a rejection letter or email

Sample Rejection Letter

RE: Your Application for the Position of <Designation>

<Date>

<Name of applicant>

<Address>

Dear <name of applicant>

Thank you for applying for the position of <designation> with <company name>.

We are pleased to have had the opportunity to meet with you in person and to learn about your background and career interests. After careful consideration of your skills and experience, we are unable to proceed further with your application at this stage. Prior to reaching this decision, we have considered many factors and have discussed your application at length with our interviewers.

We would like to thank you for the interest you have shown in <company name> and wish you success in your career.

Yours sincerely

Signature

Source: Singapore National Employers Federation and Spring Singapore, HR Capability Toolkit – Recruitment & Selection
Download from <http://www.hrcapability.sg/tool-kit/> (T2.13 – Rejection Letter)

7.6 Record Keeping

- A proper record of the interview, assessment process, test (if any) and job offer made is kept for at least one year

CASE STUDY 1: Sing Fuels Pte Ltd**Background of Company**

Established in 2012, Sing Fuels Pte Ltd is one of the largest Singapore domicile bunker trading house, specialising in international trade of marine fuel and lubricants to the shipping industry.

Headquartered in Singapore, Sing Fuels footprint spreads across the following countries: United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, China, Turkey, Cambodia, Vietnam, India, Denmark, Nigeria, Taiwan and Far Eastern Russia.

Sing Fuels provides products and services including global trading of marine fuels, lubricants, vessel services, risk management, cargo trading and LPG trading.

Challenges in Recruitment

Being a strong believer in fair employment practices, Sing Fuels constantly seeks to hire energetic, passionate and highly-motivated individuals to join the team. Due to the dynamic nature of Sing Fuels business, the company finds it difficult to fill the vacancies with suitable candidates at times.

Since the process of bunkering is happening throughout different regions and new regulations will be introduced by MPA, the employees are required to be constantly updated on different developments. Whereas for the support team, to keep up with the growing business, they would also constantly have to build their skills and increase individual productivity. Therefore, when it comes to hiring, the hiring managers would request for certain traits in their candidates, such as being open to frequent training in order to catch up on the new regulation's requirement.

Improvements made to Recruitment Practices

When Sing Fuels was approached by SNEF to sign the Tripartite Standards, the company went on to seek clarification to understand the specifications of the Tripartite Standards from SNEF. The company further enhanced its processes to ensure that each recruitment advertisement goes through a stringent vetting process such that the wordings do not contain discriminatory content and the requirements of the job are based on skills, knowledge and experience. As some positions require proficiency in certain languages in order to cater to specific groups of customers, the recruitment advertisement will indicate the language requirement. However, the candidate need not be a citizen of any specific regions.

The recruitment documents such as the application forms and interview assessment forms are also reviewed to ensure that irrelevant criteria and information such as gender, age and marital status are excluded.

The company made efforts to ensure that their hiring managers are briefed on types of questions that are considered appropriate or inappropriate to ask during the interview process.

CASE STUDY 2: Eligo Pte Ltd

Background

Eligo Pte Ltd distributes a range of inter-complementary premium industrial product and provides customised service to the oil and gas, semiconductor, pharmaceutical, petrochemical, marine, infrastructure and mining industries. The company provides solutions for valves, fitting, tubing & mission critical fluid delivery system components. Applications for their product can be found in many industries. For example, oil & gas, reactors, heat exchanger, skids and CIP cleaning units.

As a company with collectively 50 years of experience, they are forward-looking and are always seeking to have progressive employment practices so as to attract and retain good employees. Currently, nearly 40% of their workforce are mature workers.

Challenges in Recruitment

As a small workforce, Eligo wants to attract and hire suitable candidates who will fit into the work culture of the company. Sometimes hiring managers may put in certain requirements for job advertisements in order to narrow down the shortlisting process. On the other hand, there is also a need to have a diverse workforce so as to introduce new ideas and innovation into the company.

Improvements made to Recruitment Practices

Having been briefed on Tripartite Standards by SNEF with clarifications on the recruitment practices in the advertisements, application forms and interviews, Eligo reviewed their recruitment process and ensured that they do not select candidates based on age, gender, race or medical grounds which are unrelated to their knowledge, skills, and experience for the job.

Eligo had also ensured that their job advertisements and application forms are non-discriminatory and that the process of shortlisting and selecting candidates is based on merit. Extra steps and effort had been implemented to vet the wording of job advertisements before it is released to the public.

In order to be aligned with fair employment practices, Eligo has also briefed the hiring managers to conduct fair and unbiased interviews, with a focus on the applicant's professional competencies and abilities. When shortlisting the candidates, Eligo also put in place a set of fair and objective selection criteria for the interviewer to assess the candidates during the interviews.

This implementation guide is designed to be aligned with the specification in the Tripartite Standard on Recruitment Practices and references are made from the following sources:

- Singapore National Employers Federation and Spring Singapore, HR Capability Toolkit – Recruitment & Selection
- Tripartite Guidelines Fair Employment Practices by Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Practices (TAFEP)
- Fair Recruitment & Selection Handbook by Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Practices (TAFEP)