

CONVERSATIONS

A FULL SHOPPING CART FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT, ALWAYS

Founded in 2015, Shopee is today one of the region's e-commerce giants. Find out how its belief in consistently looking out for talents and upskilling opportunities full has played a part in its growth.

1. Shopee is a major player in the regional e-commerce industry, supported by a diverse group of talents. To Shopee's management, what is the role of human capital in business success?

Talent is one of the key drivers of competitive advantage for businesses to do well. It is essential for companies to continue to invest in their employees and take a long-term view in talent development.

At Shopee, we are committed to attracting top tech talents and ensuring that they continue to grow and remain competitive. We do this by taking a systematic and robust approach towards Learning and Development across the region. We have Shopee Academy, a training initiative where we give our employees the opportunity to attend a variety of training workshops and programmes across numerous disciplines.

We also have the Techademy initiative, where we organise internal technical sharing sessions and workshops, conducted by our in-house software engineers and tech teams. Through this, we aim to expand our employees' engineering and technical capabilities, and keep their knowledge of data science and big data technology up to date. Shopee also invites experts, such as university professors, to speak at technical sharing sessions to improve our employees' knowledge in their respective fields.

At Shopee, we firmly believe in a constant journey of self-improvement by giving every employee the opportunity to upgrade themselves regularly.

2. The e-commerce industry is growing fast, with new competitors entering the market constantly. What are some of Shopee's key strategies to attract, retain and upskill talent amidst this rapidly evolving landscape?

The e-commerce industry is a fast-evolving and rapidly growing one, which sees us face new challenges, opportunities and demands every step of the way. Investing in the upskilling of our workforce is an important part of our talent retention strategy. With this, we designed an effective mix of talent attraction and development strategies that include internship programmes and developmental initiatives to nurture our local tech talent pipeline.

At Shopee, we recognise our interns as an integral part of our team and we trust them to work on high-impact projects with the potential to make real change. Our internship programmes are aimed at encouraging students to join Shopee and take ownership of projects given to them. We also have in place the Sea Management Associate Program, which is key in attracting and developing talents from the start.



Lim Teck Yong, Head of People Team and Regional Head of Operations, Shopee

To cultivate interest and equip the local tech talent pipeline with the right skills relevant for e-commerce, Shopee also proactively engages the various tech communities through a series of initiatives, including the National Data Science Challenge, I'm The Best Coder Challenge, and Shopee Code League.

We are dedicated to inspiring interest in tech and engaging the next generation of local talents who will make a difference in the digital economy of tomorrow.

In 2018, we received the SkillsFuture Employer Award, reflecting our commitment to continually drive a strong learning culture and develop capabilities within our organisation. Under Shopee Academy, employees at every level work closely with leaders and different teams to co-create effective learning solutions and develop cross-functional skills. We have also implemented a wide variety of talent development initiatives, including multi-level training, company-led training, and Techademy, to enhance employees' general, functional, and leadership skills

3. Shopee is also big on employee engagement - there's even an in-house "People Engagement" team! Why is employee engagement such a major part of your culture? What are some employee engagement practices that have worked best for Shopee?

Fundamentally, we envision Shopee to be a place where employees come together to build meaningful connections. This guiding principle is reflected in both the design of our office space and our workplace initiatives - all of which place a great emphasis on employee engagement.

Firstly, Shopee's office space was designed in a way that ensures our employees have a conducive, well-equipped, and comfortable environment that instils a sense of belonging and purpose. Launched in 2019, our regional headquarters in Singapore underscores our commitment to nurture tech talent, develop the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and create job opportunities.

Our office space boasts a host of features, including a gym and a fun zone where employees can unwind and relax over a game of darts. There are also nap pods, where employees can quickly recharge; we also have in-house massage therapists to help them de-stress.

Secondly, we organise a slew of employee engagement activities such as fitness classes, creative workshops and training programmes. During the circuit breaker period, we conducted the Shopee Wellness Virtual Events and the Shopee Fitness Challenge, designed to keep our employees fit and happy!

We believe in creating an environment where our employees can work hard, play hard, and improve themselves. This is key in ensuring a good work-life balance and sense of fulfilment.

4. Shopee is part of the Human Capital Partnership (HCP) programme. Can you share how you have seen this partnership benefit the organisation?

As a home-grown local tech company, Shopee is committed to developing our employees' skills and knowledge across all levels and sharing best practices with the larger tech community.

Being part of the HCP Programme fortifies our dedication towards grooming the next generation of local tech talent. Over the last few years, we have developed new capabilities in Engineering, Data Analytics and Data Science within the local tech workforce. The recognition has helped to attract more local talent to join Shopee and we are confident that the programme will continue to boost engagement and retention rates among Shopee employees - something that we value strongly at Shopee.

5. Any words of wisdom you would like to share with other companies?

As employers, it is our responsibility to groom and upskill our employees and we need to think about how we can nurture them to be a better version of themselves. It is important to build a culture where people are keen to listen, learn and work hard to improve.

ABOVE AND BEYOND, ENGINEERING A RESILIENT WORKFORCE

Katoen Natie believes in investing in its people, and going beyond the expected. See how this has built a foundation of success and growth that enables the company to stay robust even through challenging times.

At Katoen Natie, employees are assured that their well-being is a top priority, through both good times and bad. The company believes in taking care of its people at all levels, and is always open to investing in human capital initiatives.

"Ultimately, a company can only be as strong as its people, and our people can only be committed if we are committed to caring for them. Take care of your people so they can take care of the company," explains CEO Mr Koen Cardon.

"Our human capital initiatives enable us to cultivate a competent workforce that, in turn, generates large and long-lasting advantages for the company," he adds.

It is exactly this motto of **"Our People Make The Difference"** that has played a significant role in Katoen Natie's growth - today, the logistics service provider has a presence in 28 countries and is supported by a 12,000-strong workforce.

The Building Blocks of a Capable Workforce

Katoen Natie has a keen focus on talent development. To nurture the next generation of talents, in partnership with Singapore Management University (SMU), it hires fresh graduates as Management Trainees to groom for leadership positions. The Trainees get to explore a wide range of roles in the company through job rotation in departments such as Safety, Environment and Quality (HSEQ), Packaging, Warehousing, Order Fulfilment, Technical and Procurement. Katoen Natie also sends them to the headquarters in Antwerp, Belgium for training, and attaches them to its overseas terminals within two years of them joining the company. Eventually, they are promoted to take on ownership roles as Associate Managers running their terminals.

Much focus is placed on sharpening the skills and knowledge of leaders as well. Katoen Natie sends its managers to its headquarters for training to promote foreign skills transfer. Skills transfer initiatives include biannual workshops conducted in Antwerp, specially designed to facilitate exchange of knowledge and best practices amongst global managers and executives. Armed with new knowledge, the managers return to Singapore to boost their teams' capabilities.

A Future-Ready Workforce

Beyond talent development, Katoen Natie strives to advance its workforce's capabilities and ease their workload by tapping technology. The company harnesses innovations that make work easier, faster and safer for its people, as well as partners and customers. For example, it also introduced a new technology that enables workers to obtain real-time data to better manage the company's hauliers (employees who transport goods and materials by road) and warehouse operations. There's also an innovation that increases efficiency in unloading goods, and facilitates faster turnaround time for trucks - hence lessening the strain on workers. This Covered Train Trailer innovation is being consistently reviewed for more possibilities for productivity-enhancing processes and vehicles. Additionally, the company collaborated with a partner on a driverless truck system, to improve productivity and address the growing shortage of drivers.

More plans are in the pipeline. For instance, in its drive to reduce manual work, Katoen Natie is currently working on an electronic billing system, to ease its employees' manual workload, so that they can focus on higher-value tasks.

Going the Extra Mile to Keep Employees Safe

Katoen Natie recognises that a competent workforce also needs to be healthy and happy for business to flourish. In early 2020, when the COVID-19 crisis first intensified, Katoen Natie, true to its promise of taking care of its people, immediately set up a task force to manage the crisis. Within a short time, it thought out and put key measures in place to ensure its people's well-being, going the extra mile despite the additional costs. For example, when Malaysia's Movement Control Order (MCO) was announced, potentially leaving many workers without a roof over the heads, the task force quickly made arrangements for Malaysian employees to live in hotels, and provided them with a daily allowance. It also arranged for additional bus operations for workers for enhanced safe distancing, redeployment of work to ensure that employees' incomes were not compromised, as well as care packs and health talks.

Most significantly, it made major adjustments to its work process - going



Caroline working from home during the circuit breaker

beyond government requirements. The pandemic resulted in most businesses in Singapore having to implement work-from-home arrangements. As an essential service provider, Katoen Natie could let some of its employees to work onsite. However, it wanted to keep all its people safe, even if it meant having to put in additional effort to modify its operational processes. The company implemented work-from-home arrangements for its entire office-based workforce, enabling all departments in the company to transition into the new normal in a short period of time.

Caroline Liew, Senior Supervisor of Customer Service, is thankful for the company's efforts in helping its people transition well into their new work processes. As Senior Supervisor, she oversees her team in ensuring that orders from customers are fulfilled on time and accurately. She is also involved in customer service projects, as well as training and system development.

"Telecommuting was made possible with flexible schedules and virtual meetings. Regular virtual team meetings ensured that team members did not feel isolated while working remotely, and that all job functions were running well and smoothly. This helped ensure the team productivity was not compromised," she explains.

Today, as a HCPartner, Katoen Natie stays firm in its dedication to take care of its people throughout this time of uncertainty.

"Be it in good or bad times, and especially during such unprecedented times like COVID-19, whatever actions or decisions the management makes, we should always place our staff's safety and well-being first," says Mr Cardon.

EXPAND YOUR TALENT POOL TO BENEFIT FROM EXPERIENCED MID-CAREER JOBSEEKERS

The SGUnited Mid-Career Pathways Programme enables businesses to offer mid-career individuals attachment opportunities and co-funds 80% of the training allowance. Are you on board yet?



Businesses in Singapore can now receive Government assistance to put mid-career individuals on attachments under this programme. This is a move by the Government to help support local businesses and mid-career individuals amidst today's soft labour market.

BENEFITS

What this means for your business:

- 80% funding for training allowances
- Access to a pool of mid-career individuals who can later be considered for permanent roles when business conditions improve and when they have greater confidence to hire.



ELIGIBILITY

Your business is eligible if you...

- are registered or incorporated in Singapore;
- offer attachments ranging from a few months to no more than 9 months (attachment must commence by 31 March 2021);
- have in place clear attachment descriptions and development plans; and
- co-fund 20% of the training allowance for the duration of the attachment

MID-CAREER INDIVIDUAL PROFILE

The mid-career individual must...

- be a Singapore Citizen or Permanent Resident with the exception of recent graduates*.

NEED MORE INFO?

Find out more: Funding rates, FAQs and application procedures at

<https://www.wsg.gov.sg/programmes-and-initiatives/SGUnitedMidCareerPathways-HostOrganisations.html>

* The SGUnited Traineeships Programme is open to fresh graduates who graduated in calendar year 2019 or 2020 from ITE, Polytechnics, Universities, or other educational institutions (e.g. private universities and overseas institutions); or graduated from above institutions and completed National Service in 2019 or 2020.