

Adopting a Structured Approach to Implementing FWAs for Long-term Sustainability

Industry Best Practices:
MSIG Insurance (Singapore) Pte Ltd

Produced by:



Tripartite Alliance for
Fair & Progressive Employment Practices

tafep.sg

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ADOPTING A STRUCTURED APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTING FWAS FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

MSIG Insurance Singapore (MSIG) offers personal and commercial insurance solutions and has a 500-strong workforce. In 2019, the organisation shifted from offering FWAs on an adhoc basis to implementing a cohesive work-life strategy. The Management has reviewed its people strategies and recognises that with the growing acceptance of flexible working in the local landscape, access to FWAs is no longer a 'good to have', but a critical factor to attract, engage and retain talent. While the organisation has long-serving staff, many with over 25 years tenure, the senior leadership anticipates that the profile of MSIG's employees will evolve in the coming years as more Millennials and

Gen Z-ers enter the local workforce. HR has seen an increase in enquiries about the organisation's flexibility policies at the recruitment stage. Existing staff have also expressed an interest in FWAs as competitors in the sector implement more flexible work options, particularly for sales roles. Thus, the Management has identified FWAs as a crucial 'pull' factor that will help with recruitment of a younger talent pool as well as address the diverse needs of current employees who are at different life stages. Additionally, as a global organisation, MSIG is committed to FWA implementation as a means to reduce its carbon footprint and align to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR A FORMALISED FWA POLICY

MSIG has identified 3 important ways that a formalised FWA policy adds value to their business:



#1. INCREASES AUTONOMY, LEADING TO INCREASE IN WORK EFFICIENCY

MSIG recognises that when employees have the flexibility to manage their own time, individual productivity and motivation to achieve work goals are enhanced.



#2. INCREASES EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION, LEADING TO A DECREASE IN COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH RECRUITMENT AND TALENT REPLACEMENT

Employees who are fulfilled in both career and personal spheres are more engaged and likelier to stay with the organisation. This enables MSIG to save on talent replacement costs, including recruitment and training of new hires.



#3. POTENTIAL SAVINGS ON OVERHEAD COSTS

With the wider implementation of FWAs and more employees expected to work remotely, the organisation anticipates potential savings of real estate costs in the longer term.



We are delighted that our employees have responded very well to the implementation of FWAs in MSIG Singapore.

Nothing beats seeing their happy faces or hearing their appreciative words, on being able to balance work with their personal needs, like being there to pick up their children from school, saving on commuting time, having me-time to pursue their personal interests, to name a few.

Our supervisors are also pleased to report higher productivity and lower absenteeism from their team members; employees are motivated and feel their supervisors trust them to flexibly manage their work schedule.

With more employees working from home, this has propelled our organisation's adoption of digitalisation in our work processes across the company. Not to mention potential savings in real estate cost as we can reduce the number of onsite work stations.

Happy Employees make a Happy Workplace. We will continue to enhance the way we work to cater to the diverse and multi-generation workforce in MSIG Singapore.



KAREN CHEE
VICE PRESIDENT
HR & L&D

MSIG seeks to achieve two key objectives with its overall FWA strategy:

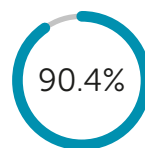
- **To ensure inclusivity and availability of FWAs across roles and functions.**

An extensive approach has been taken to engage as many stakeholders as possible to gather feedback and identify the feasibility of various types of FWAs vis-à-vis different roles, without negative impact on business results and productivity.

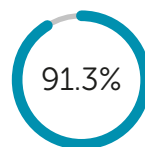
- **To formalise the FWA implementation plan for greater clarity and transparency.**

This is important to ensure that all stakeholders involved (management as well as employees), understand the intended outcomes of MSIG's policies as well as the accompanying behaviours and expectations when implementing the FWAs.

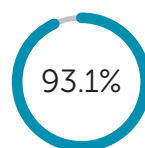
The implementation of FWAs in MSIG has been well-received; the processes and policies have garnered positive feedback from all levels of the organisation. In a feedback survey, employees shared that time saved from commuting, being able to work more productively from home and successfully managing home and work responsibilities have been their biggest gains from utilising FWAs. MSIG is also seen as an Employer of Choice, which is likely to positively impact their recruitment and retention of staff.



I am more likely to recommend others to work in MSIG as a result of FWA



I am more likely to stay with MSIG as a result of FWA



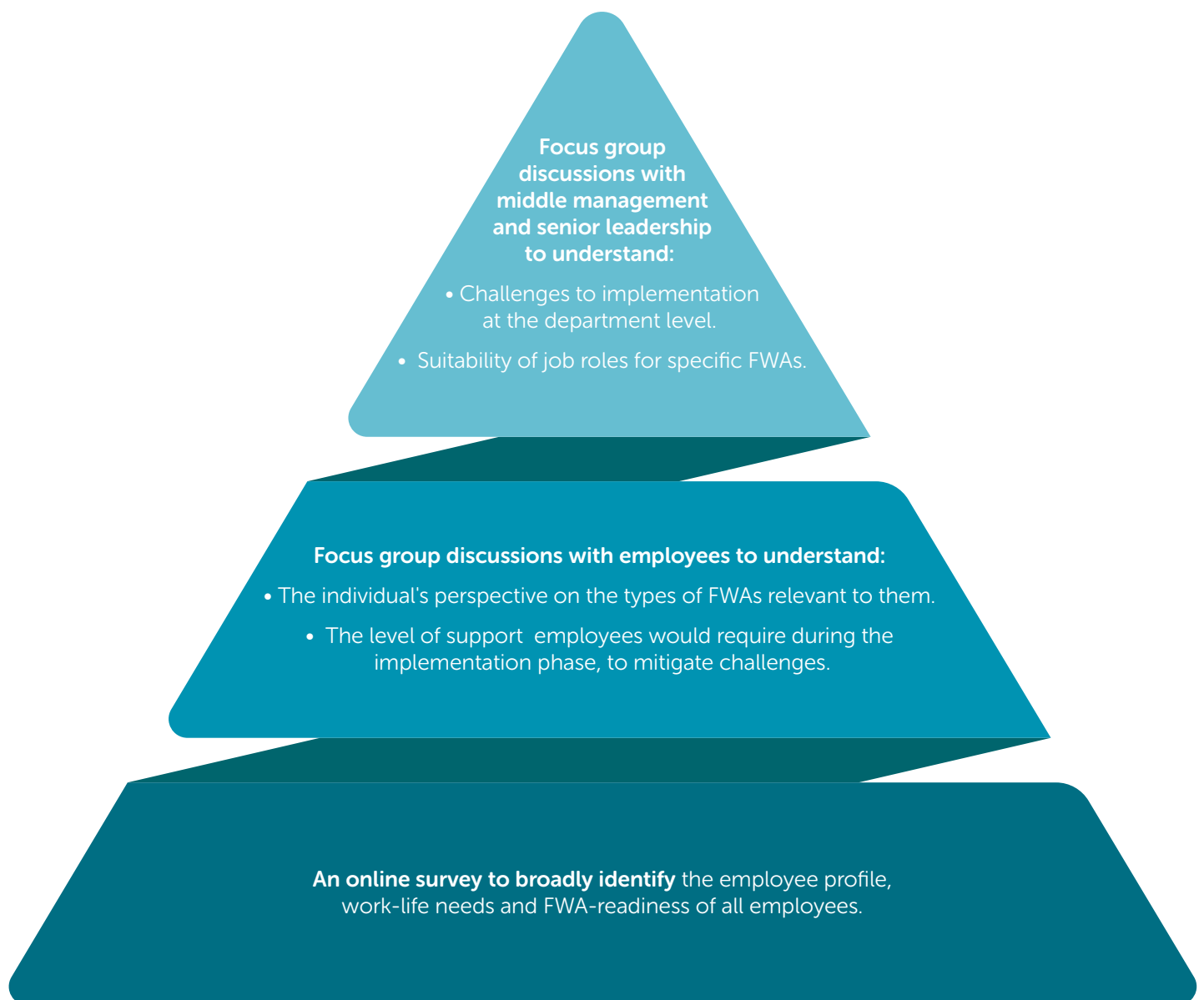
I am more satisfied with MSIG as a Great Place to Work as a result of FWA

A closer look reveals two critical factors that contributed to the overall success of MSIG's FWA Implementation plan.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND BUY-IN

The HR team recognised that buy-in from every level of the organisation was necessary for the FWA implementation plans to be accepted and utilised across MSIG. Thus, they sought to engage

stakeholders across the organisation, to ensure that the feedback, insights, and concerns at all levels would be represented. This well-structured process included the following:



These engagement initiatives are valuable sources of information that provide an in-depth understanding of the real perceptions and concerns on the ground. This ultimately helps in the HR team's decision-making process, to assess organisational readiness for FWA implementation as well as challenges that need to be addressed. Some of the key actions that were taken as a result of stakeholder engagement include:

- Determining the suitability of FWAs for the various job roles, through a comprehensive evaluation conducted in consultation with the Heads of Departments. It was established that practically all job roles could avail of at least one

type of FWA, subject to approval of their managers (e.g., all employees could utilise staggered time, while back-end roles were more suited to compressed work week, and many roles were also suitable for telecommuting).

- Establishing a set of clear guidelines stating the expected norms and behaviours for all employees, as different forms of FWAs are introduced.
- Additionally, HR addressed security concerns, by working with regional IT and Legal & Compliance teams to conduct a threat risk assessment and provide guidelines for employees who opt to work remotely.

TESTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FWAS IN A PILOT IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

In order to understand the effectiveness of the intended FWA strategy, MSIG conducted a 3-month pilot across the organisation in 2020, focusing on staggered time, telecommuting, compressed work week and flexible lunch hours. The Management believed that the trial period would provide an accurate gauge of how relevant and useful the FWAs would be to both employees and the organisation, as well as highlight key gaps in processes and policies that need to be addressed.

Employees were asked to select and commit to one FWA, subject to the approval of their managers, for the duration of the pilot phase. This enabled managers to assess the effectiveness of flexible working for their teams in a controlled manner. Employees were observed choosing FWAs that fit their job roles; enabling them to meet the requirements of the job, while still benefitting from a measure of flexibility in their work week. One example was the popularity of the compressed

work week option amongst employees from the Claims Department. They opted for this arrangement as core systems could only be accessed on-site at that time.

MSIG had to transit from the pilot phase to mandatory work-from-home and staggered time arrangements during the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, having embarked on the pilot implementation ensured a quicker and smoother shift to a new way of working for the whole organisation. An employee survey found that:

- Employees saw an improvement in their personal productivity.
- Employees found that flexibility made it easier to manage their career with personal responsibilities.
- Majority of employees wanted to retain flexible working options in the long-term.

FEEDBACK FROM EMPLOYEES ON HOW FWAS HAVE SUPPORTED WORK-LIFE EFFECTIVENESS



“Saves travelling time.”



“I can manage my time to complete my work more flexibly...”



“Better time management and having the flexibility to choose productive hours to work.”



“... more family time ... I do not have to rush home to prepare dinner, and there is more family bonding...”



“FWA gives me the flexibility to balance between work & home.”



“No disturbance/interruptions, can produce more quality work.”

As anticipated by the Management, having a pilot phase, allowed for further refinements of the FWA plans. For example, the frequency of telecommuting has increased from two days to three days per week, and the compressed work week option can now be

utilised up to twice a month. These targeted enhancements to MSIG’s FWA policies could be made without adverse impact on the business and productivity, due to the observations and insights gathered in the pilot implementation.

Looking to the future, MSIG has identified the hybrid work model as the best-fit solution to enable the organisation to meet its goals while supporting employees' work-life needs. Through the extended period of work-from-home measures, the leadership found that while employees valued the flexibility provided, there was also a desire for greater social connection with colleagues and teams. Thus, MSIG has invested further in digitalisation as well as revamping the physical work environment to enable employees to work effectively both in and away from the office. The offices are being redesigned to include collaborative workspaces that spur an increase in communication, networking, and innovation, even as the overall space used is reduced.

MSIG's structured approach to FWA implementation has enabled the organisation to introduce flexible working in a more sustainable manner. By engaging stakeholders throughout the process and trialling the various FWAs, they have been able to efficiently identify the flex practices that are genuinely relevant to the organisation and employees, gather support, as well as refine the overall strategy to ensure longevity of flexible working at MSIG.

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When the Safe Management Measures were relaxed, we started to see people coming back to the office and having that social interaction again through lunches, coffees and pantry chats. People really missed these after working from home almost all the time. So, I think having a hybrid working arrangement incorporating both flexible work options like telecommuting with onsite work is the right blend to achieve staff engagement and motivation.

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SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
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About Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices

The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) was set up in 2006 by the tripartite partners (Ministry of Manpower, National Trades Union Congress, and Singapore National Employers Federation), to promote the adoption of fair, responsible and progressive employment practices.

TAFEP is one of three agencies under TAL, along with the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM) and the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council.

TAFEP helps employers build workplaces where employees are respected, valued and able to achieve their fullest potential, for the success of the organisation. Employers can approach TAFEP for tools, resource materials and assistance to implement fair and progressive practices at their workplaces. Employees or individuals who encounter workplace discrimination or harassment can seek assistance and advice from TAFEP.