



Alliance for Action on Work-Life Harmony

Sector Specific Resources

Shaping Leadership
Mindsets and
Workplace Cultures
to enable Work-
Life Harmony in the
Manufacturing Sector



Work-Life Harmony is essential for organisations and requires leadership advocacy and support

Supporting work-life harmony is essential for the attraction and retention of talent in any organisation. When employees are well-supported to manage both their work and personal needs, they are more motivated in their jobs, which further enhances their work productivity and performance. Hence, there is a strong business impetus to develop workplace cultures and practices that enable work-life harmony. In the long term, organisations that implement work-life harmony well will be able to retain their valued employees and attract new talent.

Message by Dr Bicky Bhangu to leaders: “It is the people who see through any challenges the organisation faces. Work-Life Harmony is important to unlock workforce potential, and it’s about what you need to do to allow people to achieve that.”

Dr Bicky Bhangu is the Co-lead of the Alliance for Action on Work-Life Harmony, Council Member of the Singapore National Employers Federation and Rolls Royce President of South East Asia, Pacific and South Korea.

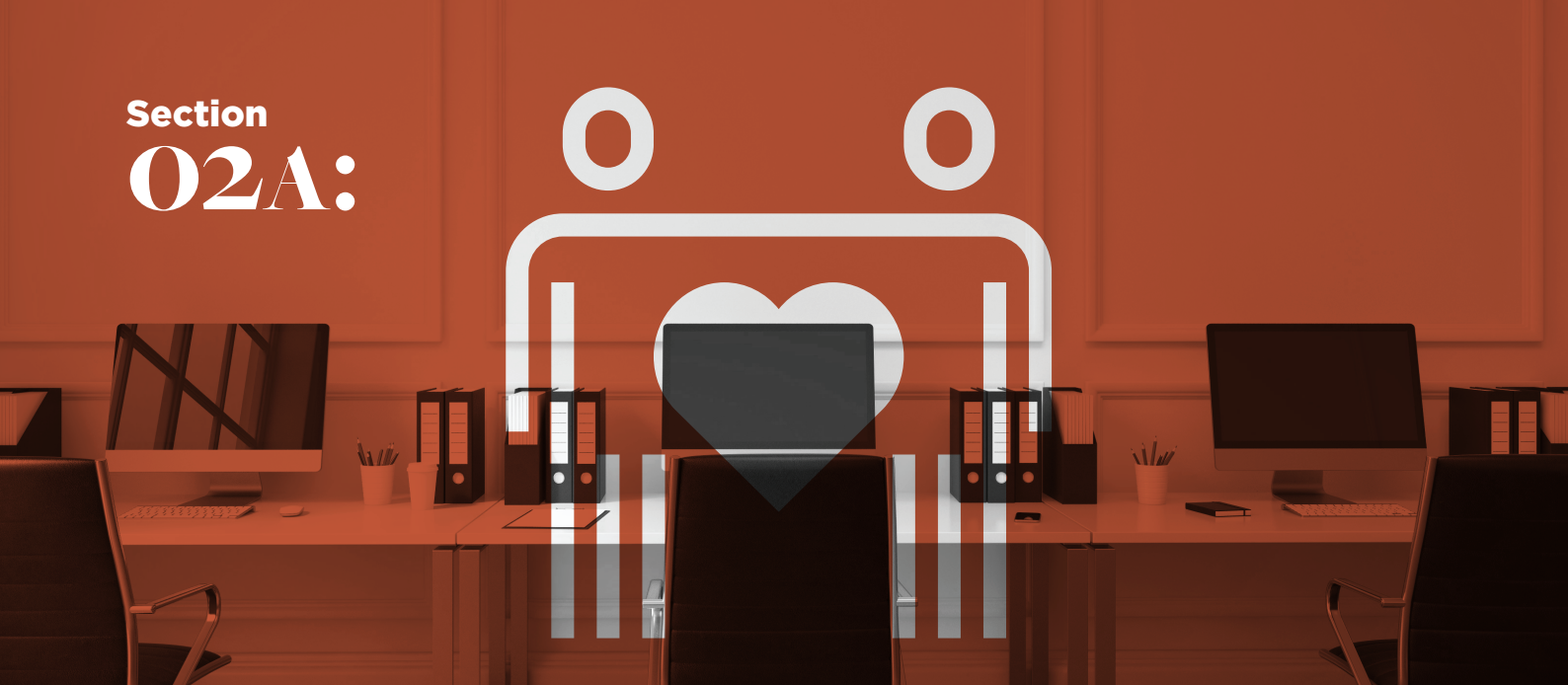


Leaders play an important role in shaping an organisation’s culture and have a strong influence on their workforce’s acceptance and adoption of progressive work-life practices. Leaders can cultivate an environment that is supportive of work-life harmony by being mindful of their own and their employees’ boundaries, introducing suitable policies to sustain work-life harmony, and being a role model themselves.

For leaders to implement work-life harmony effectively, they can consider taking the following steps:

1. Understand employees’ diverse work-life needs
2. Identify and implement suitable work-life harmony initiatives
3. Build a supportive environment that encourages the utilisation of work-life harmony initiatives when necessary

Section 02A:



Implementing Work-Life Harmony in the Manufacturing sector

There is no single solution to implementing work-life harmony at workplaces. Organisations must understand and provide work-life support that meets the needs of their employees and business operations. This may require employers to be innovative and think out of the box.

There is a wide range of roles within the manufacturing sector with varied job demands and work arrangements. For instance, while employees in administrative roles can work remotely, it is less feasible for front-line workers, such as engineers and technicians, to do so as they need to be on-site to perform their duties. However, employers could still offer other forms of work-life support to these workers such as shift swapping.

Different types of organisations within the manufacturing sector may also face varying resource constraints; SMEs have limited manpower and more constraints in the range of work-life support they can introduce. For such organisations, instead of going for breadth in the types of support provided, leaders can start by introducing 1-2 targeted schemes that are meaningful and tailored for their workforce. For example, organisations that have many parents with young children can consider providing staggered time to their employees to allow them to send and receive their children from school, giving these parents the peace of mind to concentrate and deliver at work.

Through the following case studies, we hope to encourage companies in the manufacturing sector, regardless of firm type and size, to explore and implement various work-life support that suit their operations and meet their workers' work-life needs.

Section 02B:



Work-life challenges and practices within the Manufacturing Sector

Understanding employees' diverse work-life harmony needs

Employees have varying priorities and needs at different stages of their lives. At the same time, different roles and functions within an organisation have different job demands, necessitating differentiation in work-life practices offered.

To be able to effectively support employees' work-life needs, organisations should begin by understanding the profile of their workforce and the corresponding work-life needs. This would help leaders make better decisions in choosing the work-life practices that work best for the organisation and ensure that the needs of different employees are accounted for.

Forms of engagement channels could include annual surveys on employees' well-being, townhalls with the senior management, and coffee chats with employees across seniority levels



SURVEYS



TOWNHALLS



CHATS

Leaders should also engage employees regularly to promote mutual understanding and engender discussion on how best to meet work expectations while taking care of employees' work-life needs.

This allows adjustments to be made along the way as an organisation's priorities and its employees' needs evolve. Employees are also more likely to feel valued, respected, and well taken care of by the organisation. This will in turn contribute to a workplace culture where employees feel a sense of belonging and are more motivated to contribute to the organisation.

The importance of engagement with employees is echoed across many employers. For example, the leaders of HOPE Technik hold regular townhalls with their employees to understand the work-life challenges they are facing and to review existing organisational policies aimed at supporting employees. When the company shifted to remote work arrangements, routine check-ins were held virtually to find out how employees were coping with remote work and to provide guidance on work expectations.

Not only are employees able to share their views and concerns freely to senior management, they are also able to better understand the company's needs and expectations, and how they can contribute to the organisation.

Mutual understanding and support between an organisation and its employees build strong ties and cultivates employee support and loyalty.



Identifying suitable work-life initiatives to support employees' diverse needs

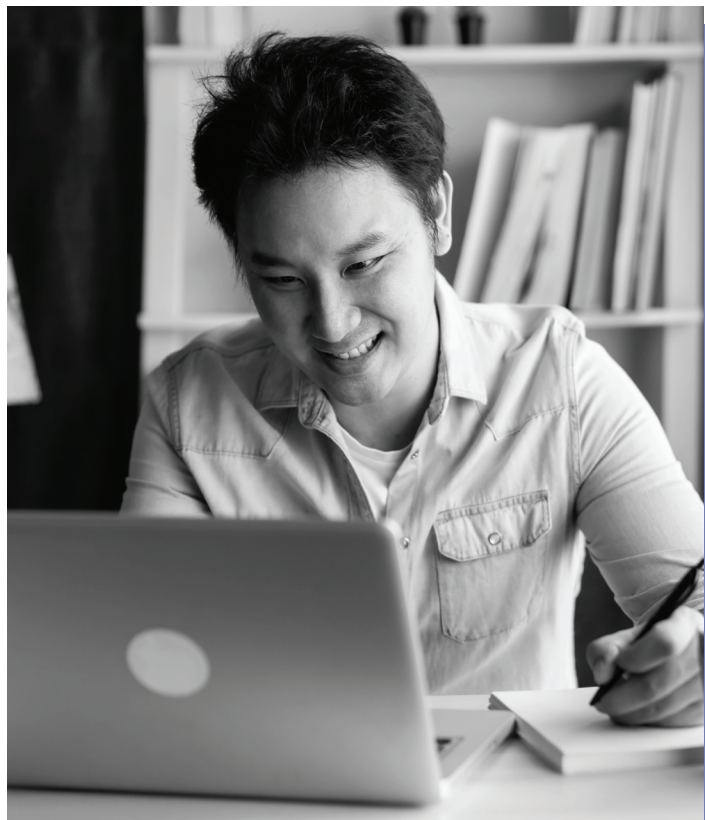
Once the leadership has developed a sound understanding of their employees' profiles and the varied work demands of the different roles and functions within their organisation, they can begin to identify and implement suitable work-life practices.

Support for front-line workers

Front-line workers are often required to work on-site and have less likelihood to do so remotely. Aside from providing flexible work hours to front-line workers, there are alternative forms of support that can be considered for these workers. For example, Infineon provided transportation for shift workers who were required to work on-site from the MRT stations near their homes to the workplace, as they were still required to work on-site during the pandemic. This helped to protect the safety of their employees and reduce their commute time, allowing them to have more rest outside of work.

Enhancing capabilities for remote work through technology

To facilitate more flexible work arrangements for front-liners, HOPE Technik introduced the use of technology that enables employees to conduct remote checks on assembly work for quality assurance. The management team continues to explore the use of advanced technology solutions that enhance their capabilities in enabling work to be done flexibly, and to better support employees' work-life needs across various roles. They also introduced hybrid work arrangements by identifying tasks within an employee's portfolio that can be performed remotely.



Managing work hours across global time zones

As a global organisation, Kemin often engages in teleconferences with their global partners in Europe and US. Kemin's leaders are mindful to arrange the meetings at timings friendly to the local time zone, to allow employees to keep to their stipulated working hours. Where it is not possible, Kemin grants their employees time-off in lieu to ensure that their employees have sufficient rest.



Different ways to support employees' personal needs and responsibilities

Leaders can consider implementing work-life practices to address needs that surfaced from their engagements with employees. For instance, to cater to the needs of employees with children, which emerged as an important issue during employee engagements, Infineon built an on-site childcare centre and a nursing room for mothers within the office. In another example, Amplus provides staggered shifts for employees who have on-site duties but also need to manage their caregiving responsibilities, such as fetching their children to and from school. In both cases, the considerations revolve around how employers can help their employees better balance work demands and childcare needs, but both companies have adopted different approaches best suited for their organisations' needs.

Building a supportive environment to encourage the utilisation of work-life harmony resources/initiatives

Some employees may choose not to take up work-life harmony initiatives offered by their employers because they worry that this would affect their performance appraisal. Therefore, it is important to build trust between employees and their supervisors.

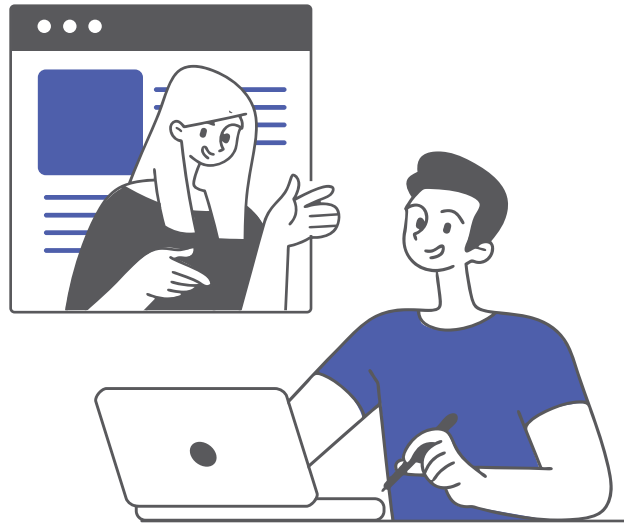


To cultivate a positive workplace culture, both Amplus and HOPE Technik have put in place fair and transparent assessment systems that are objective and performance-based, with well-defined metrics for both on-site and off-site staff. Their leaders also regularly communicate these metrics to employees to facilitate understanding and trust in the system.

When leaders walk the talk in the adoption of work-life practices, it sets a tone of embracing work-life harmony in the organisation, assuring and encouraging employees that it is likewise important and acceptable for them to take up work-life practices. This sustains a conducive workplace culture for work-life harmony.

In Amplus, leaders make it a point not to communicate with staff who are on leave, so that they are able to attend to their personal or family matters with a peace of mind, or rest and recharge properly. Mr Chua Chee Seong, President of Infineon, sets an example by declining to answer emails during his vacations.

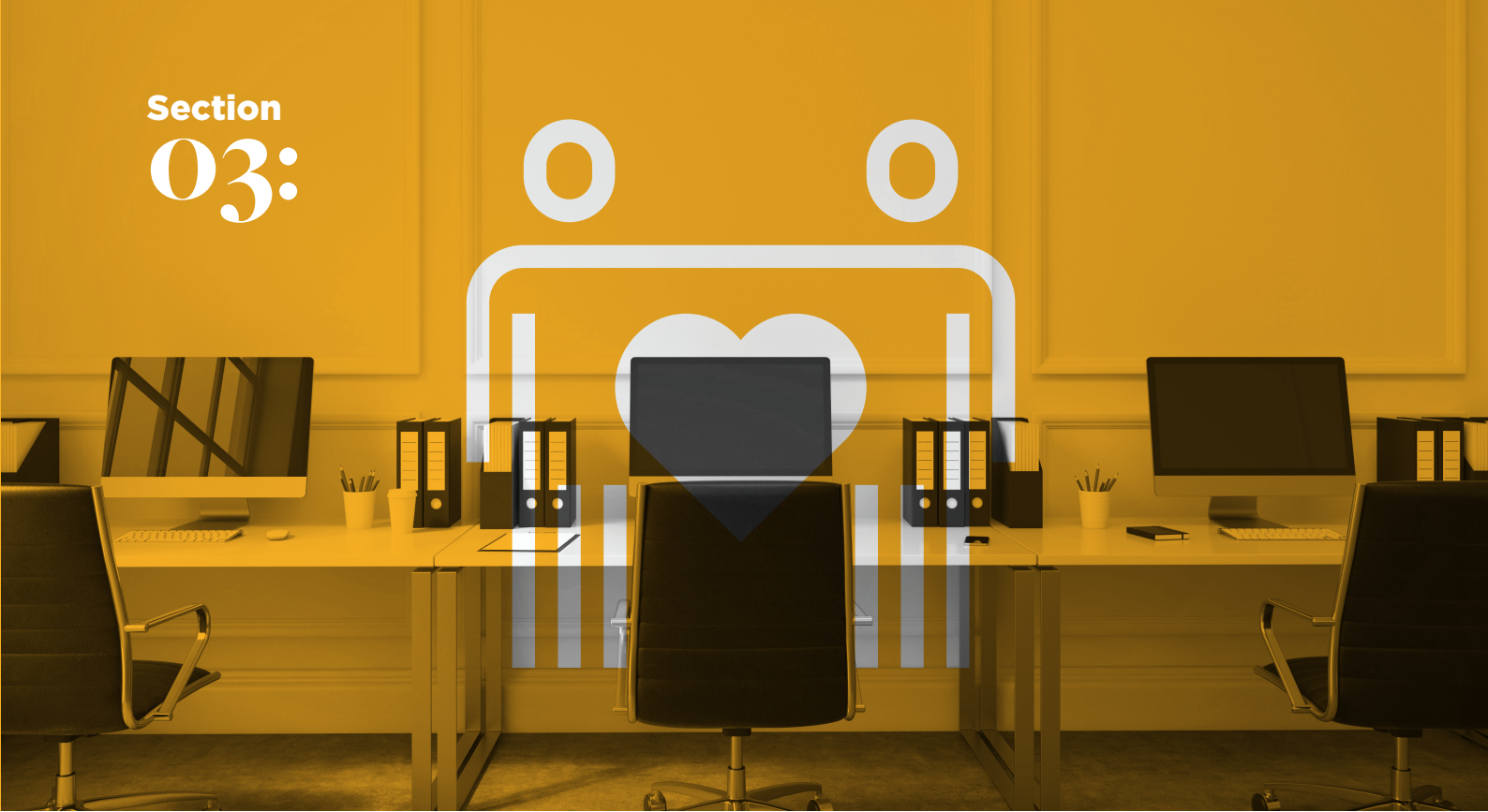
Fostering a strong sense of community and support within the workplace also creates confidence for employees to request for and adopt work-life harmony practices without fear of reprisal or judgement by their supervisors and fellow colleagues.



For example, employees can be empowered to initiate ground-up interest groups and activities that will facilitate stronger camaraderie amongst employees. In Rolls- Royce, employee-led committees initiate social welfare projects, such as Share Club's family day events, where employees' children are invited to the office.

Likewise, Kemin has an annual Mao Shan Wang durian buffet sponsored by company leaders in appreciation of their staff. Through the initiatives, it provided opportunities for employees to get together in an informal setting to give back to the community and to foster stronger bonds with colleagues from other departments. Through expansion of networks across the organisation, employees can have a better appreciation of the full work that their organisation does and strengthen their sense of belonging.

Section 03:



Conclusion

Change management starts with an understanding of unique sectoral and organisational needs. For example, on-site and off-site job portfolios require different types of work-life practices. The needs of employees also vary across organisations. The key is for leaders to continually engage employees to understand their work-life needs, introduce suitable policies, and cultivate a workplace culture conducive to sustain work-life harmony.

The rapidly changing nature of work and employees' expectation of how their work and private lives should interact means that leaders and organisations need to evolve their practices accordingly. Implementing and sustaining work-life harmony practices is an investment which will go a long way to ensure the employees' well-being as well as an organisation's success in the long run.

Section 04:



Appendix: Profile of organisations

HOPE Technik

Subsector: Mechanical, Electronics and Software

Manufacturing Type of organisation: SME

Workforce breakdown: 60% on-site, 40% off-site



Description:

HOPE Technik is a Singapore-proud engineering company with expertise in mechanical, electrical, electronics and software engineering, and is supported by an in-house suite of manufacturing as well as industrial design capabilities. The organisation helps companies solve pain points through bespoke solutions, workflows and providing professional services in automation, professional service robots, robotics middleware and special vehicles. HOPE Technik is committed to creating flexibility within job roles, and 20 – 25% of staff are currently on remote work arrangements.

Amplus Communication



Subsector: Telecommunication and Electronics
Manufacturing Type of organisation: SME
Workforce breakdown: 100% on-site

Description:

Amplus Communication designs and manufactures radiofrequency (RF), microwave, millimeter-wave and optical communication products. While the nature of the work requires staff to be on-site, the organisation promotes work-life harmony through means such as flexible work arrangement, which is utilised by 16% of staff.

Infineon Technologies Asia Pacific



Subsector: Semiconductor Manufacturing
Type of organisation: MNC
Workforce breakdown: 100% on-site

Description:

Infineon Technologies is a global top 10 semiconductor company which creates solutions intended to make life easier, safer and greener. Infineon has been incorporated in Singapore since 1970 and is the headquarters for ASEAN, India, South Korea and ANZ. A total of 2,200 employees contribute towards all value chain functions.

Since 2012, eligible employees have been able to work remotely for up to 3 days per month, with Infineon working towards an arrangement of at least 1 day of remote work per week.

Kemin Industries (Asia)



Subsector: Food Manufacturing
Type of organisation: MNC
Workforce breakdown: 56% on-site 44% off-site

Description:

Established in 1961, Kemin Industries is a global ingredient manufacturer that supplies specialty ingredients for human and animal health and nutrition, pet food, aquaculture, nutraceutical, food technologies, crop technologies, textile, biofuel and animal vaccine industries.

One of Kemin's key growth strategy is to have an engaged workforce; the organisation believes that engaged employees will have high level of accountability in achieving business goals. The company currently has over 2,800 global employees and operations in 90 countries.

Rolls-Royce Singapore, South East Asia Pacific and South Korea



Subsector: Aerospace Manufacturing

Type of organisation: MNC

Workforce breakdown: 65% on-site 35% off-site

Description: Rolls-Royce manufactures technologies for aerospace electrification, digital services, power systems and supply chain. The organisation also does maintenance, repair and overhaul as part of a JV partnership, and is a strategic hub in serving regional customers and operators.

The leadership believes in mentorship to make work-life harmony an everyday language, and empowerment of line managers to promote the practice of work- life harmony. Overall, it seeks to create an agile workforce with cross-functional capabilities, and to facilitate flexible working arrangements that is best for the team and the work done.

Note: The resource was developed based on the Singapore Together Alliance for Action on Work-Life Harmony's (AfA on WLH) sector-specific Community of Practice on Shaping Leadership Mindsets and Workplace Cultures to Enable Work-Life Harmony in the Manufacturing sector and contributions from community stakeholders who are passionate about supporting flexible work arrangements and work-life harmony in Singapore.

Although the resource was developed based on insights from organisations in the Manufacturing sector, we hope this guide will also be of use to other sectors in shaping leadership mindsets and workplace cultures in the journey toward work-life harmony.

For more information on the AfA on WLH, [refer to bit.ly/afa-on-wlh](https://bit.ly/afa-on-wlh).

Part of:

