

CONVERSATIONS

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE

HCP Conversations Knowledge Series: Let's Talk about Performance! webinar discusses why performance management is key for business growth and success, and how companies can implement it.



(Top left to bottom right: Mr Jude Tan, Ms Zarina Piperdi, Ms Cynthia Cheong, Mr Eric Tan, and Mr Vishesh Dimri)

The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) and Institute for Human Resource Professionals (IHRP) co-organised the second webinar of a three-part HCP Conversations Knowledge Series featuring best practices from the TAFEP-Mercer research study on the Impact of Human Capital practices on Business Performance.

Held on 12 November 2021, the event titled **“Let’s Talk about Performance!”**, was attended by over 300 Human Resource professionals and leaders. The event provided a platform for the speakers and panelists to showcase their journeys on performance management systems and their impact on employee performance and business success.

Ms Cynthia Cheong, Deputy Director, Programme & Capability Development, TAFEP, kicked off the event by speaking on performance management as a business strategy, and the benefits of its incorporation into team and company practices. She also touched on how the strategy cultivates an environment that enables employees to excel and accomplish their organisations’ goals.

“Performance management will be a springboard into the future – how organisations can do better in the forthcoming years, contribute to the sustainability of the business and employment, and build the talent pipeline,” said Ms Cheong.

“This would not be possible without conversations, systems to support people in training and development and career development, and if managers did not view themselves as pivotal to this success,” she added.

Ms Cheong further introduced a performance management implementation toolkit, based on findings and insights derived from data collected from human capital partners (HCPartners) and interviews with business leaders. This included steps companies could take, such as the following:

- Setting up a strategic performance management philosophy
- Cascading and communicating goals
- Managing performance
- Evaluating and reward performance

The next segment of the event saw HCPartners – Mr Eric Tan, Managing Director, FedEx Express Singapore, and Mr Vishesh Dimri, Lead - HR Consulting, HSBC – sharing their views and the company’s practices on performance management. Highlights of their presentations included how to boost employee morale, support and training, as well as key processes and strategies for performance management initiatives at the workplace.

Mr Vishesh Dimri shared their fairness review in year-end assessments and how the management team ensured that assessments were fair, accurate, and free of bias. He added that HSBC also focused on three areas – everyday performance and development, digital enablement, and people manager capabilities, in order to navigate successfully in the new ways of working.

“Performance management is a continuous journey, and it is important that it is future-focused. This is to help our employees give their best, do better, and achieve their career ambitions,” said Mr Dimri.

Mr Eric Tan further highlighted, **“Leadership is the foundation upon which team performance is built, and it must emerge from, and cascade down to drive goal execution.”**

With a continuous improvement mindset, FedEx Express Singapore transitioned into a new performance process with a simplified rating scale to encourage employees to focus on future performance, and avoid building a workplace environment where they would feel demotivated. It provides an in-depth understanding of what success looked like for employees and focused on the work they accomplished and how they achieved their goals. The organisation also implemented change management to prepare and support employees with the transformation.

The webinar also surfaced valuable viewpoints via a panel discussion on best practices, key challenges, opportunities, and more in consideration of today’s new normal. Esteemed HCPartner panellists – joined by Ms Zarina Piperdi, Managing Director at 8-List HR Consultancy Services – answered pressing questions on topics such as how companies could reward employees for their performance and engage them amidst distressing times. The panellists also shared real-life success stories of performance management at the workplace. The session was moderated by Mr Jude Tan from Korn Ferry.

To find out more, watch the webinar recording [here](#). Employers may also refer to the Human Capital Implementation Toolkit available on TAFEP’s [website](#).

FLEXIBLE, PERSONALISED AND THRIVING

Consulting firm aAdvantage spares no effort in meeting its people’s unique needs, and the advantages of such a culture are evident. Here’s its story.

When Victor Lee was 64 and struck with a health condition, it seemed like his only option was to retire from his job as an Operations Executive at consultancy firm aAdvantage Consulting. But fast forward four years today, he is still with the company, and his well-being is well taken care of.

Back then, Victor was afflicted with a painful condition that affected the soles and heels of his feet. His duties involved a lot of walking, which made it impossible for him to continue working. Once his management heard about his intention to leave, it set out to retain him, recognising the value of his services. First, the company gave him a five-month break to focus on recovery. It also made plans to give him a new role as a Training Administrator – a role that would require him to be reskilled for the job. The facilitation team was open to coaching Victor, just as Victor was willing to learn about the new processes. In a short time, Victor successfully transitioned into his new role, a part-time work arrangement that would help the 68-year-old ease into retirement in a few years’ time.

“I am grateful to have a caring and compassionate employer where people matter. The flexibility in place at aAdvantage allowed me to take care of my health condition so that I can continue to make meaningful contributions to the company,” Victor affirmed.

RETRAINING, AND RISING ABOVE THE NEW NORMAL

Victor is one of many employees who have benefited from aAdvantage’s progressive workplace culture. This culture extends across the company’s human capital practices.

“Our focus over the years has been about flexibility and personalisation, while ensuring consistency and fairness,” explained Ms Jacqueline Gwee, Director at aAdvantage.

“We recognise that each employee has different needs and, where possible, we endeavour to address these needs with care and fairness to the rest of the team,” she added.

For instance, the company shines in its efforts to help its people achieve the best, both at work and in life. At the recent Tripartite Alliance (TA) Award Ceremony, aAdvantage was recognised for its stellar efforts in implementing Work-Life Excellence at the workplace.

“Work-life is about supporting our people, their lives and work interests. It is also important in our retention strategy,” said Jacqueline.

“As our work is not based on nine-to-five schedules, we don’t go on fixed hours. Our policy allows them to choose when to start and end work. They are empowered to make decisions, and it’s not about the hours, but the outcomes,” she elaborated.

This practice is accorded to all employees across the board, and employees are trusted to meet the company’s expectations, for example by updating team calendars to keep their colleagues in the loop. There is also a Work-Life Committee in place to help with team bonding. aAdvantage also goes above and beyond to ensure that its people can fulfil their personal commitments, by allowing leave benefits such as for family care and child-care.

Such a culture, as well as aAdvantage’s culture of retraining and adapting to global and landscape shifts, enabled the company to quickly get into action when COVID-19 changed the way people worked.

The workforce eased into the new normal with a significant focus on retraining to help its people adapt, while staying happy and connected. Initiatives included reviewing and redesigning various internal processes and adopting new software applications to improve efficiencies and enabling e-learning. Some jobs were also redesigned to help keep employees safe. For instance, when fieldwork operations staff were redeployed to support internal projects due to the pandemic, some had to learn new skills. To ensure that its employees’ well-being was taken care of, the company’s Work-Life team established casual check-in sessions, as well as virtual activities sessions such as games, Zumba and yoga sessions.

SHARPENING PEOPLE’S COMPETITIVE EDGE

At aAdvantage, progressive practices start even before an employee comes on board. Understanding that its people are at different life and career stages, the company believes in making policies and implementing practices to accommodate their needs accordingly. For one, there are training initiatives for mid-career workers – the company is open to retraining its people for new



Training Administrator, Mr Victor Lee working from home

roles, especially in this rapidly evolving world, to help them achieve their full potential. It also hires mothers who have taken a break from work, but are keen to return to the workforce. Additionally, aAdvantage believes in diversity; its workforce also includes fresh graduates that it trained from scratch.

Above all, aAdvantage believes in fair and equal employment practices, which is why it was also lauded for its Fair Employment Practices at the recent TA Awards. To ensure fairness, the company makes hiring decisions based on data, and not **“gut feel”**.

“All our candidates undergo competency and psychometric assessments related to their roles, before the hiring manager meets them for a formal interview,” explained Jacqueline.

“These assessments and conversations with senior staff and peers enable them to identify individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to be successful in their job roles, but also the right attitudes and values to integrate into their culture,” she elaborated.

REAPING ADVANTAGES

aAdvantage’s focus on fair and progressive employment practices has brought about benefits to the company.

“We have successfully hired and retained quality talent, with an average length of service of four to five years, which is above the industry standard,” Jacqueline revealed. **“Our diverse and inclusive work environment has resulted in an engaged and dedicated team of employees who go the extra mile for their clients.”**

THE WORK-LIFE AMBASSADOR SCHEME

Share your successes to inspire others to adopt positive work-life practices in the workplace.

Open to employers, human resource practitioners and employees, the Work-Life-Ambassador scheme seeks to raise awareness about the value of work-life harmony in Singapore’s workplaces. As an Ambassador, you contribute greatly to building workplaces where employees can achieve their fullest potential for themselves, their careers and their organisations.

Hear From Our Human Capital Partners Who are Work-Life Ambassadors

aAdvantage Consulting Group Pte Ltd

“Equipping employees with the skills and autonomy to work flexibly and in a manner that is most efficient for them, is valuable to the organisation in the long run. For example, one of our clients has found that having the infrastructure, policies and culture for flexible working in place enabled the workforce to quickly adapt to sudden business challenges and exigencies.”



Jacqueline Gwee,
Director and Founder

Rajah and Tann Singapore LLP

In addition to being a positive retention strategy, Rajah and Tann’s experience with flexible work arrangements (FWA) initiative has shown that employees are also more engaged, showing greater accountability for their work when they are given greater autonomy over where and how they work.



Koay Saw Lean,
Director, Human Resource

Over the past two decades, Jacqueline advised companies on transformational organisational development, including incorporating work-life strategies in their overall HR plans. As a business owner and founder of a consultancy herself, she has first-hand experience of how career and personal life are closely integrated, and the skills required by both employer and employee to successfully manage these various aspects of life. She believes that when employees are empowered for work-life success, the organisation benefits as well.

Saw Lean describes the work-life culture at Rajah and Tann as “open and flexible”. She shares that the law firm values employees as individuals and views them as being fundamental to the organisation’s success. Thus, in an industry where long working hours is considered a norm, the firm continually seeks ways to support its well-being through work-life initiatives such as flexible working arrangements (FWAs). By providing employees with the flexibility to manage their time, Rajah and Tann has been able to retain some of its best performers over the years.

JOIN THE COMMUNITY OF WORK-LIFE AMBASSADORS TODAY

To apply, visit TAFEP’s website at: <https://www.tal.sg/tafep/Employment-Practices/Work-Life-Harmony/The-Work-Life-Ambassador-Scheme>