

# CONVERSATIONS

## MOVING FORWARD AMIDST A PANDEMIC

**The COVID-19 pandemic saw many companies moving fast to change the way they work. We chat with Nicole Poon, Chief of People of FinTech company MatchMove, to learn how the company continued to thrive and build their workforce during uncertain times.**

**1. The way we work has changed significantly with COVID-19. How was it for MatchMove? What were some changes that you had to put in place?**

Apart from business continuity planning, we looked at areas where we could increase collaboration and innovation with our employees while working from home. This included introducing bi-weekly learning sessions, building up our learning library, processes, tools and systems, implementing a new Human Resources Management System and adopting digital tools for seamless collaboration. In addition, we also introduced creative virtual team activities across countries that we are present in to enhance employee engagement.

In terms of employer branding, talent attraction, employee development and retention, we also relooked our strategies to align with the new way of work.

We understood that our employees faced COVID-19 and work-from-home challenges, and placed high importance on empathy and extending our support to them. Therefore, we also increased the insurance coverage and provided extra allowances for them.

**2. You already had hybrid working in place before the pandemic started. Why?**

We have several offices in Asia. Factors such as traffic, longer travelling time in certain cities, time differences, and employees located in remote areas posed some challenges to our work arrangements. Prior to the pandemic, we had already implemented a work-from-home policy and been using videoconferencing software to conduct meetings, interviews and employee activities virtually. At times, we could even hear the roosters crow while having virtual calls!

In addition, we are also mindful of family needs and parenting challenges where employees would occasionally need to take care of dependants at home or attend to home matters. Thus, we introduced flexi-hours, allowing our employees to start work at an earlier or later time.

**3. Also, how has it worked for the company?**

Our management and HR team live by one core message "One MatchMove" that permeates across our hiring, recruitment and selection strategies. If a talent has the skills and is the right fit for the company, we want them to work with us.

The hybrid arrangement has worked well for MatchMove because it allows our diversified teams to "Go Global and Act Local". Having a diversified team has helped us to grow the business through local expertise and language, and made us more inclusive and respectful of cultural differences.

**4. MatchMove had grown its presence in the midst of the pandemic, and you had to expand your workforce. What was recruitment and training like during the pandemic?**

Talent attraction was challenging during the pandemic. Many companies were recruiting similar talents that we were looking for. With high demand for tech and digitally savvy talents, we reviewed our talent acquisition strategies to ensure that we could attract top talent for our business expansion needs.

We also rolled out a new Human Resources Management System which helps us streamline HR touchpoints and processes, enabling us to track candidates a lot easier. It allows us to send calendar invites, track feedback, enable pre- and onboarding of employees, and has processes in place to track candidates' interview journey. With that, we can study the data and analyse gaps to help us with better and timely recruitment strategies.

To cultivate an innovative and knowledge-sharing environment, we introduced bi-weekly learning sessions that allow employees to understand the roles, responsibilities and challenges of different departments, and the tools they used to monitor, maintain and track performance. By doing so, our employees are more aware of the functions of various departments, but more importantly, we want to build up the understanding, empathy and collaborative spirit across teams and departments.

**5. MatchMove has been lauded for its development practices. Tell us about some of your employee retention and development strategies.**

Employees play a huge role in business growth, so we ensure that they are treated fairly and with respect. Some of our initiatives and practices include the following:

- Marvels Appreciation Programme where we recognise employees with a choice of a gift that commensurates with their tenure starting from 1.5 years
- Fair and progressive employment practices
- Learning sessions conducted by various departments
- MatchMove Virtual Amazing Race, MatchMove Got Talent, in-house Tech Hackathons, Mental awareness sessions
- Growth opportunities for both horizontal (multi-skills) and vertical growth.

**6. What is the one thing you've learnt about human capital development during the pandemic?**

The pandemic has taught us different lessons but what stands out the most is the need to be agile, timely and flexible in our arrangements. Work-from-home arrangements can be stressful and there are times we may need to be in the office to do our tasks more efficiently. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy for all companies and finding the best arrangement that works for the team will take time. As such, digitalisation is crucial in ensuring that workflows remain consistent and efficient, so that

employees can immediately pick up where they left off, be it in a physical office or a virtual one.

**7. What's on the horizon for MatchMove Singapore?**

We believe in the importance of upskilling and uplifting existing and new talents. We are working with agencies such as the Singapore FinTech Association, Institute for Human Resource Professionals and Institute of Banking and Finance Singapore to help groom and grow the local talents in Singapore.

As we grow and expand to different geographies, talent acquisition becomes even more crucial. While our headquarters will remain in Singapore, we are looking to expand our product offerings and offices in multiple geographies globally. Incorporating this multi-fold growth, we are ensuring that the human capital challenges of growing into a multinational company globally are identified and addressed accordingly.

Singapore employees will be more exposed to our new growth initiatives in existing and new markets as we expand overseas.

**8. From a human capital point of view, what advice do you have for companies looking to expand during a pandemic?**

It is important to have these key factors: clear vision, costs and budgeting, availability of talents and infrastructure, language barriers, research and market opportunities.

The pandemic has not only accelerated digital adoption but also brought a shift in traditional job descriptions and work profiles to modern age roles, with a need to adapt to the new norm. It would be important to identify this shift and modify the hiring strategy accordingly that aligns with the company's growth plans.

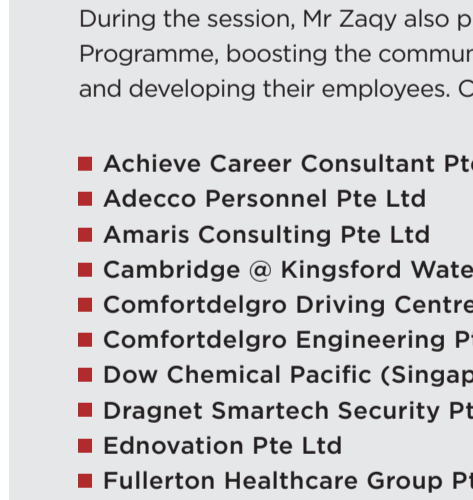
Also, change is the only constant in life. Having an agile mindset, being able to think out of the box, and being responsive to local needs and regulation changes are vital in order to face and address any challenges encountered.



Ms Nicole Poon, Chief of People, MatchMove Singapore

## "CARING" IT FORWARD

**Social service organisations such as Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities (THKMC) are in the business of looking after the well-being of the public. Find out how it cares for its people, so that they can in turn care for those in need.**



Ms Marissa, one of THKMC's employees who benefited from the organisation's work-life initiatives.

In a way, Ms Marissa Harlina Bte Mohd Kassim holds two full-time jobs. The 29-year-old Principal Lead Teacher at Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities (THKMC) is also a mother to two children aged two and four. Thanks to THKMC's policies on flexible work arrangements (FWAs), managing her work and family responsibilities has become easier.

Ms Marissa works from home on some days, which allows her to spend more time caring for her children. This arrangement also eased her burden during the COVID-19 pandemic, when children with mild symptoms could not attend school at childcare centres.

*"With such flexibility, I feel a greater sense of accountability towards my work. My supervisors trust me and have never questioned my ability to be both a teacher and mother at home,"* says Ms Marissa.

*"Working from home has truly helped me to feel more rested. It greatly reduces my travelling time and also allows me to juggle my work and family needs,"* she adds.

*"At THKMC, we strive to care for the people and communities that we serve. Above all, we rely on the passion and dedication of our people at work,"* says Mr Jason Lee, Chief Operating Officer at THKMC.

*"Thus, we have put in place progressive practices such as FWAs, to enable staff to work around their*

*personal commitments and family responsibilities. This goes a long way in alleviating our employee's stress and allows them to be rejuvenated both physically and mentally,"* he adds.

**WORK-LIFE HARMONY: A PRIORITY**

THKMC, one of the new organisations that were onboarded to the Human Capital Partnership (HCP) Programme, offers a wide range of work-life support to its workforce of over 1,000 employees. Such arrangements have been in place even before the pandemic. At least 20% of the company's staff are given the option to take up FWAs. Whenever possible, employees can choose to stagger their start and end times at work, and those who are able to telecommute are encouraged to do so.

As a social service organisation that serves the public, implementing remote working arrangements were not always straightforward. However, recognising how FWAs benefited its people, the organisation ensures that its operations run smoothly even with such arrangements. For example, Early Intervention Teachers like Miss Marissa, despite being on the frontline, are empowered to take on FWAs when the situation permits. For example, several of them are able to conduct classes in person for half of the working day and complete the rest of their administrative work at home.

**AN EMPLOYER THAT CARES**

As an organisation that takes care of the well-being of others, THKMC recognises that its people can best excel at it if they themselves are feeling good. To this end, the company implemented various initiatives in support of its employees' mental well-being.

*"We support our employees with a wide range of programmes, including our Workplace Wellness Programme, webinars and sharing on Mental Wellness and Mindfulness,"* shares Mr Lee.

THKMC also believes in the power of having a strong support system. Besides the group sharing sessions, the company also curates a range of resources such as providing affordable counselling lessons, access to crisis helpline support and digital services library, and a support system for staff in need.

*"We have observed that our company is seeing improved employee morale and a*

*strong advantage in talent recruitment,"* says Mr Lee, on the benefits that THKMC's progressive workplace culture has brought along.

**GROWING WITH ITS PEOPLE**

At THKMC, both professional and personal growth are encouraged, and the company strives to create growth opportunities for its employees across the board.

The company recognises the potential of young talents. It works with Institutes of Higher education to nurture the next generation of changemakers - to date, it has offered 27 internship positions. It also supports mid-career workers through Singapore's Career Conversion Programmes (CCP), specifically to expand its talent pool of therapists and social workers. To date, seven of its staff have come on board via CCP.

THKMC also sponsors its people for learning and development, where staff can enrol in tertiary education courses. To date, over 140 staff have benefited from this initiative.

Promising employees are recognised for their potential - and THKMC is committed to grooming them for leadership positions. This is done through the Talent Management framework that was specially designed to facilitate succession planning within the company.

**KEEPING LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN**

A firm believer in employee engagement, THKMC goes the extra mile in listening to its people. In late 2021, it partnered with Mercer on an organisation-wide employee engagement survey, allowing employees to share feedback with the senior management. More than 75% of the employees took part in the survey. Its Human Resource Department also held a sharing session where staff were invited to share their concerns and issues, as well as ask questions anonymously.

*"Our PEOPLE are what drive our cause and we aspire to always motivate our staff to work towards our common goal of One THK - Empowering the Community,"* says Mr Lee.

Such appreciation from an employer can make all the difference in employees' lives, especially during trying times. As Ms Marissa puts it, *"It is evident that my well-being is crucial in the organisation's eye even when I am working from home."*

## WELCOMING A NEW BATCH OF HUMAN CAPITAL PARTNERS



About 250 Human Capital Partners and HR practitioners attended a Post-COS Dialogue session with Mr Zaqu Mohamad, Senior Minister of State for Manpower and Defence, held on 29 April 2022. Co-organised with the Ministry of Manpower and the Institute for HR Professionals, the closed-door event discussed manpower-related issues and key priorities for 2022.

During the session, Mr Zaqu also presented certificates to 33 new employers onboard the Human Capital Partnership Programme, boosting the community of exemplary employers who value their people and are committed to investing and developing their employees. Congratulations to the following new Human Capital Partners!

- Achieve Career Consultant Pte Ltd
- Adecco Personnel Pte Ltd
- Amaris Consulting Pte Ltd
- Cambridge @ Kingsford Waterbay Pte Ltd
- Comfortdelgro Driving Centre Pte Ltd
- Comfortdelgro Engineering Pte Ltd
- Dow Chemical Pacific (Singapore) Private Limited
- Dragnet Smartech Security Pte Ltd
- Ednovation Pte Ltd
- Fullerton Healthcare Group Pte Limited
- Glin Services (S) Pte Ltd
- Grabtaxi Pte Ltd
- Les Amis Holdings Pte Ltd
- LMA Recruitment Singapore Pte Ltd
- Matchmove Pay Pte Ltd
- Metropolis Security Systems Pte Ltd
- Oriental Motor Asia Pacific Pte Ltd
- Pfizer Private Limited
- RE&S Enterprises Pte Ltd
- Recruitfirst Pte Ltd
- Rohm And Haas Chemicals Singapore Pte Ltd
- Saint-Gobain (Singapore) Pte Ltd
- Sentosa Beach Resort Pte Ltd
- Serangoon Gardens Country Club
- Shaws Cdlc @ Mountbatten Pte Ltd
- Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel
- Suez Water Technologies & Solutions Singapore Pte Ltd
- Surbana Jurong Consultants Pte Ltd
- Surbana Jurong Infrastructure Pte Ltd
- Surbana Jurong Private Limited
- Surbana Site Supervisors Pte Ltd
- Surbana Technologies Pte Ltd
- Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities Limited

## EXPAND YOUR TALENT POOL TO BENEFIT FROM MID-CAREER INDIVIDUALS

**Looking to access a larger pool of talents? Workforce Singapore's (WSG) Career Conversion Programmes (CCP) can help with funding support to train new and existing employees. Are you on board yet?**

**With the CCP, employers can meet their manpower needs by hiring and reskilling local mid-career individuals to take on new job roles with good prospects and progression within the company. The CCP also reskills existing employees to take on new or redesigned job roles with industry-recognised training. WSG offers close to 100 CCP across almost 30 sectors.**



**There are three types of CCP that you can tap on:**

- 1 PLACE-AND-TRAIN**  
Hire a mid-career individual before sending him/her for training to take on a new job role.
- 2 ATTACH-AND-TRAIN**  
Provide a mid-career individual with training and work attachments in advance of a job placement.
- 3 REDEPLOYMENT/JOB REDESIGN RESKILLING**  
Train existing employees to take on new or redesigned job roles within your company, especially if your company is going through business transformation.

**Funding Support For Employers**

TYPE OF FUNDING	STANDARD RATE	ENHANCED RATE
Salary Support	Up to 70% of monthly salary <sup>1</sup> for the training duration (Capped at \$4,000 per month)	Up to 90% of monthly salary <sup>1</sup> for training duration (capped at \$6,000 per month) <i>For long-term Unemployed<sup>2</sup> Singapore Citizen (SC) trainees or Mature<sup>4</sup> SC trainees</i>
Course Fee Subsidy <sup>5</sup>	Up to 70% of course fees <sup>3</sup>	Up to 90% of course fees <sup>3</sup> <i>For SC/PR trainees sponsored by SMEs or Mature<sup>4</sup> SC trainees</i>

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE CAREER CONVERSION PROGRAMMES**

Course details, eligibility criteria, application process and more at: <https://www.wsg.gov.sg/programmes-and-initiatives/career-conversion-programmes-employers.html>

<sup>1</sup>With the introduction of the Jobs Growth Incentive (JGI), there will be temporary funding adjustments for eligible individuals. Please visit [www.wsg.gov.sg/ccp](http://www.wsg.gov.sg/ccp) for more details on the funding adjustments.

<sup>2</sup>LTU is defined as being unemployed and actively seeking employment for six months or more.

<sup>3</sup>This includes a 20% course fee subsidy top-up from SSG's SkillsFuture Mid-Career Enhanced Subsidy, or from SSG's Enhanced Training Support for SMEs, if applicable.

<sup>4</sup>Mature trainee is defined as being aged 40 and above.

<sup>5</sup>Course fee subsidies apply for external facilitated training only.

**"WSG's CCP have helped to defray training costs and onboard more local talents to ensure minimal business disruption amid the pandemic. This allowed us to hire people with the opening of more preschools as part of our expansion plans."**

Ms Brenda Tay, Recruitment & Staff Engagement Leader, Skool4Kidz Preschool