

CONVERSATIONS

A SECURE WORKFORCE IN A WORLD OF FAST CHANGE

The security industry has always been one with high turnover, which was especially evident during the COVID-19 crisis. However, Metropolis Security Systems has seen low attrition rates and high customer satisfaction scores – thanks to its learning and development efforts. Its General Manager, Mr Daniel Chew, shares more.

1. One of the main contributors to Metropolis' growth has been the organisation's long-term commitment to upskilling its people. In your opinion, what is the most important quality to nurture in a resilient workforce?

Metropolis' vision and mission encapsulates our organisational goals and values – the need to drive a highly committed and motivated team of employees to deliver quality security services to our clients. Our management team truly believes that the most important quality to nurture in a resilient workforce is empathy. By creating a culture of empathy, it allows our management team to seek first to understand the well-being of our employees through a holistic range of employee engagement programmes to upskill and motivate them. Our engagement programmes are regularly reviewed to meet the employees' needs especially during the global outbreak of COVID-19 last year. This has led to improvements in employee productivity and organisational performance.

2. Human capital-wise, what sets the security industry apart from other industries? How has this influenced the way you attract and retain talents?

The work of security officers is often stigmatised, and this was further accentuated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges and work scope changes affected our pool of reliable and committed security officers, resulting in a high turnover with considerable additional effort to train our new officers.

There was a need for us to evolve training and upskilling efforts in order to remain relevant, competitive, and have better knowledge transfer and retention within the organisation. Thus, we embarked on a Workplace Learning journey with the National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning (NACE) in September 2020. We wanted to find better ways to improve our practices, address existing gaps and promote learning at work.

3. How has Metropolis' stance on talent development helped in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on the business?

COVID-19 impacted the business greatly in terms of the high turnover. The introduction of safe distancing measures also made our security officers' jobs more challenging. Thanks to our emphasis on continuous talent development and upskilling, we were able to quickly transform our business digitally in these four key areas: - Digital Repository/ Learning, Digital Analytics, Digital Marketing, and Digital Technology such as the Operations Technological Security Solutions.

Our employees are equipped with the latest technologies such as the Visitor Management System with Licence Plate Recognition. It allows fast registration of visitors' information, reduces processing time, stores identification information securely, and tracks visitors' time spent. The license plate recognition system provides an additional layer of security and enables our employees to monitor and perform surveillance of the vehicles with ease.



Mr Daniel Chew, General Manager, Metropolis Security Systems

With a suite of video analytics to detect anomalies, our employees are better equipped to spot intruders, unattended baggage, early signs of smoking, illegal parking of vehicles, illegal dumping and more.

4. Tell us about some of your upskilling initiatives.

We upskilled our people through various continuous professional development programmes. One significant development was the formation of the Metropolis Training Academy for our officers in 2020. The Academy aims to ensure that our officers are always keeping themselves updated amidst the constantly changing challenges in the industry with the necessary skills and knowledge to do their jobs well and meet our clients' needs.

Over the years, we've also found mentorship to be key to our people's growth. Our in-house coaching and mentoring programme comprises two mentoring models – Group Mentoring and Peer Mentoring. Our Group Mentoring approach enables our Heads of Departments (HODs) to be better able to coach their staff who encounter various operational issues on the ground. These HODs are also involved in weekly leadership sharing sessions. We also promote peer mentorship, where our people are encouraged to learn from each other.

5. How have such efforts benefited Metropolis?

For one, productivity levels have increased – we have seen higher customer retention, with zero attrition for existing projects in residential and commercial areas, schools, shopping malls, protected places, public listed companies, gaming industries and more in the first half of 2021. We have also observed a four-fold decrease in monthly staff attrition rate in 2021 (Jan to Jun) compared to 2020 (Jun to Dec). The volume of compliments has increased too, with a 70% increase in the first half of 2021 compared to the second half of 2020.

It was also fulfilling to have received awards that recognise our efforts in progressive workplace practices – the Silver Award for Coaching and Mentoring at the Singapore HR Awards

2021, HR Award by Singapore Human Resources Institute, and the Learning Enterprise Alliance Award. I'm proud to add that we are the first SME to have received a National Workplace Learning Certification, in recognition of our efforts in our workforce's continuous learning and skills development in 2022.

6. In your opinion and experience, what role do leaders have in inculcating a culture of learning within an organisation? What can leaders do to encourage employees to embrace learning & development?

At Metropolis, we believe that the quest to instil a culture of continuous learning begins with our leaders. Our leaders must walk the talk to show conviction and commitment that having a life-long learning work culture is critical to continued success. Leaders should also act as positive role models for continuous learning and motivate employees to learn. For example, senior management at Metropolis have taken up professional development courses and also regularly attend training with Metropolis colleagues.

Beyond setting an example, we also focus on building a culture of empathy. On top of enhancing communication across the organisation, such an environment helps us build a good foundation for a coaching mindset across supervisors and management staff.

7. What are your words of advice for businesses that may be unsure about committing time and resources in their talents as part of their organisational strategies?

At Metropolis, we believe in focusing on three business objectives and priorities – People, Performance, and Process. Of the three, our people are our greatest asset. It is of paramount importance for organisations to be committed to retain best practices and build competencies through a life-long learning workplace culture. By doing so, it strengthens an organisation's workforce, giving the organisation skilled, reliable, and committed manpower to meet different business needs. This will ensure businesses remain competitively relevant and sustainable in this ever-changing environment, especially in a post-COVID situation.

HEALTHY EMPLOYEES, HEALTHY COMPANY

Talent development benefits both employees and organisations. See how global healthcare giant GSK fuels both employee and business success.

From entry-level HR Generalist to being a HR Business Partner for Pharma Commercial Singapore in four short years, Ms Vanisri Selvaraja has come a long way in GSK. She joined the global healthcare giant under its HR Future Leaders Programme in 2018. The programme seeks to support young talents and accelerate their development with exposure to various parts of the business.

Since then, Ms Vanisri's contributions and achievements have won her the Young HR Talent of the Year (Gold) for the HR Excellence Award 2022. She also received GSK's IPT[®] Award in FY 2019 and 2021, which is given to the top 10% of eligible employees who had the most impactful performance for that year. Ms Vanisri has gained experience in various HR roles where she took on responsibilities such as developing the blueprint and setting up GSK's first pan-Asia Employee Resource Group (ERG) in Asia. The panel discussions, speaker sessions, and workshops initiated by the group drove meaningful conversations and provided personal development opportunities with an inclusive environment for Asians to unlock their full potential.

Last year, she organised GSK's 'Development Week', a four-day regional event in the Greater China and Intercontinental region for over a thousand participants. Through the event, it enabled managers and employees to have a common understanding on the expectations and necessary tools to support development for different roles and career paths.

On top of these, she also participated in the Accelerating Diverse Emerging Leaders programme that helped her immensely in her journey of self-discovery and growth. The programme offered a platform for introspection and to shift beliefs as well as develop in areas such as confidence and leadership, while learning from the diverse perspectives of others.

Ms Vanisri recognises that the development opportunities at GSK have helped her immensely in her career growth. She is also thankful for the support from the company, which, as she puts it, gave her the courage to take up new challenges.

"Even though the exposure I was given accelerated my growth journey exponentially, I've always felt safe because I had the support of my line managers and colleagues," she said.

This culture of development has also proven to be effective for the company.

"Commitment to talent development is a win-win for both our people and the company. Our talents get accelerated career development, and the company benefits from more motivated and engaged people," Ms Karen Lim, Singapore HR Head at GSK Singapore explained.

GROOMING TALENTS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW
"GSK's talent development culture encompasses all levels, not just at the senior level – we make sure that no one gets left behind," Ms Lim added.

The Future Leaders Programme, for example, seeks to recruit early talent from various specialties and accelerate their development by giving them exposure to various parts of the business. Selected talents go through two to three years of training, and undergo multiple rotations in their chosen career paths. These trainees have access to support and development opportunities such as sponsorship, coaching and mentorship, and accelerates their career to take on leadership roles.

GSK also grooms its talents through specially designed in-house training programmes, where managers are trained to guide their teams towards business success. These managers are equipped with the resources and support to identify personality styles, delegate work, coach effectively and motivate their teams.

In addition, GSK also has the Accelerating Difference programme that supports development and progression of women and ethnically diverse employees, as part of its broader commitment to inclusion and diversity.

JOINING NATIONAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

GSK is also an active supporter of national programmes by agencies such as Workforce Singapore. It recruits



Ms Vanisri at her workplace.

Professional Conversion Programmes (PCP) Trainees every year, in partnership with Workforce Singapore (WSG), Temasek Polytechnic and Singapore Polytechnic (SP). Under this programme, GSK provides trainees with a three-month structured facilitated training, followed by 15 months of local attachment. There is also the Work-Study Programme, where GSK provides fresh ITE graduates opportunities to learn and develop on the job while studying for their Diplomas. This programme is supported by WSG and SP.

MORE THAN JUST TALENT DEVELOPMENT

GSK's people development platforms also actively seek to ensure employee well-being beyond work.

"At GSK, we believe that the health of our company starts with our people," Ms Lim said.

The company has programmes in place to take care of its employees' health. Its Partnership For Prevention (P4P) programme provides employees and their eligible dependents with access to preventive healthcare services at no cost. GSK's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offers a free confidential 24/7 helpline for employees seeking practical advice, information or support. GSK's employees are also privy to mental health resources including mental health training for managers, and mindfulness and well-being programmes.

A health-centric company, indeed!

CAREER CONVERSION PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN CAPITAL PROFESSIONALS

Funding support for employers to strengthen HR teams' capabilities to be future-ready

The Career Conversion Programme (CCP) for Human Capital Professionals aims to facilitate companies hiring local PMETs to embark on careers as HR Professionals, redesign HR job roles and reskill existing HR practitioners in HR practices with technology as the main driving force.

Areas of Training

Equip your people with emerging skills and competencies in the following areas:



HR Data Analytics and Visualisation



Strategic Workforce Planning



HR Technology



Change Management

They will undergo structured On-the-Job Training and implement a work-based project guided by appointed industry experts.

Is Your Organisation Eligible?

As an employer, you have to:

- ✓ Be registered or incorporated in Singapore
- ✓ Offer a full-time HR position, with a minimum fixed monthly salary of \$2,800 or more, and at least a 12-month employment contract
- ✓ Put in place a structured On-the-Job Training
- ✓ Be committed to the training arrangements for the trainees
- ✓ Commit to CCP training arrangements

Candidate must:

- Be a Singapore Citizen (SC) or Permanent Resident (PR) aged 21 years and above
- Be currently employed by the participating company for more than a year (Job Redesign Reskilling)
- Be a newly hired PMET (i.e not more than three months from date of employment), and nominated by an eligible company
- Have graduated or completed NS, whichever is later, at least two years at the point of application
- Not be a shareholder or immediate ex-staff of the participating company, or its related companies
- Not be related to the owner(s) of the participating company
- Not be undergoing any programmes funded by Workforce Singapore (WSG) concurrently
- Not be in a similar job role prior to joining the CCP (Place and Train)

Available Salary Support Funding

Once on board, you'll benefit from the following financial support schemes:

FUNDING BY WSG	SALARY SUPPORT
Standard Rate	Up to 70% of monthly salary for CCP training duration (capped at \$4,000 per month)
Enhanced Rate*	Up to 90% of monthly salary for CCP training duration (capped at \$6,000 per month)

*Enhanced Rate: For SC trainees who are unemployed and actively seeking employment for six months or more, and/or SC trainees aged 40 years and above in the year of commencement of the CCP.

BUILD A FUTURE-READY HR TEAM TODAY

Find out more: <https://snef.org.sg/ccp-hcp>