

# CONVERSATIONS

## EMPLOYING FLEXIBILITY FOR A WORKFORCE THAT HAS IT ALL

**Working around the world, continuous learning, phased retirement and more. Employment agency Dynamic Human Capital (DHC) thrives on flexibility, and its dedication to helping its people thrive at work and in life has paid off. Its Director Yvonne Tan shares more.**

### 1. Dynamic Human Capital (DHC)'s work-life strategy is anchored on flexibility. Please share the rationale behind this.

We believe the key to running a successful business lies in fostering an inclusive, sustainable workspace that supports employees' well-being. Hence, we develop a culture of work-life integration where our people have the flexibility to coordinate their schedules and responsibilities. We put great emphasis to create an environment that enables them to balance their personal and professional obligations. They can achieve greater satisfaction in their lives with better work-life integration, as well as empowerment and confidence in managing their deliverables. This in turn drives productivity, innovation and have positive impacts for the organisation.

### 2. What are some of the work-life initiatives you have in place?

We constantly implement new initiatives to help our employees achieve a healthy work-life environment. For instance, we empower them to work staggered hours and telecommute; some employees who face shifts in life may choose to work part-time until they are prepared to resume full-time employment.

DHC Work Anywhere Programme was introduced to allow our employees to work remotely from anywhere in the world. For those who prefer to work in the office, we offer flexible workspace options like hotdesking, which fosters collaboration and interaction between colleagues.

To support our employees' physical and mental health, we allocate budgets to fund various work-life and welfare programmes such as team and department bonding sessions, health screening, wellness talks, and physical activities to encourage an active lifestyle. We also conduct regular check-ins to understand their well-being, aspirations, and challenges at work.

In addition, our employees can bring their children and pets to office, and a dedicated nursing room is provided for mothers-to-be. We believe that having this flexibility would create a comfortable and happy work environment for them.

### 3. How do you ensure the success of such work-life initiatives?

We employ multiple approaches for our comprehensive strategies. First, we assess the work-life needs of our employees based on a range of variables, including budget, feasibility, and the solution's immediate and long-term effects. For instance, we repurposed

a meeting room into a nursing area after studying the demographics of our workforce.

We also have an Environmental, Social, and Governance Team in charge of identifying and enhancing work-life needs through formal and informal sessions of various scales. Once we have our work-life strategies in place, we will update and inform our employees on the available programmes and policies through various channels. In addition, we conduct annual 360-degree appraisals to evaluate the effectiveness of our work-life strategy.

Continuous learning and improvements are always on our agenda. We attend industry seminars, conferences, and workshops to better understand trends and identify gaps that need to be filled to strategise an implementation plan. Additionally, we subscribe to newsletters from HR institutions and authorities to stay up to date on the latest local and international work-life best practices.

Finally, our management meets weekly to discuss matters such as future plans, HR needs, gaps, and trends. The DHC team joins and co-hosts our parent company's Elitez Group Team E!News Weekly, where managers or assistant managers select news or articles to discuss with the team. This enables them to better develop strategies, understand and forecast impact of current events, and respond to changing business environment and employees' needs.

### 4. What are some benefits you have seen?

Our focus on productivity over working hours allows employees to work remotely from anywhere. This flexibility has been especially beneficial for our overseas staff, who were able to return to their hometowns, visit their families, and work from there. With work-life integration, our people reported higher levels of satisfaction in all areas of their lives.

We have also seen an overall shift in workplace attitude. Employees are happier and our strategy has proven to be successful – DHC has been enjoying a compound annual growth rate exceeding more than 5 times since inception.

### 5. What are some other strategies DHC takes on to keep your people happy and thriving?

We believe in creating an environment that helps realise the full potential of our people and provides opportunities



Ms Yvonne Tan, Director of Dynamic Human Capital

for them to continuously grow and develop their skills. We allocate generous training budgets, encourage our people to attend training, and offer study and exam leave.

Our people are offered two paths of career advancement to help them seize more advancement prospects – the management track seeks to groom employees into leaders, while the specialist track is designed for employees with expert knowledge to serve as advisors and mentors in their areas of specialties, especially when they are near retirement age. We also believe in recognising and rewarding our employees for their contributions and hard work, which is why we have a merit-based remuneration system.

### 6. Any words of advice for companies that are just starting their work-life journeys?

It's important to have a clear understanding of the company's mission and values, as it will help the organisation stay focused on what's important. The employees are the backbone of the company, so it's essential to build a strong team that shares the mission and values.

Create a positive work environment as it can increase productivity, creativity, and overall job satisfaction. Ensure that the employees feel valued, respected, and supported. Stay up to date with the latest trends and use them to your advantage. The world is continuously evolving, so it's essential to be adaptable and willing to pivot when necessary. Don't be afraid to experiment, learn from mistakes, and try new approaches.

## NURTURING A LOYAL WORKFORCE IN A JOB-HOPPING ERA

**In a world where job hopping has become commonplace, the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts has consistently been achieving healthy employee retention rates, with employees staying 10 years on average. Here's how NAFA makes it work.**



Mr Tan Ngeup Khun at his workplace

While it was once common for employees to stay with a single organisation for many years, many workers today feel that job hopping is necessary to gain new skills and experiences, advance their careers and get salary bumps.

But at Nanyang Academy for Fine Arts (NAFA), a loyal workforce is in place, with employees staying for an average tenure of 10 years.

Mr Tan Ngeup Khun, Senior Teaching Fellow at the School Design & Media, Faculty of Art & Design, for example, has been working at NAFA for 42 years despite being offered positions with local and international organisations.

Ngeup Khun says that his work at NAFA gives him a sense of purpose and direction, and has a good career progression pathway. He was given numerous opportunities to take on various roles to fulfil his passion for nurturing students. After he joined the school as an Assistant Lecturer in 1981, he has been a Lecturer, Deputy Head, Programme and Department Head. One of his roles even brought him to Beijing where he was tasked to lead a collaboration project as Programme Head.

**“During my time in NAFA, I was fortunate to undergo training, attend seminars and given an opportunity to further my studies in the Faculty of Art and Design, Manchester Polytechnic, United Kingdom,”** he recalls.

Ngeup Khun also attributes his stay to NAFA's culture, one which he calls caring, where supervisors and colleagues look out for each other.

**“I never entertained thoughts of moving on to another organisation because the purpose and direction to nurture talents and development of youth in NAFA resonated deeply with me. I strive to continuously learn and develop myself here,”** he says.

Today, Ngeup Khun has once again taken a different role – he recently stepped down from his role to focus on mentoring his younger colleagues and continuing his passion to teach and nurture his students.

### SAME ORGANISATION, EVOLVING OPPORTUNITIES

NAFA Vice President (Corporate Services) Ms Carol Tan, recognises that in today's day and age, it is not always realistic to expect employees to stay in one company for a long time. Nevertheless, the academy works hard to retain its people and help them grow.

**“I believe people continue working with one company for various reasons beyond a competitive salary. Companies can try to retain employees by looking at softer factors,”** Carol recommends.

**“Here, we recognise the importance of staff retention as long-term employees reflect a stable work environment which improves morale and contributes to culture building. To support staff retention, we constantly retool our HR strategies and policies,”** she adds.

As a result, employees who have remained in a role over a period would be able to establish deep skillsets vertically and build their expertise. NAFA also believes in lateral growth for its employees and encourages job rotations when opportunities arise.

For example, the organisation launched its Career Advisory Programme in March 2023 to guide its employees in taking charge of their career development and growth. With the help of career coaches, participants can look into their career aspirations and goals with personalised advisory and coaching. They receive resources to upskill and close competencies and skills gaps and are given options to explore potential professional pathways to advance their careers or transit to other roles.

### GRADUATING TO A BETTER CAREER... WITHIN THE COMPANY

**“Over the past decade, the global workforce has been evolving in response to increasing complexity in business operations, having a multigenerational workforce as well as a shorter shelf life for knowledge,”** says Carol.

**“All of which have placed a premium on reskilling and upskilling,”** she adds, emphasising the need for organisations to evolve their learning and development strategies.

**“Our Learning and Development strategies have evolved through environmental scans, networking, and listening. By keenly engaging our employees, we have kept up with their learning needs,”** she explains.

One example of this commitment is the Annual Learning Festival, a three-month event focused on “Learning for Continuous Growth and Transformation”. The festival provides employees with opportunities to enhance their understanding in areas such as analytics, digital literacy, and social media, while also including sessions on faculty research, instructional design, and diversity in artistic inquiry.

To enable them to better communicate with students, colleagues and other stakeholders, NAFA also includes communication-related learnings in the mix – these include Para-Counselling, Suicide Prevention Talks and Business Communication. Other courses include managing unconscious bias, envisioning inclusivity, and learning journeys to museums in Singapore.

NAFA also believes in nurturing its people through its leaders. Every manager is encouraged to discuss career progression with their subordinates and chart out their developmental needs. The organisation also makes the effort to ensure that its employees are supported with the necessary tools to advance in their careers.

### SEEING THE RESULTS

One key success indicator of NAFA's people-centric policies includes being placed in Singapore's Best Employer 2022 for three consecutive years, and achieving accolades from the Education Services Union for its good people practices. NAFA has also achieved constant improvements in Employee Well-being and Learning and Development categories in its biannual Organisational Climate Survey.

Such results demonstrate NAFA's success in providing opportunities for employees to develop new skills, take on new challenges, and advance within the organisation, so that it can foster a sense of loyalty and commitment among its workforce.

As Ngeup Khun puts it, **“You don't earn loyalty in a day. You earn loyalty day-by-day.”**

Here's to building a loyal and thriving workforce!

## SUPPORTING YOUR BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION

**Take your company and employees to the next level of performance and productivity today.**

**Job redesign can support business transformation by making jobs more productive and attractive for employees, and help companies hire and retain good workers to support their business.**

**Transform your business with these job redesign programmes: Support for Job Redesign under Productivity Solutions Grant, followed by the Career Conversion Programme for Professional Executives or Human Capital Professionals.**



### Support for Job Redesign under Productivity Solutions Grant (PSG-JR)

#### What it does

**Helps companies transform their businesses by providing job redesign consultancy to align employees to support the transformation. It also:**

- Addresses talent attraction and retention by enhancing job value and attractiveness of the job to locals, and enhancing human capital practices to enhance employee experience.
- Facilitates business transformation by ensuring companies have the manpower with the necessary skills through redesigning jobs and reskilling employees.
- Support digitalisation with redesign of business processes, jobs and managing mindset change in employees.

#### Funding support

Up to 70% of consultancy cost, capped at \$30,000 per enterprise.

Companies will be able to further defray up to \$10,000 of the out-of-pocket expenses from the project if they have unutilised balance in their SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit.

Find out more



<https://snef.org.sg/grants/psgj/>

### Career Conversion Programme (CCP)

#### What it does

#### 1. Human Capital Professionals

Facilitate companies with redesigned HR job roles and reskill their HR employees to be future-ready.

Participating companies will develop the training plan based on the redesigned process or job tasks to guide the reskilling of HR employees. The training entails On-the-Job Training covering at least two of the four Emerging Skills and Competencies (ESCs) which are aligned to the Institute of Human Resource Professionals' Body of Competencies.

To facilitate effective acquisition of the selected ESCs, trainees will implement a work-based project during the 3-month training, guided by the appointed industry experts and supported by their respective employers.

#### 2. Professional Executives

Supports employers whose existing employees in business support roles are impacted by business transformation and requires job redesign and reskilling.

- Administration
- Business development
- Sales and marketing
- Operations
- Project management

Eligible individual will undergo a 3-month On-the-Job-Training and be equipped with at least one digital skill competency (e.g. data analytics, technology applications) upon programme completion.

#### Funding 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)

Find out more



<https://snef.org.sg/grants/ccp-hcp/>



<https://snef.org.sg/grants/ccp-pe/>

\*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.