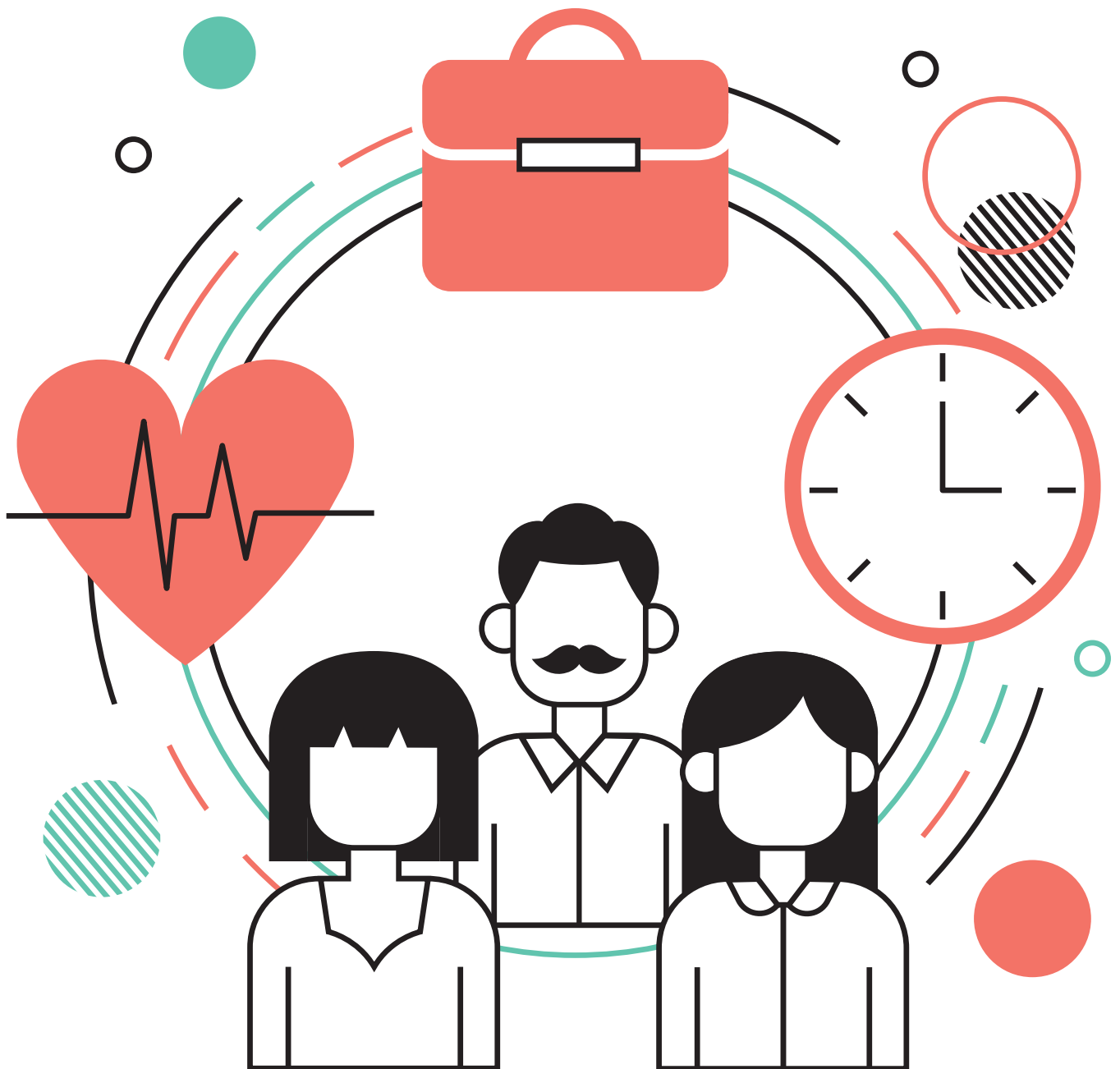
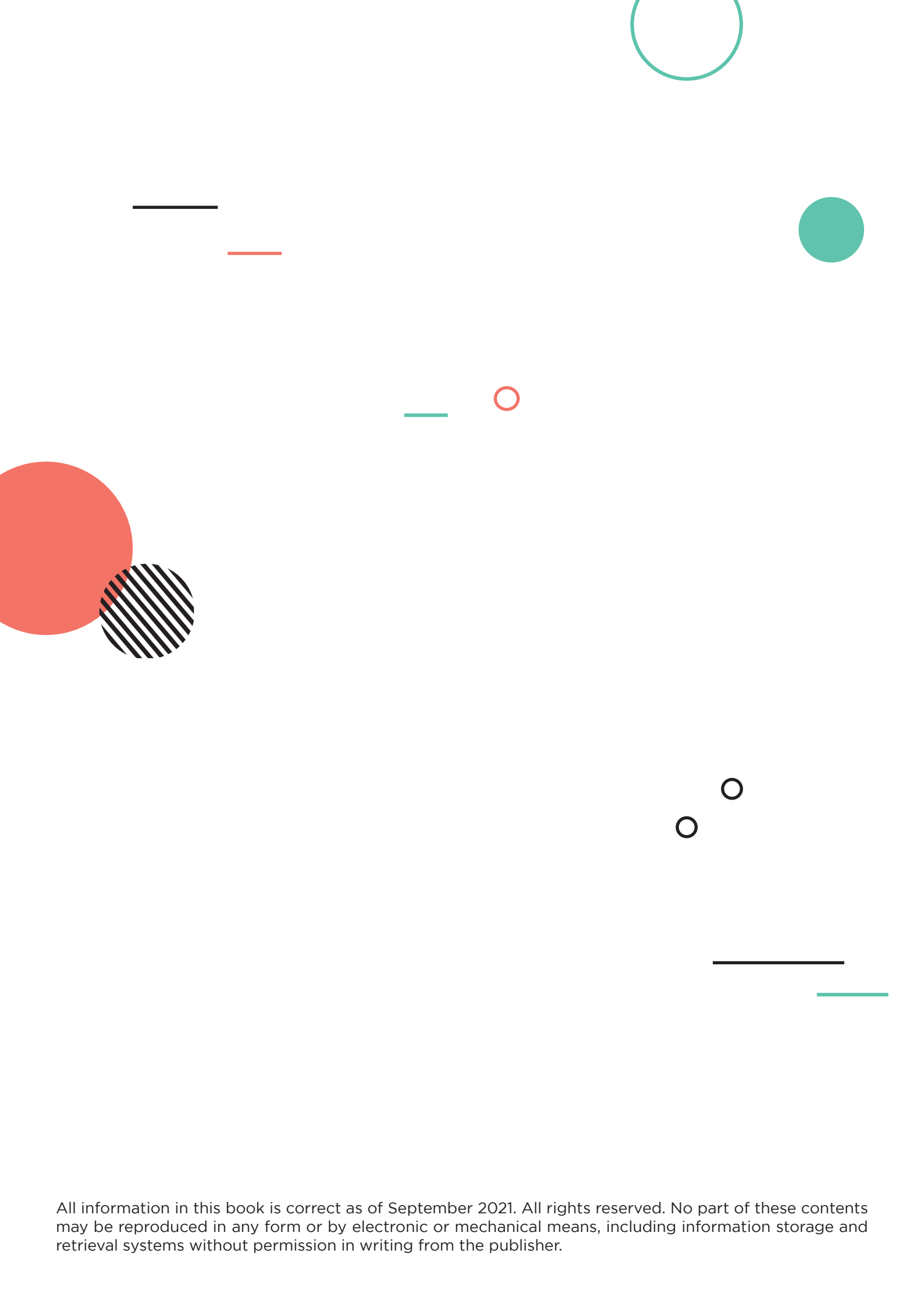


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# WORK-LIFE HARMONY GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES

THE **ROLE OF MANAGERS** IN  
FACILITATING WORK-LIFE PRACTICES





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# ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR ACTION ON WORK-LIFE HARMONY

## ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR ACTION ON WORK-LIFE HARMONY

In February 2021, the Tripartite Partners announced the launch of the Alliance for Action on Work-life Harmony (AfA-WLH) to build a community of stakeholders including employers, employees, and HR practitioners who would,

- Improve awareness of the importance of work-life harmony and work-life best practices
- Support workplaces and the wider community to sustain and enhance work-life practices
- Support companies in specific sectors to overcome challenges and implement FWAs and work-life practices

The AfA-WLH comprised over 150 Work-life Ambassadors and other key stakeholders and were advised by Co-leads representing Tripartite Partners: Ms Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State for Manpower, Ms Yeo Wan Ling, Director, Women and Family Unit U SME, NTUC and Dr Bicky Bhangu, Council Member, SNEF.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### Ms Goh Wee Lee

Principal Consultant & Managing Director, Strategic Value Consulting

Ms Goh provides consultancy and corporate training services in Human Resource Management and Work-life Implementation. It is her passion to make a difference in the workplace by helping organisations implement good work-life practices and leverage on their human resources to achieve good business outcomes.

### Mr. Tham Chien Ping

SHRM Representative and Master Facilitator, South-East Asia  
Head, People and OD, Elevandi & Deputy Director, FinTech & Innovation Group, MAS  
SHRM-SCP, IHRP-SP, GRP, CPLP, IAF-CPF, MSc (I/O Psychology)

Mr. Tham is a HR Leader based in Singapore with more than 10 years of combined experience in HR Business Partnering, Learning, Talent and Organisation Development locally and regionally in Asia. He is an advocate of “Better Work, Better Workplace” and has led global initiatives in D&I and Work-Life Harmony.

### Mr. Victor Mills

Chief Executive, Singapore International Chamber of Commerce

With nearly 4 decades of experience in the workforce, Mr. Mills believes work-life harmony is the output of a positive workplace culture. He is an active advocate for better workplace practices to help ensure the success of employers, employees and businesses.

## ABOUT THE WORK-LIFE HARMONY GUIDE

The key premise of this guide is that work-life harmony is an integral part of a positive workplace culture (PWC) which enables every business to achieve maximum commercial success.

The Covid-19 pandemic has conclusively proved more jobs than previously thought possible can be done outside the office thanks to technological tools. While this may not apply to every job, it certainly is true for most office-based jobs. This, in turn, has validated the relevance and usefulness of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) like never before.

This guide sets out the key responsibilities of everyone in a business to implement a PWC and policies and procedures which make sense for each business, namely the Board, Senior Management, Human Resources, People Managers and Team Members. These are joint responsibilities and there is no 'one-size solution' which fits all businesses. Instead, each organisation will need to carefully consider the insights, tools and templates shared in this guide, to tailor a work-life plan that best addresses the needs of their workforce.

### HOW SHOULD YOU USE THIS GUIDE?

This guide is segmented into 4 modules, each targeting a significant group of internal stakeholders within an organisation. This is done to highlight specific work-life harmony knowledge and practical tips that will be useful to these groups:

- The Board of Directors & Senior Management
- HR Practitioners
- People Managers
- Employees

### WHAT IS A 'PWC'?

A PWC is one in which each team member is respected and developed to achieve their full potential to work for the company and its business goals. It is an environment in which no team member is abused, bullied, discriminated against, harassed or undermined. This improves talent retention and enables engaged teams.

When it comes to hiring, a PWC focuses on attitudes and potential rather than paper qualifications alone. This improves hiring outcomes and, together with more engaged teams, gives every company the competitive edge it deserves.

Work-life harmony is integral to a PWC.

### WHAT IS WORK-LIFE HARMONY?

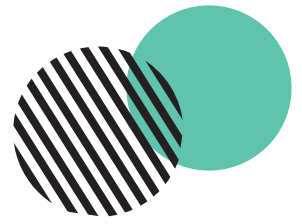
Work-life harmony is the desired state in which employees can effectively manage work and personal/home responsibilities successfully - often, this is due to a measure of flexibility offered at work.

Work-life harmony starts with trust. Businesses trust their team members will produce the work outcomes they have been employed for. Organisations that support work-life harmony,

- measure and reward work outcomes, not the number of hours worked.

- provide team members with the autonomy to manage their time and deal with family, personal needs and emergencies while achieving their expected work outcomes.

While work-life harmony is also about flexibility, it also involves consideration for each team member. Employees are not on call 24/7 and not be expected to respond to after-hours e-mails or phone calls except in an emergency.



# THE ROLE OF MANAGERS IN FACILITATING WORK-LIFE PRACTICES



People Managers serve as a linchpin in the implementation of work-life practices and creating a work-life friendly environment for employees. Where the Board and Senior Management may create and approve work-life policies, you, as a manager have the authority and opportunity to operationalise these on the ground. These are some important questions for reflection:

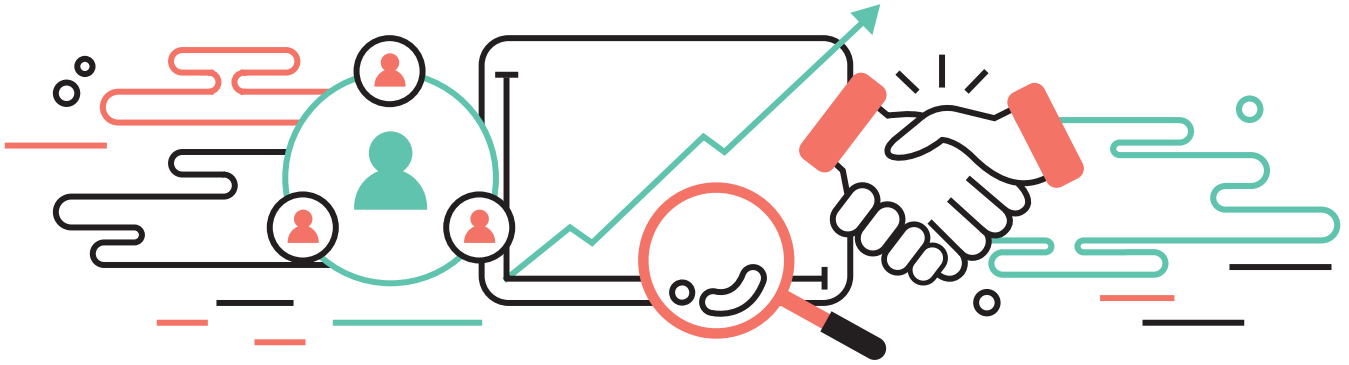
- Do I encourage my team to value productivity and results rather than hours of work?
- Is my team aware of the various work-life initiatives available, and do they participate in them?
- Do I offer flexible work options to team members when they need it?
- Do I role model positive work-life habits for my team to emulate?

It is a well-accepted fact that employee engagement is a significant driver of organisational success, increasing productivity, driving better customer outcomes, and fostering increased employee retention.

As more organisations adopt FWAs as a core component of their work-life strategy, maintaining employee engagement is even more critical given the changed social dynamics, reduced face-to-face interaction and increasingly dispersed workforce.

As a manager, how can you empower your team to utilise flexible work options in a manner that maintains work performance and productivity at optimum levels?

## MANAGING A HYBRID TEAM



### Cultivate a Culture of Trust

#### ✓ Establish Expectations

Trust and clearly written agreements on established deliverables will help to overcome the perception that staff who are not in sight are not at work. Employees must be reachable during specified periods and you, as the manager, have to recognise that even on-site employees may not always be accessible.

#### ✓ Avoid Bias

Utilising FWAs and other work-life initiatives should not affect the career advancement of your team. Employees should have clear career goals. Workload, career development and appraisals are the deciding factors for evaluation and growth.

#### ✓ Be Flexible

Aspects of the job may change over time, as the role and overall objectives of the department evolve. It is important to exercise flexibility in arrangements.

#### ✓ Seek Guidance

As the work-life needs of your team change, be assured that you do not have to have all the answers. Tap on the expertise and resources provided by HR to offer effective work-life support to your team members.

### Manage Work Performance

#### ✓ Provide Clarity

When assigning projects to your team, define the objectives, set clear goals and establish the interim steps and timeline to completion. Focus on pre-determined outcomes and deliverables during check-ins and project updates.

#### ✓ Equip Employees

Provide employees with the appropriate collaboration tools and equipment to facilitate data security, productivity and ease of communication.

#### ✓ Keep Track

Develop a checklist on the deliverables of the work, regardless of whether employees are working in the office, or off-site. Online project management tools are a helpful way to track progress and address challenges as they arise - especially for teams on a hybrid working arrangement.

#### ✓ Conduct Reviews

Conduct regular reviews with your employees, assess the effectiveness of the arrangements, and make adjustments where needed.

### Collaboration

#### ✓ Keep Connected

Managers should initiate regular check-ins for work, social interaction and even emotional support. During the initial period of adjustment, regular, but non-intrusive contact through phone, message or e-mail initiated by their manager can help to alleviate concerns remote working team members may feel about being less connected during this period.

Include them in more group meetings and encourage them to spend more time in the office to help them overcome this anxiety.

# GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING EMPLOYEES' FWA REQUESTS

**THESE ARE THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR MANAGERS WHO ARE PLANNING TO ENABLE EMPLOYEES TO UTILISE FWAS:**

- ✓ Have a clearly defined rationale for approval. This includes the business reasons as well as employee's personal reasons for requesting FWAs.
- ✓ Personal characteristics and track record of the employee making the request for FWAs. Objectively assess if the characteristics and past work performance of the employee, make the FWA a suitable solution for them.
- ✓ Identify the benefits of the FWA; consider how this arrangement will bring value to the organisation as well as the employee in the mid to long-term.
- ✓ Identify concerns and potential challenges that may arise when the proposed FWA is used and find possible solutions to monitor and resolve them.
- ✓ Know the potential impact on colleagues and other team members and how collaborative efforts with co-workers will need to be coordinated for seamless workflows.
- ✓ Have a structured communication process. Clearly state ways in which colleagues, clients and management can continue to maintain work-related communication such as receiving project updates.
- ✓ Consider ways to optimise employee efficiency in a hybrid work arrangement. For example, for employees who opt to telecommute, create a balanced schedule between off-site and in-office workdays to ensure sufficient interaction in-person, while also providing a level of flexibility to work remotely.

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Fair & Progressive Employment Practices

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### **About the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices.**

The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) was set up in 2006 by the tripartite partners (Ministry of Manpower, National Trades Union Congress, and Singapore National Employers Federation), to promote the adoption of fair, responsible and progressive employment practices.

TAFEP is one of three agencies under TAL, along with the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM) and the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council.

TAFEP helps employers build workplaces where employees are respected, valued and able to achieve their fullest potential, for the success of the organisation. Employers can approach TAFEP for tools, resource materials and assistance to implement fair and progressive practices at their workplaces. Employees or individuals who encounter workplace discrimination or harassment can seek assistance and advice from TAFEP.