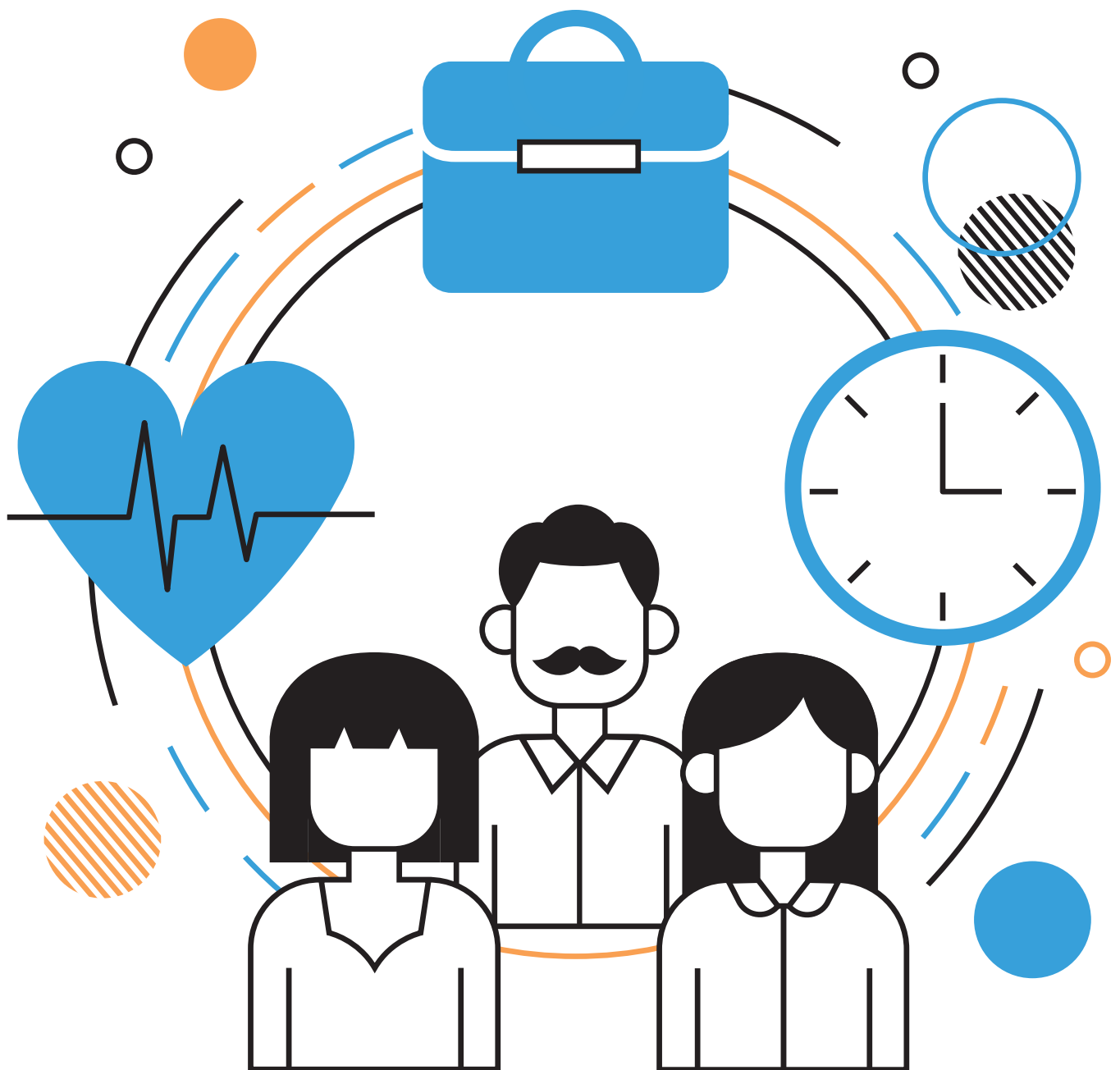
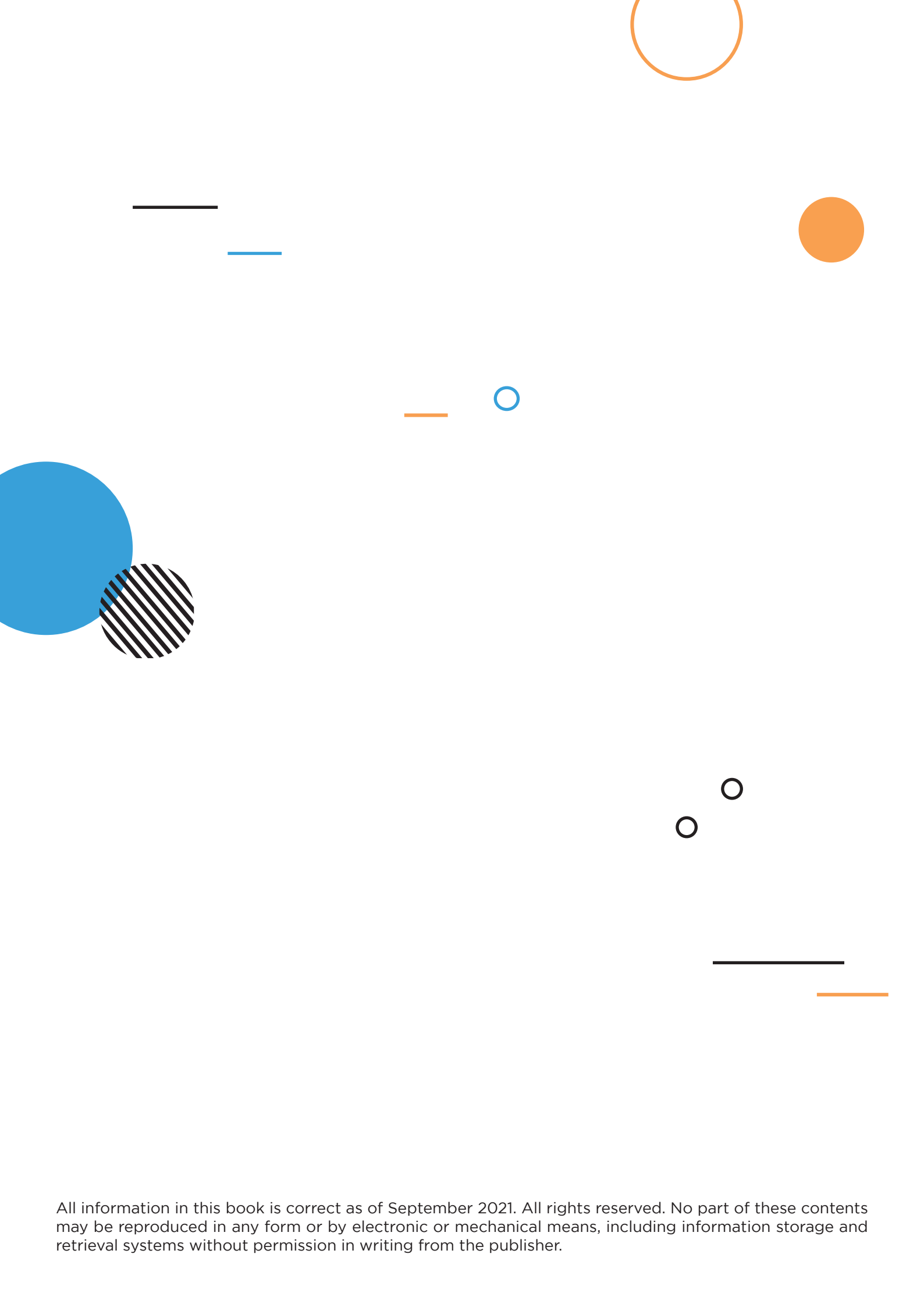


# WORK-LIFE HARMONY GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES

THE **ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT**





# 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  
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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 LEADERSHIP IN DRIVING WORK-LIFE HARMONY



**IN ANY ORGANISATION, THE LEADERSHIP, COMPRISING THE BOARD AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM, SETS THE TONE AND CULTURE OF THE WORKPLACE, DRIVES CHANGE, IMPROVES THE WORK CULTURE AND REINFORCES THE VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS THAT SUPPORT WORK-LIFE HARMONY.**

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board's responsibility for setting the strategic direction of a company and its business goals does not end there. The Board, in concert with your senior management team, is also responsible for deciding what values and behaviours your company stands for and how everyone in the company will practice them consistently. The Board is also responsible for deciding how it will hold the senior management team to account as it, in turn, is responsible for holding all team members to account. In other words, the Board and the senior management team decide on your company's workplace culture and make sure it is positive as defined above. The senior management team then leads its implementation.

## THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Change and setting the right behaviours and tone always starts from the top and are sustained by consistent practice. Senior leaders should hold themselves to account for the behaviours they exhibit and for the ways in which they lead and manage their teams. Only by consistently walking the talk will they have the credibility to engage their teams and lead the mindset shifts needed to achieve and sustain a PWC and work-life harmony.

Senior leaders should commit to communicating the company's PWC and work-life harmony measures clearly and regularly. This includes a zero-tolerance policy for non-compliance that is consistently applied to all employees and teams at every level of the organisation regardless of seniority and revenue generation.



## ENGAGING YOUR TEAMS

The overall aim of engaging teams across the company is to allow everyone in a business to jointly create and sustain the PWC and work-life harmony measures. These must always be relevant to achieve a company's business goals and to the people who help achieve them.

It is a good idea for senior leaders to verify the values and behaviours of the company by talking with their teams. This includes holding split-level meetings with colleagues who do not report directly to them. Engaging teams across the company enables senior leaders to identify other aspects of PWC and work-life harmony which they may not have considered but which are important to team members, such as identifying PWC and work-life harmony champions, for example. Senior leaders should be prepared to accept and include all reasonable suggestions, and even support in refining some of the ideas for better implementation.

While it has to be stressed that there is no one size work-life answer to fit all businesses, this guide provides the framework and outcomes which characterize PWC and work-life harmony. The leadership will need to work with the HR team and managers to create a work ecosystem that authentically supports work-life harmony for employees.





## HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM (HR)

The most senior HR executives play a strategic role in helping the Board and the senior management team set the strategic direction of the company. This includes active participation in Board discussions on the values and behaviours the company stands for, how everyone in the company will practice them consistently, and the penalties for non-compliance.

The HR team as a whole is responsible for supporting the senior management team and all people managers to communicate PWC and work-life harmony messages clearly and regularly across the company. This includes institutionalizing expected values and behaviours as KPIs in the performance management process.

The HR team is also responsible for supporting the senior management team and all people managers in the implementation of work-life practices, which includes providing the necessary training and knowledge sharing for those in supervisory positions, to ensure that they enable team members to participate fully in these programmes.

## PEOPLE MANAGERS

People managers are the allies of the senior management team as well as their own team members for successful implementation of all company initiatives. Like the senior management team, people managers have a duty to consistently practice the values and behaviours of the company and to enable their teams to do the same. People managers have a duty to facilitate a PWC and work-life harmony practices.

There are a couple of pitfalls which people managers need to avoid. The first is confusing the numbers of hours worked with the quality of work outcomes. KPIs should always be based on the quality and timeliness of work outcomes, not the number of hours worked.

Another pitfall for people managers to avoid is to dilute or undermine the company's PWC and work-life harmony measures, either intentionally or unintentionally. The senior management team will need to implement safeguards as a preventive measure, and team members should also be empowered to provide honest feedback to their managers and HR if they experience it, as such behaviour undermines the company's culture and destroys the trust needed to sustain it.

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Tripartite Alliance for  
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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.