

EMPLOYING FAIRLY

In this issue of iHR, we zoom in on fair employment practices, in particular a case study of Philips Electronics Singapore, an exemplary business that focuses on ensuring that new hires are based on merit and job fit.

The Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices (TAFEP) was set up to promote the adoption of fair and responsible employment practices among employers, employees and the general public. Leveraging its unique tripartite identity, TAFEP works in partnership with employer organisations, unions and the government to create awareness and facilitate the adoption of fair and responsible employment practices. Employers in Singapore are encouraged to widen their perspective, hire on merit and also consider the older workforce when it comes to hiring someone right for the job.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: PHILIPS ELECTRONICS



At **Philips Electronics**, the concept of fair employment is practised and lived throughout the company, which comprises of people of various races, gender and age from 33 nationalities working in Singapore.

Upon joining the company, each employee is required to sign their commitment to a set of General Business Principles which clearly state the company's focus on people, merit-based performance, and commitment to equal opportunity and non discrimination.

To safeguard fair employment policies in the company, the human resources (HR) department ensures that job advertisements and employment application forms are non-discriminatory. The HR team makes a conscious effort to achieve diversity in the recruitment process, and they have on numerous occasions hired people in their late 40s for entry level management and professional positions in functions such as accounting, administration and production.

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NEWS BYTES

- Some 64 per cent of companies surveyed in Singapore allow their workers to continue working past age 62.
- Re-employment legislation will come into force by 2012. Employers are encouraged to make plans early and put in place systems and processes for re-employment. Companies can use the ADVANTAGE! Scheme to prepare for re-employment.
- Organise a one-hour talk Live@Work programme for employees to learn how to better manage work and life. Live@Work is complimentary for the first 50 companies that sign up. Call **6213 8418** or email to **tanww@ntuc.org.sg** to register.
- Employer Alliance has launched a contest on "My Work-Life Story," Send in your story on how you have benefited from your organisation's Work-Life programmes by 25 June and stand a chance to win laptops, netbooks and cameras. Email: **jonicheong@employeralliance.sg** for more information.

Milagros Perez, Senior Director of Human Resource in Philips Electronics Singapore believes that mature workers have the ability to contribute greatly, despite the perception that some of them may not be as technologically savvy as the younger employees.

"Older workers have the experience and the insight, having been in their profession for many years. If you pair them with workers who need to learn from them and who in turn can teach them new technologies and ways of working, you have a symbiotic relationship that is mutually beneficial. So long as mature workers are healthy and fit and continue to want to learn... there will be no difference in contribution between young and mature workers," said Ms Perez.

Another advantage of hiring older workers is that they have, through their years of experience in their areas of profession and expertise, demonstrated the ability to resolve various work challenges. Older workers can provide the mentorship and guidance to younger employees and their wealth of knowledge and experience can become valuable assets to a company.

Developing a fair employment practice only requires a change in mindset. As long as managers and leaders are aware of what fair employment is about, and translate these practices into company policies so all decision-makers can adhere and continue to champion these practices, you can start employing fairly too. All you need is take the first step.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



"As business leaders and HR practitioners in companies, we should take the lead in harnessing the strengths of each of the different demographic groups within our organisations. The key to dealing with mature workers is finding ways to bring forth their strengths instead of

trying to change who they are. Focus on their many strengths like their stability that comes with maturity, sense of responsibility, and dependability as they are very committed to their jobs."

Mr. Joshua Yim, CEO, ACHIEVE Group



"Mature workers have so much to offer an organisation and employers should recognise their importance. They can mentor younger workers, provide advice and learning - as they are vastly experienced - and generally have excellent customer

service skills. Mature workers also ensure a balanced workforce and can greatly complement Generation Y workers."

Lynne Ng, Regional Director, Adecco SEA

TIP BOX

- 1 When hiring, make sure job advertisements and application forms are non-discriminatory.
- 2 Shortlist and select candidates based on merit and job experience (regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, etc.).

- 3 Focus on the candidate's competency and how he or she can add value to the team.
- 4 Diversity in the company is a good thing - team-mates can contribute different perspectives and ideas, and learn from one other.
- 5 Hirers and management should proactively practice fair employment and translate this into company policy so all decision-makers can abide by the same set of standards.

For more tips and information on Fair Employment practices, visit www.fairemployment.sg

Do you have feedback on or story ideas for iHR?
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