



Making Work-Life Integration a Workplace Reality

Background

Coherent is a global leader of photonics solutions and designs and manufactures lasers for commercial and scientific research applications. Coherent Singapore Private Limited was established in 2011 as the organisation's regional manufacturing centre and also serves as an international procurement base. This local office is staffed with an estimated 100 employees who are predominantly Generation X-ers.

Coherent is focused on employee engagement and retention and has embarked on a comprehensive Work-Life strategy to empower employees to achieve their best, in and out of the office.

Organisational Work-Life Strategy

At Coherent Singapore, People are viewed as the organisation's most important asset, and time is perceived as its most important resource. As employees constantly multi-task in order to fulfil responsibilities at work and in their personal lives, the organisation recognises that it is a business imperative to empower and support their staff with flexible work options and other work-life initiatives that enable them to be efficient and productive at the workplace.

At Coherent, shared core values underpin the organisation's work culture, and are used to shape a pro work-life environment that benefits all employees. The shared values of Integrity, Customer-centeredness, Encouraging Creativity & Innovation, Respect and Teamwork (I - CERT), are continually reinforced amongst employees.

The employment philosophy of Coherent Singapore can be summed up in these '10Cs of Work-Life Integration':

"By continually improving our employees' skill set, encouraging greater productivity and offering useful work-life initiatives, we have made work-life integration a reality for our team. Coherent Singapore is indeed a Great Place to Work and to Grow".

*Mr. Goh Hin Tiang
General Manager
Coherent Singapore*

10Cs of Work-Life Integration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenging Work Offer challenging projects that excite employees and opportunities for learning and personal growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuing Education Cultivate a learning culture and strive towards a knowledge-based environment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Development Provide opportunities for growth and development beyond the immediate scope of an employee's job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution Recognise employees' efforts and contributions to the company. Also give back to the community through CSR initiatives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Employees should feel part of a winning team, where they are valued, challenged and can make a positive difference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching Managers should serve as coaches for employees – facilitating their career development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducive Work Environment Create a work environment that sustains and nurtures employees' personal development and career growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation Offer a competitive compensation and benefits package as a long-term retention strategy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Maintain open lines of communication for information and idea exchange to take place freely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change Management Ensure that employees can cope and adapt to the evolving processes and changes within the organisation.

At Coherent Singapore, the management recognises that every employee has unique needs, and may require different solutions to effectively manage their careers and personal lives. Thus, the management has devised a comprehensive menu of work-life initiatives, including:

Flexible Work Schedules

- Employees can opt to work staggered hours beginning at either 7.30am or 9.00am.
- Ad-hoc flexibility is available in exigencies when employees need to work from home or require time-off.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- The EAP aims to maintain personal and workplace wellbeing and productivity. Employees are given convenient and confidential access to an information centre offering expert support on health and personal wellbeing.

Enhanced Flexi Health & Awareness Programme

- In addition to the standard benefits such as annual leave, medical leave, sick leave, hospitalisation leave and insurance coverage, the organisation offers health screenings, chiropractic sessions and dental treatments. Health talks are also held regularly for the employees.

Initiatives to Enhance Team Dynamics

- The organisation's Social Recreational Committee (SRC) organises ad-hoc company events such as the annual Dinner & Dance, cycling at East Coast and a treasure hunt at Universal Studios Singapore. They also manage various interest groups such as photography, badminton, yoga and aerobic dance, for the employees.
- The management also disburses quarterly funds for departmental teambuilding activities, which have ranged from baking sessions to bowling.



A treasure hunt at Universal Studios Singapore (left) and cycling at East Coast Park (right) are just some of the activities organised by the Social Recreational Committee.

Organisational Leadership Strategies

The management team believes that a strong trust culture is vital for the success of Coherent Singapore's overall Work-Life strategy – when the leadership and middle managers trust employees to deliver on their work, staff reciprocate by being efficient and manage their time responsibly. This in turn allows the organisation to exercise greater flexibility, as employees are driven and motivated to work independently.

At Coherent Singapore, the management team drives the Work-Life strategy and is responsible for implementing initiatives across all levels of the organisation. To achieve this, the management maintains regular communication with staff through 'Monthly Meet the Management Team' sessions and one-on-one meetings within senior leadership. This is key to understanding current work-life integration needs of their team, gauging the effectiveness of current work-life measures, and also serves to build positive interpersonal dynamics and keep the team aligned on the core values and mission of the organisation.

Information Management Strategies

In order to communicate updates such as new initiatives, management and HR work together to host regular face-to-face meetings at various levels of the organisation. This includes department staff meetings, leadership team meetings, monthly one-on-one sessions between the managers and Mr. Goh as well as the quarterly 'All Hands' organisation-wide sessions. These are invaluable opportunities to interact with employees on the ground, understand and address their work-life needs.

In order to ensure that current work-life measures are relevant and meet the evolving needs of employees, the organisation also conducts an annual employee survey to

better understand the challenges that staff face and how existing measures can be refined to better serve them. These findings provide a compelling business case to the top management when seeking approval and support for the organisation's Work-Life strategy.

Performance Management Strategies

Coherent Singapore adopts a clear, systematic performance management framework, where expectations are clearly stated and measurable target outcomes are set for each employee. The organisation's objectives and key goals for the year are set by the leadership team and cascaded throughout the departments. This is accomplished by the heads of department, who translate the overarching organisational goals into targets for their team members, allowing each employee to understand their role and contribution to the organisation. A year-end performance review is held with each staff member, where they receive formal feedback on their work performance, and set targets for the coming year.

This performance management framework also allows senior management and HR to identify high performers, training opportunities and carry out succession planning over the long-term.

In order to facilitate greater flexibility within Coherent, the management team also offers cross-training to ensure that the organisation remains operationally ready even as employees tap on various flexibility initiatives.

Outcomes and Conclusion

Coherent Singapore's effective culture has made a positive and tangible impact on its business. The organisation has received positive customer feedback as employees are motivated and empowered to achieve their best at work. Through consistent communication of the importance of work-life integration and implementing effective measures, Coherent Singapore has shown that a strong work-life culture can positively impact business results.