

Background

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) of Singapore is a statutory board responsible for planning, operating, and maintaining Singapore’s land transport infrastructure and systems. LTA is made up of 14 key divisions with a total staff strength of more than 4,800 employees. This workforce has a varied demographic profile, with a mix of men and women of various ages and life stages, including singles, married and mature workers.

LTA’s vision is to create a people-centred land transport system that meets the diverse needs of Singapore’s growing population and expanding economy. The organisation recognises that cultivating an agile and efficient workforce is a necessity to achieve this goal.

Organisational Work-Life Strategy

LTA has a well-articulated Work-Life strategy that provides a holistic framework that supports employees’ overall well-being and enables them to maximise productivity and efficiency, both at work and in their personal lives. There is also a comprehensive slew of Work-Life initiatives available to ensure that employees at different life stages have equitable access to Work-Life integration.

LTA’s Employee Well-Being and Satisfaction Framework is made up of 3 core elements:

“To nurture a flexible work environment is imperative to LTA’s management. Over time, flexibility options in LTA grow from specific flexi work time slots to wider time bands, from strict conditions for telecommuting to a more relaxed procedure. Having these improvements reflects the need for workplace flexibility to make the most of our employee’s productivity and to maximise their well-being.”

Mr Ang Heng
Director
Human Resources

<p>MIND</p>	<p>These are initiatives that contribute to employees’ emotional and mental well-being.</p> <p>In order to alleviate stress and empower employees’ to effectively manage work and personal responsibilities, LTA offers flexible working arrangements, an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), lunchtime talks as well as childcare and parent-care leave.</p>
<p>BODY</p>	<p>These are initiatives that contribute to employees’ physical health and wellness.</p> <p>LTA organises various programmes that offer early health intervention and promote sustainable healthy lifestyle habits. These include yearly health screenings and annual events such as ‘Family Day cum Charity Walk which provide employees with opportunities to exercise as a team. The organisation also has a staff club ‘Club7’ which is equipped with recreational facilities, where sports and social activities are organised for employees and their families.</p>

HEART	Management support for programmes and policies that equip the LTA workforce to achieve better Work-Life integration. This includes appointing members of the senior management as the Work-Life Champion and Advocate for the organisation as well as promoting CSR initiatives that encourage employees' to contribute to the community.
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Creating a flexible work culture is integral to LTA's organisational mission to enhance the efficiency of the public transport system. LTA launched the Travel Smart pilot programme in 2012. Under this initiative, employers are encouraged to provide flexi-work options that allow staff to travel for free via public transport at specified off-peak hours – the end goal is to ease peak-hour commuter traffic on the public transport system. LTA has taken the lead and sets a positive example for other employers by offering employees flexible work arrangements including telecommuting and staggered working hours. The staggered working hours arrangement has been especially popular with over 600 employees utilising this on an ad-hoc basis.

Organisational Leadership Strategies

LTA's workforce has a set of key shared values that aligns employees with the overall mission and vision of the organisation. 'Caring' is one of the shared values, and this drives the senior management's involvement in the organisation's Work-Life strategy. At LTA, staff welfare and engagement is a management priority, and the leadership team believes that employees must be equipped to achieve Work-Life integration at various life stages.



LTA staff keeping fit as a team (left) and dressing up for D&D (right).

The LTA leadership signals its support for Work-Life integration by the Deputy Chief Executive serving as the Work-Life Champion while the Group Director of Corporate Planning & Research and Deputy Director of Human Resource Management serve as the Deputy Work-Life Champion and Work-Life Ambassador respectively. By creating these structured appointments to spearhead work-life strategy and initiatives at the highest level of management, the leadership team ensures that Work-Life integration continues to be an organisational priority.

At LTA, the HR team has a proactive role in assessing Work-Life needs on the ground, and addressing these through FWAs and other Work-Life initiatives. The senior management shows its support by endorsing HR recommendations that promote workplace flexibility. This includes:

- Encouraging staff to schedule internal meetings after 9.30am, to accommodate colleagues who are on staggered working hours and start work at that time.

- Empowering divisional heads to approve staggered working hours and telecommuting requests

Senior Management and HR also collaborate closely on Work-Life initiatives. Work-Life recommendations are presented and discussed at corporate meetings to ensure that endorsement and commitment from senior leaders are obtained prior to implementing Work-Life programmes. Ultimately, management buy-in is vital for Work-Life success, as these key leaders will need to guide their respective Divisions in executing these programmes. For example, since 2011, HR has organised the Senior Management Walkabouts whereby the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive visits the offices of various Divisions. There is close co-ordination between HR and the relevant Division Heads to ensure that the visits are meaningful and that employees have sufficient face-time and dialogue with the leaders.

Information Management Strategies

LTA's senior management is committed to nurturing a culture of trust and care within LTA; this has enabled them to effectively implement the organisational Work-Life strategy across a large and diverse workforce that is spread out over multiple locations.

Senior management and HR have identified that consistent communication with employees is the key to cultivating a strong trust culture. LTA has a simple and concise communication strategy in place to achieve this. In order to maintain open communication channels between senior management and the workforce, monthly luncheons with the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive as well as quarterly online chats with senior management are organised where employees can raise Work-Life and other HR-related issues and provide feedback on current Work-Life policies and programmes.

Performance Management Strategies

A key challenge for the organisation has been to change the traditional culture and mindset of management and staff to adopt an outcome-based performance assessment framework, rather than assessing employees on face-time in the office.

To meet this challenge, LTA has adopted a performance management framework that emphasises performance and open appraisal with the setting of measurable KRAs. With this system in place, supervisors and employees hold face-to-face meetings at key phases, including the target setting stage, mid-year and year-end appraisals. During these sessions, supervisors and employees mutually agree upon goals and targets to achieve, as well as openly discuss the employee's job performance and progress.

To nurture a strong trust culture at LTA, supervisors expect committed employees to be self-disciplined and proactively provide progress updates on current projects. Through this, LTA hope to lessen the need for constant face-time discussion for updates, and allows employees greater flexibility and mobility at work.

Outcomes and Conclusion

With an effective and relevant Work-Life strategy in place, LTA hopes to see more of their employees engaged at work as they have the flexibility to manage their own time and attend to personal tasks without compromising on work quality.

With a healthy Work-Life culture in place, employee loyalty and the overall team dynamics have also strengthened; employees recognise that their welfare is an organisational priority, and hence, are willing to align themselves with the organisational mission and vision and work closely together to realise LTA's goal of creating a people-centred land transport system.