

COVER STORY:

REVIEWING POLICIES ON RE-EMPLOYMENT OF **OLDER WORKERS**



**Building a
Gender-Inclusive
Workplace**

**Raising Standards in
Employment Practices**

REVIEWING POLICIES ON RE-EMPLOYMENT OF OLDER WORKERS



Singapore's population has been ageing, especially over the past decade, and numbers are set to rise. In fact, the ratio of citizen in the working ages to each elderly citizen is projected to fall from 4.2 in 2018 to 2.4 in 2030¹.

As Singapore's population ages and its people live longer, the need to prepare for an ageing population and workforce is more important than ever. One of the efforts to help older workers remain economically productive includes the enactment of the re-employment legislation in 2012 to enable more people to continue working beyond the current statutory retirement age of 62, up to 67.

Such population and employment issues must be managed well as these would determine Singapore's society and its outlook. The Tripartite Workgroup on Older Workers (TWG-OW) was thus formed in 2018, to review the longer-term relevance of the retirement and re-employment age and consider the next steps that will best address the needs of the economy and society.

To gather all these insights and views from the ground, a forum on older workers was organised by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) of the National University of Singapore and the

TWG-OW on 9 January 2019 at the Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability. Around 200 people attended the event, including tripartite partners and grassroots leaders.

In his opening speech, Mr Aubeck Kam, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Chairman of the Workgroup highlighted the efforts of the tripartite partners in preparing Singapore for a population and workforce that was older but had richer work experience. He also encouraged participants to have a sense of optimism by seeing the older workforce as a boon to Singapore. "We have been able to make progress together, with workers, businesses and the society-at-large finding win-win outcomes. Each time, we have found that an older workforce is not something to be feared, but presents opportunities," said Mr Kam.

The forum was organised into three sessions. The first session set the scene for the afternoon's discussions with a presentation to recap Singapore's existing policy measures targeted at older workers as well as the key insights derived from TWG-OW's public engagement on the review of the national retirement and re-employment policy.

In the second session, the discussion shed light on the employment and employability trends of older workers, as well as retirement and re-employment policies. One of the speakers, Mr Christopher Gee, Senior Research Fellow at IPS, suggested to adopt the Work Ability Index (WAI), which is used in Australia and Finland, to help identify social and environmental

factors that shape an employee's ability to work.

Finally, the third session saw participants engaging in a dialogue session with the members of TWG-OW on economic, business and social considerations ideal for shaping the future for older workers in Singapore. The discussion also touched on ways to ensure that those who continue to work in their senior years have the necessary skills, tools, and incentives to stay in the workforce.

The panellists comprised Ms Low Yen Ling, Senior Parliamentary Secretary (SPS) for Manpower and Education, Mr Heng Chee How, TAFEP's Co-chairperson and Deputy Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress, and Mr Alexander Melchers, Vice-President of the Singapore National Employers Federation.

During the dialogue, Ms Low called on all stakeholders to empathise with the different needs and concerns of older workers, and work together to find sustainable arrangements to help them stay in the workforce longer if they wished to.

"There are two key objectives here. The first one is to be well-placed to provide greater assurance to our older workers for their job. At the same time, we want to do so not at the expense of their wages, benefits or employability," explained Ms Low.

"In order to do so, we need to ensure that our enterprise ecosystem in Singapore remains vibrant and sustainable," she elaborated. She also added that companies need to exercise flexibility and be able to adjust the employment terms and conditions during the re-employment period so as to be economically competitive.



Ms Low Yen Ling, Senior Parliamentary Secretary (SPS) for Manpower and Education (middle) with the speakers and panellists at IPS Forum on Older Workers.

[Photo Credits: Ministry of Manpower]

¹Source: "Scrapping retirement: the case for tapping the senior workforce", The Business Times, 5 January 2019



FIGURE IT OUT!

Greater Protection for Employees in 2019

Updates to the Employment Act (EA) will take effect from April 2019. See what's new.



BETTER EMPLOYEE PROTECTION



WIDER INCLUSION OF CORE EA PROVISIONS

BEFORE Core provisions of the EA apply to all employees except managers and executives (M&Es) earning above \$4,500/month.

AFTER Every employee, including M&Es earning over \$4,500/month, will be entitled to the EA's core provisions, such as:

- Minimum 7-14 days paid annual leave
- Paid public holidays and sick leave
- Timely payment of salary
- Protection against wrongful dismissal

430,000 more M&Es will be covered



OVERTIME PAY AND REST DAYS

BEFORE Additional protection on work hours, overtime pay and rest days for:

- Workmen² earning up to \$4,500/month
- Non-workmen³ earning up to \$2,500/month

Salary cap for paying overtime to non-workmen is \$2,250/month.

AFTER Additional protection on work hours, overtime pay and rest days for:

- Workmen earning up to \$4,500/month
- Non-workmen earning up to \$2,600/month

Salary cap for paying overtime to non-workmen will be revised to \$2,600/month.

Over 100,000 more employees will benefit



MEDICAL LEAVE

BEFORE Employers are only required to recognise medical certificates issued by Government- or company-approved doctors.

AFTER Employers must recognise medical certificates issued by any registered doctor.

GREATER BUSINESS FLEXIBILITY



SALARY DEDUCTIONS

BEFORE Employers can make salary deductions only under specific reasons under the EA.

AFTER Salary deductions will be allowed upon fulfilment of two conditions:

- Written consent from employee is obtained
- Employee can withdraw consent at any time, without penalty



TIME-OFF

BEFORE For work on public holidays, employers can offer time-off to M&Es earning up to \$4,500/month.

AFTER For work on public holidays, employers can offer time-off to:

- All M&Es
- Workmen earning above \$4,500/month
- Non-workmen earning above \$2,600/month

ENHANCED DISPUTE RESOLUTION



DISPUTE RESOLUTION

BEFORE

- Wrongful dismissal claims are heard by the Minister for Manpower.
- Salary-related claims are heard at the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management/ Employment Claims Tribunals.
- M&Es can seek help if they have served the employers for at least 12 months.

AFTER

- Both wrongful dismissal and salary-related claims will be heard at the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management/ Employment Claims Tribunals.
- M&Es can seek help if they have served the employers for at least 6 months.

² Workmen refers to rank-and-file employees engaged in manual labour e.g. cleaners and construction workers.

³ Non-workmen refers to rank-and-file white-collar employees e.g. clerks and receptionists.



PLEASED TO MEET YOU



Mr Nishit Majmudar
Chief Executive Officer
Aviva Ltd

HANDS-ON LEADERSHIP

His days as Aviva Ltd's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are packed, but his door is always open. The Tripartite Alliance (TA) Award Winner of Leadership Award (Fair and Progressive Employment Practices), Mr Nishit Majmudar shares with Upbeat on why he believes in building a culture of trust at his workplace as a personal mission.

Q Congratulations on your win! You became CEO at Aviva six years ago – tell us about some of the most major changes in people practices you have observed since you joined the company.

A Flexible work arrangements are on the rise across the globe, and that is something we provide for our people. We also implemented an honour sick leave system in 2013, where we take our employees' word when they are unfit for work and do not require them to produce medical certificates.

Last year, we refined our parental leave policy to offer equal paternity and maternity leave for every parent employed by Aviva. All full-time employees, regardless of gender, now enjoy 16 weeks of parental leave with full salaries.

Q What were some challenges and outcomes from implementing the 16-week paternity leave policy?

A There were initial concerns about how the extra leave would affect our manpower, but we want Aviva to be a progressive, inclusive and welcoming place to work in. Introducing the new parental leave policy is a bold and ground-breaking action that strongly aligns with Aviva's values, and allows us to be truly inclusive.

Q Your personal stance on employee well-being has been instrumental in shaping Aviva's organisational culture. Tell us more about why you saw the need to evoke change.

A I believe in putting employees at the heart of people initiatives because happy employees make happy customers. Employees are the most valuable asset of any organisation, and what happens inside the organisation can often be felt on the outside, especially by its customers.

Q You place strong focus on building a culture of trust and inclusion in the workplace. How can such a culture translate into benefits for both people and business?

A I believe that trust and inclusion go hand-in-hand when building a positive workplace culture. Trust is the foundation for employee engagement, and it encourages and empowers employees to grow and succeed within the organisation. When employees are more engaged and feel included, their ability to think bigger and do better for our customers and each other increases. Positive work culture also leads to employee growth and allows individuals to take pride in their work, which in turn, benefits the business as a whole.

Q You practise an open-door policy where employees at all levels can approach you on work and personal matters. How do you get your employees to feel comfortable reaching out to you?

A We have the Basecamp programme, where we line up activities every month to help employees lead more well-balanced lifestyles. I think being active participants in Basecamp

activities makes it easier for employees to approach me. Getting to know me in a less formal setting probably makes it more comfortable for them to reach out to me on work and personal matters.

Q You personally went around the office to speak to employees across various teams when Aviva encountered business challenges. Tell us about the experience and your reasons for taking that approach.

A Challenging times are a period of uncertainty where people often worry about their job security. The least I can do in times like this is to go around and speak with employees face-to-face to let them know personally what is going on. It is also important to me that our employees know that their opinions matter and that their voice is heard in the organisation.

Q As a leader, what is your advice for employers who are looking to build a culture of trust at their workplace?

A You cannot control the level of trust in the workplace, but you can foster a safe environment to promote trust. You can do so by communicating openly and frequently. What worked for me is having regular town hall meetings to keep all employees up to speed on what our goals are and what we are doing as a company to achieve them. Once employees have a clear vision to work towards, you can empower them to take charge of achieving these goals.



A.S.K

Assistance. Support. Knowledge

Building a Gender-Inclusive Workplace

Gender diversity in the workplace has been known to drive innovation, retention rates, productivity and profitability. We shed light on how you, as an employer, can unlock the business benefits of a gender-inclusive workforce.

Recognise the value women bring to the organisation

It all starts with acknowledging that females have as much to contribute as their male counterparts in helping businesses thrive. Moreover, the diversity in perspectives will be beneficial to organisations, especially at the senior levels where critical decisions are being made.



Demonstrate commitment towards a gender-inclusive workplace

Successful culture-building starts from the top. Senior management must proactively demonstrate their commitment to being role models in building and reinforcing a workforce free of gender stereotypes. One way to do this is to champion initiatives that build a pipeline of women leaders.



Assess Human Resource (HR) policies for any gender preferences or bias

As a start, review your existing HR policies for any possible gender preferences or bias. For instance, policies or practices that benefit men should benefit women equally. These include identifying talent early in their career and providing developmental opportunities for both genders.



Learn from other progressive employers

Always make a conscious effort to regularly review your existing policies and programmes and benchmark them against other exemplary employers to ensure continuous improvement. Doing this enables you to keep abreast of the leading practices in creating gender-inclusive workplaces and adapt them for your organisation.



THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE



Ms Teo Sze Ling



Mrs Joanna Koh-Hoe

Women in Leadership

Celebrated annually on 8 March, International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in their countries and communities.

Themed “Think equal, build smart, innovate for change”, this year’s campaign focused on innovative ways to advance gender equality and empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure.

In view of the occasion, we speak to two female leaders who have won the Tripartite Alliance Award 2018 for their exemplary efforts in creating fair and progressive workplaces. Let’s hear from these individuals on the underlying challenges in promoting gender equality in the workplace and some ways to overcome it.



One of the constant challenges faced by women in the workplace is striking a balance between work and family. The leaders whom I’ve worked with have always been mindful of this challenge and they show constant care and unwavering support by providing flexible work arrangements. In 2015, I was encouraged to take a career break in order for me to focus on my family. The support given to me throughout the entire journey, especially when I returned to work after three months, reassured me that my career will not take a ‘break’ while I attend to my loved ones.

Ms Teo Sze Ling

Vice President, Global Enterprise
Banking – EmB Business Compliance
OCBC Bank



The concept of women in the workplace has shifted from that of the rising alpha female⁴ to proving that women are no different from men. Throughout these cultural shifts, the challenge of work-life balance or integration of career and family for working women has remained. We have witnessed how performance on both the work and home fronts improved when employers provided support for women to be the best mums they can be, be it through lunchtime parenting talks or parent support or interest groups at the office. These efforts resulted in a win-win outcome for all.

Mrs Joanna Koh-Hoe

Chief Executive Officer
Focus on the Family Singapore Limited



⁴ An alpha female is a powerful and successful woman, often in a leadership role.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

RAISING STANDARDS IN EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Citing a 'people-first' vision for the organisation, consultancy firm Emergenetics Caelan and Sage (ECS) has put in place comprehensive work-life initiatives and policies that build trust and integrity. Find out how the Tripartite Alliance Award Winner of the Work-Life Excellence category places people at the heart of the organisation through their HR initiatives.



Being a consultancy firm that focuses on strategic communication, branding and design as well as people and development, ECS' passion is in people.

Guided by its service philosophy— "We serve with mind and heart because we value people", the management of ECS believes in developing and motivating its people so that they will be dedicated to help the company succeed and make a difference in the lives of others.

Managing Work-Life through Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs)

When it comes to managing work and life schedules, the management encourages employees to take responsibility in achieving their tasks in a way that best suits the individual and his or her team. Giving employees the option to utilise FWAs without having to file a formal application beforehand supports this culture.



Employees of ECS and their loved ones having a wonderful time together at their Christmas gathering.

"Every employee who joins ECS benefits from our culture of work-life integration, which is designed to enhance the individual's personal effectiveness both at work and in life," explained Mr Terence Quek, CEO of Emergenetics Asia Pacific.

Last July, the firm moved to new premises that had a coworking space for people to interact and collaborate outside of their traditional offices. "This is part

of our firm's work-life strategy. Be it working at the office desk or away from it, we want to allow employees to feel like they are in control of their surroundings, which leads to comfort," added Mr Quek.

The firm has also implemented a range of work-life initiatives to complement the work and personal needs of its employees. One of the work-life initiatives is the compressed work schedule, an arrangement that enables employees to work full-time hours within a reduced number of days. This allows them to use the extra hours to pursue part-time studies and hobbies or take care of personal commitments. Staggered time, telecommuting, and part-time work are other options.

When granting its people "miscellaneous" leave, ECS goes beyond the required. On top of the minimum legal leave entitlements, it grants birthdays, exam, marriage, family care, community service, unrecorded medical and social leave. "How the social leave came about is because when we looked at the standard practice, there is always childcare leave for married employees but there's nothing equivalent for somebody who is single. That's why we decided to implement social leave to encourage singles within the company to go out and have fun and hopefully, it promotes personal well-being in other ways," explained Mr Quek.

That said, ECS understands the potential implications that may come along with such work-life programmes. Employees may worry about not having people to cover their jobs when they tap on these programmes. To address these issues, ECS creates cross-functional collaboration and rotation opportunities so that its people can "wear more than one hat". "ECS also grades our people's

performance based on a standard set of key performance indicators instead of their attendance," shared Mr Quek.

Leveraging Technology to Facilitate Collaboration

ECS ensures that its people have the connectivity and flexibility to work and communicate whenever they need, whether they are physically in the office or not. From job candidate selection and onboarding to enabling off-site project collaboration, the firm has implemented technology to complement its employees' work. At ECS, job candidates are not required to fill job application forms. Instead, they are assessed using an online psychometric system called Emergenetics Selection Programme (ESP) to help their interviewers be more objective. This, in turn, reduces biases during the interview process. For employee onboarding, the firm uses an online psychometric profiling system called Emergenetics Profile to help employees understand one another better.

Promoting collaboration among employees is also a breeze, thanks to Emergenetics+, an app that prompts interaction amongst people. The firm also uses platforms such as Slack and Notion to facilitate communication and collaboration within team and clients across the region. Besides having a shared digital calendar, the availability of cloud storage like OneDrive has also improved the work mobility of the employees, giving them the flexibility to work off-site.

"From the business point of view, the use of technology provides more opportunities for the team to share innovative ideas and improve customer experience. All these enable us to better engage our employees, resulting in high retention and engagement scores," said Mr Quek.



FOR YOUR DIARY

Check out some exciting events that we have in store for you this quarter!

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- 3RD Apr TS Coaching Clinic on Recruitment Practices
 - 3RD Apr TS Coaching Clinic on Flexible Work Arrangements
 - 3RD Apr TS Coaching Clinic on Grievance Handling
 - 10TH Apr TS Coaching Clinic on Recruitment Practices
 - 17TH Apr Overview of the Employment Act
 - 30TH Apr Fair and Progressive Employment Forum

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- 8TH May TS Coaching Clinic on Recruitment Practices
 - 8TH May TS Coaching Clinic on Flexible Work Arrangements
 - 8TH May TS Coaching Clinic on Grievance Handling
 - 15TH May Overview of the Employment Act
 - 22ND May TS Coaching Clinic on Recruitment Practices

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- 12TH Jun Overview of the Employment Act
 - 12TH Jun TS Coaching Clinic on Recruitment Practices
 - 12TH Jun TS Coaching Clinic on Flexible Work Arrangements
 - 12TH Jun TS Coaching Clinic on Grievance Handling
 - 26TH Jun TS Coaching Clinic on Recruitment Practices
 - 26TH Jun Fair and Progressive Employment Forum

For more details on TAFEP and updates on workshops, log on to tafep.sg

All information stated above is correct at time of printing and subject to change.