



Labour Department



Workplace Consultation
Promotion Division

“Good People Management” Series

“Good People Management” Series

Contents

Extracts	P.3
Foreword	P.4
LH Group	P.5
Belle International Holdings Limited	P.7
DHL Express Hong Kong	P.9
UA Cinema Circuit Limited	P.11
SOCAM Development Limited	P.13
Conrad Hong Kong	P.15
Hong Thai Travel Services Limited	P.17
DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited	P.19

“Good People Management” Series

Extracts

“Apart from recognising employees’ needs from the humanity perspective, enterprises should offer employees contingency support according to their own capability.”

Simon Wong Kit-lung, Executive Director of LH Group

“Caring for employees should be put into action by adopting tailor-made good people management practices.”

Karen Lee, Director of Human Resources of Belle International Holdings Limited – Hong Kong & Macau Region

“It is vitally important to take employees’ feelings into account when devising good people management practices so that they can feel the respect and encouragement from the company.”

Donna Kong, Vice President, Human Resources, DHL Express Hong Kong

“Listening to different opinions and encouraging staff of all levels to express their views while formulating policies can help cultivate an open working environment.”

Ivan Wong, Managing Director of UA Cinema Circuit Limited

“Employees’ sense of belonging can be strengthened through the enhancement of their safety awareness and professional knowledge.”

Yuen Siu-chen, Human Resources Manager (Construction) of SOCAM Development Limited

“We extend hospitality to our staff and accompany them through every important moment in their lives.”

Ada Wong, Director of Human Resources of Conrad Hong Kong

“By Upholding the philosophy of “Passing Love On”, it is hoped that our care for staff can be extended to their families.”

Jason Wong, Director and President of Hong Thai Travel Services Limited

“Taking into account employees’ needs at different life stages, various flexible welfare policies are adopted to ensure that they can benefit each and every staff member, “

Sharon Cheng, Managing Director and Head of Human Resources of DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited

Foreword

Good people management should embody the three principles of “employee-oriented”, “law-abiding” and “equal and fair”. Through the adoption of these principles in various aspects of people management, including recruitment, training, occupational safety, staff communication and arrangement for termination of contract, can effectively foster harmonious labour relations in enterprises. With the growing concern for balance between work and family life, family-friendly employment practices have also become an indispensable part of good people management.

Apart from their roles in the company, employees also are shouldering various obligations as parents or children in their families. When employers recognise the multiple roles played by their employees and assist them in balancing work and family life through candid communications and good people management practices, their employees will surely appreciate their goodwill and work with greater dedication in return.

The Labour Department has all along been a facilitator in promoting good people management, effective staff communication and family-friendly employment practices by disseminating relevant information and publicising related practices in the community through a wide range of publicity channels as well as diversified educational and promotional activities. Yet, the effective implementation of these good practices requires the concerted effort of relevant stakeholders, including employers, employees and members of the public. Their understanding and recognition of the practices as well as dedicated try-out and action are equally crucial.

The Labour Department has commissioned Hong Kong Economic Times to compile this casebook which features the exemplary experiences of good people management practices in eight enterprises from different sectors. This casebook aims to give references to employers and human resources personnel so as to encourage adoption of good people management practices having regard to the enterprise’s unique business conditions and employees’ needs. These real-life cases also show that it is not an uphill task to implement good people management practices. The corporations can always choose to carry out concerned practices taking into consideration their own circumstances. It will not only contribute to fostering a greater sense of belonging among employees and enhancing mutual cooperation and support, but also help retain and attract talents in the current competitive labour market. The Labour Department hopes that employers and human resources personnel will act positively to adopt good people management practices so that both employers and employees can share the fruits of economic prosperity and development of Hong Kong.

LH Group leverages unique operations of the catering industry to tailor win-win propositions

It is often misunderstood that good people management practices can hardly be implemented in the catering industry given its year-round operation characteristic. Yet, if a comprehensive plan is in place and by taking into consideration the enterprise’s execution capability, these practices can be rolled out without difficulty. By adhering to the “people-oriented” principle, LH Group sets a shining example to the industry how it has successfully accommodated the needs of both the enterprise and its employees.

“Catering industry is known for its strong human touch,” says Simon Wong Kit-lung, Executive Director of LH Group. He remarks that apart from recognising employees’ needs from the humanity perspective, a smooth implementation of good people management practices in the catering industry also hinges on the enterprise’s capability and availability of contingency support.

University student volunteers give tutorials to employees’ children

The LH Group currently has about 1,500 staff. In recent decade, it has introduced a number of good people management practices uncommon in the industry, such as birthday leave and paternity leave, which are more favourable than the statutory requirements. Earlier on, another new initiative of “Tutorial Programme for Employees’ Children” has been launched under which free tutorials are provided by university students to children of the employees in the Group’s restaurants during off-duty hours. There are now three volunteer tutors coaching five primary school children of the employees.

Wong reveals that the Programme was initiated by a university student from a grassroots family who proactively approached him with this idea. “When he was small, his school results were far from satisfactory. Thanks to his mother who worked very hard to hire a tutor for him, his academic results improved considerably. He knows very well that it is vitally important for children to have guidance during the learning process and empathises with grassroots families that are under the financial pressure of hiring a tutor. He therefore wants to do something for the children in need. I think this is such a meaningful idea that I should launch the Programme.” Wong adds that the Programme aims at helping the employees’ children who are in primary school. The Group provides the venues and matches the volunteers to the children. He says, “Our restaurants are ideal tutorial venues during non-peak off-duty hours.”

Wan Hong-woon is the Group’s restaurant receptionist who works long day-time hours, leaving her very little time to spend with her children every day. As her children attend tutorial classes in her

workplace, she can see them more often. “This is a thoughtful arrangement. After joining the Programme, my children have made improvements academically and won the praise of their class teachers,” Wan says. Wong is delighted to see that the Programme can help employees’ children while realising young people’s aspirations to serve the community. He further hopes that the Programme can encourage counterparts in the industry to launch similar programmes so that this win-win proposition can have a more extensive impact.

Thinking outside the box - Offering flexibility of personalised job openings

The Group has recently launched a new recruitment scheme to inculcate the “people-oriented” principle. Unlike the traditional approach where employers pre-determine the job requirements as well as the place and hours of work, the new scheme allows candidates to propose employment conditions having regard to their own circumstances and needs. The Group will then customise the jobs according to their proposals and work experience. For example, some housewives can only work for a few hours in the neighbourhood while their children are away at school. The Group will, as far as possible, assign them to work in their preferred venue and customise the jobs to suit their needs. “The new scheme helps ease recruitment difficulties in the catering industry caused by long working hours and at the same time make optimum use of the labour force. This is another win-win proposition. If the scheme proves to be a success, it will be a breakthrough in overcoming recruitment difficulties and bring a new dimension to the catering industry.”

Key features

- Good people management practices which are highly feasible and valuable by adhering to the “people-oriented” principle and emphasising employees’ needs as well as the company’s capabilities.
- The management keeps an open mind to new ideas and tries to implement practices uncommon in the industry. If such practices are implemented successfully, it will take the lead and set a good example in the industry. If there is room for improvement, the management is also willing to allocate time and resources to further refine the practices.

Belle International offers flexible rosters helping employees to maintain work-life balance

The retail industry is at its busiest on holidays when shops are crowded with shoppers. With support from management, shoe retailer Belle International Holdings Limited demonstrates how much it values and cares for its employees by adopting good people management practices. Through the provision of special leave and the implementation of flexible work arrangements, shop employees who have to work on holidays can strike a balance between work and family life.

Belle International Holdings Limited fully understands that actions speak louder than words when it comes to cherishing talents. Karen Lee, Director of Human Resources of Belle International Holdings Limited - Hong Kong & Macau Region, points out that the company has tailor-made good people management practices, which best suit the business nature and operations of the company. It wants each and every staff member to feel the respect and support of the company. When they are happy about their work, they will serve the customers with a genuine smile.

Free to choose any day for family leave

“We now have more than 100 shops in the Hong Kong and Macau Region, all operating on a roster system. The shop supervisor will arrange a shift roster according to the manpower requirement in different seasons. Employees are required to work irregular hours and their rest days often fall on weekdays instead of public holidays which are the peak periods of our business,” says Lee. She further says that, in order to assist the employees in achieving a healthy work-life balance and spending more time with their family, the company introduced birthday leave five years ago. From last year, employees can also choose any one day during the year for taking Family Care leave, so as to attend school with their children on the first school day or taking care of their parents.

Lee adds that the employees enjoy flexibility to take Family Care leave as they only have to make prior applications with reasons given. “Special leave arrangement serves to show that the company cares about our employees and their families. This will help enhance sense of belonging of the employees, who will in turn be more sincere in serving the customers. This is a win-win situation to the benefit of the employees, customers and company.”

According to Janice, an office staff member, the new Family Care leave allows her to make the best use of an extra day off to attend family gatherings, as such she visited her relatives in the hometown with her mother not long ago. “In the past, my mother used to visit our hometown alone because I could not have my day-off flexibly. This year, she was happy that I could accompany her in the visit.”

Half-time jobs for working mothers

Lee says that Belle International strives to improve the staff management system. She has witnessed many colleagues progressing through different stages of life, from joining the company after graduation to getting married and becoming parents. “Many working mothers have to look after their young children but they also want to keep on working to support their families and enlarge their social circle. They are caught in a dilemma.”

In this regard, Belle International offers half-time jobs for current staff and job applicants. Lee explains that staff members of half-time jobs are only required to work five hours a day and they are free to choose the working hours that match their children’s school hours or their spouses’ work pattern. Such an arrangement helps them juggle work and families flexibly. “So far, several applications have been approved. The company will do its best to accommodate needs of staff members. When their children have grown up, they may revert to a full-time work schedule. This can serve the dual purpose of allowing greater flexibility in roster arrangements and retaining experienced staff to provide guidance to junior colleagues, which is far better than hiring part-time staff.

Key features

- With management’s full support, the company demonstrates how much it cherishes talents through good people management practices tailored for the employees.
- Employees’ feedback is collected not only through traditional channels, like e-mails and focus groups, but also through popular social network to ensure that the special leave and flexible work arrangements meet their needs.

DHL

showing care and concern

introducing a breastfeeding-friendly policy

The logistics industry covers a broad spectrum of business areas with numerous divisions operating on a 24-hour basis, making it difficult to implement good people management practices. DHL Express Hong Kong (“DHL”) tailor-made good people management practices from the employees’ points of view and meeting their needs so that they can work happily and in turn enhance the quality of work.

The logistics industry is a service industry where the attitude of staff towards customers has an important bearing on the corporate image. “Staff members are the company’s valuable assets. It is vitally important to take their feelings into account when devising good people management practices so that they can feel the respect and encouragement from the company,” says Donna Kong, Vice President, Human Resources, DHL. She expects the staff will be more devoted to their work if they can feel the care and concern of the company through such practices.

Flexible work rosters for breastfeeding mothers

There is a general perception that the logistics industry is male-dominated, but in fact it has also engaged a number of female workers. DHL is aware that there are quite a number of working mothers in the company, hence it has adopted the approach of “Creating a Mother-Friendly Workplace” and introduced the “Lactation Accommodation Policy” for meeting the needs of female staff with new born babies by setting up lactation rooms and breast milk storage facilities in the Kowloon Bay headquarters and the Tsing Yi service center. Breastfeeding mothers are accorded priority to use the conference rooms in the remaining three service centers and DHL’s Central Asia Hub in the airport where breast milk storage facilities are also provided. Given both software and hardware support is available, female staff are able to deliver their bounden duty as mother.

“For example, in the past, our female staff at the Kowloon Bay headquarters had to use the lactation room in the nearby shopping center where the office was located. It was time-consuming and very inconvenient to go up and down,” says Kong. According to Kong, the company now has its own lactation rooms, which, though small, are fully equipped with necessary facilities, such as electrical sockets, small fridges, chairs, tables, basins, etc. which cater for the need of breastfeeding mothers.

As for software support, DHL allows its female staff to use the lactation rooms flexibly while on duty. “Departmental managers will timely arrange other colleagues to substitute a colleague who needs to express breast milk during office hours.” Kong adds that female staff are entitled to reasonable lactation breaks within a year after delivery.

Christine Lee, a customer service executive, is one of the beneficiary staff members. She says that the lactation room is comfortable and free from disturbance. “More importantly, I do not need to queue up for using the lactation room in the shopping center and I can plan my work schedule more flexibly.”

Appreciation Week to serve the staff and demonstrate the company’s care

Appreciation Week is an event organised regularly by DHL. During the Appreciation Week, the management will visit and serve lunch to the frontline staff in various locations, such as operation centers, to directly convey their gratitude and appreciation to the staff. “The management will put on chef’s uniform and serve meal to the frontline staff. By doing that, it is hoped that the frontline staff can feel respected and a closer relationship can be forged.” Kong further explains that the management not only participate in staff activities within office hours, they will also visit all service centers during their operation hours.

Key features

- Good people management practices are designed and implemented having regard to the characteristics of the logistics industry. For example, the customer service staff working on shifts may choose to work 5 or 5.5 days a week and rosters are set accordingly.
- A range of measures are rolled out to show the company’s respect and care for the staff and their families, such as the smoke cessation and health check programme, festival gifts and scholarships for staff’s children.

UA Cinemas

Smile Campaign cultivating a harmonious atmosphere

Going to the cinema is a good way to while away one’s leisure time. Yet, the enjoyment will not be possible without the hard work of a group of dedicated cinema staff working behind the screen. Since staff are the important bridge of communication between the company and its customers, their morale is a crucial factor affecting the atmosphere of the cinema. To keep staff happy at work, UA Cinema Circuit Limited (“UA”) has launched the “Smile Campaign” with the aim of spreading their smiles to every customer.

One of UA’s key principles in human resources management is people orientation. Ivan Wong, Managing Director of UA, says the company has all along been promoting good people management and family-friendly culture. In addition to providing flexible working arrangements to cater for staff needs, the company organises a range of team building activities and training programmes. “To retain outstanding staff, the company needs to make sure that staff love and enjoy their work. Staff in different posts have their own talents. The company needs to help them unleash their potential through good people management,” he adds.

Management Experience Frontline Work

In the light of the above, UA launched the “Smile Campaign” for the very first time this year, which includes the “Management on Frontline Days” programme for the management to experience the daily workflow of frontline staff. Through the programme, Ivan learned from his frontline colleagues what it was like to be a cinema service officer and experienced the duties from ushering to selling tickets and snacks. “Every master specialises in his own field. To serve drinks seems to be a simple task, but techniques are indeed required.” The experience programme helped him understand better the difficulties faced by frontline colleagues.

“The experience of frontline work enables the management to be more considerate in formulating policies, resulting in a smoother cinema operation.” In order to relieve staff from work pressure, a variety of recreation and sports activities, interest classes, etc. are organised for them to relax and enjoy themselves.

UA cinemas are located in various districts across the city. In formulating people management policies, UA’s major concern is to strengthen communication with frontline staff in different locations. Ivan says that, with understanding of the frontline staff’s busy and stressful work, the company incorporates fun competitions in their daily routine, such as “Happy Smile Awards”, “Popcorn Competition”, “Box Office Competition”, “Ushering Competition” and “Guests’ Angels”, etc. The purpose is to help colleagues know and communicate better with each other. Staff with

outstanding performances will be commended and rewarded. “Take ‘Guests’ Angels’ as an example. Suggestion boxes are placed in every UA cinemas so that customers can commend the staff they appreciate right away. Staff with remarkable performances will be given rewards and can share their service experience in the company’s internal newsletter for mutual encouragement and improvement.”

Flexible working arrangements for company sustainable development

Ivan emphasises, “Everyone devotes time and efforts to take care of the family. If the management team can put themselves in the shoes of employees and treat them well, reciprocally, the team will bring more rewards to the company in the long term.” A staff who has kids says, “Thanks to the company’s understanding of my situation, I am able to arrange my work flexibly so that I can have more spare time to look after my kids and the family.” UA also organises recreational activities and interest classes for employees to maintain their mental and physical well-being. UA believes that talent is the capital for success. Staff members are encouraged to pursue lifelong learning to enhance the company's sustainable development. In addition to internal training, employees enrolling in courses of other organizations can apply for educational allowances.

Key features

- The company provides a pleasant working environment, helps boost staff’s morale and strengthens their communication through various internal competitions and lunch gathering. The management can understand staff needs by putting themselves in the shoes of staff.
- The company offers group purchases, festive red packets, complimentary film tickets and so on as staff welfare and rewards. It also organises recreational and sports activities to promote work-life balance.
- The company attaches great importance to staff training. The Business Associate Programme is designed to provide training for management talents who are interested in joining the cinema business.

SOCAM

promotes strong learning ethos for achieving construction safety culture

Every construction project begins with the meticulous design and planning of architects and engineers, whose conceived ideas are then brought into being by construction workers. Both professional knowledge and site safety are indispensable throughout the construction process. For the purpose of enhancing the safety awareness and professional knowledge of its staff, SOCAM Development Limited (“SOCAM”) adopts various good people management practices so as to work together with its staff in upholding the industry standards.

While attaching great importance to talent development and striving to provide a safe and healthy working environment to its staff, SOCAM also cares about their work-life balance. According to Yuen Siu-chen, Human Resources Manager (Construction) of SOCAM, employees in the industry are subject to pressure arising from the need to complete construction projects within a specified time frame with professionalism, conscientiousness and attention to details. Therefore, they have put emphasis on professional training, stress relief and safety and health in devising good people management practices to facilitate the work of our staff.

Acquiring professional knowledge for safeguarding the “Safety First” principle

“The construction industry is facing manpower shortage amid strong competition for skilled labour. We are therefore keen to offer training opportunities to our staff in the hope of enhancing their sense of belonging,” says Yuen. Apart from internal training programmes, SOCAM introduces the “Training Allowance Scheme”, under which staff members are encouraged to better equip themselves by pursuing further studies in the form of external training courses. With the allowance granted under the Scheme, Chan Kai-yiu, currently engineering graduate of building services engineering, attended the professional seminars of the industry. “The company subsidises us to attend seminars organised by The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers which are very useful in enhancing our professional knowledge and career development. Furthermore, attending these professional seminars is one of the requirements for qualifying as an engineer.”

The company has also set up the Health, Safety and Environment Department to proactively advocate the principle of “safety first” in connection with different construction projects. In addition to fostering a safety culture in the company, the Department also organises seminars, such as the “Target Seminar”, to share the latest safety information and legislation with stakeholders such as contractors, sub-contractors and site workers annually.

Conducting self-organised workshops to relieve stress and build staff relationships

Not only does SOCAM support its staff to attend various training programmes and seminars, but it

also thinks highly of their work-life balance. To this end, the “Interest Group Development Fund” is set up allowing staff members to organise workshops by themselves according to their interests. It is hoped that work stress can be reduced through other modes of learning. The Fund offers great flexibility to the staff as anyone interested is only required to submit a proposal to the company providing relevant information such as scope of the workshop, tutor qualifications and necessary funding for approval. Yuen reveals that the funding amount is limited but it does encourage staff to pursue continuous learning while relieving their stress at work.

Fu Jing-yi, Administrative Assistant, has been working at SOCAM for almost 20 years. She is pleased to see the company keep enhancing its good people management practices. “I have attended a number of interest classes which enable colleagues from different departments to get to know and build a harmonious relationship with each other so as to facilitate their cooperation in the future.”

Key features

- Being fully aware of the requirements of work safety and health for staff in the construction industry, the company has devised good people management practices that promote occupational safety, physical and mental health and a satisfactory working environment in conformity with the industry standards.
- The company proactively encourages and supports its staff to pursue further studies and learning having regard to both their professional qualifications and interests so as to enhance their professionalism and maintain a work-life balance.

Conrad Hong Kong extending hospitality to hotel team members

Entrenched manpower shortage and high staff turnover is not uncommon in hotel industry. However, should the management ever listen to its staff with empathy and make good use of hotel resources, there will not be any difficulty in staff retention. Conrad Hong Kong (“Conrad”) extends hospitality to its staff and provides diversified people management practices, which are well received by staff and their families.

Conrad currently employs over 600 staff, with an average length of service of eight years. More than one-third of them are “veterans” who have served the company for as long as ten years. There is no doubt that the key lies in good people management. “Our primary concern in human resources management is the staff’s perspective,” says Ada Wong, Director of Human Resources of Conrad.

Leverage on the hotel’s advantage to organise staff activities

In addition to public holidays, all Conrad employees are entitled to special leaves such as birthday leave, marriage leave and compassionate leave. The entitlement is much more favourable than the statutory requirement and most of the counterparts in the industry, which differentiates Conrad from the typical perception of associating the hotel industry with long working hours and fewer rest days. Wong says that holidays or salaries, however, are not the sole indicator of good people management. A hotel may provide a range of staff benefits by making good use of its existing resources to attain a win-win situation. “For example, our staff may book any of the 4,700 hotels worldwide under Hilton Group at very attractive rates. Their families and friends may also enjoy special room rates.”

To utilise its venues for staff activities, Conrad organises birthday parties and family activities for staff in its ballrooms. Staff may also hold wedding banquets or gatherings in the hotel at attractive rates. “The hotel has witnessed our colleagues progressing through different stages of their life, from graduation to developing their career, and from building up their own family to having children. The hotel will accompany them through every important moment in their lives.”

Hospitality as the cornerstone of people management

The hotel has provided comprehensive and flexible ancillary facilities for expressing breastmilk in the workplace. “We reserve a guest room for use by our working mothers every day. A fridge is reserved in the pantry for storage of breastmilk.” The idea was inspired by a thank-you letter received by the hotel a few years ago. Wong explains, “A lady with a baby in her arms approached the concierge to look for a washroom to breastfeed. Our staff was very considerate and arranged a

“Good People Management” Series

guest room for her use free of charge. She subsequently sent us a thank-you letter in appreciation of our hospitality. It came to my mind that the staff is not only our valuable resources but our most important internal customers. Why don't we treat them with the same hospitality?"

Lo Ka-man, supervisor of the teleservice centre of Conrad, is a mother of two. She has benefited from the lactation policies for almost one year after the birth of her second child. "It's in fact an ideal arrangement for mothers to express breastmilk in a comfortable and private guest room." She also enjoyed the time with her kids by bringing them to the kids' parties organised by the hotel. "When knowing more about my workplace, my kids no longer whine and ask me not to go to work. Sometimes taking them to the hotel for fun turns to be an 'incentive' for them!"

Key features

- In addition to public holidays, all employees are entitled to special leaves such as birthday leave, marriage leave and compassionate leave. The entitlement is more favourable than the statutory requirement and most of the counterparts in the industry.
- Utilisation of hotel resources for staff activities to share with them the important moments in their life.
- Treating staff with the same hospitality as to customers and providing guest rooms for staff to express breastmilk.

Hong Thai offers different types of leaves for staff to enjoy family life

Long holidays are the busiest time in the tourism industry as working people in Hong Kong often grasp the timing to travel with families. It is therefore not possible for employees in the industry to spend the holidays with their own families. In light of this, Hong Thai Travel Services Limited (“Hong Thai”) adopts a series of good people management practices, including the provision of different types of leaves and study allowances so that its staff can spend more time with their families and map out their career paths, which enhance the cohesion of the team and reduce staff turnover.

Hong Thai strives to offer customers an enjoyable travel experience since its establishment. The company cares about the staff as much as its customer. Jason Wong, Director and President of Hong Thai, strongly believes that “only happy staff can make customers happy”. Dedicated to promoting the philosophy of “Passing Love On”, Hong Thai hopes to extend the care for the staff to their families.

Flexible holiday arrangement gearing at staff needs

“The company has set up various communication channels like social network, emails and mails to encourage staff to air their views on the company’s policies. The company can therefore tailor better people management practices to staff needs and create a friendly working environment, thereby fostering a proactive team that offers hospitable services to customers,” says Wong. He stresses that in view of the industry nature, frontline colleagues have to work during holidays while other people enjoy their social and family gatherings. Outbound tour leaders working abroad are also unable to enjoy time with their loved ones in festive seasons. As such, many members of the industry will think of changing career after marriage.

As Wong points out, Hong Thai has noticed that this is one of the reasons for the higher staff turnover in the industry. Hong Thai therefore introduced birthday leave in 2012, allowing its staff to take one day off in their birthday month to celebrate with families and friends and enjoy more time together. Hong Thai has also introduced paternity leave before enactment of the statutory paternity leave. Wong says, “We flexibly arrange compensation leave for our outbound tour leaders who may take leave during the low seasons. Besides, they may take leave on public holiday if it falls on the day following their return to Hong Kong from overseas tours. They are also entitled to an extra half-day off after taking a midnight flight back to Hong Kong to get adequate rest.”

Activities for staff to enjoy family time

“Family members are invited to join the company’s staff activities and they can also enjoy

tailor-made travel concessions. Staff can therefore enjoy family life by making use of these company’s offers.” Wong adds that Hong Thai also provides study leave and allowances to encourage staff to study bachelor and master degree courses for continuous self-enhancement. It also organises various internal training programmes and offers equal opportunities for job promotion. All these initiatives are intended to offer brighter career prospects for the staff.

Outsiders may admire the work of outbound tour leaders who have frequent opportunities to travel worldwide. Emily, who joined Hong Thai as a tour leader three and a half years ago, reveals that she needs to work on shifts as well as going abroad for half of the time each month. As she often works abroad during long holidays, she could hardly join her family at festive gatherings. She is therefore grateful to the company for the birthday leave that allows her to celebrate her birthday in Hong Kong, and the day off following each tour that allows her to spend time with her family after a short tour. “The company invites our families to annual dinners and staff activities so that they can have a better understanding of our jobs and offer greater support to our work. Some married colleagues have staged performances with their children in the company’s activities, which not only enhanced parent-child relationship, but also engendered a feeling that the company is like a big family,” says Emily.

Key features

- Having regard to the industry nature, the company offers birthday leave and arranges compensation leave flexibly so that the staff can spend time with loved ones to recompense working on public holidays and festive seasons.
- Study allowances and study leave are incentives for staff to continuously enhance their professionalism and map out better career plans.
- The company’s good people management policies also benefit the staff’s families. They are invited to join the company’s activities and offered travel concessions which make them feel like a member of the company so that they will show greater support to the staff.

DBS

provides flexible staff benefits with emphasis on human touch

While the banking industry has always been renowned for its rewarding remuneration and prospect, employers in the industry are racking their brains to compete for talents with their counterparts. Committed to the “people-oriented” principle, DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited (“DBS”) cares about the needs of its staff and enhances its competitive edge in talent attraction and retention by adopting responsive and flexible good people management practices.

Banking services are known for its professionalism. Sharon Cheng, Managing Director and Head of Human Resources of DBS, says that banking is a “people” business which stresses the importance of relationship with people, including employees. “DBS emphasises the importance of human touch in devising good people management practices. Taking into account employees’ needs at different life stages, various measures with family-friendly elements are adopted depending on the circumstances,” says Cheng. She adds that the company has launched the “DBS Cares” programme which focuses on three core values, namely work-family balance, recognition and achievements, and personal health, so as to ensure that the relevant measures benefit each and every staff member.

Flexible medical schemes to meet different needs

“We notice that employees have different needs regarding medical schemes. For example, older employees may need medical check-ups to keep in view their health condition, while it may not be too much of a concern to the younger ones who are more interested in staying fit. Therefore, it may not be cost-effective for the company to implement a uniform medical insurance scheme as before since it cannot benefit the staff as a whole,” explains Cheng. DBS has specially introduced a health benefit initiative, “iFlex Programme”, under which employees are provided with a subsidy capped at a certain amount payable on a reimbursement basis for a combination of benefits, such as medical check-ups, vaccination, dental care, prescription of glasses and fitness centre membership to suit their needs. These arrangements not only enhance the flexibility of the medical schemes, but also effectively cater to the needs of individual employees.

Cheng adds that the company has put in place the “5@5 Happy Friday” programme, under which employees are allowed to leave work earlier at 5pm every Friday. In addition, different types of leaves like family care leave and birthday leave are offered. DBS believes that all these initiatives, together with its flexi-working arrangements, can enhance the work efficiency of staff and achieve a win-win situation for both the employer and employees. “We are going to launch a new Mobile App through which our employees can apply for annual leave and training programmes. This App will also feature a forum to facilitate better communication among employees.”

Nurture creativity through training for better career development

Innovative elements have been incorporated into staff training and development programmes. Cheng says that DBS has developed an interactive platform, “iGrow@DBS”, featuring interactive games, virtual tutors and useful information on internal development opportunities. Other than traditional classroom learning, the company spares no effort in developing training via the internet and mobile phones as well as Experiential Learning, so that employees can have diversified learning opportunities beyond geographical boundaries.

Boris, Senior Vice President of DBS, was seconded to Singapore in the first year he joined DBS. When he came back to Hong Kong in the following year, he worked in different departments to gain a better understanding of the overall operation of the company. “The company offers us various training and development opportunities. For me, the most memorable experience is the trip to Mongolia in 2012, when I had opportunities to work with top professionals to develop fund investment programmes for SMEs. This solid experience is very useful to me in my current managerial position,” says Boris.

Key features

- DBS has set up the Human Capital Council to examine and regularly review the family-related employment policies so as to help staff maintain work-family balance.
- Guided by the objective of “Making Banking Joyful”, the management gets a free hand to devise flexible staffing policies for the benefit of staff as a whole.
- DBS values staff potential and helps develop their talents through creative and innovative training and development programmes.

“Good People Management” Series

Acknowledgements:

LH Group

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