



PMC Stars

This section of the PMC Newsletter is dedicated to showcasing the achievements and contributions of our PMCs in the field of management consultancy. For this edition, our PMC Star is **John Quek** of Worklife Solutions.

ABOUT THE CLIENT

Hotel Royal @ Queens is a wholly owned subsidiary of Royal Properties Investment Pte Ltd, which is itself a subsidiary of the Hotel Royal Limited Group, a locally grown company. It is a 4-star hotel strategically located in the heart of the city's dynamic business, cultural and entertainment hubs. Some of the major landmarks of the city that are located within walking distance include Esplanade Theatres by the Bay, Suntec City Convention Hall, Marina Square, Bugis Village, Orchard Road, Chinatown and Clarke Quay.



BRIEF PROJECT BACKGROUND

Work-family balance has received increased attention recently due to dramatic changes in workplace and family life over the past decade. The workforce has also seen a large increase in female and professional workers, with many of these being considered working moms. Societal changes and technological advances have created a serious potential for interference, conflict, and competing demands between the expectations of the workplace and personal needs at home.

High turnover rate and workplace stress are just some of the common problems that have plagued the hotel industry in the absence of family-friendly practices. Nevertheless, family-friendly concerns are not the only consideration. Achieving an appropriate balance between work and other aspects of life has several advantages for both businesses and employees. Organizations need to recognize that employees facing conflict between their personal roles and their responsibilities as a worker may result in lower workplace productivity. The removal of unnecessary obstacles that prevent workers from achieving their full potential within the labour market will help prevent skills shortages which may continue to be a widespread problem across the hotel industry.

Herein, the main objective of this work-life project was to assist employees to address their work and family commitments through the provision of appropriate flexibility in the workplace and resources to support employees handling the increasing demands of work and life. Others objectives of the project included the improvement of employees' job engagement, reduction in staff turnover and the enhancement of corporate image (to be an employer of choice).



CONSULTING ACTIVITY

To address the above concerns, flexibility in the workplace to accommodate work, personal and family needs can result in benefits to organizations such as reduced absenteeism and staff turnover. This was the main impetus for Hotel Royal @ Queens (Singapore) Pte Ltd to explore the feasibility of introducing work-life programmes and policies for its employees.

To kick-start this work-life programme, Hotel Royal @ Queens engaged work-life consultant John to assist the organization to apply for a grant to defray the costs for the project. A preliminary needs assessment was conducted to gauge the work-life needs of the workforce. In collaboration with the project leader from the company, the items required for flexi-work arrangements were identified and some key recommendations and policies were drafted and implemented for the organization.

In summary, the entire duration of the project was twelve months and several dialogue sessions were held with the top management during the course of the project. To encourage management buy-in, success stories and business cases were shared and presented during the discussions.

As a result of the project, several policies and programmes were introduced to enhance the physical and mental wellness of the employees. For a start, flexi-work arrangements such as flexible shift schedules, telecommuting options, flexi-hours, time-banking and time-offs were introduced for different categories of employees. Different work-life options were customized and applicable to different categories of employees due to the nature of the job and business requirements. Aside from flexi-work arrangements, the company also has in-place other employees' benefits such as workplace health programmes, leave benefits and recreational programmes to enhance the working environment.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND CHALLENGES

The project has achieved all its intended objectives during the post-implementation stage. Post evaluation results reinforced the benefits of the work-life project by revealing an improvement in job satisfaction, reduction in staff turnover rate, a drop in absenteeism rate and savings in medical expense. From a business perspective, the hotel has observed an improvement in productivity levels and the improvement in job satisfaction levels has a positive impact on the hotels' customer service through improved ratings on the customers' feedback portal.

Nevertheless, not all projects are without its challenges. It is important to note that flexibility and trust are important ingredients for a successful work-life project. Managing employees on flexi-work arrangements is indeed challenging and requires one to shift his/her paradigm of thought from a traditional viewpoint to one that assesses employees' performance based on his/her quality of work rather than time spent in the office.