

DIVERSITY IS THE BEST POLICY AT SUNWAY SHARED SERVICES

BY PATHMA SUBRAMANIAM

Sunway Shared Services Sdn Bhd bagged its first Aon Best Employers award at this year's event. Chief information officer Kevin Khoo attributes the win to the organisation's cohesive team.

He says the company's commitment to diversity and inclusivity is among the reasons it is an employer of choice among Malaysians. "Just like in a Formula One race, employee engagement is a journey that requires the involvement of more than one party in the organisation. The success of any organisation lies in its team spirit.

"We foster a culture that respects and appreciates differences, promotes equality among our colleagues and encourages all individuals to realise their fullest potential. This results in greater performance outcomes."

It is this objective — to ensure fair representation among its team members in terms of age, gender and race — that Sunway Shared Services is able to leverage a variety of ideas, backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, says Khoo. The company provides IT support services to most of Sunway Group's IT projects.

As IT is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world, Khoo says it is crucial that the company benchmarks itself against industry leaders. "We strongly encourage our employees to take part in trending IT projects such as blockchain technology, big data, the internet of things, robotics and automation and cloud computing, to assist in the smooth and seamless operation of our business units."

The survival and success of any large organisation depends greatly on having highly engaged employees, says Khoo. He points out that he holds quarterly town hall meetings and maintains a director's blog to ensure "clear two-way communication" between him and the employees.

"The town hall meetings provide a shared and transparent means of thought-sharing while the director's blog is where I share my opinions on the latest IT trends, how external factors may affect the performance of an organisation and some tips to make the best of any opportunities that may arise," says Khoo.

"I practise having engagement sessions with every employee to help better their understanding while sharing the direction and strategy of the group with them. Through this, employees understand their value in the organisation and are able to work harder to achieve a shared goal."

The company attracts talent via its referral programme he says. "This works best for us as we be-

lieve that a performer in the team is better able to identify another good talent. We feel that our employees know better what it takes for the group to perform optimally and they will be able to introduce efficient workers just like themselves. As part of the appreciation, we offer a referral bonus to our employees after a referred recruit has been hired."

The company also hires via its internship programmes through a collaboration with Sunway Education Group. Khoo says the internship opportunities give graduates hands-on work experience and involvement in day-to-day job duties. "Our conversion from interns to permanent staff is 20% as we use internships as a means of enhancing our recruitment efforts," he adds.

One of the key initiatives is the "Build Yourself+ Programme", which includes coaching sessions, an annual talent review and casual sharing sessions for staff. "This prolonged approach creates a sense of awareness among the staff about their own performance and achievements, as well as how their performance assists with the goals of the group. This eventually creates a good relationship with the organisation as good work never goes unnoticed," says Khoo.

To assess the level of satisfaction among its employees, Sunway Shared Services conducts employee engagement surveys. "We have engaged Aon as our biennial survey partner to conduct employee engagement, apart from a pulse survey carried out every two years for a quick insight into employee satisfaction," says Khoo.

That is because employee engagement is key when it comes to dealing with talent, he adds. "Following Aon's engagement model, we encourage employees to exhibit the 3S, which is to consistently speak positively about the organisation to co-workers (saying), to have an intense desire to be a member of the organisation (staying) and to exert extra effort and engage in work that contributes to the success of the business (striving)." E



Khoo