

Hartalega introduces wellness programme to re-energise its employees

With Hartalega Holdings Bhd on an aggressive expansion phase over the last few years — doubling its sales, capacity and headcount in just three years — Director of Human Resource Kuan Vin Seung believes that the time is right to re-energise the employees, better known as Hartanians.

He says the Group's strong growth, which puts it as the world's largest nitrile glove manufacturer, was achieved because of the "blood, sweat and tears" that have been put in by Hartanians.

"We realised that some Hartanians have been working so hard that they neglected their health and well-being, resulting in being overweight and having high blood pressure and cholesterol," says Kuan, when asked about the motivation behind the Group's wellness programme, Hartagize, which was launched in December last year.

The programme, which was mooted by its Human Resource department, is run by a team comprising members of its employee communication and engagement unit, corporate social responsibility unit and Sports Club, whose members are mostly millennials. The aim of the 13-month programme is to create a fun, healthy and engaged workplace.

"Ultimately, we want to re-energise the Hartanians," says Kuan.

Some 50 activities involving health, volunteerism and engagement have been planned for the year. Those that focus on health include the 10,000 steps-a-day challenge, Mount Kinabalu climb, colour run, Skytrex, Zumba, futsal and badminton.

"The 10,000-steps challenge has been well received, and we reward the employee who took the most number of steps every month. Our record is 1.5 million steps in a month, which is equivalent to taking 50,000 steps per day consistently for 30 days. This goes to show that Hartagize really makes people go the extra mile (in this case, it was many miles) to improve their health," Kuan says.

Apart from promoting healthy living, Hartalega also encourages its employees to take part in volunteer work such as river cleaning, mangrove planting and visits to homes for the elderly. This is important as studies have shown that millennials are more likely to join companies that are socially responsible, he says.

As for promoting engagement among employees, the company organises town-halls, treasure hunts and movie screenings.

"To encourage participation, we introduced gamification into the programme

KENNY YAP/THE EDGE



Kuan Vin Seung

campaigns annually to create awareness of the importance of workplace safety and health.

"We have clinics in our factories to ensure Hartanians receive prompt medical attention when they require it. For emergencies, we have an ambulance team. We also have emergency response teams that are trained by the Fire Department to respond to emergencies such as fire and chemical spills," Kuan says.

As Hartagize enters its 12th month soon, the company has plenty to boast about when it comes to the effectiveness of its wellness programme — the number of employees taking medical leave has seen a 5% reduction, the number of medical leave days taken has come down by 9% and employee attrition has dropped 18%.

Despite the success, Hartalega is not resting on its laurels. Kuan tells *The Edge* that Hartagize 2.0 will see new elements added to enhance the effectiveness of its activities, which involve financial and mental wellness.

He believes a new area to focus on in the coming years is the participation of Hartanians, especially those in the management level. The company is also keeping an open mind on initiatives that have yet to be introduced such as flexible working arrangements.

by awarding points for participation. This system is designed in such a way that it encourages multi-level and multi-department participation," Kuan says.

Apart from Hartagize activities, the health, safety and environment department also organises health and safety