

Federal Express Services (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (FedEx) has won the Aon Best Employers award for the ninth time in a row, which makes it the longest winning streak in the award's history. Its managing director Ramesh Kumar Singam is understandably proud. He attributes FedEx's success to its strong company culture, built on the back of its People-Service-Profit (P-S-P) philosophy.

"Essentially, the philosophy is about establishing a culture that respects and rewards employees who deliver exceptional service to customers. Delighted customers, in turn, reward the company with their business and loyalty, creating a profitable enterprise that can provide job satisfaction and job security for its people," explains Ramesh.

In other words, FedEx does not see its employees as a cost and liability. Rather, they are the company's most important asset. Treating them well will bring more business to the company. And this positive cycle can go on and build upon itself.

"At FedEx, our people are the heart and soul of the business. We understand that the people of FedEx — more than planes, trucks, warehouses and technology — make FedEx what it is today," says Ramesh.

In line with the P-S-P philosophy, FedEx provides a variety of training and development opportunities for its employees to encourage their career progression. For instance, there is the "Advance into Man-

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agement" (AIM) programme, which allows lower-level employees who demonstrate management potential to be nominated by their managers to participate in a well-structured leadership training programme.

More importantly, FedEx has a tradition of nurturing its employees to reach their highest potential and of hiring first-line managers from within employee ranks, says Ramesh. This instils a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the company.

"Attracting and retaining talent is [part of our long-term strategy] of promoting from within. There are no limits on career progression at FedEx. We have a tradition of training up our team members from junior to management positions to help drive our business forward. This policy lays the groundwork for career paths right through to the top management and into new areas."

Meanwhile, employee engagement is the cornerstone of everything, says Ramesh. Despite the existing infrastructure that has been put in place to encourage the career progression of FedEx employees, the top management has to constantly understand the needs of its employees and the younger generation in order to retain old blood and attract the new.

Ramesh says while remuneration may be important, it does not carry the weight it used to. Today, Malaysian employees are asking for different things and FedEx is adjusting its company policies to meet these new demands.

Ramesh says, "We find that the local workforce has undergone a mental shift. Employee motivation and engagement

have less and less to do with salaries and monetary benefits and more to do with leadership, communication, empowerment and development.

"Let's take the Gen-Y as an example. This group of employees will form 50% of the global workforce by 2020. Our observation shows that they take engagement very seriously, prioritising elements such as empowerment, professional development and enhancement of workplace relationships."

Therefore, FedEx tries to foster a strong people culture so its employees feel valued in the workplace. "We encourage our employees to excel and contribute."

Ramesh says this mental shift is not occurring only in logistics, but across all industries. Companies have to enhance their engagement with employees to attract the best talent in their respective industries.

This is also what FedEx has been doing. "To engage with employees and attract the best talent, we have to re-evaluate the methods and approaches that we currently have and work towards tailoring these processes, in line with the trends and challenges posed by the workforce," says Ramesh.

At the end of the day, irrespective of mindsets or expectations, all employees want to be respected, trusted and empowered. "Employees want freedom and for the company to have enough trust that they will do a good job. They also want to be heard," Ramesh adds. **E**