

WINNING DEBUT FOR HARTALEGA

BY KUEK SER KWANG ZHE

Apart from being a key contributor to the robust local glove industry, Hartalega Holdings Bhd is also the world's largest nitrile glove producer. This year, it added another feather to its cap by clinching the award for Best Employer at the Aon Best Employers — Malaysia 2018 awards.

Managing director Kuan Mun Leong says the news comes as a surprise as it is the first time the company has picked up an Aon award. "It certainly is a pleasant surprise. It is truly an honour to be selected for this prestigious award, more so as we are ranked among other prominent top employers. This award is important to us as it recognises the excellent calibre of our talent pool and our people practices," he adds.

How does the Kuala Lumpur-based company keep its employees happy? Kuan says one of the ways is the implementation of the Employee Share Option Scheme (ESOS). Under the scheme, the company issues share options to eligible employees, which gives them the right to acquire company shares in the future. The scheme helps employees generate extra wealth on top of their monthly salaries. It also increases employee dedication and work satisfaction.

As at Aug 20, the scheme had generated a total profit of more than RM450 million for Hartalega's employees. "We have extended the ESOS coverage to our technicians and clerical staff. We ensure that our people receive attractive compensation and benefits," says Kuan.

However, the company knows that monetary rewards alone are not enough. It is essential for the company to train and develop the potential of its employees by identifying talents and allowing them to take on leadership roles. To do so, the company has introduced various initiatives in recent years to achieve these goals, says Kuan.

First, there is the Structured On-the-Job Training (SOJT) programme to equip employees with the right skills and knowledge. This programme, provided to employees in various departments, helps them fit into their roles and gain a sense of confidence in their abilities. Another initiative is the Competency Development Programme (CDP), which has a clear framework for upgrading the employees' core and leadership competencies.

The company also runs the Leadership Development Programme (LDP), which helps identify and groom future leaders of the company. This programme is part of its succession plan, which involves employees at the leadership level as well as those who have been earmarked to take on leadership roles.

"The senior leadership team, together with the human resources department, identifies high-potential candidates based on their performance, competencies, contributions and aspirations. These candidates are coached and mentored by the senior leaders. Their skills are then evaluated to ensure that good leaders are nurtured. This is important as good leaders will cultivate a strong team that is crucial for the company's succession and sustainability," says Kuan.



“

We have extended the ESOS coverage to our technicians and clerical staff. We ensure that our people receive attractive compensation and benefits.

> Kuan

”

He adds that the company also works with established external leadership development consultants for the LDP course to impart good leadership practices to the candidates.

Hartalega stays engaged with its employees to ensure that they are fully aligned with the objectives of the company, says Kuan. "That is why the company conducts employee engagement surveys from time to time and carries out regular activities such as town hall meetings and briefings with the management team or focus groups that are established by the human resources department."

Digital media, such as social media and the company's intranet, are also essential engagement tools that it utilises to keep employees up to date on various events.

There is also Hartagize — an initiative launched by the company's human resources and corporate social responsibility departments together with its sports club. Hartagize promotes social health, employee engagement and volunteerism among employees by organising a wide range of activities.

Recently, 40 different activities were organised over a 12-month period. The activities includes sports, fitness activities and community outreach efforts. There were also fun events such as movie nights and treasure hunts to foster strong bonds and build a sense of camaraderie among employees.

"To encourage participation from all levels in the organisation, we have a point system that allows employees to accumulate points when they participate in these activities and earn handsome rewards. The response from employees has been very positive," says Kuan.

The fact that the company has the largest market capitalisation among local glove makers and is the most innovative nitrile glove manufacturer in the world has enabled it to build a strong brand name to attract talent. "They want to work for a winning organisation. They feel a sense of pride that they are part of the company. Thus, it is important for the company to sustain its growth and success going forward," says Kuan.

How can this be done? He says the company will continue to instil the core values that have made it successful among its employees. These values are articulated by the acronym "SHIELD", which stands for synergy, honesty, innovativeness, excellence in quality, learning and dedication.

"All our employees are appraised with these values as a benchmark and we constantly promote the values throughout the organisation. This encourages a positive, ethical and performance-driven mindset among our people," says Kuan.

The company is establishing a dedicated learning centre at its Next Generation Integrated Glove Manufacturing Complex in Sepang, Selangor, which aims to create a highly skilled workforce. This will cater for the company's long-term talent needs, says Kuan.

He adds that the company is looking at embracing the latest technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, to support its human capital management system. "As part of our long-term growth strategy, we are focused on scaling up the capabilities of our talent pool to meet global standards." E