

BASF: Flexi Hours, Work From Home and Job Sharing Pilot



The BASF Asia-Pacific Service Centre Sdn Bhd located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia since 2005, is part of BASF's global network of shared service organizations. The centre provides Finance, Information Services, Human Resources, Procurement and Environment, Health and Safety services to 18 countries and territories in Asia Pacific.

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- Amanda Oh, Head of Human Resources

Overview

The Flexibility@Work Enhancement was put in place as part of BASF Asia-Pacific Service Centre's commitment to creating a work environment which promotes work-life balance and caters to the needs of a diverse workforce.

As part of the enhancement, Flexibility@Work introduced the 'flexi-work' hour option to employees as well as a 'Work from Home' option.

Objectives

Based on findings from internal surveys and a review of industry practices, BASF Asia-Pacific Service Centre Sdn Bhd set out to develop policies with the objectives of providing flexibility at work, while balancing the need to meet business requirements and ensure minimal impact to operations. The initiatives also enhance the Employer's Value Proposition in attracting and retaining staff, while promoting employee motivation and accountability and being in line with other Shared Service Organization setups.

Initiatives

The organisation wide survey was done to gauge employee needs in relation to work from home policies, which included questions such as "have you encountered the need to work from home?" and "looking at current job responsibilities, do you think it is possible for you to work from home?". Besides that, the survey also sought to expand the scope of the flexi-hours initiative which was already in place. Results were compiled and examined before the final guidelines were decided upon. In this manner, employee concerns, comments and opinions were investigated and analysed in detail before initiatives were adopted.

The following are outcomes from the Flexibility@Work initiatives:

Flexi-work Hours

'Flexi-work hours' aims to give employees the flexibility of arriving at work anytime between 7am to 10am, as long as the 8 hour work day and 40 hour work-week criteria are satisfied. Core hours of 10am to 4pm are also practiced whereas all employees should be present at work. All permanent and confirmed employees are eligible for 'Flexi-work hours'.

During the initial pilot phase, application form was required for employees who want to opt for 'Flexi-work hours'. This was subsequently abolished during organisation-wide implementation, allowing supervisors to use their own discretion to achieve mutual agreement with team members via email.

Additional slots for flexi times were also included as per employee feedback from the survey to extend the number of starting work time from 3 to 6 choices i.e. starting at 7:00 am by half hour increments up until 10:00 am instead of hourly increments previously.

Managers are expected to communicate expectations and set baseline target performance (e.g. SLA, ticket resolution rate) with employees, define and plan peak periods with respective function Senior Manager and Director to obtain agreement, and ensure overall team deliverables are not compromised by the arrangement in place.

Work from Home

'Work from home' aims to give employees the flexibility of working from up to 4 days in a month with the assumption that the employees are available and contactable at all time during the work hours. All permanent and confirmed employees are eligible for 'Work from home'.

Employees who opt for this arrangement are required to update mobile number in the company's global communication directory and set up a call forward to mobile number. Additionally, they are expected to denote 'Work from home' days in the company's internal shared calendar system.

The employees also need to adhere to all applicable company policies and code of conduct, especially with regard to BASF data security policies and protection of confidential information. As such, working in public area is prohibited.

Outcome

The initiatives under Flexibility@Work Enhancement program were successfully introduced to BASF employees and are perceived as being good initiatives. Employees generally feel that the organisation understands and supports their need to balance between work and life. Even for some employees who do not use the flexible work options, simply knowing that they have these options, gives them the feeling that the organization cares about their desires and well-being. It does influence employees' commitment to their jobs, satisfaction with their work and the ability to handle their responsibilities at work and at home.

"The flexi-work hours initiative allows me to start early and finish early for the day. I do not need to waste time sitting in the rush hour traffic which can be very unproductive. With this flexibility, I am able be on time to pick my son up from the babysitter. I have better focus between work and family." - Emi Imai, Controlling & Quality Management Team

“Working from home saves me a lot of travelling time and the everyday stress of getting a car park. Apart from being in the comfort of my own home, it also gives me more control of my time over work and life.” - Sharon Choong, Finance & Controlling

Job Sharing Pilot



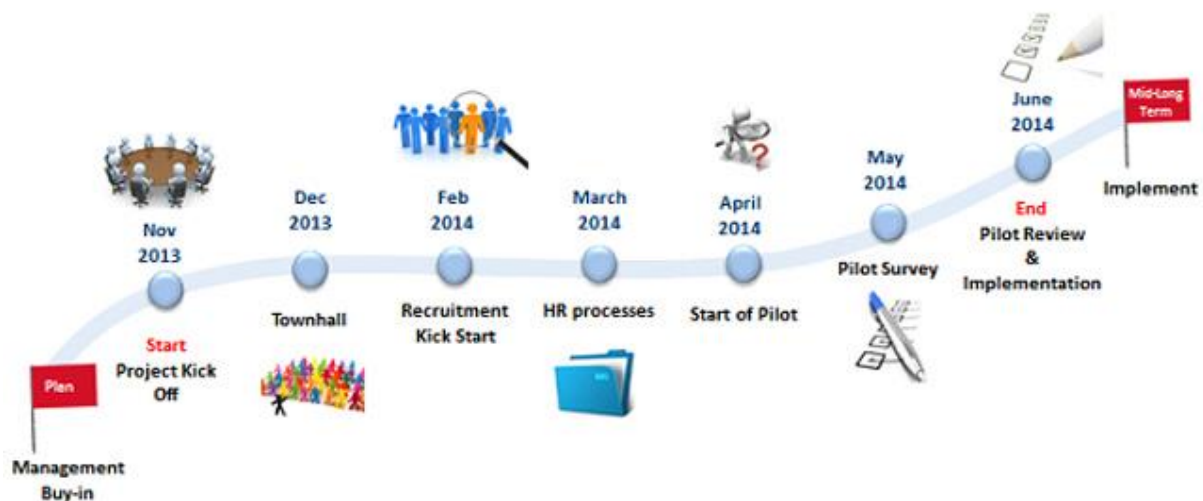
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Overview

BASF's Job Sharing work option journey began in September 2013. This is in addition to the previous Flexibility@Work schemes to further attract talents when BASF discovered that there was an increasing need for different kinds of flexibility work options, beyond the conventional methods that they are already currently practicing to continually enhance their work-life balance and diversity and inclusion initiative.



What is Job Sharing?

Job sharing is an arrangement where two Part-Time employees share the responsibility and similar compensation of a full-time position. There are two types of job sharing, which are:



There is often a misconception that job sharing is synonymous with ad-hoc part-time jobs, but in actuality, job sharing is two long-term roles with reduced working hours.

There are many benefits to job sharing, which include:

- Cost-effective method for attracting talent who prefer working shorter weeks
- Increased knowledge depth from employing two people
- Continuity of operation as one job sharer will be able to cover their partner when they are unavailable to come to work
- Ability to retain talent, especially employees looking to start a family as well as caregivers

Job Sharing Journey in BASF

Despite its successes in many countries globally, job sharing remains a relatively new concept in Malaysia's corporate landscape. Eager to kick-start the job sharing trend in Malaysia, BASF reached out to companies who are currently practicing job sharing to begin compiling best practices as key learnings for the pilot project. Internally, they began by assessing the feasibility of job sharing within different departments. After rounds of discussion with the hiring managers of the departments, a few functions under their Service Centre were chosen to be a part of the pilot group.

These departments were chosen due to the nature of work which entails that:

- the work tasks require minimal continuity and follow-up
- the work tasks are measurable and the work load could be split between job sharers
- the department's business needs are accommodating to absorbing job sharers

Job Sharing Recruitment Approach

Next, it was crucial that they discussed the initiative with major stakeholders for the pilot to run smoothly. They began sharing the idea during leadership meetings, highlighting the objectives of the initiatives as well as the benefits it would entail. While the concept was very new to all stakeholders involved, it was well-received with hardly any resistance.

Job Sharing Compensation and Benefit Approach

The next step was to ensure that all the HR processes and infrastructure were re-designed specifically to accommodate job sharers, as well as hiring for job sharers. The project team, which consists of recruiters and compensation and benefit experts, gathered material from job sharing best practices and incorporated job sharing elements seamlessly into the recruitment process, and relevant HR processes and policies.

The team found from research materials that most companies pro-rate the compensation given to job sharing employees and still allocate them the same benefits as full-time

employees, as job sharing employees are hired on a permanent basis The team began analysing the compensation and benefits areas which would be affected by job sharing, which include:

- Salary
- Health coverage
- Insurance benefits
- Employee leaves

With recommendations from the Head of HR and the Compensation & Benefits Manager, the team came to a feasible salary package for job sharing employees.

The team initially spent more time on the recruitment process, given that a number of potential candidates were at first unfamiliar with the concept of job sharing. After explaining the concept however, many women were excited that the organisation was willing to offer this flexibility. The project team used a variety of recruitment method, from utilising online job portals such as myStarjobs and JobStreet to attending the TalentCorp’s Career Comeback Networking event, which allowed for them to meet some of the potential talents eager to return back to the workforce.

After ensuring that the appropriate HR infrastructure was developed and validated by the Senior Managers and HR Director, the company is now ready for job sharing.

Job Sharing Pilot

Days	Hours	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Partner A	8.30am - 12.30pm	4	4	4	4	4
Partner B	1.30pm - 5.30pm	4	4	4	4	4

Definition of Job Sharing

BASF began the job sharing pilot in April 2014 and ran it for a total duration of two months, after they had their first job sharer candidate on-board in the second week. The job sharers share a desk, and an hour grace period is provided in case there are some unfinished tasks to attend to, or if there are any tasks that need to be handed over. The first pair splits their work schedule from 8.30am – 12.30pm while the other job sharer starts working at 1.30pm to 5.30pm, totaling up 4 hours per work day.

Outcome

The 2 month Job Sharing proved to be successful in helping BASF attracts talent to their company, particularly women who needed the flexibility in order to obtain work-life integration. The Job Sharing initiative has resulted in positive business and employee outcomes, which are:

Total of five (5) job sharers in two (2) departments, all of whom are women returnee

- Maintained recruitment turnaround
- Maintained productivity levels within the two departments which have job sharers
- High level of engagement by the job sharers

“I was particular when I was job hunting because I wanted the flexibility. I’m grateful to BASF for allowing me work on reduced hours, while still offering permanent employment.”

- Pauline, HR Services Analyst

Success Factors

- Leadership
 - Top Management Influence
- Organisation Alignment
 - Specific focus groups formed around organisation issues
 - Communication & feedback from employees

Website

www.basf.com