



GE: Women's Network

GE works on things that matter. The best people and the best technologies taking on the toughest challenges. Finding solutions in energy, health and home, transportation and finance. Building, powering, moving and curing the world. Not just imagining. Doing. GE works.

"Gender diversity ranks among the top priorities of some of the best global companies today but I must qualify this by emphasising that women professionals are making their mark in the business world purely on merit. We have some of the best women talent in GE across the more than 130 locations in which we operate in."

- Stuart Dean, CEO ASEAN, GE Global Growth and Operations

Overview

Initiated in 1997 by Jack Welch and a handful of senior female employees in GE, the Women's Network has been recognised globally as one of the most effective voluntary women's network. The GE Women's Network was formed to foster professional women development to attract, grow and retain female talent throughout GE. This is done through various tools which include networking, education and information sharing. In Malaysia, the GE Women's Network has links to partners such as Talent Corporation, Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita and McKinsey among others to advance the role of women in the workplace.

The initiative reaches out to women through events, workshops, speaker engagements, mentoring and networking activities and partners with local organisations to contribute physical and financial resources.

Objectives

Across ASEAN, GE's target is to ensure that 30% of the business is represented by women at various levels and fields. A fundamental component of meeting this objective is to ensure that the competence and caliber of women employees meet the level of competence required by the role. Therefore the Women's Network plays a critical role in cultivating women's leadership skills, expanding their contacts, building career opportunities and sharing best practices and experiences in order to facilitate the development of women leaders to meet this objective and to drive GE's success.

The Women's Network has five priorities:

- Enhance women's professional growth by providing information on coaching career paths, flexibility, and role models
 - Develop new and existing commercial talent
 - Foster the retention and promotion of women in technology and engineering
 - Improve GE's ability to attract, develop and retain diverse women
 - Cultivate the leadership competencies that reflect GE's focus on growth
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Initiatives

The focus for the Women's Network on a yearly basis is to expand the number of active female members and to continuously re-energise the events as well as find innovative ways to connect GE women and leverage on their experiences. GE provides women with the tools to take a proactive approach in managing their career and increasing visibility of their talents in order to seize opportunities when they arise.

Through proper leadership and governance, the network's operating structure consists of a leadership team, regional steering committees and local hubs. Once every two years, the hub leaders have a global meeting to discuss the development opportunities for the year whilst the regional steering committees meet quarterly and local hubs follow individual timelines. High-potential female executives identified as part of GE's Succession Planning process are often tapped to manage the Women's Network hubs and regions worldwide giving these women valuable, enterprise wide executive experiences and developmental opportunities.

Through global, regional and hub meetings, the Women's Network is able to establish the activities, trainings, workshops and themes for each initiative for the year. GE takes an 80/20 approach when determining activities in the year where 80% of activities are based on women's professional development and the remaining 20% is focused on development of social and personal skills such as expanding networks. The activities can include:

- Training & Mentoring Programmes
- Lunch with a leader or role model
- Social networking events
- Engagement events
- Work-life balance workshop
- Career-path workshop
- Women and health management
- Citizenship efforts to address challenges in communities

Some of the initiatives that have been rolled out from the Women's Network include:

- Women & Technology
A forum to help develop women in technology roles and those who want to use technology to grow their careers
- Women in Commercial
A forum for women in commercial roles (sales, marketing and customer facing jobs)
- myConnections
An initiative that promotes small group mentoring and peer group mentoring

Leveraging Technology

In 2011, GE launched "Colab", an internal online social media tool to help connect employees across the globe. Colab is actively used by the Women's Network to link up women in GE, worldwide to one another to support knowledge transfer and communication across borders.



Measuring Progress

Every year, the local committee in Malaysia meets to brainstorm activities and the theme for the year whilst Hub priorities are set every 2 years. Committee members are then accountable for the achievement of these initiatives through the establishment of performance metrics that are then reported at a local and global level.

Outcome

In Malaysia, GE's rate of return from maternity leave is at 100% as women leverage on the Women's Network as a form of support to transition back after maternity leave. The success of initiatives implemented by the network can also be translated in the Net Promoter Score which asks participants whether they would recommend the program to a friend. All initiatives have, up to today received a 90% response rate that participants would recommend initiatives to a friend.

After 7 years since the implementation of the Women's Network in Malaysia, GE has seen a tremendous increase in the participation rate in the network as well as enabled the business to build a successful leadership succession pipeline of women to help drive the company forward.

Success Factors

- Leadership
 - Top Management Influence
 - Organisation Alignment
 - HR Policies & Procedures
 - Cultural & Organisational Alignment
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Awards

- 2012: GE named one of "Top 50 Employers for Women" in UK by the, 'The Times'
 - 2011: "10 Best Companies for Women's Advancement" by Working Mother
 - 2011: "Empowerment of Women", Prime Minister's CSR Award Malaysia
 - 2004: Catalyst Award for innovative, effective and measurable initiatives to advance women
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Website

www.ge.com/my



Other Practices

Global

Flexible Work Arrangements

- GE encourages employees to meet their work commitments while balancing their own life through their flexible work arrangement. The flexible work arrangements are highly dependent on the employee's nature of work:
 - Telecommuting
 - Part-time

Canada

Family Friendly Facilities

- Flexible Childcare Option
 - GE Canada has collaborated with Kids & Company to provide employees with reliable, high quality full-time and part-time flexible child and elder care. The programme also includes back-up care in case the employee's current caregiver arrangement is unavailable.

India

Returnship Programme

- RESTART

An initiative started in 2008 that assists women scientist, engineers and functional experts who may have taken a break in their careers to restart their professional careers by coming back to work. This initiative was first launched at the John F. Welch Technology Centre (JFWTC) in Bangalore, India which is the largest of the four GE global research centres in the world.

During the GE Women's Network meeting in May 2007 at JFWTC, the team discussed the challenges of getting back to work after a career break. With this concern in mind, GE's JFWTC looked into how to exclusively hire women technologist and engineers who have taken career breaks by listening and understanding the needs of women employees. Whilst the team felt RESTART was a great initiative, it also highlighted various internal changes that needed to take place before employees 'restart' into the workforce such as reserved car parks for expecting mothers, reviewing the flexible work arrangements, mother-to-be relaxation and lactation rooms. Upon launching the initiative, RESTART has attracted more than 600 applications.

Family Friendly Facilities

- "Baby on the Way" Parking Sites
Priority parking is provided for soon-to-be mothers, that is within close proximity to the office entrance.



- **Post Maternity Flex Policies**
The flexible work policy provides returning mothers the opportunity to transition back to the company.
- **Mother-to-be Relaxation Room**
Provide mothers-to-be with the opportunity and space to unwind during the day.
- **Lactation Room for New Mothers**
Private room for new mothers which includes a refrigerator.

Malaysia

Flexible Work Arrangements

GE Malaysia practices various forms of flexible work arrangement to provide employees with the opportunity to customise their working style and schedule to support the business:

- Flexi-time/hour
- Telecommuting
- Part-time work

Family Friendly Facilities

- **Extended Maternity Leave**
GE was one of the first companies in Malaysia to practice extended maternity leave for 3 months which is an additional month from the statutory requirement.
- **Lactation Room for New Mothers**
Private room for new mothers which includes a refrigerator.
- **Designated Car Park**
Priority is given for soon-to-be mothers for allocation of car-parking facilities.

Training & Development

- **Training & Development Programme**
GE has identified targeted training and development programmes for women.