

OSRAM: Women @ OSRAM



OSRAM, Munich, Germany is one of the two leading light manufacturers in the world. Its subsidiary, OSRAM Opto Semiconductors GmbH in Regensburg (Germany), offers its customers solutions based on semiconductor technology for lighting, sensor and visualization applications. Osram Opto Semiconductors has production sites in Regensburg (Germany), Penang (Malaysia) and Wuxi (China). Its headquarters for North America is in Sunnyvale (USA), and for Asia in Hong Kong. Osram Opto Semiconductors also has sales offices throughout the world.

Overview

As one of the participating companies in the fleXChallenge organised by TalentCorp in May 2013, Osram Opto Semiconductors (M) Sdn. Bhd. explored the opportunity to implement a work from home scheme for their employees. In August 2013, the team launched a work from home pilot programme for expecting and new mothers to enable them to balance personal and professional responsibilities. While the programme currently targets a specific demographic, Osram Opto Semiconductors is keen to identify opportunities to expand the programme in order to create a supportive and flexible environment for their employees.

Objectives

Osram Opto Semiconductors is committed to promoting a healthy and safe environment for their employees which is reflected in the wellness programmes that exist across the company. Work-life integration plays a critical role in supporting the wellness of their employees and is aligned with the company's desire to become a more flexible employer.

Prior to the launch of the work from home pilot programme, Osram had informally launched a flexi-hour scheme that allows employees to flexibly start work between the hours of 7:00 am to 9:00 am and leave as early as 4:15 pm if they start work at 7:00 am. After receiving positive feedback on the initiative, Osram's gender diversity group "Women @ OSRAM" were keen to further nurture the needs of their female employees balancing family and work commitment. The group therefore recommended the implementation of a work from home programme

Initiatives

The launch of the fleXChallenge provided Osram Opto Semiconductors with the opportunity to obtain advisory support from experienced HR practitioners who have implemented similar initiatives within their respective companies. The team seized the opportunity and developed a work from home proposal to present to their management team in order to obtain their buy-in. In developing the proposal, the project team conducted a benchmark study of other companies within the semi-conductor industry and within the Northern Region to understand the types of flexible work arrangement available in the market.

The team also extended communication to their Head Office in Germany to better understand their existing work from home policy and processes which have been in practice for many years. With the best practice insight at hand, the team was able to obtain buy-in from their management team and launched the pilot programme in August 2013.

Eligibility Criteria

As this was the first time the team had embarked on such an initiative, they decided to target only expecting and new mothers for the pilot group. The team believed that expecting and new mother's need for flexibility was a genuine concern. Another component of the criteria was the nature of work and whether the nature of work enabled the employee to work from home. For example, client facing roles or roles that required employees to be present at work due to equipment or technology requirements would not be eligible for a work from home arrangement.

The decision for eligibility ultimately remains at the discretion of the immediate supervisor to ensure that the business needs are not compromised. By starting with a small and clearly defined group, the project team and immediate supervisors would be able to manage and monitor the effectiveness of the work from home programme.

Defining Expectations

To complement the eligibility criteria, the project team created a policy and guidelines that outline the terms and conditions for supervisors and employees. Eligible employees are entitled to work from home a maximum of 10 working days during their pregnancy and within the first year their child is born. Employees are expected to adhere to the policy and ensure they maintain their existing performance to deliver quality and timely work deliverables.

Similarly, immediate supervisors are expected to continue monitoring and managing an employee's performance to ensure that the business needs are met. Supervisors are encouraged to practice discretion in amending the working arrangement upon discussion with their employee to ensure minimal impact to the business. This ensures that the team or department is sufficiently staffed to complete the required work tasks.

Infrastructure

The primary responsibilities for Osram were to develop the policy, guidelines and execute a communication plan to all employees. The policy and guidelines were then uploaded onto the intranet for all employees to view.

In terms of technological requirements, all employees are already provided with laptops with access to their shared files and communicators to facilitate communication outside of the office. Employees who requested for a work from home arrangement must ensure they have internet access in their home or location of work.

Outcome

Based on an employee survey launched after 8 months of the pilot implementation, the company has experienced increased morale for employees as employees felt more motivated when they work from home. They believe they are able to concentrate better at work and with ease of mind knowing their child is taken care of. For example, an employee was able to work from home to complete their work while taking care of their sick child. From a supervisor's

perspective, they believe their employees are more engaged and feel they are appreciated by the company.

The work from home programme also positions Osram Opto Semiconductors as one of the forward looking companies in Malaysia to provide flexible work arrangement. Currently the company is reviewing their work from home programme to see if there is an opportunity to open the programme to other employees.

Success Factors

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

www.osram-os.com