

PwC: Work-Life Plus Programme (WLPP)

PwC is the world's largest accounting, tax and consulting firm. They employ more than 180,000 people across 158 countries around the world. Globally, their clients form 84% of the Fortune 500 group and have a bigger revenue base compared to any other competitor.

"Our focus going forward must continue to be on work-life integration for our people, promoting diversity and contributing to the communities that we operate in."

- Sridharan Nair, Managing Partner PwC Malaysia

Overview

Each year, approximately 2,000 PwC professionals worldwide become parents and take time off to care for their families. To cater to this growing need, PwC has made significant investments to meet the needs of its working parents through various initiatives.

The Work-life Plus Programme (WLPP) launched in October 2009 in PwC Malaysia aims to identify meaningful ways of providing employees with options on how they can balance their work and personal lives. It is an avenue for employees to take time off from work to spend quality time doing activities that facilitate personal and professional growth as well as spending time with the family.

Objectives

Aligned to PwC's Global Diversity and Inclusion objectives, the WLPP was developed to create a flexible work environment that enables the firm to respond in the most agile way to the demands of their clients as well as attract the best talent.

PwC's diversity initiatives and strategies are designed to attract, develop and advance the most talented individuals regardless of their race, sexual orientation, religion, age, gender, disability status or any other dimension of diversity.

Initiatives

Leadership support has been fundamental to the success of PwC's diversity programmes. In order to manage diversity and inclusion every day, globally, PwC has a dedicated National Office of Diversity, market-based Diversity Leaders and a broad network of committed professionals who support their Chief Diversity Officer, Maria Castañón Moats.

In 2006, the Global Gender Advisory Council (GAC) was established to educate and raise awareness around the business case for better female retention and development across all territories. While gender diversity remains a priority, the GAC evolved to become the Global Diversity & Inclusion Council in 2011.

With the support network by the leaders, the National Office of Diversity and GAC, PwC is able to utilise an integrated approach to create a more flexible work environment for the employees.

In Malaysia, the WLPP was implemented after consolidating the results of the annual Global People Survey and feedback from their employees. The Human Capital and Leadership Team launched the WLPP based on the results of an employee survey which showed increasing value in the importance of work-life balance. PwC believes in empowering their people and giving them the tools to help them succeed in their jobs by providing them various work arrangements based on the needs of the local office.

Aimed at addressing employees' concerns of maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life, the WLPP offers three options:

- **Flexible Work Arrangements**

The FWA was an extension of the current policy whereby employees from all levels may opt to apply for a 2.5-day (half day every day), 3-day or 4 day work week. All benefits and leave entitlements are pro-rated against the number of days worked.

- **Time Out**

The Time Out programme allows employees to plan in advance for additional time off beyond the annual leave entitlement for up to a maximum of one (1) month. It is an enhancement to the unpaid leave policy. In line with the practice, the following benefits apply:

- **Salary:**

Salary is pro-rated according to the number of days of unpaid leave taken while benefits such as bonus and annual leave entitlements will change if the total accumulated unpaid leave in a year is one month or longer.

- **EPF/Socso:**

Contributions will be computed against the salary earned after deducting the time off.

- **Travel Allowance:**

Will not be paid for that particular month off.

- **Bonus:**

The first 20 days of unpaid leave taken during the financial year is waived. The company will only pro-rate the bonus payout if any staff has taken more than 20 days of unpaid leave during the financial year.

- **Medical/ Hospitalisation:**

Employees on medical / hospitalisation leave during the unpaid leave period will not be provided with any replacement leave.

- **Career Break**

Gives the employee the flexibility to apply for one continuous month or up to a maximum of three months in a year for personal and professional development. In line with the practice, the following benefits apply:

- Salary:

Salary is pro-rated according to the number of days worked.

- EPF/Socso:

Contributions will be computed against the salary earned after deducting the number of days taken for the career break. Travel Allowances will not be paid for that particular month off.

- Bonus:

The first 20 days of unpaid leave taken during the financial year is waived. The company will only pro-rate the bonus payout if any staff has taken more than 20 days of unpaid leave during the financial year.

- Medical/ Hospitalisation:

Employees on medical / hospitalisation leave during the unpaid leave period will not be provided with any replacement leave.

Diversity Awareness

Diversity is a critical enabler of PwC's business strategy. To support their long-term growth goals, diversity initiatives are introduced to make PwC a more inclusive workplace with a focus on three main areas:

- Early success

Expanding the pipeline of diverse employees and helping them get a strong start.

- Development and advancement

Supporting the advancement of professionals and promoting diverse leadership.

- Inclusion

Enhancing cultural dexterity for all employees. Cultural dexterity is the ability to understand, manage, coach, work and communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds and across multiple dimensions of diversity.

Measuring Progress

While getting diversity right is a complex and broad-reaching journey that requires consistent and unflagging effort over time, PwC recognises the importance of tracking its progress. A fact-based approach that includes metrics and measurement is required to ensure that diversity and inclusion efforts are aligned with business objectives.

In PwC, these are the basic guiding principles of an effective diversity strategy:

- Tangible, actionable goals, accountability and oversight by senior leadership
 - Compensation that is determined, in part, by an employee's ability to thrive in a diverse workplace
 - Processes and procedures that make the new programmes and initiatives sustainable
 - Ongoing commitment to training, education, development and regular communications around the strategy
 - A requirement that managers learn and practice the managerial skills necessary in a multicultural work environment
 - A safe place or forum for employees to communicate
 - Behavioural accountability at all levels of the organisation
 - Monitoring the progress and wellbeing of employees through the annual performance review
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Outcome

In PwC Malaysia, the WLPP has played a pivotal role in the increase of engagement scores across all lines of service from 65% last year to 70% this year. Employees believe that they are able to influence and control the approach in which they work to deliver desired outcomes.

According to Florence Tan, Corporate Responsibility (CR) and Internal Communications Manager, "PwC provides me work-life balance by allowing me to take on a Flexible Work Arrangement where I work four out of five days in a week. This way, I can still do what I'm passionate about, which is CR, and spend time with my son. It also means that I don't have to put my career on hold."

Globally, through the implementation of the WLPP and other gender diversity initiatives, PwC Malaysia has made great progress in increasing the number of women in senior management positions within the firm. 40% of its partners and directors are women and 60% of its managers are women as at June 2012.

Success Factors

- Strategy & Objectives
- Leadership
 - Top Management Influence
- Organisation Alignment
 - Communication and Awareness

- Embedded Culture of Trust
 - Robust Policies & Procedures
 - Targeted Engagement with Line Managers
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AWARDS

- 2013: ranked #2 on DiversityInc’s “Top 50 Companies for Diversity” list
 - 2013: ranked in the Top 10 on five DiversityInc specialty lists: #1 – Recruitment & Retention; #1 – Executive Women; #8 – Asian Americans; #10 – Global Diversity; #10 – GLBT
 - 2012: recipient of the 2012 National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) Corporate Partner of the Year Award
 - 2011 - 2012: ranked among the “Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces” by the Dave Thomas Adoption Foundation
 - 2010: ranked among the “Top 50 Companies for Fertility and Adoption Benefits” by Conceive magazine
 - 2009: winner of the Point Inspiration Award for GLBT inclusion
 - 2009 & 2012: winner of the Profiles in Diversity Journal’s International Innovations in Diversity Award
 - 2007: winner of the Catalyst Award
 - 2006 - 2013: received a 100% rating with the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s Corporate Equality Index
 - 2005 - 2013: ranked among Working Mother’s “Best Companies for Multicultural Women”
 - 2004 - 2012: ranked among the “Top 10 Companies for Working Mothers” by Working Mother magazine
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WEBSITE

www.pwc.com/diversity

OTHER PRACTICES

Global

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA)

- Teaming Culture

A teaming culture in which multiple employees share responsibility for client service and deliverables enables employees to create work schedules that work best for themselves, the team and the client.

- Reduced Hours

Reducing hours to less than a regular full-time week.

- Flextime

Work hours move earlier or later than “regular” business hours.

- PwC@Home

Formal telecommuting, routinely working from home three or more days per week.

- PwC Offsite

Telecommuting, routinely working from home one or two days per week.

- Job-Sharing

Two people jointly fulfill the responsibilities of one full-time position.

- Compressed Workweek

Standard hours compressed into fewer than five work days.

Work-Life Benefits

- Sabbatical

Leave of absence while maintaining benefits and a reduced salary rate.

- Unprescribed Sick Leave

To assist employees in maintaining work-life quality, the Firm’s policy provides an unprescribed number of sick days for all US full-time and part-time staff scheduled to work at least 1,000 hours a year. What’s more, our policy allows paid time off not just for one’s own illness, but also to care for a sick child, parent, spouse, or same-sex domestic partner.

- Work-life Resource and Referral

To help employees balance personal and work commitments, PwC offers a confidential resource and referral service that can assist PwC employees and their immediate families with financial, educational, career, childcare, elder care, disability, and stress management including free articles and publications.

Malaysia

Work-Life Benefits

- Parents Network

Established in April 2010 in PwC Malaysia, this parents network meets once a month with the common objective of sharing experiences and tips on balancing the responsibilities of work and bringing up young children at the same time. The members of the group consist of mothers, to-be mothers as well as fathers.

- PayFlex

A programme which provides staff with the option of spreading the salary deduction over a period of time. There are two (2) options available:

- Salary deduction will be allowed for planned unpaid leave (for career breaks or time out) up to a maximum of 12 months. Details will be determined between staff and HC-Payroll.
- One-off salary deduction in advance.

- Mom's Room

Supports mothers who choose to breastfeed their babies by providing a room which includes a fridge, storage facilities, sink and chairs.

- Designated Parking

Reserved parking within the building for pregnant women.

- Pre-natal Subsidy

Subsidy for pre-natal checks.

- Extended Maternity Leave

Option to stretch maternity leave from 2 months (paid) to 3 months (last month unpaid leave).

Interviews with PwC Managers

Interview with Florence Tan – Corporate Responsibility and Internal Communications Manager

What are your current roles?

I juggle two big roles: a mother of a toddler and managing PwC Malaysia's Corporate Responsibility (CR) initiatives and internal communications. This doesn't include my other roles: being a wife, a daughter and sister.

Which FWA benefit are you currently utilising to juggle your two roles?

PwC provides me work-life balance by allowing me to take on a Flexible Work Arrangement where I work four out of five days in a week. This way, I can still do what I'm passionate about, which is CR, and spend time with my son. It also means that I don't have to put my career on hold.

PwC is also flexible on clocking in and out as most of our professional staff are client facing and on the move – what's important is delivery of quality work and responsiveness.

In utilising FWA, what are some of the enablers that allow you to be effective at work?

Technology helps me in my role. I receive and reply emails on my iPhone while I'm on the go and it helps me get work done efficiently.

The flexibility at work, understanding from the people I work with and the opportunity to explore different roles have influenced my decision to stay and grow with PwC.

Throughout your experience, have there been any challenges in managing your time at work?

It's not all sunshine and rainbows. There have been some rough patches too. I may sometimes need to work longer hours or at night and also on my off-days. I also check my emails throughout the day, quite compulsively. But I do these willingly because I take pride in what I do and understand how it contributes to the business. And I appreciate the trust PwC has given me that I will contribute whether I'm in the office or not.

Interview with Johanna Sherene Ramli – Assurance, Senior Manager

How long have you been utilising FWA at work?

I've recently started on a flexible work arrangement (FWA) a month plus ago, having been working full time prior to this.

Which FWA benefit are you currently utilising and how has the experience been?

I work three out of five days in a week. As my salary is pro-rated due to my work schedule, I have changed my lifestyle to a more modest one. I feel that the long term benefits on my physical and emotional well-being more than outweigh the opportunity cost of not earning more.

I ensure that my portfolio of clients is able to fit a three day week schedule. I also ensure that the people I work with are aware of my work arrangements so that the work can be scheduled around those 3 days. However, given that I'm in client service, there will be unavoidable circumstances which will require me to work on my off days. I'm happy to compromise and oblige and then replace my off days the following week.

Why did you decide to opt for FWA?

I opted for FWA because I wanted to spend more time with my 1 year old daughter and my mother who is feeling poorly.

How has FWA affected you at work?

So far, it's been working well. The people I work with acknowledge my new work arrangements and respect my time.

A number of naysayers have the impression that this arrangement will only succeed for employees in internal firm services(i.e support roles) and it is not realistic for someone who is client facing like me.However, I'd like to prove that it will indeed work for client facing staff.

Do you have any additional thoughts to share?

I've very pleased that PwC has granted me this flexibility and I hope it will continue to work well for me.