Interview with IHRP-CP, Shane Yan from

Inspire-Tech Singapore

At Inspire-Tech, we push boundaries by converging technologies and transforming workplace. We inspire ideas and imagination through smarter solutions. Through our convergent technologies that enhance productivity and workforce efficiency, we future-proof organizations of every size by revolutionizing their digital workplace.

Company Size: 26

% of employee Working From Home: 100%

Q: What are some of your successful strategies and available support systems that your company has implemented to engage your employees?

At Inspire-Tech, our firm belief is that our people enable our business success. Being able to create the family-oriented culture that employees enjoy working at, caring for their health and understanding our employees, their intrinsic motivations and career development plans are key for us.

As soon as we heard of the ease of spread of the virus in January, we began enforcing telecommuting for 90% of our employees, way ahead of the Circuit Breaker measures that were implemented in April 2020. Transiting to working from home was a breeze for us because we were already running frequent Teams/ Skype meetings with our overseas colleagues and we also use our own software, EasiShare that enables us to share files and collaborate remotely and securely.

On an individual level, working from home for employees may pose challenges because of family circumstances. We allow employees who have children engaging in Home-Based Learning (HBL) or other family needs the flexibility in managing their working schedules as long as there is proper communication in place to inform everyone. This is done by updating their Teams status whenever they are away and when they can be expected to be back at their desk. This will ensure that all employees respect each other's personal time and space and not disturb them when they need their time off. Yet, it provides accountability by letting colleagues know when they can reach out to him or her.

We run a profiling assessment for everyone in our organization yearly to measure any changes in our employees' intrinsic motivation. Through this, we understand that being able to learn new things is a key driver for our employees.

Prior to the COVID-19 situation, we already have in place a fortnightly lunch and learn session. Once we started working from home, we moved into a weekly lunch and learn session to ensure that everyone stays connected. These sessions are used for several purposes:

1. Share business and COVID-19 updates
   a. Regular updates are done to keep employees in different countries up to speed in terms of what is happening in the various locations and in the industry.
2. Learning
   a. Employees take turns to present something that is in alignment with their personal development plans and interests to the team. This enables everyone to enhance their presentation skills while learning something new every week (example of

       topics: understanding the culture of India, my journey of being in the company, the importance of setting objectives)
3. Playing games (with learning outcomes)
4. Checking in with one another on well-being

Supervisors also get in touch with staff regularly. They check in with how they are coping at least once a week. In the event that anyone feels a need to talk to someone for professional or personal life challenges, the employee is able to turn to a certified International Coach Federation (ICF) life and executive coach who is able to help empower them to craft out their own action steps to achieve their desired outcomes.

News/updates are shared via email and a company-wide WhatsApp group chat.

Q: How should your company prepare your employees to be a step ahead during these uncertain times?

Being in the ICT sector, the pace of change has always been fast. Our employees have been trained to always expect uncertainty and have a sense of ownership in the company. They are also empowered to help the company to brainstorm solutions to any challenges. During these uncertain times, our employees are prepared to be agile and adapt to any changes. For example, during pre-COVID-19, virtual interviews were not widely utilized by Hiring Managers. However, with the changing times, all Hiring Managers adapted and supported HR to have virtual interviews fully. The company also introduced the policy of bringing your own device years ago in which employees are given an allowance to buy a computer of their preferred model / brand for work purposes so that employees have a sense of ownership of the personal computer they are using. This makes onboarding easy in the WFH situation because new hires can get started readily.

Our organization has a rather flat hierarchy and communication is transparent. Our management convene regularly to discuss and determine possible impact to the company and come up with response plans. Any decisions or thought processes are then shared with transparency to employees so that they understand and are able to react accordingly. Employees are free to brainstorm and make suggestions openly as well to support with response plans. By involving employees in brainstorming solutions for any uncertainty and with our open culture of communication, we prepare them to be one step ahead. One such initiative is the sharing of new skills / knowledge with colleagues during our weekly lunch and learn session so that they can pick up soft skills and learn something new from each other. This was designed to support them with their individual training and development plans.

Q: How do you think COVID-19 will influence or shape your HR practices (e.g. onboarding, offboarding processes) in your workplace during this period and moving forward?

Prior to COVID-19, Inspire-Tech has already been making use of a blend of online and face to face interviews. With COVID-19, we have moved to a full online interview process to safeguard the health and safety of our hiring managers and candidates. To onboard any new hires, supervisors conduct online sessions with them. We also have our own LMS system with training modules that will help orientate any new hire to our company and to our products.

Offboarding process is easy as it does not involve any return of physical items with our Bring Your Own Device to work policy, fingerprint access into the company and we are generally paperless (given that we share all documents on our EasiShare system). Exit interviews are conducted offline and cessation form will be signed digitally.

Given that there are a lot of free resources for online learning, these resources have been shared with employees and they are encouraged to learn in their own time.

During Phase 1 and 2 resumption of work, all employees except essential employees who have to service clients, are working from home. Meetings are conducted virtually to engage everyone working from home, in the office and in our regional offices.

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