

Interview with IHRP-CP, Jernet Tan from DHL Express Singapore

Today, DHL is the world's leading logistics company. Our 380,000 people in over 220 countries and territories work every day to help you cross borders, reach new markets and grow your business. Or simply send a letter to your loved ones.

Company size (in Singapore): 1500

% of employees Working From Home: 73%

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

Even as the COVID-19 situation continues to develop, DHL stays firm in fulfilling our mission of "Connecting People, Improving Lives". All around the world, emergency controls have been put in place and this presented unprecedented challenges to our global network. Employee engagement is ever more important as we continuously adapt our operations to mitigate potential impact and to continue to play a critical role during this global health crisis.

As we continue to ensure that emergency and healthcare supplies get delivered and our customers are able to receive the best possible operations we can provide, we believe firmly in doing what is right for both the business and our employees. This is achieved by keeping communication channels open and transparent, and ensuring empathy and care for our employees amidst the many challenges.

Business continuity plans were started for all staff since early February 2020 before Singapore's circuit breaker measures were implemented in April 2020. The early trial enabled staff to be mentally prepared and better equipped when tightened social distancing measures were mandated. For office employees, this meant that they had some time to adjust to work-from-home arrangements; for ground operations staff, they were given ample time to get used to getting the same work done in smaller groups.

We broadly categorized our employees into 2 groups:

- a. Office Employees
- b. Ground Operations Employees

Strategies for office employees:

1. Ensuring empathy and care:
 - a. Issuing health advisories since early January
 - b. Provide hand sanitizers (both at facilities as well as individual vehicles)
 - c. Temperature checks twice a day
 - d. Virtual meetings and update sessions
 - e. Virtual 'kopi' (coffee) sessions, virtual workout sessions via Zoom/Skype

Strategies for ground operations staff:

1. Regular communications to update on developments and share rationale of the safety measures to be implemented.
2. One-time necessity allowance of \$150, hotel accommodation provided, and an extended daily \$50 allowance for Malaysian workers affected by Movement Control Order that have chosen to stay in Singapore

3. Alternative worksite set up at Gateway in Johor in collaboration with DHL Express Malaysia for employees who had to return to Malaysia, so they can continue performing their duties
4. #DHLDoubleTap4Pride campaign – colleagues globally shared videos and photos with words of encourage on social media

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

During the COVID-19 period, we adopted a Safety-First approach by assessing risks and working together to determine an appropriate course of action. Our cross-functional committee and management convened regularly to discuss response plans. Regular communication by way of emails, memos, face-to-face briefings and, more recently, virtual meetings were key to helping employees stay focused and up-to-date. The company also has a strong middle management group who form the next level of communication to respective teams. This group helps their respective functional teams cascade the messages from the top management and develop corresponding functional tactical plans. With open communication and frequent engagement, we ensure that all employees are clear about the situation and understand what is required in their respective roles to help overcome the challenges. With the continuous improvement mindset that is ingrained in the company's way of working, employees continue to contribute by anticipating challenges and coming up with solutions to manage them.

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?

We proactively review our HR policies and practices for situational adjustments required during this period.

We make use of digitalisation to mitigate disruptions to onboarding and exit. During recruitment, the company conducts video interviews to reduce face-to-face interactions and safe-guard the well-being of the hiring managers and candidates. For essential employees' onboarding, we have also responded by moving majority of the trainings to remote / online sessions.

There is also more focus to drive online learning. Employees are encouraged to explore a wide spectrum of topics, ranging from technical know-how and compliance to wellness tips such as how to cope with remote work.

As for compensation and benefits, we also responded adeptly by reviewing changes required in aspects such as leave entitlement, increment and bonus payout. For example, staff who were impacted by the Stay Home Notice requirement were granted exceptional leave if they had travelled out of the country before the border controls were mandated. These paid leave days were granted over and above the employee's annual leave, medical leave and hospitalization leave.

Despite businesses being affected worldwide by the lockdown in many countries, we still went ahead with our annual salary increment and bonus payout to employees without delay in April. We take our commitment to our employees seriously and continue to do what is right for our people and our business.

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