

MALAYSIA'S HEALTHIEST WORKPLACE

— *AIA Vitality* —



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
AZAM ARIS
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
KATHY FONG
PROJECT EDITOR
BEN SHANE LIM
WRITERS
BILLY TOH, ADAM AKMAL, SYAHIRAH SYED JAAFAR
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OUI INN LEONG
CHIEF COPY EDITORS
PUSHPAM SINNAKAUNDAN,
MAH PIN PIN
ASSISTANT CHIEF COPY EDITOR
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ART DIRECTOR
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SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER
RAJITA SIVAN

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER
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GENERAL MANAGER
KINGSTON LOW (012) 278 5540
SENIOR SALES MANAGERS
FONG LAI KUAN (012) 386 2831
GREGORY THU (012) 376 0614
MICHAEL TAN (012) 213 0252
SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER
NG CHING YIN (012) 232 8035
SHAFINA SYHRIR (017) 281 4787
ACCOUNT MANAGERS
LEE SOO SIN (012) 710 6220
LUM WAI FONG (016) 218 5908
LUQMAN AB RAHIM (017) 629 0297
SHANICE LIM (012) 420 7986
SHANNON LEONG (012) 677 5345
SHAUN LEE (012) 658 7245
CREATIVE MARKETING
CHRIS WONG (016) 687 6577
HEAD OF MARKETING SUPPORT & AD-TRAFFIC
LORRAINE CHAN
EMAIL: advertising@bizedge.com

CORPORATE

PUBLISHER & GROUP CEO
HO KAY TAT
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
LIM SHIEW YUIN

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THE EDGE, PO BOX 8348,
PEJABAT POS KELANA JAYA,
46788 PETALING JAYA
PHONE (03) 7721 8000
E-MAIL: editor@bizedge.com

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EDITOR'S Note

If you're reading this, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to do so. Most readers will likely skip to the colourful and informative infographics (on Pages 4 to 9) right now.

It is also likely many readers will allocate just enough time to read the paper as it takes them to finish a cup of coffee. That is, if incoming messages on the omnipresent smartphone does not distract.

We're certainly short of time these days, aren't we?

Being busy has become incredibly fashionable. Work, of course, is the chief reason, consuming time all the time.

Toss family and friends into the mix and oftentimes, our personal health is neglected. I am not particularly unfit but working on this project with the wonderful folks at AIA has been a personal wake-up call to make lifestyle changes.

It involves little things, like watching what I eat more closely and trying to sleep earlier. It also takes big commitments that are easy to put off, like getting a gym membership.

Just like work, when it comes to health, both personal and at the workplace, we need KPIs to aim for and ways to measure it.

Thus, *The Edge* is proud to partner AIA to present the first ever Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey. It fills a

painfully obvious void, taking stock of Corporate Malaysia's literal health.

For their inaugural survey, a heartwarming 47 companies participated. That's more than in Singapore and Hong Kong combined.

The survey puts in numbers what many of us might have intuitively assumed in the past – that Malaysians are unhealthy. It even sheds light on a subject that many shy away from – mental health.

I hope you will take the time to digest the findings of the survey and take stock of your own health. Perhaps, even exploring some of the health interventions provided for by your employer.

More importantly, I hope the findings of this survey capture the attention of business owners, employers and HR managers – people who can have a big say in developing better health and well-being plans for employees.

For inspiration, we have included interviews with the most outstanding participants – companies that have in place some of the most comprehensive and innovative workplace interventions as well as those with some of the healthiest employees around.

I'll leave it to the experts to expound the virtues of a healthy workplace. But in the spirit of change and self-improvement, I part with an undeniably cheesy quote from a motivational poster that I once saw: "One day or day one, you decide."



Ben Shane Lim
Project Editor
The EDGE Malaysia

Message from the CEO

This year, AIA is proud to launch the inaugural Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality – a research study that shines the spotlight on health and well-being in the workplace. This study, which is modelled after Britain's Healthiest Workplace, is the first comprehensive workplace survey in Malaysia that captures data on the health and well-being of employees, as well as health strategies and activities practised by employers in the country.

Why workplace health? Why now?

In recent years, the media has continued to highlight the health issues that affect our nation – obesity, diabetes, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia and, more recently, depression along with other illnesses of the mind.

The sad truth is that many of these conditions are brought about by unhealthy lifestyle choices, particularly poor nutrition, lack of exercise and smoking.

The state of Malaysia's health has become a cause of national concern, and a key pillar of the 11th Malaysia Plan is improved well-being for all. However, while there has been a lot of focus on the role of individuals, government and the community in promoting healthy behaviour, we found that there has been little focus on the role of employers in championing good health at the workplace. Given that working Malaysians spend most of their waking hours at work, it is important for us to understand, measure and improve health and well-being at the workplace.

After all, a healthy workforce is good for business. Among the benefits of having healthy employees are increased productivity, stronger business performance and higher employee engagement, not to mention a reduction in accidents and work-related sickness, controlled medical costs and less pressure on employees to cover health-related absenteeism and presenteeism.

What Malaysian employers and employees say

A total of 47 employers participated in the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey, with 5,369 Malaysian employees providing feedback on health and well-being at their place of work. We were very heartened by the participation rate, as this in itself is an indicator that Malaysian companies see value in improving the health and well-being of their people.

The survey data, which was analysed over the period of two months, found that Malaysia experiences a high loss of productivity as the average annual cost of health-related absenteeism or presenteeism is approximately RM2.7 million per organisation.

The survey brings to the fore the issue of presenteeism, which refers to employees who are physically present at work but are unable to focus on their tasks because they are unwell. The survey results show that out of the 67 days that an employee loses in a year, 59 days were lost due to presenteeism.

The results went on to highlight other behaviours and factors that negatively impact employee health, particularly a lack of sleep, long hours spent at work, stress brought about by financial concerns as well as other known behaviours such as poor eating, physical inactivity and smoking.

The study also revealed that Malaysia's workforce is at high risk of mental illnesses and obesity.

What's next?

Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey was designed to be a catalyst to get employers to place employee health and well-being at the centre of their corporate strategy. Information is



Anusha Thavarajah
Chief Executive Officer
AIA Bhd

power, and armed with data on their employees' health and well-being, the participating companies can now pursue proactive interventions that can effect positive behavioural change among their employees.

The personalised Organisational Health Report that eligible participating companies receive will enable them to understand the health of their organisation, as well as the effectiveness of their current health strategies. This can act as an important baseline by which they can develop and implement the health and well-being programmes that their employees most need.

Over time, we believe that these interventions will improve employee engagement, establish more positive attitudes towards health and ultimately increase business productivity. It will be a win for the employee, a win for the employer and a win for our country.

Thanks and appreciation

I would like to thank all the companies and employees who took the time to participate in the first ever Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey. You have played a pivotal role in starting us on our journey to improve workplace health in Malaysia. The data that we have collected based on your feedback will serve as an important baseline for future research. We hope that you will make full use of your Organisational Health Report to make healthy strides in improving well-being in your workplace.

To the winners of the first ever Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality, congratu-

tions and keep up your efforts! We will be looking to you as champions of workplace health, and we hope that others, too, will see value in implementing programmes that promote better health and well-being at work.

This survey could not have been successfully rolled out without the support of RAND Europe, AIA's research partner, as well as Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, our local academic partner. Your commitment to implementing a solid research methodology and careful analyses of the data have been impeccable and we are very proud to have worked with you on this.

My sincere appreciation also goes to *The Edge* for sharing our vision to promote workplace health and working closely with us to create this supplement.

The road ahead

For AIA, the journey to promoting workplace wellness has just begun. Armed with the data from this inaugural survey, we hope to work together with the government, corporations, healthcare providers and the community at large to enact policies and practices that can help Malaysia's workforce live longer, healthier and better lives.

If you are a business leader, I encourage you to sign up for Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality 2018 and take the first step towards creating a healthy and happy workplace for your people.

Let's all work together to make Malaysia a healthier nation for all!

METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS

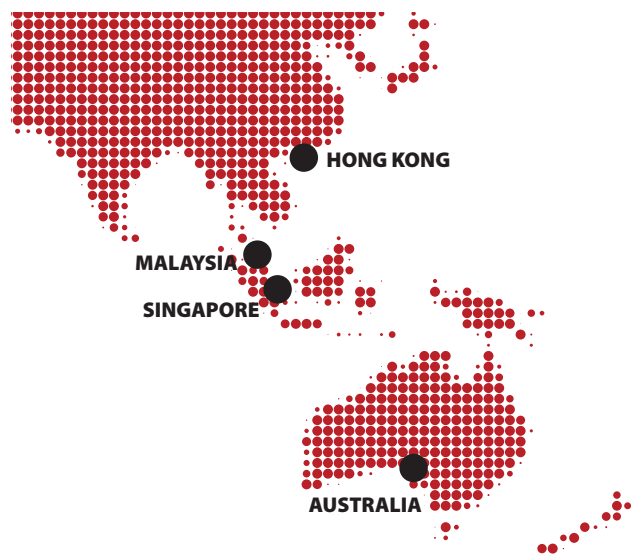


The Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality aims to help organisations:

This year is the first year that AIA has launched Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality — the first science-backed workplace survey to promote employee health and well-being to all organisations, regardless of their size. A total of 47 organisations participated and 5,369 employees in urban areas were surveyed in total. The wider Healthiest Workplace survey, encompassing Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, saw 104 organisations participated in total, with 10,001 employees surveyed.

The study was developed by AIA and is delivered in partnership with RAND Europe. In Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) is the local academic partner working with AIA and RAND Europe to provide academic advisory as well as to validate the survey questionnaire and findings. Having inherited Britain's Healthiest Workplace, which started in 2013 and has helped nearly 370 organisations, AIA has brought this to Asia for the first time to help organisations improve their understanding of their employees' personal health and well-being.

- Understand the health and well-being profile of their employees
- Understand how the organisation's wellness facilities and programmes are employed, and how effective they are
- Compare the workplace health promotion efforts of participating employers
- Identify effective interventions so that employers can improve or initiate health promotion strategies to create a healthier environment for their people
- Increase productivity and attract the best talent in the field



The survey was structured into 11 SECTIONS

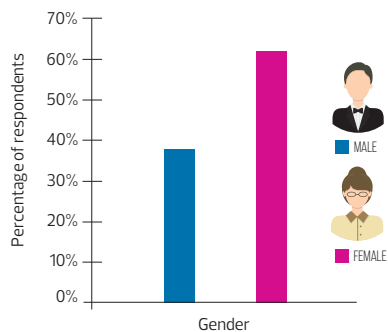
1. Personal characteristics
2. Job characteristics
3. Physical health and well-being
4. Mental health and well-being
5. Smoking
6. Alcohol
7. Physical exercise
8. Diet
9. Musculoskeletal health
10. Health and well-being at the workplace (interventions)
11. Work environment

healthiestworkplace.aia.com

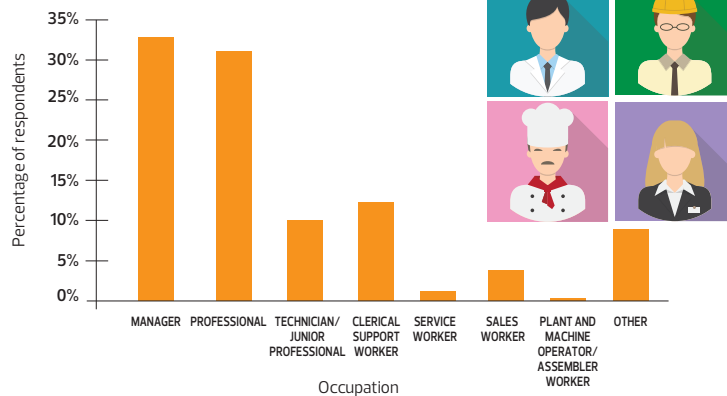
MALAYSIA

47 companies participated } **5,369** employees were surveyed

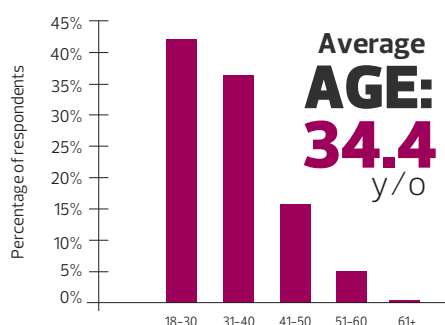
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER



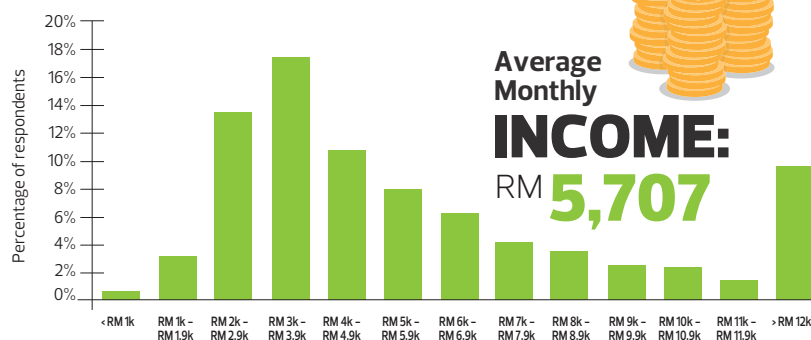
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY JOB CATEGORY



DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE GROUPS



DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACROSS INCOME GROUPS*



Survey Process

Organisational Health
Assessment: A 40-minute online assessment completed by a Human Resources representative.
Report: A comprehensive report outlining the health of the organisation, with benchmarking information to enable more targeted workplace interventions.

Employee Personal Health
Assessment: A 20-minute online assessment that is completed on a voluntary basis.
Report: Participating employees will immediately receive a personal report outlining their AIA Vitality Age, key lifestyle and health risks and suggestions for improvements.

MALAYSIA'S
HEALTHIEST
WORKPLACE

AIA Vitality RAND EUROPE

KEY
FINDINGS25.7% LOST
WORKING
HOURS
due to absence
and presenteeism67 DAYS
LOST PER EMPLOYEE
PER YEARRM2.7 mil
LOST PER COMPANY
PER YEAR90%
are at
nutritional risk64%
are physically
inactive12.5%
are obese
(BMI > 30)11%
are current
smokers

97%

have an AIA Vitality Age
higher than their actual age
with average difference
of 5.5 years53% at risk of
mental health20% have a lot
of financial
concerns84% reported
one or more
musculoskeletal
disorder56% sleep less than
7 hours a day15%
HAVE 4 OR
MORE RISK
FACTORS

BUT

45%
OF THOSE
BELIEVE
THEY ARE
IN GOOD
OR VERY
GOOD
HEALTH91%
OF EMPLOYERS
PROVIDED AT
LEAST ONE
WORKPLACE
INTERVENTION

WHILE

58%
OF EMPLOYEES
PARTICIPATED IN
AT LEAST ONE
INTERVENTION

It starts with a check-up, Malaysian workplaces!

Malaysians are running harder than ever in the modern rat race and the country's burgeoning middle class is proof of the hard work put in.

But just as the number of Malaysians moving up the social ladder has grown over the years, so too have their waistlines and blood pressure.

"Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases have become a serious threat to public health. And it should be taken seriously because it has implications on productivity in the workplace," says Associate Professor Dr Wee Lei Hum from the Faculty of Health Sciences at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Wee notes that NCDs are estimated to make up a whopping 73% of total deaths in Malaysia.

Not surprisingly, the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey found that Malaysian employees reported more health risks than their peers in Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia.

More than 100 employers and 10,000 employees from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia were polled in the survey launched in May, whose results were released last month.

The results of the entire survey can be summarised quite succinctly in what is called the AIA Vitality Age, which reflects the state of people's health in terms that are more easily relatable: The more a person's AIA Vitality age is above their actual age, the more unhealthy they are.

Malaysia did not score well.

Overall, 97% of Malaysians had an AIA Vitality Age older than their actual age. This was similar to the figure for Asia comprising Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, but worse off compared with Australia, where 86% of their employees had an AIA Vitality age older than their actual age.

Furthermore, the average AIA Vitality Age gap for Malaysians was 5.5 years, in contrast with that for Asia (Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia) as a whole — 5.1 years; and Australia's 3.4 years.

The survey flagged poor nutrition as one of the key risks that Malaysian employees were disproportionately exposed to: a startling 90%, which is close to the 87% registered for Asia in total, but considerably worse off than Australia's 58%.

Malaysians were also the most sedentary, with 64% at risk from physical inactivity compared with 63% and 36% for Asia in general and Australia respectively.

Malaysians also had the poorest sleep, with 56% reporting less than seven hours of sleep per night. Asia and Australia only saw 54% and 26%, respectively, suffering in this aspect.

Another worrying trend was that 12% of respondents reported

moderate to severe symptoms of depression, compared with 11% in Asia as a whole and 6% in Australia.

Like for many other NCDs, prevention is certainly better than cure; not only for health reasons but also for the productivity of a company.

The good news from this survey is that Malaysians were motivated to change their lifestyles. Almost 90% indicated that they wanted help to reduce their weight, while approximately 65% were eager to improve physical activity.

However, Wee cautions that the high level of motivation may not translate into actual action.

She says employers play a huge role in enabling their staff to act on their motivation to change. In particular, she stresses the importance of regular health screenings for early detection of risks.

However, Malaysian employees still perceive themselves as healthy even though they have four or more risk factors. Wee stresses that a person needs to have a realistic perception of their health, failing which they will be less likely to change their unhealthy behaviours.

Associate Professor Dr
Wee Lei Hum, Universiti
Kebangsaan Malaysia

"Each company will find that its employees exhibit different risk profiles. With the personalised data gathered from the survey, employers should reflect on the findings and identify and address the specific issues that arise in their organisations," says Wee.

The Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey is a useful health assessment tool because it breaks down and provides personalised data not only to every employee so that they are informed of their health risks and can then take the necessary redress but also to their organisations so that they too can act on their responsibility for the well-being of their staff. And with continued participation in future editions of the survey, they can monitor the progress of their health.

Wee stresses that intervention programmes cannot operate in isolation but as part of a wider holistic approach to improve health in the workplace. One area that often gets overlooked is mental health, she notes.

Based on the survey, 53% of employees face mental health risks, but almost 44% of employers offer no interventions at all.

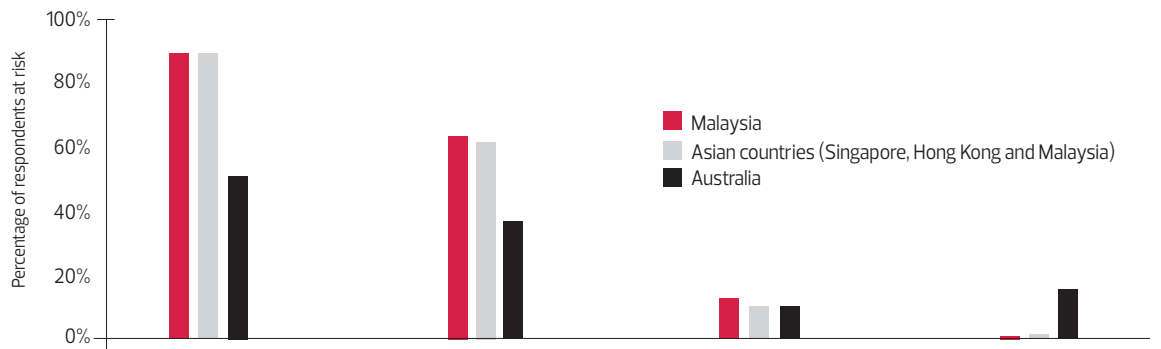
"The key to successful behavioural change is through the promotion of health and wellness strategies in the workplace and making sure they are ingrained in the organisational culture. This can only be achieved with strong support from the employers," says Wee.

While it is difficult to quantify the return on investments made into employee health and well-being, successful programmes can pay incalculable dividends in the long run in the form of higher productivity, lower turnover and attracting the best talent.

LIFESTYLE HEALTH

LIFESTYLE CHOICES — THE 4 RISK FACTORS

Malaysian employees were found to have poor lifestyle habits compared to Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia — with **unbalanced diet consumption** as the most common issue.



How can healthy nutrition habits, or **a balanced diet** — servings of fruits, vegetables and whole grains — be a norm at work?



Sweat it out! **Moderate-intensity physical activities** can greatly reduce risk of cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes.



Smoking can cause, among others, loss of time at work and it is a **contributing factor towards absenteeism**.



Drinking alcohol can cause **blackouts, memory loss and anxiety**. Go any further and you risk getting **cancer, heart disease or stroke**.

Nutrition

90% of surveyed Malaysian employees do not eat a balanced diet. Their diets are poorest in the area of fruits and vegetables.

Less than 5 in every 10 surveyed Malaysian employees with nutrition-related risk factors are motivated to change their diet.



Supplements will not make the difference. Having a balanced diet should be the main aim. Eat a fruit and some vegetables for a start instead.”

— **Dr Christian van Stolk, VP, RAND Europe**

EMPLOYERS CAN: Swap office snacks for fruits! Healthy servings (with calorie tagging) can also be provided during meetings or briefings.



ON BALANCED DIET:

5 PORTIONS (400gm)

Recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables — United Nations

5gm (daily)

Natural salt in daily diet is sufficient — WHO

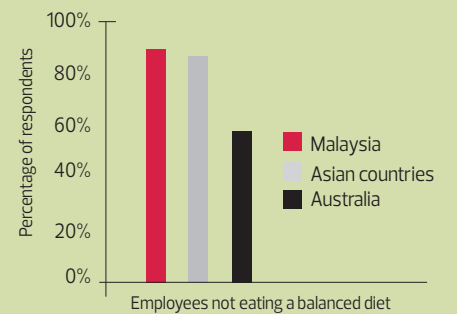
COST FACTOR

is one of the barriers stopping employees from eating a balanced diet

50%

of all surveyed workplaces worldwide offer fresh fruits and vegetables at work!

OVERALL NUTRITION RISK PROFILE



Physical Activity



Moderate activity can incorporate a range of exercises. Choose stairs over the lift, walk out for lunch, and join more HR-initiated physical activities.”

— **Thomas Wong, Chief HR Officer, AIA Malaysia**

The survey found that 64% of Malaysian employees do not do enough moderate-intensity exercise, compared with 63% in Asian countries and 36% in Australia.

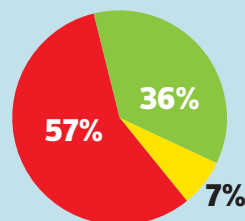
1 in 4 workplaces do not have interventions to encourage physical activity.

Most employees are **sedentary** (sitting at desks) throughout majority of working hours.

Technology may help! 77% of participating employees who own health wearables changed their behaviour towards exercise as a result.



EMPLOYEES' WEEKLY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS



- Low-risk (151+ minutes)
- Medium-risk (120-150 minutes)
- High-risk (<120 minutes)



Instead of pushing for intense exercise, start making smaller lifestyle changes that encourage you to be active. This is most likely to have significant initial impact on your health.”

— **Dr Christian van Stolk, VP, RAND Europe**

EMPLOYERS CAN: Adopt the recommendation of Public Health England — seated-based workers should integrate 2 hours of light physical activity (walking discussion, stand-up meetings) during work each day.



Smoking

Among the surveyed Malaysian employees, 11% are current smokers, compared with 9% in Asian countries and Australia respectively.

Smokers generally find it difficult to quit. Starting to smoke at a young age will lead to habit that continues over time leading to a higher probability of significant health problems later on in life, says RAND.

Think it is costly for employers to help employees quit? Think again. In the UK, absence due to smoking habits costed employers £1.4 billion in 2011 alone. This excluded indirect costs, such as loss of productivity from cigarette breaks, among others.

MALAYSIA'S
5 MILLION SMOKERS

10% < 19 years old
40% 19–30 years old

50%

31 years old and above

* Source: National Health and Morbidity Survey 2015

SMOKING KILLS
6 million
people each year – WHO
(In Malaysia, smoking kills 20,000 people each year)

SECOND HAND / PASSIVE SMOKING KILLS

600,000
each year, 28% of whom are children – WHO

It takes an average of
6 minutes
to smoke
ONE CIGARETTE
— that's two hours a pack!



Smokers should seek professional help to quit as smoking leads to nicotine dependence. Individuals must try not to smoke with each other, but help each other to quit as a group.”

— Associate Professor Dr Wee Lei Hum, UKM

EMPLOYERS CAN: Provide the basics — smoking interventions, eg. group smoking cessation programme or discounted/free medications to quit smoking, such as nicotine replacement therapy.

Alcohol

1.1% of surveyed Malaysian employees exceeded the recommended alcohol consumption limit of 14 units of alcohol which roughly equals to 7 strong large beers — compared with the 1.2% of Asian average, and far below Australia's 16%.

Binge drinking can result in **loss of concentration** and **cumulative health issues** in the longer run.

BINGE DRINKING:

> 6 units
per session

or when you feel drunk,
says RAND



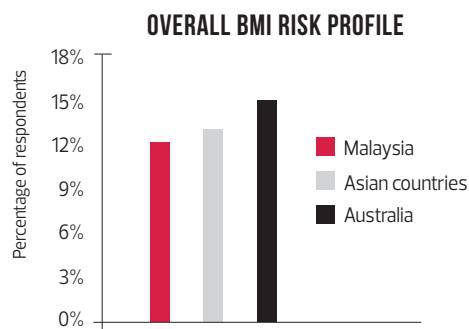
Drinking is the lifestyle habit employees are least motivated to change.

EMPLOYERS CAN: Provide professional/clinical attention to individuals who binge drink due to stress, including counselling on how to slow down or having support groups, among others.

CLINICAL HEALTH

The survey shows that **obesity is increasingly a problem in Malaysia**. 12.5% of surveyed Malaysian employees are obese. They are also very much at risk for high blood pressure.

Body Mass Index (BMI)



* **Obesity**
BMI range:
> 30



Clinical indicators

Common chronic conditions

Heart / Kidney /
Cancer / Diabetes /
Hypertension

BE WARNED!
Pre-hypertension
is enough to lead
to stroke.

Employees at risk

Malaysia **29%**
Asian countries **26%**
Australia **33%**

RESPONDENTS AT RISK OF CLINICAL INDICATORS*

	MALAYSIA	ASIAN COUNTRIES	AUSTRALIA
Blood pressure	46%	47%	44%
Cholesterol	10%	9%	8%
Blood glucose	3%	3%	3%
All 3	0%	0%	0%

* Of those who recalled their medical result.

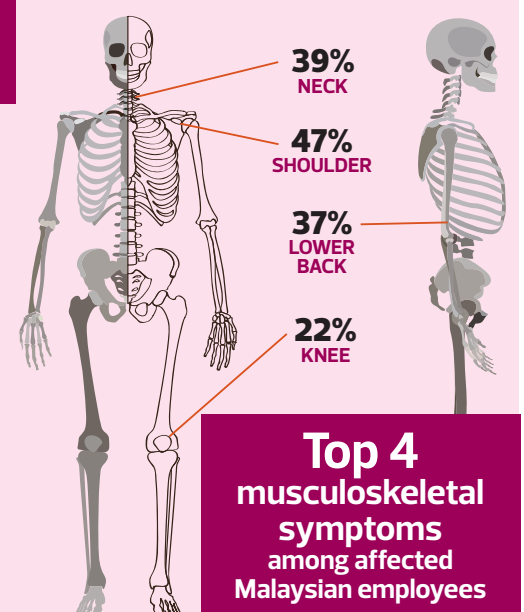
EMPLOYERS CAN: Send their employees to undergo regular screening tests to assist in early detection and treatment.

Musculoskeletal conditions



The most direct activity is making basic adjustments in the workplace such as making sure your monitor is at the right height, and having posture aids (better desks, chairs). These are often not costly.”

— Dr Christian van Stolk,
VP, RAND Europe



EMPLOYERS CAN: Create a workplace environment that encourages an ergonomic way of life (less repeated physical tasks, please!)

How motivated are employees to adopt better habits?

Contrary to the ranking of risk profiles across the four lifestyle habits, employees are more motivated to change their lifestyle when body mass index (BMI) is involved, followed by physical activity, smoking, nutrition and, lastly, alcohol.

Findings on 129 studies of behaviour change strategies confirmed that the least effective strategies were those that aroused fear or regret in the person attempting to make a change.

“Studies have also shown that goals are easier to reach if they are specific, not too numerous, and you have practical ways to reach them,” said Associate Professor Dr Wee Lei Hum of UKM.

One simple way to do it is to tell yourself to “walk for 30 minutes a day” rather than “get more exercise”, she added. “Any effort made in the right direction is worthwhile, even if you encounter setbacks or find yourself backsliding from time to time.”

SLEEP

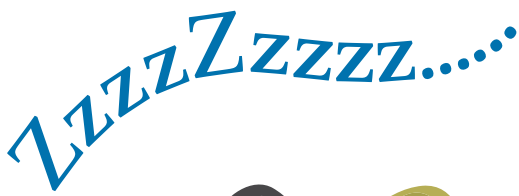


Small amounts of sleep loss can accumulate over time, leading to severe sleep problems and an **increased risk** of developing **SEVERE MENTAL HEALTH** conditions. Workers who report poor sleep habits are more likely to avoid social interactions at work.

Malaysians don't get enough sleep!

Studies show

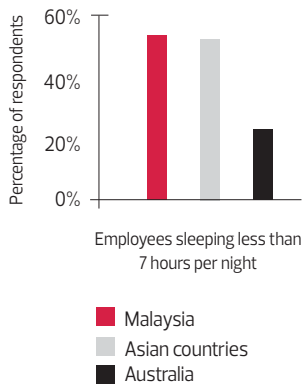
56% < 7 hours



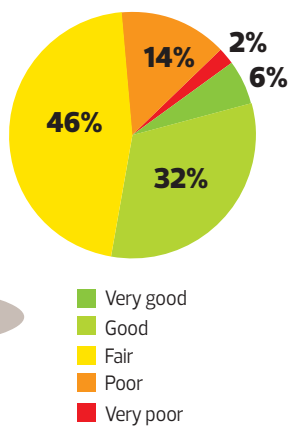
RECOMMENDED HOURS OF SLEEP

7 to 9 hours	healthy
6 to 7 hours	+ 7% mortality risk
<6 hours	+13% mortality risk

SLEEP PATTERNS: HOURS OF SLEEP PER NIGHT



SLEEP QUALITY



17% REPORTED POOR/VERY POOR QUALITY OF SLEEP DURING THE WEEK PRECEDING THE SURVEY

Long commutes due to traffic jams coupled with an Asian work culture that normalises overtime are some factors that have been blamed for poor sleep habits. Thomas Wong, Chief HR Officer, AIA Malaysia says:



Employers can support by integrating sleep management programmes into workplace strategies and promoting education on various stress management techniques that individuals can practice.”

RAND CORP STUDIES in 2016 shows:

Lack of sleep among US working population costs the economy up to **US \$411 bil** a year.

+US\$266.4 bil to US economy if sleep improves from under 6 to between 6 and 7 hours.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING



53% are subject to at least one work-related stress factor

RAND says that Malaysia is transitioning from a traditional workplace culture towards a more flexible culture that emphasises work-life balance. The Traditional workplace culture in Malaysia could be a factor that led to less consideration for work-life balance. Policies around flexible working hours could help to manage the long-working-hours culture and ensure employees can take regular breaks that could lead to better-motivated, healthier and happier employees. From this survey, Malaysians on average work 15 hours more than their contracted hours each week.

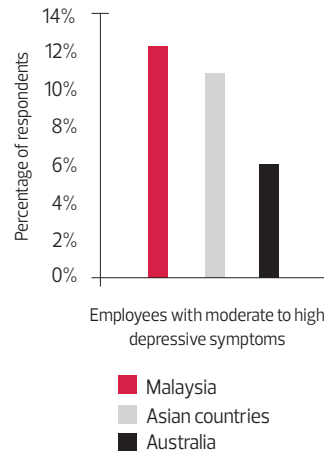
OVERALL STRESS RISK PROFILE



12%

of employees have high levels of anxiety or depressive symptoms. Malaysia comes in second after Hong Kong in this category.

OVERALL ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION RISK PROFILE

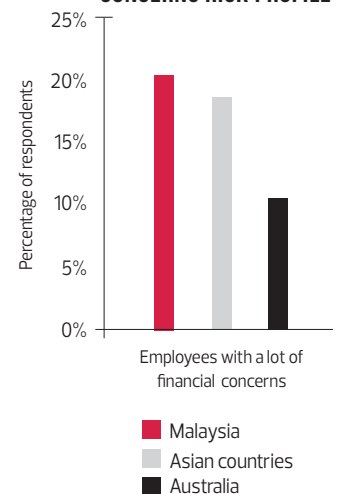


17% of employees can't decide when to take a break

18% of employees are bullied. 4% are bullied often/always.

Close to **44%** of employers offer NO intervention to mental health

OVERALL FINANCIAL CONCERNS RISK PROFILE



In Malaysia, mental health remains a taboo discussion. A trusting, caring and purposeful organisation can only flourish within a culture that takes care of its people holistically.”

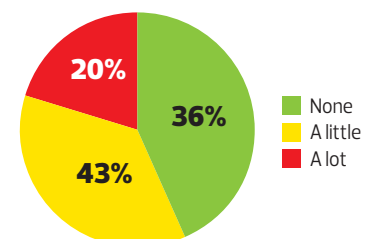
— Thomas Wong, Chief HR Officer, AIA Malaysia

EMPLOYERS CAN: Assist employees by offering in-house psychological support.

20%

of surveyed employees had A LOT of FINANCIAL CONCERNS

EXTENT OF FINANCIAL CONCERNS



ABSENCE, PRESENTEEISM & PRODUCTIVITY

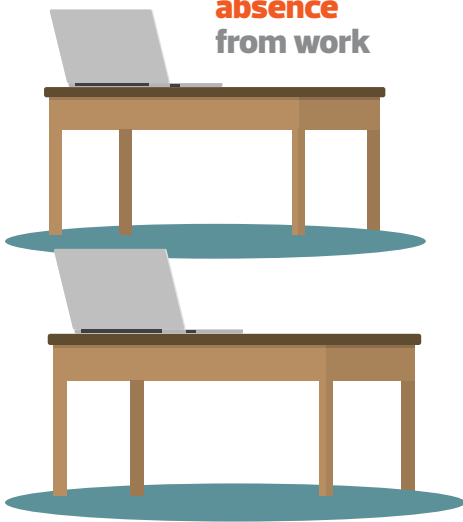
The link between an organisation's productivity and employee health and well-being can be explored through two measures – absence and presenteeism.

25.7% working hours lost a week

67 days lost per employee per year in Malaysia

Absence
8.2 days

Actual absence from work



Presenteeism
58.8 days

ZZZ



What is presenteeism?

Unlike absence, which is easily measured, presenteeism refers to **lost productivity** from employees who **show up to work in spite of health and morale issues**.

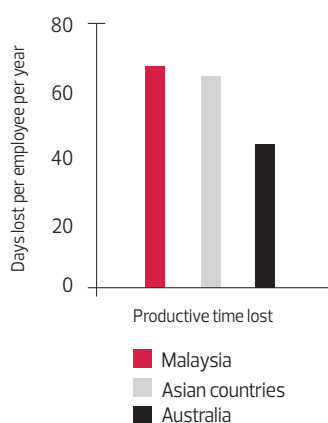
How is it measured?

The **Work Productivity and Activity Impairment (WPAI)** Questionnaire is a widely validated tool used to measure self-reported absence and presenteeism — and in turn, productivity loss.

THE COST:

RM2.7 million lost per year per company on average

OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY PROFILE



Why do people work when they are sick?

Research studies have shown that presenteeism was often linked to work-place policies to reduce absenteeism such as disciplinary actions, limited paid sick leave or medical certification required for sick time. Job demands also come into play, with heavy workloads, understaffing, overtime and looming deadlines all motivating people to work while sick.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

53% of Malaysian employees feel their line managers care about their health and well-being

60% feel their line managers encourage them at work

54% feel their leaders view the employee health and well-being as important to the organisation's success

11% of employees are highly engaged at work

19% have low levels of work engagement



WORKPLACE HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

91% of employers offer at least one intervention in their workplace

58% of employees participate in at least one intervention

Only **14%** of employees are aware of the interventions offered on average



Overall, employers in Malaysia have a good number of interventions. Only a minority of employers (10%) offer nothing. However, there is a blind spot in mental health, nutrition and physical activity. This survey helps employers to set a targeted intervention to solve the issues that they want to resolve."

— Dr Christian van Stolk, VP, RAND Europe

Taking the first step to building a healthier workforce with AIA Vitality

Every company, regardless of its size, wants to have healthy and engaged employees working for them. After all, a healthy workforce is good for business.

However as shown in the findings of the recently concluded Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey, our health has unfortunately become a victim to the social conditions under which we live. For many of us who happen to spend a significant amount of our waking hours at work, our idea of exercise is to slog away at our desks, only to later walk the short

distance to our cars to spend another hour to get back home. Time is what we don't have, or so we claim, when it comes to engaging in healthy pursuits.

While one can argue that it is largely depending on the individuals' own initiative and control to address and manage their health risk factors, more and more corporates in Malaysia are realising the opportunity and the powerful societal role they play in influencing and encouraging behavioural changes amongst their employees.

With over 15 million Malaysians currently in the labour force*, establishing a healthy culture in the workplace through an effective corporate wellness programme has become increasingly important. When employees improve their lifestyle choices, not only will it help to increase employee engagement and work productivity, but will also give companies a hiring edge given that more and more employees value work-life balance.

This is where AIA Vitality can help.



* Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia - August 2017

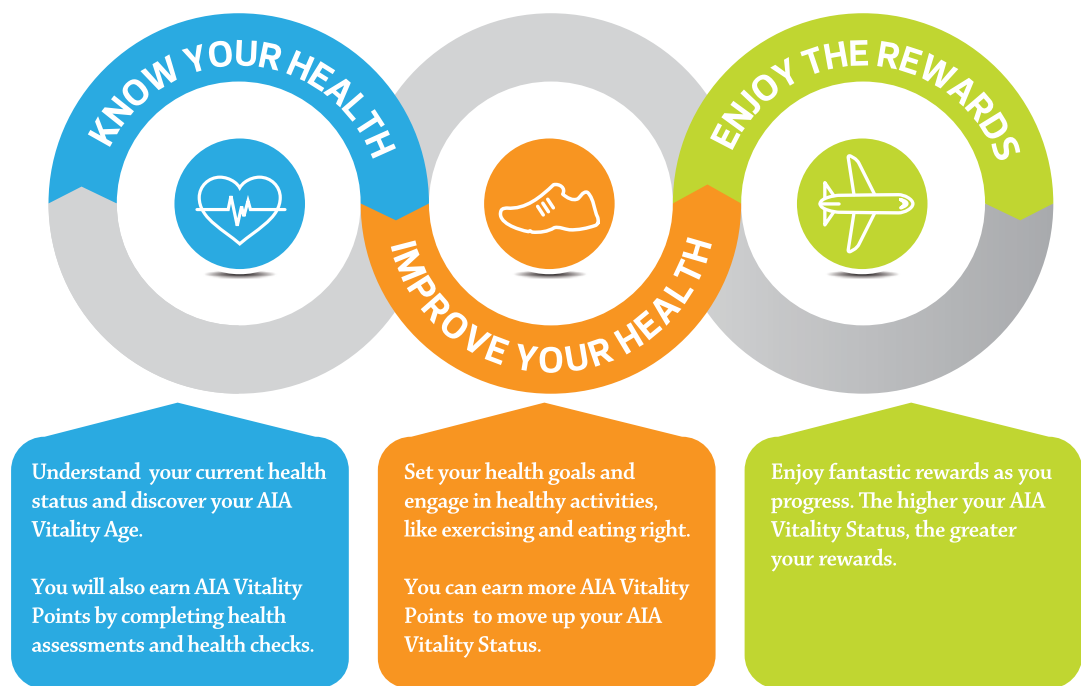
What is AIA Vitality?

AIA Vitality is a full-scale science backed health programme that companies can leverage on to drive employee health and engagement. It empowers employees with the knowledge and tools to make healthier choices and achieve their health goals.

Using the latest research in behavioural economics and incentives, it is designed to encourage long-term behaviour changes in health. Members of AIA Vitality are rewarded with benefits and discounts for taking sustainable steps, however small, to improve their health and wellbeing.

How AIA Vitality works for your employees as individuals

AIA Vitality motivates you, as an individual, to make healthy choices through a sustainable and continuous 3-step cycle.



How AIA Vitality works for you as an organisation

When your employees join the AIA Vitality programme and are starting to take steps to improve their lifestyle choices, your organisation will benefit and reap greater, long-term tangible results through the power of the community, of which these active and engaged employees are a part.

As your partner in championing workplace health, AIA will work with your organisation to help you drive adoption and engagement of the programme amongst your employees:

Individual Motivations



Earn AIA Vitality Points by doing healthy activities



Achieve higher AIA Vitality Status as you progress



Enjoy greater rewards with higher status



Amplified as a community



Harness the power of the community for even greater results

Support System to drive organisational engagement

Wellness Days at Your Doorstep

We will bring wellness days to your premises and make them fun and engaging, with education sessions and partner presence to help your employees maximise their experience.

Integrated Communications

We will work with you to embed AIA Vitality in your organisation's existing efforts on employee wellness and engagement, with templated messaging and ideas for activities or challenges.

Vitality Champs and C-Suite

We will guide you to set up an employee wellness team of Vitality Champs within your organisation who will create a supportive environment with peer-to-peer influence and top-down drive.

Comprehensive Reporting

We will provide you with regular insights on your employees' engagement with the programme, lifestyle issues, and health metrics over time.

Delivering meaningful results

AIA aims to work with you to achieve your organisational health goals, as well as those of your employees.

In the early years, we aim to achieve programme engagement and identification of your organisation's health risk factors. Over the longer term, we aim to help you with healthcare cost management and productivity.



- Health Status
- Positive and caring image of the company
- Employee morale
- Productivity



- Staff turnover
- Absenteeism
- Sick leave
- Healthcare utilisation

SMALL ORGANISATION (50–249 EMPLOYEES)

SAP Malaysia Sdn Bhd

SAP Malaysia uses its own expertise to improve employees' well-being

When an organisation has a vision to improve people's lives, the best way to start working towards that goal is by enhancing the lives of its own members. That is exactly the case with SAP Malaysia.

The leading innovative enterprise software company emphasises using its own technology to improve the well-being of its employees, says managing director Terrence Yong.

"Our people are our most important assets," he says. "What better way to demonstrate the organisation's capabilities than to use them to improve the health of our own people?"

One of SAP's key programmes is FitSAP, which applies Internet of Things and the company's cloud platform to gather information from its employees worldwide who use wearables to track their daily activities.

"We provide a common platform to collect data from wearables, fitness devices such as FitBit, Jawbone and Withings," says Yong. The information can then be displayed on an individual, national, regional and global basis in real time.

To increase participation, SAP offers attractive discounts to employees to buy the FitBit activity tracker wearable. The group then uses the data for follow-up programmes such as team and individual competitions to boost the impact of the programme.

"To encourage employees further, we provide a quarterly incentive of RM275 to those who achieve an average of 8,000 steps per day in the period," says Yong.



Terrence Yong

Slightly more than half of SAP Malaysia employees have taken part in the programme since its launch in the middle of last year. In 3Q2017, about 60% of the participants achieved the quarterly incentive target.

Although SAP Malaysia has only 130 employees, its office in Jalan Tun Razak, Kuala Lumpur, is equipped with various facilities, including a nursing room, foosball table, two pantries and even a massage chair to help reduce work-related stress. The company also provides fresh fruits daily, monthly healthy luncheon and cold-pressed juices once a month, among others.

It also runs an annual employee experience programme called People Week. This year, it

lengthened the duration of the programme to three months to include more talks and workshops by experts globally (virtual session) and locally on psychology, nutrition, mental health and stress, among others.

Apart from the usual medical benefits, SAP Malaysia also offers the Employee Assistance Programme — a third-party support platform to help employees resolve life issues — to further address stress and ensure mental well-being.

The company is also running remote working programmes such as Flexi Time and Flexi Location, which it adopted three years ago. At present, more than half of SAP Malaysia's employees have the option to work from home.

The "modern" work structure, says Yong, has allowed employees to join the company's club, which organises and takes part in activities, ranging from cultural eating events to triathlons and cycling sessions.

"Some of our employees are also active in non-governmental organisations that support social entrepreneurship," says Yong. "They are usually self-funded at the beginning, but we welcome ideas from them on how we can support or even fund some of their projects."

Feedback can be submitted under the company's annual employee survey, which touches on issues such as leadership, workplace facilities and company engagement. Then, an action items list is drawn up for the following year.

"One of our cultural pillars is to 'Tell It Like It Is'. We encourage our employees to give honest feedback on how the organisation is doing. Without that, we will have no clear direction on what needs to be improved," says Yong.

He says SAP Malaysia will continually approach the well-being of its employees in a holistic manner. The company is considering better perks, including subsidising gym fees, and conducting the employee feedback survey on a quarterly basis for better impact.

"Our research and many others have found that healthy and happy employees are more engaged and productive," says Yong.

"We are a very competitive organisation and we want to offer the best to them. It's simple logic."

"Being an employer of choice is not all about providing perks and benefits, but of understanding the needs and ideals of each employee. The people are the company, and we grow together. Employees who are nurtured will, in the end, prove more valuable than any single thing that we can build or create," adds Yong.

SAP has been in Malaysia for the past 25 years. Globally, the company is at the forefront of 25 industries, so much so that it is a widely held belief that "The world's best-run businesses run SAP".

Datacom Systems (Asia) Sdn Bhd

Shifting employees' preference to better choices

A cosy resting area with an unlimited supply of free sugary and high-carb snacks — such as chocolate bars, potato chips and soda — for employees is a common sight at IT companies.

But at Datacom Systems (Asia) Sdn Bhd's office, employees are provided with baskets of fruits when they want something to munch on during the long working hours. Oats, green tea, soy milk and yoghurt drinks have also been made available to discourage its staff from snacking on junk food.

The initiative of the New Zealand-based IT solutions provider is aimed at persuading its employees to eat healthily. It also wants them to participate in more outdoor activities.

Director Andrew Goodwin tells The Edge that Datacom is taking a bold step in an effort to shift the preference of its employees from well-liked high-sugar and high-carb snacks to healthy, energy-boosting foodstuff.

"It is a conscious decision as we want to promote a healthier lifestyle to our employees. Of course, we're not changing their diet entirely. Initially, it was a bit difficult. There were murmurs against certain decisions, such as why soft drinks were removed while coffee is still available."

"But the free annual health screening has helped. When our employees received their results, they realised and understood why the company had made these changes," he says.

As the Kuala Lumpur office serves clients across different time zones, Datacom's employ-



Andrew Goodwin

ees often have to work night shifts. Goodwin believes that the provision of healthy snacks, fruits and drinks are important, especially for those who work at night as the only food outlets that are usually still open are the mamak stalls and fast-food restaurants, which may not serve ideal food for a late-night supper.

According to him, one of the key drivers of such changes is Datacom's holistic approach to its employees' health and well-being. On this, the company has initiatives in place to help promote a healthy diet, physical activi-

ties, health screening, social health and even mental health.

"We have a holistic view of health and well-being — it is more than just physical health. While we provide subsidised gym memberships, fruits, healthy food and drinks as well as free annual body check-ups, we think that that is only part of the equation."

"You also have social health — things like community activities, charity work and other CSR (corporate social responsibility) events. My view is that all of these will actually lead

to a healthy well-being. It's a more holistic approach in that respect," Goodwin remarks.

Another initiative that Datacom has undertaken is the Employee Assistance Programme, which offers free and confidential counselling to employees who need it, whether for work or personal reasons.

Its employees' response to the health and well-being programme has been positive, with about 20% of them utilising their gym membership allowance. There has also been an increase in employee engagement results.

On his advice for other companies that want to provide better health and well-being programmes for their employees, Goodwin says the role of an employer is to encourage and not to mandate.

"A lot of these things ... you can't force people to do them. They need to have the will to do so themselves. Our job as leaders is to encourage, but not mandate. We find creative ways, such as paintball on the weekends, to get our employees to be active. Different teams run different activities. They could invite other teams to play together over the weekend. We used to have futsal events as well."

Goodwin is hopeful that the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey will help companies improve and learn from others about how to better motivate and encourage their employees to have a healthier lifestyle, given the increasing work pressure in a globalised community.

MEDIUM ORGANISATION

(250–999 EMPLOYEES)

International Medical University (IMU)

Keeping medical educators healthy

Educating oneself about one's body and health need not necessarily be confined to the classroom. Indeed, at International Medical University, the nation's leading private medical and healthcare university, health is not only taught but is also a way of life for its students and staff.

"As a health educator, we have always emphasised the welfare and health of our employees," says IMU director of human resources Francis Wen.

To demonstrate its commitment, the university set up a wellness steering committee in April to track and monitor the various initiatives that are to be carried out.

"Following the set-up of the committee, we also launched our IMU Wellness programme in May, which entails various initiatives," says Wen.

As part of extending health education to the staff, the university organises various health talks on diseases such as diabetes, obesity and immunisation, among others, he explains.

"In fact, we offer free flu vaccination to all our employees. They also have access to our in-house clinics and the sports facilities on campus."

Food health is also an important component of good health at IMU, and the institution prides itself on being at the "top of the class" in this. This initiative, Wen says proudly, has been validated by the Ministry of Health – IMU this year took second place for the *Medan Selera Bersih, Sihat & Selamat* (Clean, Healthy and Safe



Francis Wen

Food Courts operating in shopping complexes, hypermarkets or own buildings) at the national level.

With the help of the school's nutrition and dietetics lecturers, their canteen also provides a calorie label count. On top of that, the walls of the cafeteria are plastered with educational material pertaining to good nutrition.

Furthermore, a "Quit Smoking Clinic" was set up to help spearhead IMU's smoking cessation initiative. As a move to help smokers in general kick the habit, Wen says

the clinic is open to the IMU community and the public at large.

IMU also caters for stress management with employees able to choose from a range of unique therapies, such as music, art therapy and tai chi.

Wen explains that the university offers such variety because there is no one-size-fits-all approach to stress management.

Additionally, all employees subscribe to the AIA Vitality programme, which rewards them for trying to get healthy, he says.

"In the programme, employees enjoy

various incentives. For example, walking 7,500 steps a day for five days entitles them to a free movie ticket. They can even progress themselves through bronze, silver, gold and platinum membership to enjoy more goodies and rewards. Such incentives help encourage healthy lifestyles."

To further demonstrate its seriousness about wellness, the school encourages its deans and heads of departments to release their staff, when possible, to participate in its wellness activities every Friday from 4.30pm to 5.30pm.

"There may be an opportunity cost here but we believe wellness is equally important and would eventually bring a positive return on investment. When the staff are more engaged, they will go the extra mile for the organisation," Wen explains.

When it comes to making healthy choices, however, Wen says it is ultimately each individual's decision.

"As the saying goes, 'you can buy medicine but you can't buy health'. As an organisation, we will provide the best facilities, environment, motivation and programme. But to achieve the goal of living better, one has to put in his own sweat and perseverance, including discipline and commitment."

Nonetheless, with the various programmes in place and proactive engagement, IMU is determined to make it as easy as possible for its employees to make better choices with regard to their health.

GlaxoSmithKline Malaysia (GSK)

GSK's mission starts at home

GlaxoSmithKline's (GSK) mission to help people "do more, feel better, live longer" starts with its employees. The British pharmaceutical giant prides itself on providing for the health and well-being of its patients and consumers worldwide, and this philosophy is reflected in how it treats its staff.

A testament to its patient-focused philosophy being applied to its employees, GSK — which standardises its programmes globally — recently created a new internal programme for staff called the "Partnership for Prevention" (P4P).

Under this scheme, all GSK employees and their family members, irrespective of where in the world they are based, are given access to a number of healthcare services at low or no cost.

"If you look at a lot of organisations, they focus on the curative aspects of a disease, such as medical care. We have gone a step further to say, 'let's talk about prevention'. So, we provide services such as immunisation, vaccination and even smoking cessation programmes for employees and their dependents and children," says Murali Thanabalan, Human Resources Cluster Head of GlaxoSmithKline Malaysia.

P4P also covers services such as general medical examinations, blood tests and cancer screenings.

Encouraging a healthy lifestyle at work is high on the agenda at GSK, which has a



Murali Thanabalan

dedicated "healthy corner" in the cafeteria. The organisation has teamed up with Global Challenge, the leading provider of technology solutions to offer modules to encourage and promote movement and physical activity, healthy eating, quality sleep as well as resilience to its employees. In teams of seven, employees track their daily activity and work towards a daily target of 10,000 steps per day.

Employees are also encouraged to take the stairs instead of the lift and encouraging participation in various in-house fitness programmes held throughout the year.

"The key message is 'get healthy, stay healthy'. Exercise and do your minimum steps. It has even created a buzz in the

office as people are talking about it, comparing how many steps they have taken," Murali tells The Edge.

To balance the physical aspect of good health, Murali says GSK places just as much importance on the mental well-being of its employees. The organisation has an "Energy for Performance" and "Personal Resilience"

programmes that run twice a month, with a series of stress management workshops and mindfulness session, consultations and other initiatives to ensure employees are getting the support they need to maintain their energy levels at work.

"We had an employee who just could not cope with the stress at work, so, we offered to give him a year off. In that year, he got involved in some of GSK's in-house programmes, in addition to taking the advice of doctors and changing his lifestyle. If you look at him today, he is back at work, he has changed his lifestyle and he is fully recovered. He has even volunteered to be the Energy and Resilience champion of the company to share the importance

of health and well-being with his other colleagues," Murali says.

As illustrated, the company caters for time off and flexible work arrangements. Murali says it is granted to staff wanting to participate in company activities or programmes and for those who need to take care of family and personal matters.

"In my department, we have at least two persons working from home every week. And it's fine as long as the work gets done. From the employee's perspective, it is something they value because they don't have to get stuck in traffic, they can spend time at home and be with the children and still carry on with work. I think it's a good motivator," he says.

For new parents, GSK gives three months' maternity leave and two weeks of paternity leave.

Simple gestures like this help the staff to keep engaged and reduces attrition rates. For example, the company's Consumer Healthcare business staff engagement score has increased from 67% in 2016 to 73% this year. Ideally Murali hopes to achieve a level of 80%, which he says is "healthy".

"For me, the key thing is that if somebody is healthy and happy, they would probably be more productive than someone who is disgruntled. It's about keeping your staff happy, healthy and motivated in the right way for the right reasons," he says.

LARGE ORGANISATION (>1,000 EMPLOYEES)

Top Glove Sdn Bhd

Executive chairman is a positive role model

While a factory may sometimes be thought of as a hazardous workplace, Top Glove Sdn Bhd — the world's largest manufacturer of rubber gloves — boasts a workforce with a lower level of obesity than the national average.

According to founder and executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Lim Wee Chai, only 17% of the group's employees have a body mass index of over 25 (an indication that a person is overweight). This is less than half of the 45% recorded for the overall Malaysian population.

Lim tells *The Edge* that Top Glove advocates five habits to ensure its employees work and live healthily for 100 years. These habits are clean, eat, work, exercise and sleep well.

The group's health-focused corporate culture starts at the top — Lim himself is a firm believer of work-life balance.

"Personally, I achieve work-life balance through discipline, a well-planned schedule and investing my time wisely, and I encourage my colleagues, business partners and friends to do the same. My personal motto is, 'Work is my hobby, exercise is my duty, health is my wealth'," he remarks.

To encourage its employees to exercise for about 30 minutes a day, four to five times a week, Top Glove organises multiple monthly sports activities with prizes to attract staff across all its factories to participate.

"We also have a gym at our corporate tower where our staff can use the facilities free of charge. The gym also offers group classes such as Zumba, spinning and yoga. These are some of the initiatives we have undertaken to encourage work-life balance and a healthy lifestyle among our employees," says Lim.



Tan Sri Dr Lim Wee Chai

In fact, the health and well-being of Top Glove's workforce are so important to the group that one of its business rules is "Do not lose your health", he adds.

The glove maker also pays close attention to the diet of its employees. It has in-house nutritionists who work closely with the top management to design programmes that foster good eating habits. Free fruits are also provided to all its

employees at its Malaysian and Thailand offices once a month.

"We recently entered into a joint venture with Global Doctors for an ambulatory care centre with a focus on preventive healthcare. It will serve not only Top Glove's employees but also the wider community," Lim reveals.

In order to encourage its employees to look after their own well-being and

reduce preventable illnesses, Top Glove organises health talks on topics ranging from lower back pain management and cardiovascular problems to non-communicable diseases.

Lim stresses that the cultivation of a healthy and active lifestyle requires constant encouragement and creative initiatives.

"Although some employees were initially reluctant to participate in the physical and healthier lifestyle activities as they were not part of their usual routine, our constant encouragement and emphasis on the benefits of these activities helped them accept and embrace our healthy living culture," he says.

While Top Glove's employees have regular working hours, the company offers flexible work arrangements as part of its ongoing initiative to support them and help them achieve better work-life balance.

"For example, in the case of new parents, they are given the option to choose flexible working hours to help them manage. In most cases, we do see productivity increase when these benefits are used correctly," says Lim.

To help Top Glove improve its health programme, its employees volunteer to share their fitness, health and lifestyle data, allowing the company to analyse the internal data.

Lim says the group also actively participates in externally run, research-based studies to identify the gaps in its health strategies and to find ways to improve its programme. The organisations and universities that have conducted these studies include the Ministry of Health, UCSI University and AIA.

Nestle (M) Bhd

Affording employees a healthy lifestyle that suits them best

There's nothing quite as satisfying as having a platter of goodies to choose from.

At Nestle (M) Bhd, employees are empowered to choose from a range of benefits and decide what best suits their needs. The company believes it is an ideal recipe for employee satisfaction.

On Nestle's "Flex Benefits" programme, group human resources executive director Shahzad Umar says the company provides employees with the flexibility to tailor their benefits based on individual needs and differing stages in life.

"For example, if you want to claim medical expenses for your parents, there's an option to do that. If you want to use some of your budget or entitlement for your personal grooming or spa, you can also do that. In fact, the 'hottest selling cake' right now is claiming for international holidays," he adds.

And there's definitely more where that came from, Shahzad reveals.

Each year, the company has had a different theme — last year, the focus was on the importance of nutrition.

"Last year, we focused on the food that

we serve in the canteens, so we discussed the nutrition in the food and how we could lower the salt content or relook at the oil being used," Shahzad says, adding that free fresh fruits are provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

As Nestle is the largest nutrition, health and wellness company in the world, it is only natural for it to ensure that its employees are nutrition ambassadors.

This year, the company is focusing on its employees' physical health through an initiative called "Fit Back".

"To address ergonomic issues at workplace, we came up with this initiative to help people to manage back pain. Back assessment sessions are provided to determine their posture while stretching sessions are strongly recommended and reminded via notices. We also provide in house physio clinic for employees to get help to prevent and improve their posture," explains Shahzad.

Of the many initiatives, Nestle's flagship programme is its weight wellness programme — a 100-day competition to shed as many pounds and as much body fat as possible.

"The whole idea is to lose weight and body fat. We also want people to know their numbers in terms of their body mass index (BMI), weight and body fat. Last year, the gentleman who won the competition lost 20kg in 100 days just by changing his food habits and exercise. From our annual health screening, he found out he was at high risk if he did not make these changes. And with the support of his family he has been successful at it," explains Shahzad.

The programme has indeed gained traction over the years. In 2015, there was a 25% participation rate. This increased to 45% last year, which, Shahzad feels, is highly encouraging.

Currently, one of the most popular programmes is the aerobics-cum-dance Zumba class, he says. Demand has quickly grown, and more classes may need to be added soon.

Shahzad points out that it is important for health programmes to appeal to employees. Otherwise, they would be ineffective. Sometimes, this requires a healthy dose of marketing from the HR to get employees to participate. At other times, it means

swapping out old initiatives for newer, more exciting ones.

That said, Shahzad proudly points to the company's annual sepak takraw competition, which has been running for 30 years. Even for a company that has been in Malaysia for over 100 years, it is a notable achievement. In fact, the event has been managed by the same staff member since 1995, he says.

"We also have our own Nestle Olympics called Supermeet, which is held every four years. Last year, it was held at Universiti Malaya, and close to 1,200 staff participated with the support of their friends and families. There were more than 20 sporting events. It was great."

Moving forward, Shahzad hopes to see an increase in participation from its 5,500-strong workforce in Malaysia.

Looking at the numbers, Nestle spends more than RM1 million annually on its programmes. Shahzad happily states that that has led to an increase in employee satisfaction.

"Our foremost priority is to ensure that our employees are healthy and that their well-being is being taken care of."

Dell Global Business Center



Pang Yee Beng

Keeping employees interested

How do you encourage thousands of employees, located in different sites, to live healthier lives? A flexible work schedule and inclusiveness provide employees the space to be passionate about living more healthily, says Dell Malaysia managing director Pang Yee Beng.

Dell has a significant presence in Malaysia with three sites — Cyberjaya, Bayan Lepas and Bukit Mertajam — with key functions such as shared services, manufacturing, and sales and marketing.

“Yes, each site has a different type of workforce, so it is a challenge in itself. But the organisation adopts a working culture that pushes the right buttons,” says Pang.

Dell is one of the earliest companies to advocate remote working, introducing its Connected Workplace Programme at its US headquarters in 2009. The programme allows employees to sort out their own work schedule — crucial for a company whose employees deal directly with colleagues around the world in real-time.

“There is no ‘clock in, clock out’. We give them that trust, and measure the performance based on objective results. This allows them to prioritise on a daily basis,” says Pang.

With a solid structural support by the company, such as subsidies for high-speed internet, Pang says employees are more satisfied and, in turn, are more participative and motivated.

In 2004, Dell introduced a comprehensive wellness and health-improvement programme, Well at Dell, which provides substantial incentives to reward participants and family members who monitor, maintain and improve their health.

For Dell Malaysia, this has translated into regular health talks by experts, free on-site clinics on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and free health screenings twice a year, among others.

The company has set up in-house gyms and showers in two of its three sites, with the last one in the planning phase. “When work requires them to be in the office, their workplace welcomes them with the facilities they need,” Pang says.

Employees’ suggestions were central to the revamp of its café in Cyberjaya, which now serves fresh juices and vegetarian food. “Our café manager is a health enthusiast. That helps when the management needs to take an appropriate course of action to encourage the staff to embrace healthy diets.”

“The café now doubles as a place for casual meetings away from the office environment. We plan to replicate this in the other sites as well,” adds Pang.

Dell Global Business Center also provides facilities to help employees relieve stress, such as a games centre and a relaxation lounge with deck chairs.

The employees started most of the initiatives, which range from scuba diving to weight-loss competitions, says Pang. “The committee members in our recreational club are all volunteers. I believe that any motivation to improve oneself should come from within.”

“A case in point ... We have a very dedicated employee who runs in marathons held as far as Hong Kong. She pays all of her travel expenses to such events although we told her that we could sponsor some of the cost,” says Pang.

The organisation also hosts Dellympics, an annual sports competition that sees participation from employees from all three sites. But the benefit goes beyond having an active lifestyle, says Pang. “This programme has also brought our employees closer outside work. They collaborate better.”

Most importantly, Dell Malaysia is open to providing funding for these activities. “We want them to feel at one with the company, that we acknowledge their programmes, which in turn nurtures loyalty and attachment between Dell and its employees.”

Over the last two years, the international technology company has won multiple awards for different aspects of its workplace environment at both national and regional levels.



Shahzad Umar

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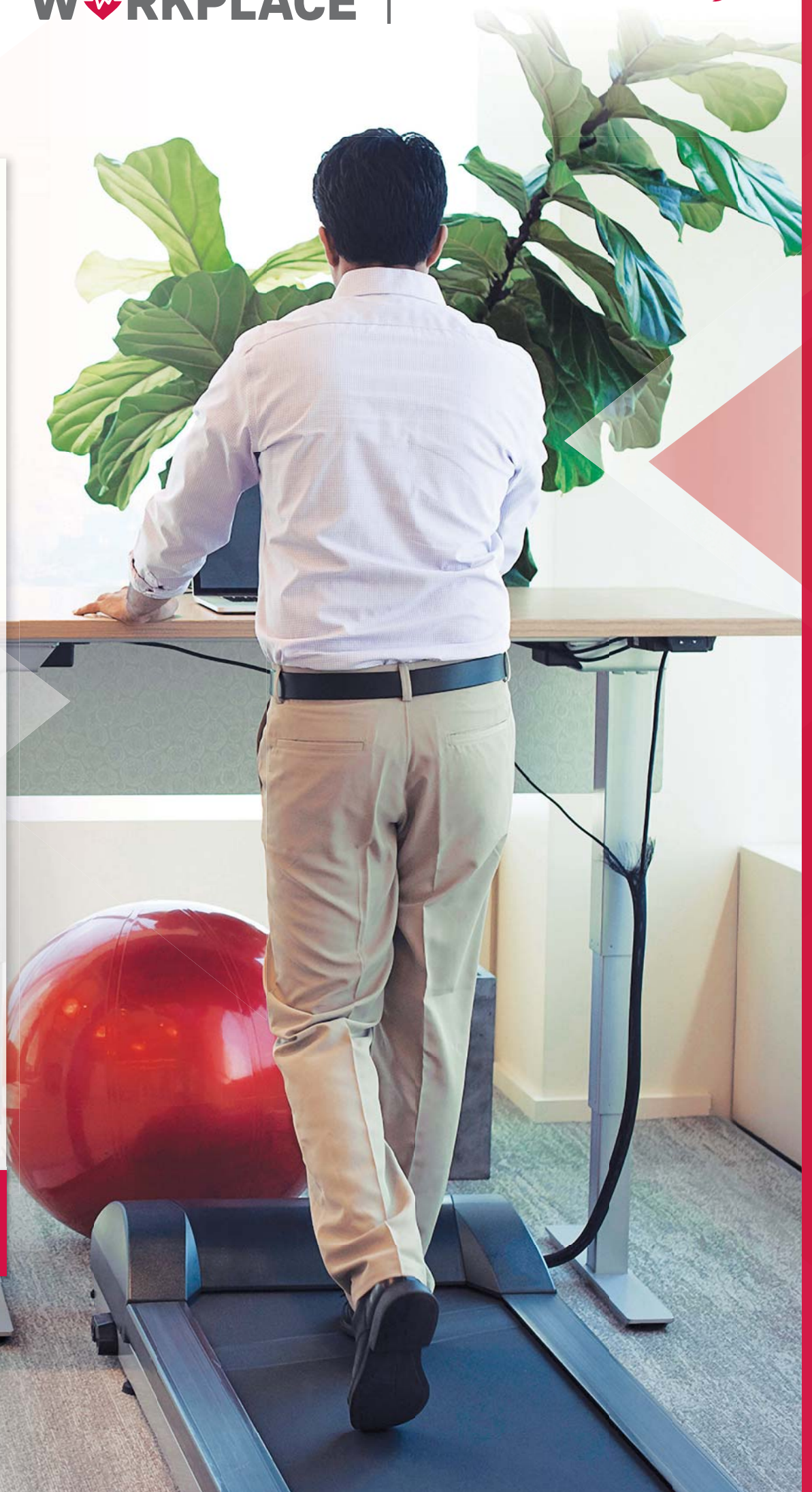
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