

Boss Skills: Upgrade your job offering

Q: What is the difference between a job and a job that comes with plenty of perks and opportunities for professional and personal growth?

A: A savvy boss who knows how to inspire the best in his people. Let Addicon Logistics Management and PestBusters show you how strategic HR practices can make everyday jobs extraordinary.

“Now I’m enjoying more time on my hands to look at other areas of growth”

Mr Benjamin Koh,
Chief Executive Officer



Addicon: A Succession Story

While Addicon Logistics Management has regional offices and international customers, Chief Executive Mr Benjamin Koh insists on running as many business activities and processes out of their Singapore headquarters to ensure that the office here remains abuzz and to help create jobs for locals.

Delivering the promise

Filling the jobs, however, is not without challenges. Not many know what the industry is about and graduates of logistics courses tend to ply a different trade eventually. Mr Koh hopes to change that. “We offer them internships here in hope that they will continue in the industry. A lot of students don’t and we lose those talents. We try to hold them back in the industry by giving them a different perspective on our business,” he said.

Every year, Addicon employs at least 10 interns as part of their Management Trainee Programme. “Once we identify good potential candidates, we try to train them. We also create opportunities for students from all polytechnics (that offer logistics courses),” said Mr Koh, adding that the real challenge is to keep them keen on a business that many perceive to involve nothing more than “container loading and trucking something from point A to B”.

Good job, great package

In a bid to appeal to the younger generation, Mr Koh perks up his job offerings with the lure of overseas exposure. “The younger generation gets bored with desk jobs. They want to move out of Singapore and see the world. I give

people a chance to move around (the regional offices). At least they won’t find the job boring and hopefully we can tap on their creativity and ideas. Sometimes they come back with something spectacular. That’s what I always look for,” he said.

In addition, Addicon’s policy of continuous training and education promises to raise each employee’s stature and value as a logistics professional. Employees with the potential to stay and grow with the company are sent for a formal diploma programme at Singapore Logistics Association. Some of them will even get a chance to pursue their degrees, fully paid for by the company.

As for Addicon’s most promising management trainees, the sky is the limit. Mr Koh cited the example of the company’s latest star pupil who is currently being groomed to take charge of a subsidiary. “Normally it takes 3 to 5 years to learn this business quite well. And to be able to run your own company, you’ll probably need about 8 to 10 years. By the time he is ready, he’ll probably seek employment somewhere else,” he joked.

Once a serious micromanager, Mr Koh has learnt to trust his people. This has enabled him to focus on building the company. “Now I’m enjoying more time on my hands to look at other areas of growth.”

Expanding the network

Contrary to the usual practice of safeguarding talent within the company, Mr Koh encourages his staff to try new pastures if the opportunity arises in order to learn more and enhance their career prospects. This open culture has reaped in benefits multi-fold. Many former employees who heeded the advice are doing well for themselves and continue to be professionally linked with Addicon as business partners, references, clients or contractors.

PestBusters: Abuzz with Opportunities

PestBusters is a local company on the verge of becoming a game changer on the global stage. However, underneath the success remains a difficult profession to fill, according to Chairman & Chief Executive Officer Mr Thomas Fernandez. “There aren’t many people who want to take on this job (of a pest controller) because it’s not the sexy job that you want to be in,” he said, adding that more educated Singaporeans means fewer candidates for him.

Busting the manpower shortage

Once a Pest Control Technician himself, Mr Fernandez recognises that people have immense potential if given the chance to fulfil their passion and willingness to learn. This is why he calls PestBusters a “people business”.

To entice people to join and stay with his company, Mr Fernandez created jobs that they could be proud of. PestBusters trains people to be specialists who command respect for their mastery of knowledge, science and technology, and recognises their efforts on the job with monetary and honorary awards. To supplement the usual recruitment channels, the company also taps on the Yellow Ribbon project for recruits.

The company also maps out a career path for each staff and provides support and funding for the training and education required to move upwards or laterally. Mr Fernandez spends time and money that “exceeds the national standard” on training and education. “A lot of people look at training as a cost. It’s an investment. It’s never a cost to us,” he said.

One of the biggest successes of this policy on people development is Ms Angeline Hia, who joined the company as a Service Coordinator. Armed with a potent dose of self-determination as well as company support, she pursued her studies and honed her trade skills through numerous courses. Today, Ms Hia is PestBusters’ Director of Human Capital.

Staff development also plays a key role in having employees stay on the job. The company strives to keep its staff for at least a year, the crucial period for staff retention. “We found that employees who stay with us for at least a year are very likely to continue with the company,” said Ms Hia.

A brand that cares

PestBusters rejects fogging because it kills not only the pests but harms all other insects within the environment too. This thoughtfulness extends to its work environment where help is always available when needed – something that even former employees miss. The local term “Kampung Spirit”, which describes a close-knit community, ensures that all employees understand how crucial it is to corporate as well as personal success.

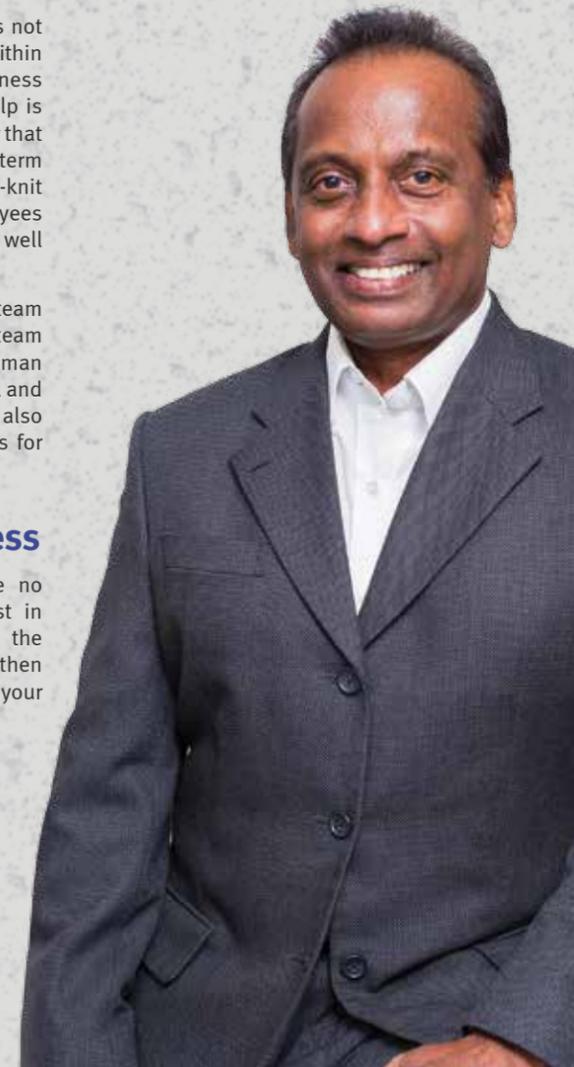
A proactive social culture has also helped team spirit to blossom. In addition to monthly team building activities organised by the Human Capital Department, such as bowling, futsal and even short overseas getaways, associates also take initiative in planning weekly activities for everyone’s participation.

Make people your business

Mr Fernandez urges employers to spare no expense on people. “You need to invest in human capital because you must be the employer of choice. If you can’t get there, then you will have a serious issue growing your company.”

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Mr Thomas Fernandez,
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer



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