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Finding Balance Together

Implementation Guideline:
Support Network

SUPPORT NETWORK

I. **Definition:**

Networking or mentoring programmes with a common focus to target audience, e.g. professional women, executive leaders, pre-maternity mothers and post-natal mothers returning from their maternity leave.

II. **Important Considerations:**

- Programme objectives to be defined (e.g. advance the development of women) and identification of supporting activities to drive objectives.
- Plan ahead with a roster of activities to maintain employee interest.
- Consider providing funding for these programmes / activities.
- Technology readiness (share point, portal, online sites) to support the options chosen.
- Time availability within the normal working hours to hold support network events with minimal potential disruption at work.
- Costs required to set up and maintain technology related items (share point, portal, online sites) and other costs related to recurring support network events (breakfast sessions, after work dinner session etc.).

III. **Policy Guidelines:**

- **Eligibility:**
  All employees who aspire to develop their leadership and mentoring capabilities as well as parents and soon-to-be parents.

- **Types of Support Network:**
  a. *Women's Network* : formed, managed and participated by professional women to accelerate and advance the development of women in order to increase representation of women in Senior Leadership roles. Women's Networks utilise various forms of development programmes such as training, mentoring programme, sharing of best practices, online portals and social networking programmes.
  b. *Mothers Club/ Mothers Support Network*: formed, managed and participated by a group of mothers and soon-to-be mothers. This network is for mothers to exchange information and receive support on what to expect during and after pregnancy, consideration for extended maternity leave, and other specific challenges faced by women with young children.
  c. *Parents Support Network*: formed, managed and participated by parents and soon-to-be parents. This network encourages open exchange of information for areas and challenges related to parenting and living as a working parent.

- **Application and Approval Process:**
  The support network is open to all eligible employees who aspire to develop their leadership and mentoring capabilities as well as parents and soon-to-be parents. There should not be an application or approval process required. Invitations to join the support network should be delivered to targeted employees that are pre-identified prior to implementation.

- **Review of Support Network:**
  a. The uptake and usage of support network must be reviewed regularly to determine it meets business needs.
  b. HR may edit or discontinue the policy if it no longer meets business needs.

- **Expectations of Employees Utilising Support Network:**
  a. Employees should utilise support network responsibly to foster open communications and provide a platform for professional women and parents to discuss and share knowledge and experience. Each member is responsible for their own learning and for contributing their effort to achieve the network's objectives.

Checklist for Employer:

❑   Identify targeted employees and define roles and responsibilities.

❑   Identify the types of Support Network and objectives.

❑   Develop and design programmes to specifically meet each initiative's objectives.

❑   Outline the duration and frequency of each initiative.

❑   Determine hardware and software requirements (e.g. sharepoint, portal, online site) to build communication channels to sustain the support network.

❑   Determine location and other logistical details for support network events.

❑   Develop communication of the initiative and send invitation to targeted employees.

❑   Identify a facilitator to plan activities or topics to facilitate discussion.

❑   Discuss action plans and summarise for presentation to the top management.