



BRIEFING PAPER ON FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS IN SINGAPORE

LESSONS AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

Key Insights



The workplace in Singapore has evolved and work arrangements have shifted away from the traditional on-site, fixed-time, and fixed workload structure. Over the years, NTUC has championed flexibility at work as a means of improving welfare for employees as well as supporting individuals with caregiving responsibilities at the workplace.

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) can and should be implemented in a way that is a win-win for both companies and employees. In this Briefing Paper*, we suggest three behaviourally-informed recommendations for companies to implement **easy**, **acceptable**, and **clear** FWAs.

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE GROUPED INTO:



Flexi-time

Examples: Staggered working hours, compressed work week



Flexi-place

Examples: Tele-commuting, work-from-home



Flexi-load

Examples: Part-time work, job sharing

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS PROVIDE WIN-WIN BENEFITS TO BOTH EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS



Employees	Employers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improved work-life balance and mental well-being ▶ Enhanced ability to balance work with caregiving responsibilities ▶ Increased job satisfaction from saving time and expenses on commuting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Greater access to a wider pool of labour (e.g. older workers and women with caregiving responsibilities) ▶ Better able to retain existing staff

THREE KEY PRINCIPLES FOR WIN-WIN FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

1



Make it **easy** to work flexibly

- ▶ FWAs need to be easy for employees to request and managers to consider
- ▶ Needs to be easy for work to be done while on FWAs

2



Make flexible working **acceptable**

- ▶ Reduce pluralistic ignorance where employees may mistakenly believe that the company is unsupportive of FWAs
- ▶ A need for management at all levels to clearly express support for FWAs

3



Make the requirements **clear**

- ▶ Uncertainty aversion may make employees cautious about taking up FWAs if there is ambiguity around FWA options available, the requesting process, or any potential impact on their career progression

*As part of the study, interviews and a survey were conducted with 23 employees, HR staff, and senior management personnel across 5 companies to gather experiences with FWAs, and views on how FWAs could be implemented. These were supplemented with 6 focus group discussions with 32 female company leaders, a survey with 2,711 Singaporean employees, and past research studies (both local and international) on FWAs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS*

1 REVIEW

key operational needs and job outcomes



- Determine **scope of flexibility** that operational needs can accommodate
- Redesign jobs** to match both context and labour market's needs
- Ensure performance management is based on fair and measurable **outcome-based metrics**

2 PRIORITISE

good management and communication



- Institute an **official FWA policy**, with fair and practical considerations for requests
- Increase **supervisors' readiness** to manage employees on FWAs
- Support utilisation of FWAs through formal channels** (e.g. townhalls, company-wide emails, staff handbook / orientation), **informal channels** (e.g. manager-staff conversations) and **role-modelling** (by C-suite and managers)

3 ADJUST

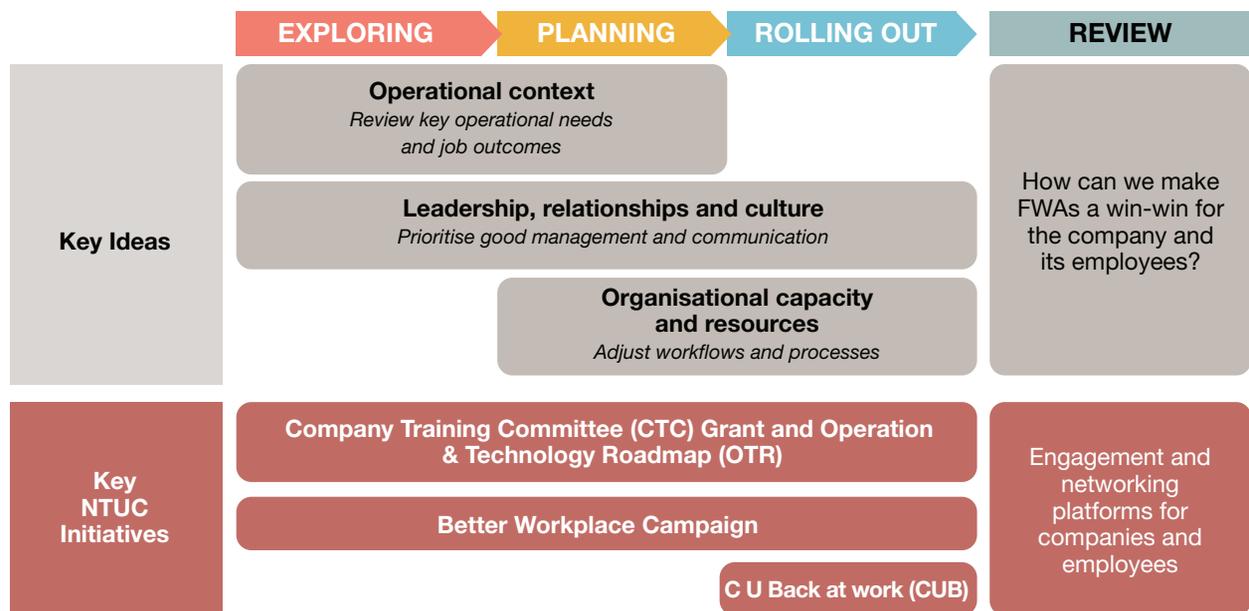
workflows and processes



- Invest in **new technology and software**
- Seek **consultancy and advice** on processes
- Ensure a **streamlined process** with reduced steps for FWA application; consider **making FWAs a default** where feasible

*Refer to Briefing Paper for more details

HOW COMPANIES MAY IMPLEMENT FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS*



HOW NTUC SUPPORTS YOU IN IMPLEMENTING WIN-WIN FWAS^



Platforms for companies to discuss their experiences with FWAs and chart the way forward



Grants, advice, and support for companies at each step of their FWA implementation journey



Support in redesigning jobs and developing systems / processes that enable flexibility

^To find out more, contact us at sme@ntuc.org.sg or womenandfamily@ntuc.org.sg



To view the full Briefing Paper, visit www.ntuc.org.sg/Research-FlexibleWorkArrangements

Copyright © 2024 NTUC. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publishers.

In partnership with



ntuc

National Trades Union Congress

**#EVERY
WORKER
MATTERS**

**MEMBERSFIRST
WORKERSALWAYS**

National Trades Union Congress
NTUC Centre
1 Marina Boulevard Level 10
One Marina Boulevard
Singapore 018989

Tel: +65 6213 8000
Fax: +65 6327 8800
www.ntuc.org.sg