

Events, developments, and opportunities in the international marketplace.

Menopause Leave Increases in Popularity



Menopause leave has emerged as the most popular employee benefit in a recent global survey, with a 1,300% year-on-year increase in searches since 2018. There was a movement ten years ago for fertility benefits for women of reproductive age; however, many working women are over that age and dealing with issues, with very little resources to help support them. Research has suggested that an estimated one in every five workers is affected by menopause and as a result, there is growing demand from employees for their employers to provide menopause leave. One company that provides menopause leave commented that that offering menopause benefits improves access to quality and inclusive care while also helping employers attract and retain talent and manage

their healthcare and business costs. A survey conducted by a leading global insurer also revealed that of the menopausal women who stayed in the workplace, many had to take an average of 32 weeks' leave to help manage symptoms throughout their careers. In the current business environment, employers seeking to remain competitive should be sure to understand how menopause may affect their workforce and be prepared to have discussions about it with employees.

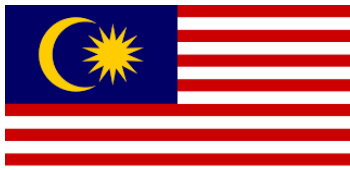
“Flexcations” Emerging as New Employee Benefit

According to a new report, more than half (57%) of employees plan to extend their vacation abroad to do some work as they gain confidence in their ability to remain productive while working remotely. The impact of hybrid work arrangements on employees' working styles is significant, with 88% planning to "work from anywhere" this year. For many employees, the days of the daily commute are over, as hybrid working allows more people to work wherever they are most productive. Companies that offer



"work-from-anywhere" benefits, enable these "flexcations," and employees are beginning to look for this policy with their own employers. More than 70% of employees said they would consider a new job that allowed them to work from anywhere at least some of the time, and at least 75% of employees said they intend to work for a company that provides frequent "flexcations" as a perk. This trend is expected to continue, with more and more companies embracing WFA policies to improve employees' work-life balance and increase their attractiveness as an employer.

Malaysian Firms Considering Stock Options



Companies in Malaysia are starting to explore alternative employee benefits options with ESOPs (Employee Stock Option Plans) rising in popularity as a way to retain talent and boost productivity. ESOPs are stock options granted to company employees as a form of equity compensation that gives an investor the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell a stock at a predetermined price and date. The company usually determines the price and quantity of shares. One Malaysian firm that implemented an ESOP as an employee benefit stated that since its introduction, the company has experienced its lowest employee attrition rate and the highest employee happiness scores. ESOPs also can be used as an incentive to encourage employees to contribute beyond their immediate roles and responsibilities. Employees have reported feeling a sense of belonging as a result of the exclusivity because, in some ways, it communicates to them that their long-term service and loyalty are appreciated and valued. The shares could be part of the employee's remuneration package or an added benefit after a certain number of years of service.

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