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VIGILANTE JUSTICE, BLOGGER-STYLE

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Voices

Going downhill, over time

Is the culture of working overtime the new "sick office syndrome"? News Comment writer Vincent Chia's views in "Working late again? Stop ..." (March 28) stirred readers to comment.

When efficient workers get penalised

Letter from **DENNIS TAN**

I AGREE with Vincent Chia's comments on the work culture in Singapore. To stay competitive, people often have to do overtime.

I work in an audit firm and have come to realise that it is not putting much effort into recruiting more talented people. Maybe it's due to the inability of the company to provide a work-life balance.

Often, manpower is less than half of what it is supposed to be. With few resources and unreasonable deadlines, things get messy. Motivation is affected.

Efficient people finish tasks earlier and get new jobs thrown at them over and over, while the inefficient deliberately finish theirs slowly to avoid more work.

Saving costs by cutting down on human resources ends up costing the company more – something they apparently have not thought of.

Should the company evaluate employees' performances based on their willingness to slog for the company, or should it look instead at their creative thinking and efficiency?

Countries like Australia realise that only by having work-life balance can the staff produce more during normal working hours.

Be smart, work flexibly

Letter from **VIKRAM SHAH**

WHILE it is true that staying late at work has developed into a culture here, most people tend to work longer hours for another important reason: Job security.

Many think, especially in the last few years, that if they do not work late, their bosses might think them lazy and replace them. This needs to change.

In my previous job, my boss expected me to work long hours on weekdays and even on Saturdays, despite having finished my work on time.

My new job, on the other hand, offers me much-needed flexibility. I am allowed to take time off anytime I want during the week as long as my work is done. And I am not required to work on Saturdays.

If I need to work longer hours, I can do so at home. So, as long as my work is done, I can spend more time with my family.

Companies in Singapore should be educated properly, to eradicate this worthless culture that we are following. It should be realised that working smart is working right.

Caught in long-hours trend?

Letter from **RONALD KOH LIANG HOO**

THE situation here reminds me of the Japanese work culture of employees not going home just because the boss was still around – whether working or chatting.

Also, when a man goes home early, his wife and neighbours will assume he's in

trouble at the office. Are more of our companies and MNCs jumping into this trend of working long hours? My daughter clocks up to 2am in her new senior position!

On call even on holiday

Letter from **IRENE CHEONG**

AT MY workplace, most of us have been given a notebook computer which links to our office computer, while some are issued with a phone so that we can be reached at all times.

Even on vacation, we are asked to switch our mobile phones on 24/7. Though our bosses may not call us that often, office matters are always at the back of our minds and we cannot enjoy our holidays fully.

Many times I have witnessed my bosses calling for meetings at 5pm or 6pm, because there is so much work to be done during normal office hours that there is hardly time even for a short meeting.

Sometimes, the meetings stretch all the way to 10pm or later.

I make sure I go home on the dot all the time. Some bosses see their staff going home early and think they have not been given enough work to do and thus add to their staff's workload.

It saddens me when this happens because an employee is deprived of his/her personal life.

I fully support Vincent Chia's argument that people who stay long past office hours should not necessarily be promoted, because they may just not be all that productive.

Unlikely Legionella link

Letter from **DR NG LEE CHING**
Head
Environmental Health Institute
National Environment Agency

WE REFER to the letter, "Pollution not only outdoors" (March 23) and thank Lionel De Souza for the feedback.

Most office buildings have a dedicated air-handling unit to bring fresh air into the building. In this process, outdoor air is cleaned and conditioned to dilute indoor air.

Windows are kept closed to prevent excessive outdoor moisture from being trapped inside.

High moisture content indoors may promote the growth of fungus, a source of allergy.

Legionnaires' disease is caused by the Legionella bacteria and the source of Legionella is usually in man-made water systems such as

cooling towers.

Transmission of the bacteria occurs when susceptible individuals inhale the contaminated water aerosol.

Unless contaminated water aerosol is brought into the office through the outdoor air intake duct, Legionella is very unlikely to be found in the indoor air.

Therefore, Legionnaires' disease is rarely linked to poor indoor air quality.

In addition, to prevent and control Legionella contamination in cooling towers, the National Environment Agency has enacted Environmental Public Health (Cooling Towers and Water Fountains) Regulations, which require building owners to conduct routine maintenance and monitoring on microbial levels in their cooling towers.

SHORT TAKES

COLIN ONG TAU SHIEN: F1 LEAD TO U-TURN?

I read with interest about the possibility of a Singapore F1 race ("Singapore pit-stop for F1?", March 28). I will not argue about the positive spillover effects in terms of job creation, tourism and even boosting the vibrancy of our economy. But it is well-known that there are strong links between F1 Grand Prix and tobacco-advertising activities. Will having F1 in Singapore be a U-turn in our country's anti-tobacco efforts? Or is it a necessary evil with a much greater good?

CHARLES TAN: RIGHT TO KNOW

What appears to be a mystery about the no-go Feelin' Good Party (March 28) is the lack of recorded documentation from the various parties involved. It appears that the "middlemen" were led into a difficult position and forced to remain tight-lipped. As consumers, the party-goers, who have been denied a chance to experience the music of Kate Monroe, have a right to know what transpired. This no-go party highlights the need for more openness and transparency within our bureaucracies and businesses.

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