



Working hours at Nuffnang Sdn Bhd is quite flexible. There is even a corner for staff to take a nap when they are tired.

Already practised by companies for decades

KUALA LUMPUR: Flexible hours have been practised by multinational companies for decades.

The good news is that more local companies have adopted the concept by replacing the traditional nine-to-five working hours with a more flexible, employee-oriented and result-driven work culture. This new work culture is less about the hours an employee puts in at the office, but more about the person's productivity.

IBM Malaysia's human resource director Kenneth Ho said the work culture had shifted from the concept of "work/life balance" to "work/life integration".

Since the concept was introduced 20 years ago, more than one-third of IBM's employees work out of the office.

"Flexibility matters to the company just as much as to the individuals. We conducted a survey which confirmed that

as employees' flexibility increased, their difficulty in balancing work and personal life decreased."

Ho claims the company's flexibility was one of the key reasons many of its workers had chosen to remain with IBM.

One of them is IBM workforce and communications manager (Asia Pacific internal & executive communications) Michelle Florence Wee, who said it was important for her to continue working after having children as it was about maintaining her independence and self-esteem.

"I'm fortunate to be able to spend a lot of time with my children. My husband is thrilled too."

Inspired by Silicon Valley, local blog advertising company Nuffnang Sdn Bhd allowed its staff to come into the office whenever they could as long as they delivered their work on time.

Nuffnang co-founder Timothy Tiah said depending on the job scope, the employees were allowed independence with their work routines.

"They can even sleep in the office. We have a corner of beanbags, pillows and blankets," said Tiah.

At the end of the day, each worker would e-mail a daily report of what they have done.

"This is our check and balance mechanism to ensure productivity," he said.

One of the workers, Firdaus Haris, usually walked into the office at noon and worked past midnight.

Despite the long hours at work, the 28-year-old designer said he did not feel stressed because the flexi hours allowed him to sleep in the next day.

He said his creativity "flowed" better in the night, so the whole concept worked well for him.