

# Crucial to protect and promote a healthy workplace



Anusha (eighth from left) with her team and the winners of the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality

BY EMIR ZAINUL

The World Health Organisation defines a healthy workplace as one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of all employees and the sustainability of the workplace. This includes incorporating health and safety concerns in the physical as well as the psychosocial work environment, personal health resources and avenues for employees to participate and contribute to the community.

In Malaysia, AIA has been at the forefront of this cause. At the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace Summit 2017 last week, AIA revealed the results of Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey 2017, spearheaded by RAND Europe, the research agency commissioned to conduct the study. It also shared notes on the best workplace practices by various companies.

Some 200 participants attended the event, which included discussions and sharing sessions. They also learnt about fitness from exhibitors such as Fitbit, Fitness First and BP Healthcare.

The climax of the event was the award presentation for Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality 2017 under three categories — Healthiest Employees, Healthiest Employer and Healthiest Workplace. The awards were subdivided into small, medium and large organisation categories.

The survey uses the scientific indicator "AIA Vitality Age" — which takes into account all aspects of health, including exercise, nutrition and stress — to calculate a person's "health" age as a comparison to his/her chronological age.

Forty-seven companies took part in the survey, with 5,369 employees providing feedback on the health and well-being aspects at their workplaces.

The Healthiest Employees award is pre-

sented to the company that has the healthiest workforce, measured by the average difference between AIA Vitality Age and the actual age. This category is based on the survey responses received from the employees of the participating companies. SAP Malaysia Sdn Bhd won the award in the small organisation category while International Medical University came out tops in the medium organisation category. Top Glove Sdn Bhd won in the large corporation category.

The Healthiest Employer award is given to the company that has the best weighted score based on the provision and use of facilities, company culture and workplace stress. This category is based on the inputs from both the employers and employees of the participating organisations. Datacom Systems (Asia) Sdn Bhd, GlaxoSmithKline Malaysia and Nestlé (M) Bhd won the award for the small, medium and large organisation categories respectively.

The Healthiest Workplace award is conferred on the company that has the best weighted score based on the two previous categories. The award went to SAP Malaysia for the small firm category; International Medical University, for the medium organisation category; and Dell Global Business Center, for the large corporation category.

From the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality survey 2017, it was revealed that poor health and well-being of employees have resulted in Malaysian companies losing 67 days of productive work per employee per year, or an estimated cost of RM2.7 million a year on average.

It also revealed some real concerns about stress at work and issues surrounding sleep patterns of the workforce. Of the employees surveyed, 90% did not have a balanced diet, 64% were physically inactive, 56% slept less than seven hours a night, 53% had at least one dimension of work-related stress and 12% experienced high levels of anxiety or depressive symptoms.

AIA Bhd CEO Anusha Thavarajah said the

survey initiated by AIA serves as a platform to promote awareness of the importance of workplace health and encourage constructive discussions and action on the well-being of employers and employees, especially regarding mental health, an issue that is usually avoided as it is a taboo topic.

"Here, we are playing a role in creating the awareness — making sure that people appreciate and understand what is involved [in the mental health issue] and what it could grow to," she said.

"It is high time employers took a closer look at the health and well-being of their people, especially given that working Malaysians spend most of their waking hours at work. If

organisations embrace the importance of a healthy workplace, the immediate outcome is that they will see their employees show better health and productivity, and it will naturally bring better business results [for the company]."

*The Edge is the media partner of Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality 2017*

**MALAYSIA'S  
HEALTHIEST  
WORKPLACE**  
— AIA Vitality —



## DELL GLOBAL BUSINESS CENTER Healthiest Workplace (large organisation)

"I'm glad that we are doing very well, and we will make good use of the findings to raise the bar of a healthy workplace environment."  
— Koay Tze Siang, director, IT Infrastructure, general manager (Cyberjaya)

(With Koay are [from left] Malaysia human resources senior manager Noorul Uteh, Anusha and Malaysia compensation and benefits manager Teoh Lyn Syrin)



**TOP GLOVE SDN BHD**  
Healthiest Employees (large organisation)

"We want to help our employees realise the importance of health via awareness workshops, education and seminars. Without this knowledge, no matter how wealthy you are, you can't live long."

— Loke Kean Mun, deputy general manager of human resources



**NESTLÉ (M) BHD**  
Healthiest Employer (large organisation)

"Hats off to AIA for championing this cause, which I believe will garner higher awareness and understanding among employers from all sectors of the economy about this critical topic — of workplace health and well-being."

— Shahzad Umar, executive director, group human resources



**INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL UNIVERSITY**  
Healthiest Employees and Healthiest Workplace (medium organisation)

"The statistics have shown that many employees are suffering from weight problems, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol level. It's quite alarming. All employers and employees must take this as a wake-up call. Being a health educator, we must walk the talk."

— Francis Wen, director, human resources



**GLAXOSMITHKLINE MALAYSIA**  
Healthiest Employer (medium organisation)

"It is important to have an analysis of the general health and well-being of the organisation so we can then take the necessary steps and interventions to further improve."

— Murali Thanabalan, human resources cluster head



**SAP MALAYSIA SDN BHD**  
Healthiest Employees and Healthiest Workplace (small organisation)

"I believe that our innovative and technology-driven initiatives to track the health and well-being of our employees have contributed to this win."

— Ivy Low, human resources business partner



**DATAKOM SYSTEMS (ASIA) SDN BHD**  
Healthiest Employer (small organisation)

"As a services organisation, we rely on our people to give the best to our customers. So, we firmly believe that when we have happy employees, it will directly result in happy customers. Our people are our business."

— Andrew Goodwin, director