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FOR the fifth consecutive year, Great Eastern Life Assurance (M) Bhd has been recognised as the most popular graduate employer in Malaysia's insurance sector by Malaysia's 100 Leading Graduate Employers.

This win is the latest addition to the 105-year-old company's already long string of accolades, which includes being the only life insurance company in the country to receive the Reader's Digest Trusted Brand Gold Award for 10 consecutive years since 2004.

With RM59.6bil in assets, over 2.9 million policies in force, 21 operational branch offices and a network of 17,000 agents nationwide, Great Eastern Life boasts not only of generational presence, but established operations and financial strength.

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

The company acknowledges it would not be where it is today without the investment put in its people.

According to its senior vice-president and head of human capital division Datin Nancy Lim, "Great Eastern Life recognises in-house talent, and we place strong emphasis on promoting internally, fast-tracking staff on appropriate career paths, and developing future leaders from within the firm as they possess the best domain knowledge."

The company offers comprehensive training to new staff to orientate them into their roles and new working environment, as well as continued training programmes throughout their career with Great Eastern Life so that they benefit from continued professional development.

In the pursuit of promoting and grooming in-house talent, Great Eastern Life provides opportunities to employees to further their education.

"Great Eastern Life supports education at the workplace through its educational assistance programme," says Lim.

"This provides support to employees in the form of study leave, examination subsidies, professional memberships, course fee assistance and special salary increments upon successful completion of courses or passing of professional papers," she adds.

According to Lim, increments upon passing of actuarial papers can be as high as RM1,000 depending on the difficulty of the paper.

The company also sponsors employees for the Life Office Management Association (LOMA) training and examinations. Its strong efforts in this area have been recognised through the LOMA Educational Achievement Awards for five years in a row.

In terms of recognition, Great Eastern Life offers rewards to employees who excel through its annual Chairman's Awards and GEvolution Heroes Awards, and honours long-term service through its Annual Appreciation Awards as well as other incentives.

Employee engagement is monitored on a regular basis. An annual climate survey is conducted to ask staff what they think about the company.

"Staff engagement is at 80%, placing us among the top-performing companies, and we are continuously improving year to year," says Lim.

On top of internal engagement, the company actively participates in career fairs to maintain engagement with graduates.

COMMUNITY CONSCIOUS

As far as giving back to the community goes, Great Eastern Life has been exercising its social responsibility for over 18 years.

It has donated more than RM1.8mil to 180 children homes in Malaysia through Children Care and has worked hand-in-hand with the Social Welfare Department and various non-governmental organisations on various children welfare programmes.

In addition to this work, it has awarded over RM7.9mil in education scholarships to young talents through the Supremacy Scholarship Awards.

Apart from its scholarship programmes, Great Eastern Life provides internships as well as management trainee programmes. The



GREAT EASTERN DOES IT AGAIN

LIFE INSURANCE
COMPANY
STRENGTHENS
REPUTATION AS
LEADING GRADUATE
EMPLOYER



Senior management team of Great Eastern Life take to the floor with employees during a fun workout session on a Making Life Great Day.

company sees these programmes not just as tools to develop talent internally, but to contribute towards developing skills in youth and address skill shortages within the industry.

"LIVE GREAT" MANTRA

Last year, the company redefined its purpose of no longer being just a life insurance company but a LIFE company.

Through the LIFE Programme, Great Eastern Life is empowering staff to take charge of their health and wellness.

Director and chief executive officer Dato Koh Yaw Hui says, "The employees of Great Eastern Life are our best ambassadors of our new purpose to be a LIFE company. As we help our customers to live healthier, better and longer, we also aim to live great and stay healthy ourselves so that we can be there for our loved ones."

"There will never be another you to take care of your loved ones; our health is not only our wealth, but our family's wealth as well," he shares.

Making Life Great (MLG) initiatives, 1 Great Eastern Family Carnival and other staff engagement activities are organised throughout the year. These not only promote work-life balance, but also serve to strengthen the relationship among its people.

Numerous incentives and tools are given to employees to take care of their health. As well as a subsidised gym membership, the Human Capital Division has produced a MyLIFE, MyBMI booklet that serves as a practical weight management and wellness guide.

The guide entitles employees to receive LIFE stamps that can be collected at LIFE Programme events. Stamps can be converted to attractive products such as sports equipment and health devices at the end of each programme term.

To promote a healthy lifestyle and work-life balance, the company organises its Live Great Days every Friday with activities such as Zumba and aerobic sessions, running clinics and stair-climbing.

In addition, the company organises several health talks delivered by medical specialists for its internal staff audience, on top of the health workshops that are organised for its customers nationwide.

LIFE Ambassadors within the staff community have also been appointed to champion and encourage their fellow colleagues' regular

practice of an active and healthy life-style such as exercising together during Live Great Days.

A WORTHWHILE INDUSTRY

"Nobody wakes up and says, 'Today I want to work in insurance,'" says Lim. "We want to change this and make it known that insurance is a great industry to work for. We need all sorts of professions – not just those who are strong in technical aspects."

"Graduates from actuarial science, statistics, law, finance, accounting, marketing, creative, engineering (land surveyors), medicine, biomedicine, biotechnology, sociology, or even anthropology backgrounds can be perfect for the job, as long as they have the passion and drive to excel in the industry."

Who would be the ideal candidate for Great Eastern Life? The company looks for intellect, energy, enthusiasm and, importantly, a can-do attitude. "You can train for skills, but a poor attitude will not take you anywhere," explains Lenard Cheong, vice-president and head of recruitment.

Even though academic excellence is important, Great Eastern Life also looks for well-rounded individuals, who are involved in a variety of co-curricular activities.

Above all, a range of people is essential – for a company to run and excel, it needs those who have strong people-facing skills, as well as those who have rigour in executing details.

■ Those keen to join a LIFE company and make life great for themselves as well as others in an organisation that promotes living healthier, better and longer, please write in to hr-my@greatasteallife.com or call (03) 4813 3215 / 3221.

GREAT EASTERN HIGHLIGHTS

- Great Eastern Life is highly committed to exercising its Corporate Social Responsibility within the industry, through its **Children Care charity** and its annual **Supremacy Scholarship Awards**; amongst various other local community CSR projects.

- Apart from training programmes and continued professional development throughout the career of employees, Great Eastern Life also supports further learning through its industry-leading **Educational Assistance Programme**.

- Great Eastern Life advocates **work-life balance** and developed the **LIFE Programme** for its staff and the **Live Great Programme** for its customers; to empower them to take charge of their health and wellness.



Koh (left) and Lim taking their pledge to make health and wellness their priority at the launch of the company's LIFE Programme.