Inspiring a fulfilling career

AIA Singapore’s strong and supportive work culture motivates financial services consultant Ms Linda Chua to excel at work

BY GEL CABOTAJE

A belief in the importance of insurance in one’s life led Ms Linda Chua, 32, to join the insurance industry to promote the welfare of individuals. And being a financial services consultant at insurance company AIA Singapore does not feel like a typical job to her.

Her work fulfills what she has always wanted in a career — being able to manage her own time and interact with different individuals to help add value to their lives.

“AIA provides me with a fulfilling platform — to help others and achieve my personal milestones,” she says.

Ms Chua, who has been with AIA Singapore for five years now, says its positive working culture and environment has played a part in her professional and personal growth. Everyone is treated like family and there is great teamwork.

“I like that AIA is always providing valuable trainings and developing our skills and professionalism,” she says.

For instance, there are weekly “sales builder” sessions where the team’s top producers share tips and learning points to help everyone improve their skills and services to clients.

“There’s no intense competition about achieving the sales figures. Instead, we are focused on helping everyone succeed and achieve their goals,” she adds.

Making a difference

AIA Singapore, which has been consistently listed as one of the most desired employers in Singapore’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers, has various programmes in place that help motivate its staff. The company also provides rewards and incentive trips to celebrate employees’ achievements.

Such programmes push Ms Chua to strive for the best and she finds comfort in knowing that her hard work has benefitted others.

She says: “AIA Singapore, one of the biggest life insurers in Singapore, has been serving generations of Singaporeans since 1931. It is committed to putting customers at the heart of everything it does and being an integral part of its clients’ life journey, whether it is for their health or financial needs.

“More importantly, I’ve helped my family members, relatives and friends in terms of their medical or illnesses claims, as well as providing sound advice for them over the years.”

For those planning on taking the same path as hers, she advises: “Explore this career with an open heart and a never-say-die attitude. You will feel fulfilled everyday knowing that you are making a positive impact in other people’s lives.”

5 things graduates look for in employers

A recent survey by Singapore’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers (S100) has seen an encouraging shift in local graduates expressing interest in the technological industry. It observed that more graduates across all disciplines of study are viewing this industry as the next big frontier for their early careers.

Says Mr Isaac Hee, managing director of GTI Media Asia: “Each year, we see tech firms and employers with strong in-house tech divisions steadily climbing the ranks. Despite the buzz surrounding the disrupting effects of the tech industry and the advent of Industry 4.0, it seems that graduates across the board still see the tech industry as a winning bet.”

While the sector may be gaining steam among graduates, a majority of students still keep a lookout for various factors that would make an employer or an organisation the ideal choice. Of 13,874 respondents, 76 per cent highlighted that moral and ethical factors play an integral role in their decision-making process.
These are the top five attributes graduates consider during their job search:

1. **Good career prospects**
   - These offer assurance that there are opportunities for promotion and professional growth.

2. **Positive employer leadership**
   - Effective and principled leaders are more likely to motivate their staff to excel in their work.

3. **Opportunities for personal development**
   - These help to develop skill sets, be it soft skills or personal interests, beyond one’s job scope.

4. **Appreciation at work**
   - Receiving recognition for putting in effort at work offers great job satisfaction.

5. **Friendly colleagues**
   - This, and a positive and collaborative environment that is free from office politics, is ideal for bringing out the best in everyone to succeed.

These findings have not changed much over the years. Previous surveys conducted have shown that graduates tend to make career decisions that correspond with their personal values and principles.

On the flip side, according to Mr Hee, employers are stressing the need for current students and graduates to work on soft skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving, as well as develop a sense of curiosity and an appetite for learning.

He highlights that the key to developing soft skills for success lies in the pursuit of the unknown.

“Do things that are genuinely interesting and fun for no other reason than having a good story to tell later on. Do things that scare you now,” he says.

“When you put yourself out there and are constantly trying new things, you’ll pick up lots of useful soft skills in the process.

“The best weapon for dealing with a constantly changing world is a keenly-sharpened spirit of curiosity.”

---

**About S100**

The Singapore’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers (S100) Awards is organised by GTI Media to recognise and celebrate excellence in graduate recruitment practices. It is also a benchmark for local recruitment practices among recruiters and graduates.

The award ceremony recognises the most outstanding graduate recruiters in the country via their Overall Rankings, and those who stand out within key industry sectors via their Sector Rankings.

Established in 2010, the award is determined solely by votes from university students. The voting is done via the Singapore Graduate Barometer, an annual survey conducted in partnership with universities across the nation. A total of 18 awards will be presented to the most popular graduate recruiters in Singapore.

The survey is conducted at 28 local universities and institutions during student and recruitment events. Respondents go through a multi-stage process that identifies the career sectors they are interested in, the most appealing employers (from a curated list), and their top three preferred employers. They also have the option to nominate employers that are not featured on the list.

For employers who wish to be included in the list, they have to hire a specific number of graduate roles every year or have a proven track record of consistent student-graduate engagement over the last three years.

The survey and rankings are completely independent of employers’ commercial relationships with GTI Media. Visit www.singapore100.com for more information.

---

**Close to heart**

Research analyst
Ms Deanette Pang shares how working at Ministry of Health keeps her passion going

**BY GEL CABOTAJE**

The spotlight falls again on the Ministry of Health (MOH) this year. It has consistently been on the list of most desired employers in the Healthcare and Pharmaceutical sector at Singapore’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers. With that on record, one can’t help but wonder what it’s like to work with one of the best employers in the healthcare sector.

“MOH has a framework in place which takes an integrated approach in promoting the holistic wellness of employees in the physical, mental and social aspects, besides a comprehensive rewards and recognition framework for the staff,” says MOH’s human resource partnership senior manager Mr Yong Khian Chua.

Research analyst Deanette Pang, 25, has been part of the ministry’s policy research and evaluation division since 2016. She explains what motivates her in her job.

**You started as an intern at MOH before joining the ministry full-time in 2016. Why did you choose to be part of MOH?**

While I was studying at National University of Singapore, I deliberately planned my modules in such a way that I can take up an internship in my last semester. And it so happens that the ministry’s policy research and evaluation division had an opening back then. It was an eye-opener for me as the work turned out to be very different from what I had imagined. The work felt very close to heart and I could see how it can make an impact on patients.

I wanted to be a part of MOH simply because healthcare is so meaningful; it is a basic but essential need for everyone. Without good health, there’s nothing else we can talk about and MOH is where we can help improve the health of the general population.

**MOH is the only organisation you’ve ever worked for since graduation. How has MOH helped you grow in your career?**

When I first started out, my research topics were more generic and revolved around trends in disease and utilisation patterns. But as I gradually gained more experience talking to different stakeholders both within and outside of the ministry, I have geared my work towards identifying pain points and exact areas where we should focus our resources.

My mentors are also inspiring. Because they are so experienced, it is always great to speak to them to find out if a new area I’m intending to embark on will gain traction on the ground. If not, they’ll help me look at the same issue from another perspective.

**What makes working at MOH exciting and fulfilling?**

Everyone is so friendly and helpful, whether within or across divisions. Bosses are very approachable as well and you can always look to them for guidance. Constant engagement with clinicians also helps you stay in touch with issues on the ground.