

OFW strandings expected after HK travel ban

SOME OVERSEAS Filipino workers (OFWs) are expected to be stranded in airports after Hong Kong barred inbound flights from eight countries it deems high-risk due to the coronavirus, including the Philippines, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) said.

OWWA Administrator Hans Leo J. Cacdac said at an online

briefing on Thursday that the agency is currently evaluating the volume of flight cancellations in order gauge the volume of aid required for OFWs unable to fly.

Hong Kong barred flights from Australia, Canada, France, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, the UK, and the US between Jan. 8 and Jan. 21, Hong Kong Chief Execu-

tive Carrie Lam said on Wednesday, as a precaution taken against re-emerging coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreaks.

Mr. Cacdac said that in general, recruitment agencies have been providing help to stranded OFWs, but additional assistance from the government may be needed in some cases.

"We will help them if they have nowhere to stay here in Manila, if they are from provinces or other regions, by providing them shelter, food and accommodation, and assistance for transport from the airport to where they would like to be sent," he said in Filipino.

Mr. Cacdac also said that the Philippines' fresh surge of CO-

VID-19 cases will likely affect the deployment of OFWs only during high-infection periods. "If there will be an effect, it will only be temporary and will remain only at times when the surge can be felt, but this will not stay for long."

With the global spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19,

"I think foreign host countries, governments, and foreign employers will understand when it comes to our workers," he added.

He said Filipino workers will always be sought after because of reliability, quality of work, and loyalty, Mr. Cacdac said. — **Alyssa Nicole O. Tan**

OPINION

Will a one-day, final job interview suffice?

IN THE WORKPLACE
REY ELBO

ELBONOMICS: It's not the fastest, but the smartest who wins the game.

the BPO industry and 35 years in HR overall.

Most BPOs do one-day hiring because their clients give them ultimatums to hire, for instance, 1,000 agents in 15 days; failure to do so will result in the cancellation of the account. "If we fail, (that means we) breach the contract and the client moves to another BPO," he said.

You need to understand that my proposed 15-day hiring process is for all types of business. It is not intended for BPO companies that may have found a solution to maintain their competitiveness despite the risks of hiring fraudsters, as some jobs require handling the accounts of banks and other financial institutions.

LEAN HR

Also, let me clarify that the term

"Lean HR" is not my invention. It has been around since HR practitioner Dwane Lay wrote the ground-breaking classic, "Lean HR: Introducing Process Excellence to Your Practice" (2013). Three years after its publication, another HR executive, Cheryl Jekiel, wrote "Lean Human Resources: Redesigning HR Processes for a Culture of Continuous Improvement" (2016).

The word "lean" has fascinated a lot of management professionals since 1988 when John Krafcik wrote a paper on "Triumph of the Lean Production System," Sloan Management Review. Krafcik studied Toyota and discovered why it has been successful in reducing its operational waste to half that of its competitors.

BPO company or not, you still need to protect yourself against bad hires and at the same time fast-track the hiring process. You can still do Lean HR by observing the following steps:

One, do an online screening of the applicant's curriculum vitae (CV). The CV is the only document you need to assess the applicant's capacity and potential. There's no need to ask for their transcript of records, employment certificate, court

clearance or anything at this point as they're needed only from shortlisted applicants as you make a final hiring decision.

Two, limit the interview process to two interviewers. After the first level HR interview, the applicant is passed on to the requesting department for another fast-track interview. If they pass initial screening, the requesting department can decide by a further interview of two or three shortlisted candidates.

Three, have a standard set of interview questions on work situations. Create two or three versions that you can use for all applicants at a given time. This ensures objectivity and keeps decoy applicants from passing them to other people. The questions are adjusted constantly depending on the result of bad and good hires in the recent past.

Four, limit the interview to 30 minutes per applicant. This prods the interviewer to ensure the efficiency of interaction with applicants and minimize waiting time. Corollary to this, avoid the batch-and-queue method of interviewing applicants. As soon as someone clears HR, they must be interviewed right away or

passed on to the next level by the requesting department.

Five, maintain a blacklist of ghost applicants and dismissed employees. If someone fails to honor an online interview or they're even one minute late, cancel right away so you can move on to other applicants or other important tasks. There's no point of repeating your mistakes by calling the applicant for another interview, even if they have good reason.

Last, require new hires to sign an employment contract in person. The contract should spell out the performance standards and other requirements of the job. Include a provision reserving the right to do background checks.

Our fast-paced world demands that we be conscious of waste in our business operations. Many of this waste is invisible but still contributes to inefficiency. If HR could use a bit of critical thinking, much can be accomplished; we may not even have to resort to labeling sensible practices "Lean HR."

Have a chat with REY ELBO via Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter or send your workplace questions to elbonomics@gmail.com or via <https://reyelbo.consulting>.



You've been advocating for the application of lean principles in Human Resources (HR). You even coined a term for it — "Lean HR," and posted on social media on how to reduce the 30-day "theoretical" hiring process to 15 days. You may have missed what the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry is doing. Many of them are hiring after only a one-day process, including a single interview. What's the value of Lean HR? — White Linen.

After forest ranger killed a grizzly bear in a protected area, he defended himself during the inquiry by saying: "When I saw that bear approaching me, I had no trouble deciding who the endangered species was." The same can be said by management working in the BPO industry.

We need to understand the context of BPO, where the attrition rate is up to 50%. This is why they are aggressive in hiring, even to the point of ignoring some risks involving potential hires who have been dismissed by other BPOs.

"They take the risk," according to a retired HR practitioner who has worked for more than five years in

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