



## BPO company iQor to expand Iloilo workforce by 100

BUSINESS process outsourcing (BPO) firm iQor is looking to expand its Iloilo workforce by 100 to specialize in servicing its Canadian telecommunications clients.

In a statement on Thursday, iQor said it is promising successful applicants a one-time bonus of P60,000.

The company called the compensation package competitive,

with healthcare coverage beginning on Day 1 for the candidate and three dependents.

It said employees are eligible to earn monthly performance incentives and are subject to quarterly appraisals. Paid leave is up to 30 days, with up to 21 unused days convertible to cash.

"We offer above-industry-rate salaries, bonuses, benefits, and

growth opportunities," iQor Senior Vice-President of Global Recruitment and Human Resources in the Philippines Fleurette Navarro said.

iQor Senior Director of Operations Tony Rizkallah said the company considers Iloilo a strategic location.

"Our Ilonggo workforce delivers outstanding service

and results to our clients. We are confident that our telco business will continue to grow, which will translate to even more job opportunities, not only in Iloilo but in other iQor locations as well," Mr. Rizkallah said.

iQor employs 35,000 people in 10 countries. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

OPINION

## Deciding between a loyal old-timer and a top-performing newcomer

**I'm a vice-president who is torn between promoting an average-performing old-timer (OT) and a newcomer with star qualities (SQ) to a vacant managerial post. The human resource (HR) department does not have a clear policy on promotion but recommended OT. I rejected this advice out of my belief that meritocracy should prevail over seniority. How do we resolve this matter? — Yellow Submarine.**

The most objective and practical way is to send both OT and SQ through an evaluation process by a third party, using tools like psychological assessments, job simulation games, ability and aptitude tests. It may cost your organization some money but the result can be worth it if you want to assess likely on-the-job performance.

As a department head, you must understand the dynamics of each and every relationship in your organization. It could be that the HR department is influenced by friendship with OT. We can't say for sure. That's one reason why you need to be very careful with your choice.

Of course, loyalty as displayed by OT is an important ingredient in any work relationship, except that any hiring decision must balance the need for loyalty with the overall requirements of the job. It is possible to interpret OT's long service as reflecting an inability to get a job elsewhere.

### IN THE WORKPLACE REY ELBO

**ELBONOMICS: Big results come from unambiguous process.**

If this is the case, then a consistent performer like SQ, who could serve as a role model, might be more welcome. On the other hand, OT and the rest of your department may have been so accustomed to a relaxed work environment that SQ might be treated like a pariah if he rocks the boat by demanding more performance.

If you aren't aware of these things, maybe you don't have your ear to the ground.

### MERIT TAKES PRECEDENCE

You need to make a firm and objective decision that keeps future issues from arising. Now might be the right time to create or review a management policy with the help of the HR department. Put it in black and white that merit takes precedence over seniority. Seniority should come in only to settle ties between equally-qualified candidates.

Here are some ideas that you can use to create a healthy working environment:

**One, job vacancies must be announced to all workers. Go public.** Explain the requirements of the job, the required qualifications and the timeline for submitting applications. This does not mean ignoring those who do not indicate their interest. If this happens, talk to people who are next in line and find out what their career plans are.

**Two, promotion policy must align with succession planning.** You can't have one without the other. If there's a vacancy, the succession plan (aka replacement plan) is the first document you should consult. Unlike the promotion policy, a succession plan must be kept confidential to avoid adversely affecting the morale of people not on the list.

**Last, employee career management and career planning.** This is the job of all line managers and department heads who must practice proactive communication with their direct reports. This requires a regular engagement dialogue to help discern the employees' career interests and assist them through a multi-pronged training and coaching program.

### MANAGING MOTIVATION

People management is the heart and soul of every organization. In order for your business to succeed, it's important to manage people effectively, by motivating them not just with big money and handsome perks. You should also do so with zero-cash motivational approaches that let them use their talent to full potential.

While the employment contract carries with it specific expectations from both employees and management, there are many unwritten rules, like treating everyone with due respect and trust.

Everyone deserves a happy, healthy, secure and safe working environment. The employees themselves must be the ones making the environment sustainable. Anything less than this would represent a clear failure in motivating people. It may lead to the promotion of deadwood over candidates who consistently perform like stars.



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## ILO finds only 6% of domestic workers enjoy social protections

THE International Labour Organization (ILO) said on Thursday that only about 6% of domestic workers worldwide have access to comprehensive social protections.

The remainder lack "access to the full range of protections, covering medical care, sickness, unemployment, old age, employment injury, family, maternity, invalidity, and survivors' benefits," the ILO said in a statement, citing a study it conducted this year.

"Even where they are legally covered, only one in five domestic workers are actually covered in practice because the vast majority are employed informally."

The labor organization said that 76.2% of domestic workers are women, and the lack of so-

cial protection would leave them vulnerable.

The ILO noted the Philippines is the only country in Asia and the Pacific that ratified the Domestic Workers' Convention in 2011. A year later, the country passed the Kasambahay Law that set a minimum wage, benefits, and improved terms of employment for domestic workers.

"The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has made 'glaringly apparent' the social protection coverage gaps experienced by domestic workers," the ILO said. "They were among the worst-hit during the pandemic, with many losing their jobs and livelihoods."

The ILO recommended raising awareness among domestic

workers and employers about their basic rights and obligations, ensuring adequate work conditions, and promoting a participatory and integrated policy-making process.

The report cited the Philippine Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), which covered the repatriation costs for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) during the global pandemic.

OWWA provided P10,000 cash aid to returning OFWs from the agency's trust fund.

"The Philippines is a major migrant worker-sending country, home to some of the most important labor migration corridors from the Philippines to Malaysia and Hong Kong (China),

as well as to Qatar, Lebanon, and other countries in the Middle East and North Africa region," the ILO said.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) estimated that the number of OFWs dropped by 18.6% to 1.77 million in 2020 from 2.18 million in 2019.

In a survey conducted in 2019, the Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) and the PSA said that 83% of the 1.4 million domestic workers in the Philippines are not covered by social security benefits.

DoLE earlier said that domestic workers in 13 regions will have higher monthly pay this month, with wage increases between P500 and P1,500 in some regions. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**



## PCC hematologists share advancements in blood cancer treatments

Singapore faces a stable increase in blood cancer patients. Promisingly, a chance of better treatment for such incidents emerges from the developments in cancer research and technology.

In a virtual open dialogue, senior consultants specializing in hematology at Parkway Cancer Centre (PCC) in Singapore highlighted the progress in blood cancer treatments, particularly the possibilities of making them individualized.

Most blood cancer patients during the mid-1960s to mid-1990s experienced poor outcomes with the treatments. But from the mid-1990s up to now, "there's been a lot of exciting and revolutionary advances," said Dr. Teo Cheng Peng.

Dr. Colin Phipps Diong talked about leukemia and introduced the Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell (CAR T-cell) therapy which involves taking a patient's T-cells and modifying the cells in the laboratory to make them recognize certain targets on certain cancers. Those cells would be given back to the patient through an infusion.

While effective, such a therapy is expensive. Early clinical trials also saw the therapy "killed so many leukemia cells all at once; when [the leukemia cells] died in the body, they release a lot of the toxic stuff inside the cells, and that overwhelmed certain patients," Dr. Diong said.

"Thankfully, we now know how to deal with these complications, and how to preemptively — or you can say preventively — treat so that these severe complications that cause death are minimized," he said.



Moreover, CAR T-cell is a targeted therapy which means it cannot be used for all cancer types.

"The two approved indications for CAR T-cell therapy in Singapore at this point [are] against the B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia and large B-cell lymphoma," Dr. Diong said.

"As yet, we do not know what is the best way to target acute myeloid leukemia or T-cell lymphoma with CAR T-cells. There is still a lot of development that needs to happen in the CAR T-cell therapy," he added.

Dr. Dawn Mya discussed multiple myeloma, a cancer originating from plasma cells. Since multiple myeloma remains incurable, she said that they concentrate on achieving remission with treatment.

"Our treatment is mainly focusing on symptom control, at the same time trying to improve the quality of life;

together with prolonged remission as much as possible while trying to delay the time to relapse," said Dr. Mya.

She divided the treatment into definitive treatment (usually combination therapy) and supportive care.

Dr. Mya also shared new advancements in multiple myeloma treatments like several classes of drugs for medical therapy. There are also immunotherapy and other specific therapies such as bispecific T-cell engagers and cell therapy like the CAR T-cells, which are in clinical trials and may be available soon.

As for lymphoma or the type of blood cancer involving the lymphatic system, Dr. Lee Yuh Shan said that its various subtypes have a different treatment approach.

Developments on lymphoma treatments are also on the horizon, said Dr. Shan. These are immunotherapy and BCL-2 inhibitor, new bispecific antibody, and the CAR T-cells.

"Treatment outcomes [are] improving over the years with the new agents, which are more effective," Dr. Shan observed.

"Personalized treatment is very important," he added. "We have to take into consideration the tumor type, the disease status, the mutation of the tumor, as well as the fitness of the patient to improve the outcome of this patient with lymphoma."

