

Uber, delivery apps propose offering Mexico drivers social security

MEXICO CITY — Tech giant Uber and delivery apps DiDi and Rappi have proposed offering social security benefits to workers in Mexico for the first time ahead of a new government bill set to regulate the gig economy.

The companies said in a statement on Wednesday, co-signed by worker-rights activist groups, they were open to covering drivers and couriers who work an average of more than

40 hours a week on one or more platforms.

They stopped short of agreeing to classify drivers as employees, however, and few details were given on how payments towards social security costs would be divided.

Mexican Labor Minister Luisa Alcalde has said officials are working on a bill that would bring gig workers into the “formal economy,” although the

timeline is still unclear. It is also unclear if the bill will seek to make drivers employees, or propose other reforms in line with the apps’ statement.

Ridesharing and delivery apps worldwide have pushed back against calls to classify workers as employees rather than independent contractors, saying the change would hinder their business models and deny drivers flexibility.

The statement from Uber, Chinese mobility firm DiDi Global, Inc. and Latin American delivery app Rappi also suggested establishing mechanisms to ensure fair pay in line with time worked, but did not outline specifics.

“It’s time to take the next step and find a point of consensus ... and start improving conditions,” Tonatihu Anzures, Didi’s government affairs director in Mexico, said in an interview.

Any changes will depend on further talks and government backing, Mr. Anzures added.

Nicolas Sanchez, Uber’s head of public policy in Mexico, said that he hoped that extra costs would be low but Uber was “open to them” if the industry, which encompasses some 500,000 people, was allowed to retain flexibility.

The Labor Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for

comment. Reaching broad consensus may be tough. A few dozen workers honked on motorcycles outside the Mexico City building where the companies were slated to hold news briefings on Wednesday, in what Sergio Guerrero, head of the National Union of Application Workers, called a protest against the companies’ stance.

“To have labor rights, you have to be recognized as an employee,” he said. — Reuters

OPINION

When HR becomes unpopular

Our human resource (HR) department is unpopular because of its strict implementation of our policies. One other grievance against it is the delayed hiring of new employees. HR also hired a new canteen concessionaire last month that resulted in a minor food poisoning incident recently. How do we manage the situation? — Yellow Banner.

First thing to do is to immediately fire the new concessionaire subject to the terms of the contract to avoid a protracted court battle. This is a double-edged weapon as it could inconvenience the employees who rely on the canteen for reasonably-priced meals and snacks.

It’s imperative that employees not lose access to this. This means hiring a temporary but more experienced concessionaire that can set up in one to two days maximum. If they have the expertise, they should be able to organize themselves in record time to serve employee needs.

Don’t forget to sign a contract with them for say one or two months, depending on how long it will take you to agree on a long-term deal. Just the same, don’t allow

IN THE WORKPLACE REY ELBO

ELBONOMICS: Get better by frequent change, rather than by infrequent chance.

Even with 30 years of experience may not be able to match a competitor with say, 15 years in an upscale location like Bonifacio Global City (BGC).

Or vice versa. That BGC concessionaire may not like the idea of serving a Laguna factory or lower its standards to meet the needs of shop floor workers. In fact, it may even reject an offer.

To ensure co-ownership, allow at least two employee representatives to participate in the bidding process to be handled by a five-person ad hoc committee chaired by management. If there’s a union, request it to send in representatives to the vetting committee.

PROCESS ORIENTATION

The delayed hiring of new employees is often a symptom of the deeper problem of poor employee motivation due to toxic management style. If this is true in your case, prepare to solve them simultaneously.

But then, what causes the delay in your hiring process? Some HR people tell me they can hire new employees after 60 to 90 days, depending on the job specifications. Sometimes, if the vacancy is for a sensitive managerial post, the hiring process takes longer, even if they outsource it to headhunters. Why that long?

I talked to several recruitment managers and I was surprised to learn they are still observing outmoded practices. When asked about the first step of their hiring process, about 90% tell me they require applicants to submit basic documents like diplomas, transcripts of records, birth certificates, police and court clearances, social security numbers, employment certificates, driver’s licenses and marriage certificates.

What does that have to do with their capacity to do the job? Wouldn’t it be better to simplify the process by requiring only a curriculum vitae? If one has passed the third level of job interviews, that’s when you require the three shortlisted candidates to submit their records for further evaluation.

You don’t have to require all job applicants to confuse you with so many documents that may not be needed in the first place because they have not passed your testing and interview process. And speaking of job interviews, focus on asking difficult questions about work situations peculiar to the vacancy. Questions like, how would you manage an irate customer who is badmouthing you and your brand of service?

Avoid interview questions about the strengths and weaknesses of a person or a trite question like — “tell me something about yourself.” They’re a waste of time. Rather, focus on the core competencies of a job and let the applicants justify how they would perform under critical work conditions.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

HR is not engaged in a popularity contest. If HR is hated for implementing management policy, then you should not take it against them. Rather, you must commend HR for doing its job regardless of the folly of such policies and practices.

The best thing for HR to do is to re-examine a much-criticized policy and determine whether it is rational to continue with it. Issue a memorandum to all employees clarifying the logic behind such policies. Otherwise, accept the blame when something goes wrong. Or, change certain policies that were implemented in answer to specific situations that have since been resolved.

HR must be brave enough to admit mistakes. Be honest with people and be magnanimous with change as well.



Chat your questions with Rey Elbo on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter or e-mail elbonomics@gmail.com or via <https://reyelbo.com>

DMW distributes aid to victims of Myanmar recruitment scam

THE Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) has provided cash aid to Filipinos who fell victim to an online illegal recruitment scheme allegedly run by Chinese offshore companies in Myanmar.

In a statement late Wednesday, the DMW said the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration gave P10,000 each to the 12 victims of the scheme, who were promised a monthly salary of P40,000 for six months of work.

“The Department of Migrant Workers has issued an advisory against online offers for temporary work in Myanmar for POGO-

run establishments that are really forced labor and human trafficking hubs in disguise,” Migrant Worker Secretary Maria Susana V. Ople said.

The victims had been rescued in a remote area in Myanmar through a joint operation conducted by the DMW, the Office of Senator Ana Theresia N. Hontiveros-Baraquel and the Department of Foreign Affairs, she noted.

They were offered jobs in customer service relations and technical support but were instead made to form relationships with potential bitcoin investors

through dating apps and other social media platforms.

Ms. Ople said Ugat Foundation, a non-government organization, provided on-the-spot counseling and psychological evaluations of the victims.

“This type of operation in Myanmar and in other parts of Asia as well... are luring Filipinos to work there with promises of a six-month contract and a high salary,” she said.

“I will not be surprised if there are syndicates also operating in remote areas here in the Philippines.”

The DMW noted that it will be working with the Philippine

National Police to document the testimonies of the victims as they prepare to file human trafficking and illegal recruitment cases against the Chinese firms.

In August, Undersecretary Bernard P. Olalia issued an advisory suspending the deployment of Filipino workers to Myanmar due to violence and armed conflict there.

The agency has said it will maintain a blacklist of foreign employers and recruitment firms found to have violated labor standards, including exploitation and abuse of migrant workers. —

John Victor D. Ordoñez

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