Union seeks worker support during EDSA rehab

A LABOR UNION is urging the government to protect and support workers affected by the rehabilitation of Metro Manila's busiest highway.

"The DoTr (Department of Transportation) has outlined a few alternatives. But they've failed to provide any assurance that things won't get harder for workers over the next two years," Joanna Bernice S. Coronacion, deputy secretary general of the Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO) said in a statement.

Ms. Coronacion said the rehabilitation project will impact workers who use Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) daily. "For millions of workers already enduring long, exhausting commutes, this will make a bad situation even worse," she added.

The government is set to invest P8.1 billion in rehabilitating EDSA starting June 13. The road is used by an average of 437,000 vehicles daily.

"We call on the government to convene an emergency summit — now. Bring all stakeholders to the table. Open the plans. Listen to commuters, workers, and communities," she added.

She added that the government and those affected by the roadworks need to agree on a comprehensive response, including smart traffic management and expanded and reliable public transportation.

The plan should also incorporate flexible work arrangements to give workers options during the rehabilitation.

The Department of Labor and Employment has urged companies to adopt work-from-home schemes to avert potential gridlock while the roadworks are ongoing.

"Workers and commuters are not collateral damage. They are the heart of this city. They deserve respect, dignity, and a voice in the decisions that shape their daily lives," Ms. Coronacion said.

SENTRO is also pushing for a high-capacity busway with proper pedestrian access to train stations and 3.5-meter-wide, tree-lined and shaded sidewalks.

"If the goal is a livable, inclusive Metro Manila, then EDSA must be rebuilt with the people in mind," she added.

The rehabilitation project is expected to run for two years and will be the road's first major upgrade since the 1980s. — **Adrian H. Halili**


PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

OPINION

What employers can do in a dry job market?

IN THE WORKPLACE
REY ELBO

We are a small cosmetics company in dire need of chemists. We can't seem to attract applicants as major companies have cornered the job market. Even graduating students would want to work for multinationals that offer not only lucrative pay but sophisticated training programs. How do we compete with them? — Little Lamb.

You don't compete with them in that same traditional space. Rather, you've got to create your context like marketers do with the Blue Ocean Strategy. That means creating untapped job markets with little or no competition where the "pie" is made bigger rather than fought over.

Your best approach is to make your competitors irrelevant in your quest for chemists. Focus on what your competitors are ignoring rather than fighting with them in their own game, which you may not be able to afford anyway.

But first things first. I suggest that you examine your current value as an organization. Why are you having difficulty hiring chemists? Do an honest-to-goodness self-evaluation. You may find out that money is not everything.

SELF-EVALUATION

To evaluate your organization, you can do many things with the help of an external management consultant, preferably those outside of your industry. Topping my list are the following programs, which you can do one after another, in the following sequence:

One is SWOT analysis. This is about understanding the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. You can do this in a two- to three-day weekend get-away with top management and lieutenants to participate in strategic planning, and corporate visioning, and to revisit the vision, mission, and value statements.

Two, recruitment analytics. How well do you understand the job applicants' acceptance rate and their time-to-hire situations? In real terms, how many candidates would accept a job offer? Sometimes, it's surprising that a low acceptance rate may point to issues like the candidate's poor experience during the recruitment process, among other reasons.

Three, employee morale survey. This is an annual, structured tool used by organizations to measure the general mood and satisfaction level of their employees. It helps employers understand how people feel about their work, management, team dynamics, and culture. That's how sophisticated applicants would want to gauge the emotional well-being of their current employees.

Four, employer branding. This refers to the reputation and image a company projects as an employer — both to current employees and to potential job candidates. It's essentially how your company is perceived as a place to work and what makes it attractive or unattractive to job seekers. It answers one simple question — "Why would anyone want to work there?"

Five, competitor benchmarking. The goal is to identify gaps, discover best practices, and find opportunities for improvement to stay competitive in your industry. This is difficult to do, especially if you have nothing to offer in exchange for comparing your company's performance, strategies, products, or practices against competitors.

OTHER OPTIONS

Are you sure you know what you're doing? Be skeptical about your current policies and practices to discover what you've been ignoring or missing out. To do that, answer the following questions:

One is job requirements. What are the imperative skills of the job? What skills are optional? How about years of work experience? Would 10 years of experience be needed or optional? Why can't five years of experience suffice? How about applicants from other industries?

Two, sourcing platforms. How well do you know of potential candidates outside of the job market? How about those people active in professional groups? What are the upsides and downsides of hiring highly visible candidates in industry associations? How effective are referral bonuses for current workers?

Three, pay and perks package. How competitive are your compensation policies when compared to those in the industry? How low is low in absolute terms? Can you offset this with strong non-monetary benefits like flexibility, independence, mission-driven work, and faster career growth? How about giving them a performance bonus and stock option plan?

Four, training and upskilling. Can you hire for the candidates' potential, rather than their current skill and experience? How about establishing a management development program to train junior hires in exchange for their three-year employment? Can you do this program with a reputable educational institution?

Five, specialized recruiters. Can you outsource the hiring process to trustworthy manpower agencies that can reach out to hidden talent? How sophisticated are these agencies in processing job applicants to avoid mismatch? What are the reasons why it's better to subcontract the hiring process to these agencies?

Six, management consultants. How about hiring special subcontractors to do the job? Are you willing to hire retired chemists, either as project workers or short-term consultants? How about exploring the idea of hiring subcontractors or external vendors with the same talent and skill?

Surely, you can attract talent with below-market pay, but only if you're exceptional in other areas that matter to candidates. In other words, what's your value proposition beyond money?

Bring REY ELBO's branded leadership program called Superior Subordinate Supervision to your organization. For details, e-mail elbonomics@gmail.com or DM him on Facebook, LinkedIn, X, or via ***https://reyelbo.com***

PAL plans to expand nonstop routes, boost airline partnerships

FLAG CARRIER Philippine Airlines (PAL), operated by PAL Holdings, Inc., plans to expand its nonstop route network and explore more partnerships with other airlines to support growth, its president said.

"PAL is strengthening its competitive edge by expanding its nonstop routes and forming inter-airline partnerships to improve connectivity to global markets," PAL President and Chief Operating Officer Lucio C. Tan III said during the company's annual stockholders' meeting on Thursday.

The airline is preparing for the delivery of nine Airbus A350-1000s and 13 A321 New Engine Option (NEO) aircraft, which will be deployed on nonstop flights to North America and other international destinations.

"To boost global competitiveness, PAL is preparing for a significant fleet update with the planned delivery of aircraft," Mr. Tan said, noting the first batch will arrive this year.

PAL Holdings reported a 20.28% year-on-year increase in attributable net income to P4.33 billion for the first quarter, driven by revenue growth.

Consolidated revenue rose 2.51% to P46.95 billion from P45.8 billion in the same period last year.

Passenger traffic increased 5% to 4.1 million in the first quarter. Its cargo segment handled 52.6 million kilograms across more than 28,000 flights in international and domestic networks.

PAL is also advancing a retrofit program for its Airbus A321ceo fleet.

"PAL continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability by balancing operational growth with environmental responsibility. PAL advances its net zero goal by adopting fuel-saving technologies," Mr. Tan said.

The airline remains on track to operate sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)-powered flights to Singapore by 2026 and is pursuing CORSIA certification.

CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) allows airlines to use SAF made from biomass or waste to reduce carbon offsetting obligations.

PAL currently does not operate SAF-powered flights but targets incorporating at least a 1% SAF blend on Singapore flights by 2026, in line with Singapore's regulatory requirement.

PAL operates nonstop flights from hubs in Manila, Cebu, Clark, and Davao to 31 domestic and 37 international destinations across Asia, North America, Australia, and the Middle East.

PAL Holdings shares rose 0.92% or four centavos to close at P4.40 per share on Thursday. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**


DMCI HOMES, INC.

DMCI Homes says reservation sales at Benguet condotel hit P4.9 billion

DMCI HOMES, Inc., the real estate unit of DMCI Holdings, Inc., said it has recorded around P4.9 billion in reservation sales from the first building of its Moncello Crest condotel project in Tuba, Benguet.

"Launched in May 2024, 84% of the nearly 700 condotel units in the project's first building, Blanca, have already been reserved, translating to approximately P4.9 billion in reservation sales," DMCI Homes said in a statement on Thursday.

Following the initial launch, the company opened the project's second building, Silva, which will have 52 units.

The Blanca and Silva buildings are scheduled for turnover by November 2028 and August 2029, respectively.

Moncello Crest is the second development under DMCI Homes Leisure Residences and is located near Baguio City.

"Moncello Crest is a compelling investment for those seeking a vacation home and passive income in one," DMCI Homes said.

Unit sizes range from 35 square meters to 91.5 square meters, with prices starting at P7.95 million.

Facilities include a jacuzzi, fire pits, restaurant, café, spa, gym, entertainment room, outdoor play area, and a convention center. The project includes mountain views and Filipino-themed interiors, with some areas designed by global architecture firm Aedas.

Buyers may earn income from their units through a rental pool program and receive at least 30 room nights annually through Leisure Plus, which may be used at Moncello Crest, Solmera Coast, and future DMCI Homes Leisure Residences projects.

DMCI Homes said it plans to expand its portfolio in the leisure segment in response to market demand.

"We are encouraged to continue expanding our leisure portfolio to support this growing market," DMCI Homes President Alfredo R. Austria said.

Shares of DMCI Holdings, Inc. fell by 0.19% or two centavos to close at P10.64 each on Thursday. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

SEC pushes real estate firms to tap capital market

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is urging real estate companies to tap the capital market for their growth and funding needs, citing a streamlined registration process.

"Access to the capital market can provide a long-term, cost-effective financing alternative, unlocking new opportunities for expansion and innovation. At the same time, increased real estate activity within the capital market can attract a more diverse pool of investors and contribute to greater market liquidity and resilience," SEC Commissioner McJill Bryant T. Fernandez said in an e-mail statement on Thursday.

"Given its scale and strategic importance, the real estate sector stands to benefit immensely from deeper participation in the capital market," he added.

At a launch event on May 21, the SEC introduced the guidelines on Securing and Expanding Capital in Real Estate Investment Transactions (SEC RENT), implemented through SEC Memorandum Circular No. 12, issued on July 16, 2024.

SEC RENT streamlines the registration process for securities issued by real estate companies offering investment contracts through rental pool agreements.

Rental pool agreements are investment contracts in which a property developer sells or offers units in real estate projects — such as condominiums, hotels, or resorts — to the public, provided that buyers contribute the units to a rental pool managed and operated by the company or a third-party operator.

Under such agreements, buyers receive a share in profits based on agreed conditions, typically derived from renting out the units to third parties.

"The growth of the real estate sector and the development of the capital market are mutually reinforcing," Mr. Fernandez said.

"Accounting for 5.6% of gross domestic product in 2024, the real estate industry continues to be a vital engine of economic development, with strong interconnections to construction, finance, retail, and tourism," he added.

Under the Securities Regulation Code, the SEC Markets and Securities Regulation Department is mandated to complete its review of registration statements filed by covered companies within 45 days. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

DHL taps MSpectrum for solar energy in Laguna

MSPECTRUM, Inc., a wholly owned solar subsidiary of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), has energized DHL Supply Chain's training center in Sta. Rosa, Laguna with a 120-kilowatt-peak solar rooftop system.

The solar rooftop installation is expected to generate approximately 171,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, enabling DHL to reduce its carbon emissions by an estimated 121 tons, MSpectrum said in a media release on Thursday.

"We are looking at building a few more sites powered by solar energy. It just makes so much sense, not just for this generation, but for future generations as well. We'll continue to invest in solar panels, and we look forward to expanding and strengthening this partnership with MSpectrum," DHL Country Managing Director Bevan Williams said.

MSpectrum and DHL began their partnership with the energization of the logistics firm's largest facility in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. The collaboration was further supported by Power Consult's advisory on optimizing energy usage.

"This partnership is more than just a milestone — it is a meaningful step toward our shared vision of a future where solar rooftops are a common sight across the Philippines. With this project, we take one step closer to that future," MSpectrum President and Chief Executive Officer Ma. Cecilia M. Domingo said.

MSpectrum has been in the solar industry for eight years and has installed more than 80 megawatts of rooftop solar capacity, estimated to power around 40,000 households.

"As an active nation-building partner, Meralco and its subsidiaries actively support the logistics sector with innovative solutions and empower stakeholders to further contribute to economic development," MSpectrum said.

Meralco's controlling stakeholder, Beacon Electric Asset Holdings, Inc., is partly owned by PLDT Inc.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., holds an interest in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**