

9 to 5 = 4 hours



It's not the number of hours you spend in the office, but what you pack in them that counts. That's the moral behind a survey which shows that Malaysians work longer hours than their counterparts in many benchmark countries, but produce less than them. Staying back to complete a job may well indicate that you don't know how to manage your time, according to the Malaysian Employers Federation. > See Page 4 for reports by **NICHOLAS CHENG** and **RAHIMY RAHIM**

MEF: Long hours may not mean quality work

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PETALING JAYA: Working long hours does not necessarily increase productivity or improve the quality of output, according to employers.

"In fact, employees who prefer to stay back and claim overtime only show that they cannot manage their time effectively," said the Malaysian Employers Federation.

MEF executive director Shamsuddin Bardan added: "Working long hours does not make you a good employee. It also does not mean that you can be more productive and

perform quality work. You should instead practise a healthy and balanced work life."

He believed that some employers stayed back due to peer pressure from colleagues who spent more time in the office.

"They don't want to look bad going off while their colleagues are still working," he said.

Shamsuddin noted that longer working hours could add to the operational costs, with employers having to pay more for electricity and overtime, among other expenses.

To encourage a balance between life and work among its staff,

Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia Bhd has implemented flexible working hours and allows some of its employees to work from home, using the Internet and smart phones and other such devices.

The bank even has specific days in a week when employees are encouraged to go home early, said its Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Country Legal and Compliance head Irene Tan.

She added that Malaysians were generally hardworking and got along well with the other staff who are of various nationalities.

"It is our priority that our staff

have a healthy work-life balance. Our flexible working arrangements allow many of them to fulfil their personal obligations and at the same time deliver quality work," she said.

GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare, too, believes in a good work and life balance for its employees.

A corporate affairs officer who declined to be named said that employees are now meeting work demands faster than before.

"In general, productivity levels have increased over the last 10 years in tandem with the advent of technology," he added.