

CONNECT

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- Marking 50 Years of Defence
- History of the Manufacturing Industry
- Future of Manufacturing Industry Dialogue

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50



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Nation Building



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Dear Fellow Members

In this issue of CONNECT, you will be able to read about the many activities and initiatives undertaken by SMF, anchoring on the Federation's four key strategic thrusts, or C.I.P.T – Collaboration, Innovation, Productivity, and Talent Development.

Why these four pillars? As the manufacturing industry transforms, many of our local SMEs may find their roles of middlemen and traders being marginalised as it is easy for buyers to find the sellers with the advancement of the Internet and globalisation. These SMEs must hence innovate (I) their business models or consolidate through strategic collaborations (C) to remain competitive. At the same time, the mindset of the top management and staff need to change. Thus, talent development (T) is critical in a business. Furthermore, with the tightening of foreign labour policy and sluggish productivity growth, companies should also focus on innovation-driven productivity (P).

For Collaborations, SMF and the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen business relations and promote economic cooperation.

To promote Innovation and the adoption of technology in the packaging industry, the Packaging Council of Singapore organised the Packaging Conference in June. SMF is also planning to launch a MasterClass programme on Business Model Innovation, specially catered to C-level management of SMEs.

In helping members drive Productivity, Singapore Innovation and Productivity Institute (SiPi) conducted a learning trip to Makino Asia Pte Ltd recently, to learn about the company's best practices and methodologies. SiPi, in collaboration with the Japan Productivity Centre, will also be organising a Productivity DNA MasterClass programme, which includes experiential tour to companies in Japan to learn more about productivity practices.

For Talent Development, SMF partners with the People's Association under its "Senior Academy Golden Work Series", to provide senior citizens the opportunities to take up jobs offered by our members.

In view of our nation's 50th birthday, this issue also features a special editorial showcasing the history of the manufacturing industry and the journey of SMF.

I sincerely hope you will enjoy reading this issue of CONNECT, and please join me in wishing Singapore another 50 years of happiness, prosperity and progress.

Douglas Foo
President
Singapore Manufacturing Federation



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Visitors to SMF



22 April 2015

SMF President, Mr. Douglas Foo (right), greeted the Ambassador of Thailand to Singapore, His Excellency Bansarn Bunnag (left)



23 April 2015

SMF was honoured to receive the delegation from Latvia, which was headed by His Excellency Mr. Peteris Vaivars (sixth from right), Non-Residing Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia to Singapore



3 June 2015

Mr. Adam Hamid (centre), Co-Chairman of India, Africa, Middle East & Central Asia Regional Business Group, SMF, warmly welcomed His Excellency Mr. Javad Ansari (third from left), Ambassador of Iran, and accompanying delegates from Social Security Investment Company (SSIC)



12 June 2015

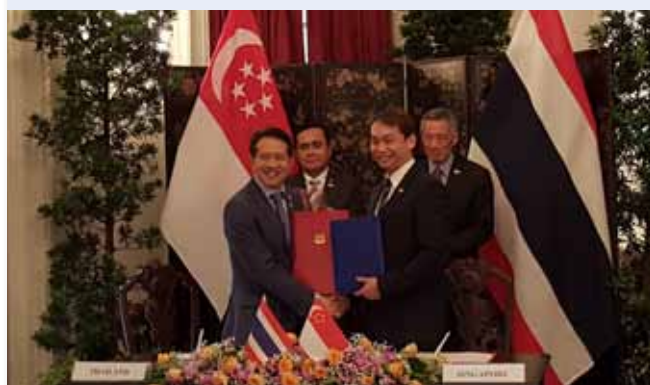
(Left to Right): Mr. Lam Joon Khoi, SMF Secretary-General; Mr. Sunny Koh, SMF Deputy President; Mr. Supant Mongkolsuthree, Chairman of the Federation of Thai Industries; Mr. Douglas Foo, SMF President; Mr. Patrick Chang, SMF Vice President and Chairman of SMF Global Business Groups

SMF Signed MOU with Federation of Thai Industries

SMF inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) on 11 June 2015 at the Istana. The signing was held in conjunction with the Thai Prime Minister His Excellency Prayut Chan-o-cha's visit to Singapore.

Signed by SMF President Mr. Douglas Foo and FTI Chairman Mr. Supant Mongkolsuthree, the MOU aims to strengthen business relations and promote economic cooperation between the two organisations. It will present a platform for SMF and FTI to collaborate and help their members, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, in various areas of trade, investment, business events, and manpower training.

"SMF has been actively helping our Members in their business expansion into Thailand through organizing the Singapore Pavilion in Thailand trade shows, as well as through business initiatives. For example, under SMF's Working-in-Partnership Programme, local food companies have successfully banded together to increase their shelf presence in Thailand supermarkets. With the SMF-FTI MOU, it will pave the way to fortify stronger alliances in Thailand. This will further encourage fruitful collaborations and partnerships, forging stronger relations between the Federation and various industries," said Mr. Douglas Foo.



SMF is honoured to ink the MOU with FTI under the witness of the two Prime Ministers



On behalf of SMF, Mr. Foo also attended the luncheon at Shangri-La Hotel, hosted for the Thai Prime Minister by IE Singapore

Part-time Job Opportunities for Seniors

Soon after the launch of the Senior Academy in February, the programme was already set in motion, with a Golden Work Series Showcase held on 28 April 2015 at Tanjong Pagar Community Centre. The event attracted the participation of hundreds of senior citizens. Senior Minister of State for Law and Education Ms. Indranee Rajah was the Guest-of-Honour at the showcase.

The Golden Work Series under the Senior Academy is an effort by the People's Association (PA) to meet the needs of seniors who are keen to be engaged in freelance or part-time work to pick up relevant job-based skills while earning pocket money on the side. SMF partners PA in this initiative to match interested member companies with the senior citizens. With SMF's support, several companies have already signed up for the Golden Work Series. They include Sakae Holdings, Tea Ideas, FarEastFlora.com, Orchid Laundry, Dione International, and Modern-Pak.



Ms. Indranee Rajah (second from right), Senior Minister of State for Law and Education, took part at the floral arrangement workshop

Ms. Wong Wei Feng, a retired cleaner, attended the floral workshop by FarEastFlora.com at the Golden Work Showcase. She said: "I am glad for these job and learning opportunities, which allow us senior citizens to still contribute to the society while learning new things."

"We participated in the programme because we feel that it is for a good cause, whereby we can help the senior citizens go back to work and learn a skill or two. At the same time, they can also earn additional income for their living. At FarEastFlora.com, they can take up light jobs, such as doing small floral bouquets," said Mr. Ryan Chioh, Managing Director of FarEastFlora.com Pte Ltd and SMF Council Member.

Marking 50 years of Defence – SAF Combined Rededication Ceremony 2015



Mr Douglas Foo, SMF President, donned his uniform for SAF Day

“We will preserve and protect the honour and independence of our country WITH OUR LIVES!” The Combined Rededication Ceremony 2015 for the East Zone ended on a high note, as the event hall echoed with the solemn vow from the National Servicemen (NSmen) and Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) leaders.

On 1 July 2015, the SAF commemorated its 50th year. It was a day where organisations – from both private and public sectors – pledged their support for National Service, and for NSmen to rededicate themselves to the defence of Singapore. SAF50 is made all the more significant as the nation enters its 50th year of independence amidst numerous celebrations held nationwide to mark Singapore’s Golden Jubilee. As such, it was exceptionally gratifying for SMF to be the organiser of this year’s SAF Day Combined Rededication Ceremony for the East Zone.

“Let us remember that a large part of the peace, progress and prosperity that we enjoy today is due to the stability of our country, and the important role that our NSmen have played to maintain it”, said Mr. Douglas Foo, SMF President, who delivered the opening address that morning at SAFRA Toa Payoh.

“I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to all our National Servicemen and their commitment to Singapore’s defence. It is their contribution that forms the cornerstone of today’s peaceful and cohesive Singapore,” he continued.

Also underscoring the importance of the SAF was Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Defence, who was the Guest-of-Honour. “They (our pioneer generation) learnt bitter lessons about life – that when you are not in charge of your destiny; others can reap what you sow; others can destroy what you have built.”



Officiating the rededication ceremony was Minister for Defence Dr. Ng Eng Hen

"Every male citizen and Permanent Resident has been called to do their duty to protect their homeland through national service. Government leaders have committed significant resources to build up the SAF year after year... Today, after 50 years, all these efforts have built up the SAF into a modern, professional force, reputed to be among the best militaries in Asia, capable of deterring aggression and defending Singapore", said Minister Ng.



Pledge Leader, CPT (NS) Joshua Lim: "As Singaporeans, we are in charge of our own national security"

Indeed, our nation's security and peace did not come easy. With a history of 83 years, SMF has witnessed the tribulations of Singapore, from the fall of Singapore, to its post-war social unrest. It was therefore heartening for SMF to witness NSmen and staff that made up more than 500 participants, from over 100 organisations, expressing their dedication to the nation's defence during this SAF Day Combined Rededication Ceremony 2015 for the East Zone.

Pledge Leader, CPT (NS) Joshua Lim, who left as a full-time National Servicemen in the Republic of Singapore Air Force in 2010, still continues to learn from his experience in the SAF. Of his yearly In-camp Training (ICT), he shared how he was struck by the continual improvements of the SAF: "I look forward to learning about the changes to my unit and understanding my role in the unit, which is always evolving, such as the introduction of new equipment and technology or organisational restructuring. These people (SAF) have embraced changes and taken ownership of their new positions or equipment, and they put their best foot forward to get the job done. That is the spirit that I try to bring into my civilian career," he said.

"I participate in the defence of Singapore with pride, knowing that my participation to the defence force also protects my personal interests – family, friends, career and lifestyle that I enjoy in Singapore," Mr. Lim added.

Sharing this sentiment was CPT (NS) Leonard Low, a participant of the SAF Day, and Managing Director of Feoso Energy (Singapore) Pte Ltd. "I have travelled to many places and lived in several other countries and I think what we have here in Singapore is very precious and worth defending," he said.

He also recognised the value of ICT, saying that "in my professional life, I only get to meet certain people. But in NS I get to meet a diverse group of people, which is more reflective of what Singapore society is like. That exposure is very valuable. (The Combined Rededication Ceremony) is a good reminder that we are serving something that is bigger than ourselves – we are serving our country and we are serving our fellow Singaporeans."



SMF's NSmen present during the ceremony

Said Mr Lim Meng Wee, SMF Council Member and Chairman of the Combined Rededication Ceremony Organising Committee: "It is because of a strong defence that businesses in Singapore can flourish. This year being SG50 has an even greater significance to the SAF. Through these 50 years, our defence has matured greatly; we are capable of deterring threats from other countries and this stability translates to confidence from our investors and our people in Singapore's business environment."

Initiating SkillsFuture into Food Manufacturing

The Earn and Learn Programme for Food Manufacturing was launched on 29 April 2015 as part of the SkillsFuture initiatives. Co-developed by Singapore Polytechnic and Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), this new national programme will supply the industry with skilled local talent, whilst giving fresh graduates from polytechnics a head start in the industry through structured on-the-job training and institution-based training.

“The SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme for Food Manufacturing represents a structured and progressive career advancement and skills upgrading pathway for polytechnic graduates. I would like to urge more companies and polytechnic students to come on board the programme. Besides strengthening the manpower capabilities of industry players, the programme also helps individuals to advance in their careers through skills mastery,” said Senior Minister of State for Manpower and Health, and Guest of Honour of the launch, Dr Amy Khor.



Guest of Honour, Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Manpower and Health, (Middle) with the participating companies

SMF member companies such as Inflo Health Sciences and Chinatown Food Corporation participated in this programme and were present at the launch. Ms. Emily Kwek, General Manager of Chinatown Food Corporation Pte Ltd, is pleased with this scheme and with the student that has joined them.

“It is a good opportunity for young talents who are interested in advancing their study and we are very supportive of this programme,” she said.

However, given that these youths are new to the working world, surely challenges are bound to be in place for them. Ms. Kwek shared that indeed, being fresh graduates with little or no experience, guidance from a trained personnel in the company is imperative. Nevertheless, with their diploma qualifications under their belts, coupled with being quick learners, the lack of experience will not pose much of a hindrance for them.

The funding that the Singapore government provides allows SMEs to save costs, further encouraging their participation in this programme. In addition, it gives Singapore's young talents a job opportunity which involves training, leading to an Advanced Diploma in Applied Food Science.

Welcoming New Members into SMF



The new SMF members networking amongst themselves

SMF welcomed 46 new member companies on 29 May 2015. A half-day session was held to orientate these new members into the SMF family. Mr. Sunny Koh, SMF Deputy President delivered the welcome address, during which he gave a candid outlook of the manufacturing landscape. “The manufacturing industry is being confronted with many challenges in recent years... Along with economic restructuring, manufacturing must undergo its own transformation to an innovation-led, productivity-driven industry,” he said.

To do so, members can tap on SMF's various initiatives. Highlighting the Working-in-Partnership (WIP) programme – wherein food companies are aided in their expansion plans overseas – as an example on how SMF assists in providing the right support for our members, Mr. Koh assured the audience of SMF's commitment in representing the interests of manufacturing community via its tripartite communication between government agencies, local businesses, and other trade associations.

The new members also each had a chance to briefly introduce their company to their fellow attendees. This presented a good opportunity for networking during the tea break.

Said Ms. Serene Teo, Country Manager of Valukargo Groupage Services Pte Ltd: “We joined SMF to tap on the networking opportunities, and also to understand the industry practices so that we will be able to better comply with the standards.”

Case Study: Business Expansion to Iskandar

Foresight is imperative for a business to succeed. It is precisely this quality that has defined the stand of the Singapore-based water company – Wanin Industries Pte Ltd and its mineral water brand Pere Ocean amongst the numerous competitor brands in the region. As a family business starting out in Indonesia in 1986, Wanin Industries saw the opportunity of shipping water to Singapore due to the close proximity of the two countries. By 1990, it saw the prospects for a more cost-effective method of producing what consumers were gravitating towards - natural mineral water, and upon discovery of a site with a natural underground spring, started a factory in Johor. Almost three decades into the business, Wanin Industries has expanded its operations to other parts of Malaysia, while exporting its products worldwide. Today, it is considered to be the pioneer of the bulk bottled water and cooler rental in Singapore and has bagged numerous awards, a testimony to its world-class products.

Furthering its quest for natural mineral water sources, the company expanded further into the Iskandar region just last year. Sharing this experience with the editorial team was Mr. Eugene Tan Export Manager of Wanin Industries, who cited the advantages of a natural mineral source, coupled with Singapore's strong currency exchange rate over Malaysia as appealing factors that enticed him further into Iskandar. Furthermore, in trying to build up the Iskandar region, Malaysia is continually wooing Singapore investors to set up their operations there. What's more, due to the land scarcity in Singapore, Singapore has been encouraging business expansion in Malaysia as well. In Mr. Tan's words, "it is a win-win situation for both."

However, not all was rosy of their expansion into Iskandar. Differences in language and culture were everyday challenges they face. It is therefore essential that one gets an intermediary in order to communicate more effectively with the locals and importantly, to ensure all documents are appropriately translated.

While the strengthening of Singapore's currency against the Malaysian Ringgit presents a cost advantage for Singapore companies, at the other end of the spectrum, this poses a challenge of sourcing for workers in Malaysia. Malaysians are understandably more eager to work in Singapore, whether it is relocating or crossing the causeway daily. "Singapore has made it easy for them to move in and out between Singapore and Malaysia, and their working options have grown very wide", said Mr. Tan.

Asked how he manages these challenges, Mr. Tan shared the work environment of attracting and retaining employees. This is why the management tries to encourage a positive, family-style atmosphere at the work place. He said: "If your work

environment is a place where your colleagues feel like your friends and family, and it is easy to get along with one another, then you will be more likely to stay. We listen to their needs and offer flexi working hours if required. We apply this to our Singapore office as well. This is our company culture." They also open annual company trips to employees' family members to further encourage the forging of close bonds among each other. This is perhaps why they have many workers who have repeatedly extended their contracts with the company.

Mr. Tan also shared that the strong Singapore branding established in Malaysia is a huge incentive in attracting employees. The Singapore brand name is associated with quality, good hygiene standards at affordable prices, and Pere Ocean uses this to their advantage in welcoming potential employees.

The Singapore government has been moving in the direction of automation and away from labor-intensive activities. However, the manufacturing line may at times be more labor-intensive and it may not be cost-effective to replace people with automation. Nonetheless, Mr. Tan had a word of advice for businesses that are eager to expand to Iskandar: "Do not depend so much on labor-intensive work but still try to go down the automation lane that the Singapore government has been constantly promoting. It is already hard to find labour in Singapore's job market, and a lot of it comes from Johor. Therefore Johor is facing a bit of a squeeze and if you are going into Johor expecting to find a lot of people to hire, you may be mistaken. So it is still good to look into automation."

Onto future plans of the company and the brand Pere Ocean, they are hoping to further expand its operations scale within Malaysia itself. Already, they have started going into the ASEAN region i.e. Vietnam and Myanmar, and like Malaysia, they offer the incentive of a close proximity to Singapore. Mr. Tan reiterated how the superior Singapore brand helps in the expansion of his business. "This makes us an attractive factor in the Asian region and foreign countries with higher spending power are looking at this region for high quality products."



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Cards and Payments Asia 2015



Cards and Payments Asia is an advantageous platform for all sectors to learn from each other

SMF organised the Singapore Pavilion at Cards and Payments Asia 2015 from 22-23 April 2015, which was an excellent platform for industry players to keep up with the trends of Asia's cards and payments industry. This annual event saw more than 8000 attendees this year.

Paclin Office Products Pte Ltd is one such company that strives to keep up with the card industry. A frontrunner in ID card printing and having recently celebrated their silver jubilee, they are now looking to step up security in the production of ID cards. The Cards and Payments tradeshow is not unfamiliar grounds for them as they have been regular participants in the annual tradeshow since its launch over 20 years ago. They were present at Cards and Payments Asia 2015 to unveil one of their latest products, the Helix ID card printer.

Using re-transfer technology, the Helix ID card printer ensures a tighter security of the cards it prints as it adds a security feature or logo to the card at the point of printing which will fluoresce under UV light. Furthermore, the production process of including all details of the card at once eliminates the threat of any fraudulent usage of the card in the event that it falls into the wrong hands.

"There have been lots of enquiries about Helix. The larger organisations in particular, who are interested in quality and security, have shown much interest in this product", said Mr. Patrick Chang, Managing Director of Paclin. Ultra ID has launched Helix in USA and the UK in recent months, and Paclin, as the master distributor, will be distributing it regionally.

Direct Link Worldwide Asia Distribution Pte Ltd, part of PostNord, a Nordic company that specialises in logistics, provides a platform for cross-border distribution of parcels. Having set up its regional headquarters in Singapore since 1997, they have been helping Singapore e-commerce companies to send their parcels to over 200 countries around the world.



Mr. Patrick Chang (right) and Andy Matko, the manufacturer of Helix, with the machine

On Direct Link's experience operating in Singapore, Mr. Bjorn Moberg, the Business Development Manager said: "Singapore is a great logistic hub and we are very pleased to have access to the good connectivity of Changi Airport, which offers us many options to route our items. From Singapore you can serve the growing markets of Indonesia, China and Australia and we want to be really close to the growing e-commerce companies in Singapore. Singapore is efficient and its laws are clear – it is a very safe place to do business in."

It was Direct Link's first participation in Cards and Payments Asia and they were present to meet new customers and demonstrate to their existing customers their long-term commitment to Singapore. Mr. Moberg said of his experience: "It has been really good - over our expectations in fact. We have met former and current customers and have come up with new ideas and new potential business development."

"As a member of SME, we have been offered a lot of interesting seminar and events where we can network and get more business from. This would help us to get to the Singapore e-commerce companies, and highlight us as an alternative to the traditional logistics companies," Mr. Moberg concluded.



Mr. Bjorn Moberg, Business Development Manager (right), with his team

Envisioning the Future through Innovative Technologies

During the four days from 2-5 June 2015, the Marina Bay Sands Expo was teeming with activity as CommunicAsia 2015 returned and saw a fruitful convergence of international exhibitors and buyers from the infocomm technology and broadcasting industry. This year, SMF led a total of 87 exhibitors to participate in CommunicAsia and its co-located events, BroadcastAsia and NXT@CommunicAsia.



The tradeshow showcased the latest innovation of technology employed by businesses

One of the participating companies under the SMF-led Singapore Pavilion was Skyshot Pte Ltd, a company that specialises in time lapse and aerial filming. A sister company of an established video production house with a 17-year history, Skyshot was present at the tradeshow to launch the Tbox Titan series, a time lapse camera system. According to Mr. CK Chan, Founder and Executive Producer of Skyshot, the Tbox Titan is weather-proof, solar-powered, coupled with an SMS-alert system, and equipped with a life-monitoring system.



Mr. CK Chan with the Tbox Titan series

"We are the only company in Singapore that specialises in long-term time lapse. Two years ago, we were trying to find a camera system that can be used for doing long-term time lapse but we couldn't find any in the market so we started building our own time-lapse camera system," said Mr. Chan.

In addition of the product launch, Skyshot was also looking for global partnerships at the event. "Right now, we are looking for overseas partners. We have done this in a lot of sites in Singapore and now we want to expand into the overseas market," he added.



Aplustec booth had seen positive response from the visitors during the show

Participating in CommunicAsia for the third time, Ms. Amy Teng from Aplustec LLP (Singapore) felt that such B2B exhibitions were good platforms for companies to explore the Singapore market, as well as to build business connections.

"We receive many repeated customers at the trade show. We also use this as a platform to showcase our new products, which acts as a pre-launch teaser for our customers. Being a small company with limited budget for marketing, we are happy to have the opportunity to participate in such events," said Ms. Teng.

Aplustec manufactures products catered to travelers, which are generally compact and multi-functional. At CommunicAsia 2015, the company exhibited a multitude of innovative products such as slim travel reading light and mobile phones, all of which are self-designed and patented.

On the other hand, Anewtech Systems Pte Ltd is a seasoned exhibitor that has been participating in CommunicAsia for more than ten years. Mr. Kelvin Lim, General Manager of Anewtech Systems, is acutely aware of the transformation CommunicAsia has gone through over the years.

He commented: "In the past, the trade show was more focused in tele-communications. Now, it has transformed into a mega event focused on the vertical sectors. This year, we have seen better exhibitor profiles and a good visitor turn-out."



Mr. Kelvin Lim with Anewtech System's smart lighting solutions

As one of the SME 500 companies, Anewtech Systems has indeed a wide range of products and services that are both innovative and practical. Featured at the booth were the company's smart lighting systems for restaurants. Diners are able to change the colours of the lights depending on their needs, such as placing an order or asking for the bill. This way, the different coloured lighting acts as notifications to the waiters and are able to lighten the restaurant's workflow.

Compared to Anewtech Systems and Aplustec LLP, Arbor Technology Singapore Pte Ltd is a first time participant of NXT. The main company, Arbor Technology Corp., however, has more than 20 years of experience in embedded computing, and has moved its expertise into the industrial PC (IPC) market. At the trade show, Arbor Technology showcased their latest industrial computers, which can be applied globally and across industries.



Arbor Technology showcased industrial PCs at the trade show

"We have just set up our principal office in Singapore. Hence, we participated in this show to increase our presence," said Mr. Clement Ang, Business Development Manager of Arbor Technology Singapore Pte Ltd.

Sports and Fitness Asia 2015



Mr Patrick Chang, SMF Vice President, addressing participating members of the tradeshow

Following the success of the inaugural Sports and Fitness Asia in 2013, Sports and Fitness Asia 2015 was back for a second edition from 11-13 June. An exhibition and conference show where more than 120 fitness and wellness-related exhibitors from around the region congregated at the Singapore Expo, this tradeshow saw the presentation of the latest sports, fitness, wellness, and beauty solutions. The exhibition was co-located with the SEA Games 2015, providing an opportune platform to reach out to athletes, healthcare and wellness professionals, and key sports and business communities in Southeast Asia.

SMF was the proud organiser of this year's Singapore Pavilion that comprised 64 companies that featured a range of products, from innovative technology applications to personal fitness and functional nutrition.

Said SMF Vice President, Mr Patrick Chang, during his opening address: "Leveraging on our extensive network of contacts, SMF's Global Business Groups, which I chair, actively foster international business relations through business missions, seminars, business matchmaking sessions, and trade shows. For this particular show, we have obtained the support from IE Singapore for our Singapore Pavilion to be covered under the International Marketing Activities Programme. This is one of the many efforts SMF takes to ensure all companies, even start-ups, could have a chance to participate in trade shows and explore business opportunities with their local and overseas counterparts."

Indeed, this tradeshow offered a chance for participating companies to network and exchange ideas not just over the 3-day exhibition – but the business

contacts established will generate relevant linkages with potential partners long after the tradeshow is over.



Participating SMF member companies included Izeet Pte Ltd, and All Link Medical & Health Products Pte Ltd



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History of the Manufacturing Industry



Manufacturing has long been one of the prime engines of progress right from the start of Singapore's independence. Manufacturing has played a key role in building the cornerstone of the country's economy.

Today, manufacturing remains a key sector, contributing close to a fifth of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and providing more than half a million employment across diverse manufacturing jobs. According to the Singapore Economic Development Board, manufacturing also provides a strong multiplier effect to the Singapore economy. For every \$1 output of the non-oil manufacturing industry, a further \$1.42 is generated in additional economic output.

Manufacturing activities in Singapore have evolved to become more knowledge-based, and technology-driven with strong positions in the aerospace, electronics, water, marine & offshore, biomedical sciences and chemical sectors.

In order for manufacturing to remain a contributing and sustainable component of the republic's economy, Singapore must continue to restructure and re-position the industry in response to the competitions that are taking place in both the regional and global manufacturing industries. Singapore must focus on providing a conducive business environment for advanced manufacturing activities and strengthening the local small-medium enterprises (SMEs) through deepening of skills, driving productivity that are innovation-led, and promoting growth through collaborations, mergers and acquisitions, and internationalisation.

The 1960s: The labour-intensive industrialisation



At the start of Singapore's independence, the manufacturing industry, alongside the newly formed nation, faced many challenges: unemployment rates were at double-digits, a lack of natural resources except for its people, the domestic manufacturing base was tiny and there was limited industrial know-how and domestic capital.

To meet these challenges, Singapore adopted an export-oriented industrialisation strategy, attracting foreign investments from multinationals to develop its manufacturing and financial sectors to create more jobs.

The Singapore government was proactive in promoting export-oriented and labour intensive industrialisation through offering incentives to attract foreign investments. In the 1960s, the first international electronic companies set up basic assembly lines in Singapore, producing silicon chips and circuit boards.

The Singapore Manufacturing Federation's (SMF) logo is representative of the changes in the manufacturing industry and has evolved over the years.

The logo in 1958 showed factories with chimneys surrounded by gears and it represented the dawn of industrialisation in Singapore.

The 1970s: Pro-business environment and rapid expansion



According to the Department of Statistics, by 1972, one quarter of Singapore's manufacturing firms were either foreign-owned or joint ventures companies with the United States and Japan as major investors.

Singapore's stable political climate, pro-investment policies, strong infrastructure, skilled workers, and the rapid expansion of the world economy from 1965 to 1973, helped fuelled the country's annual double-digit growth. Manufacturing as a percentage of GDP rose from 17% in 1969 to 23.6% in 1979.

With the vibrant economy and advancement in technology, the SMF adopted a dynamic red logo showing factories with chimneys surrounded by gears.



SMA leaders meeting with Canadian delegation

The 1980s: The era of technology intensive and high value-added industries



By the 1980s, the government changed its strategic focus from building labour intensive industries to skill and technology intensive and high value-added industries.

In particular, information technology was given priority for expansion. Singapore had become one for the leading centres in Asia for the production of consumer electronics.

As Singapore's move towards high-tech industries, emphasising productivity and mechanisation, the chimneys in the SMF's logo were taken out, leaving a clean gear-shaped design.



Display of Singapore manufactured products at the Singapore Product Centre, 1988



The SMA House, located on 20 Orchard Road, in the 1980s

The 1990s: The knowledge-driven industries



In the early 1990s, the Jurong Town Corporation embarked on various initiatives such as the development of business parks, wafer fabrication and Jurong Island to improve the infrastructure of

Singapore and further crystallise Singapore's attractiveness as an investment location. These business parks, along with the Singapore International Manpower Programme aimed to attract foreign talents, helped increased R&D and high-tech manufacturing capabilities.



Singapore Pavilion organised by the Singapore Confederation of Industries in the 1990s

In 1997, Singapore attracted almost \$8.5 billion worth of manufacturing fixed assets investments of which about 70% were foreign and the top three foreign investors were USA, Japan and Europe iii. However, for Singapore to remain competitive, the country has to build up its internal capabilities through innovation driven productivity and overseas collaborations to create an external economy to support local growth.

In 1998, SMF adopted a new logo which comprised of three progressive strokes to reflect the dynamism in the industries.

The present: Focus on business model innovation and collaborations



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since 1932

Today, Singapore is journeying through a paradigm shift in manufacturing, from the process-oriented improvement of kaizen to Silicon Valley style innovation, new ideas that go beyond streamlining processes to transforming the business models to remain competitive.

Manufacturers today are moving up the value chain, as production of lower value-added, commoditised products such as consumer electronics are moving to other lower-cost countries in Southeast Asia.

Manufacturing companies in Singapore cannot operate "business as usual". On top of high business costs and a tight labour market, many manufacturers are struggling because their business models have been outpaced by disruptive technologies, and global competition. For example, Singapore companies in the past were able to build their businesses around being middlemen, agents, distributors, and traders. However, such roles are being marginalised, as it has become easier today for the buyers to find the sellers and vice versa due to globalisation and the internet. Manufacturers that are slow to respond to these challenges are finding their competitive positions being eroded.

Additionally, the world of manufacturing is becoming increasingly polarised. Countries such as China and Germany are the "factories of the world", and on the other end of the spectrum there are the "factories to the factories of the world" such as Taiwan and



As the manufacturing industry transforms, SMF continues to support the industry through four areas: collaboration, innovation, productivity, and talent management

Japan which supply intermediate goods to the “factories of the world”, while the rest of the countries will fall in between or become value chain suppliers. Singapore manufacturers are increasingly finding it difficult to compete on either ends of the spectrum; however, manufacturers can collaborate locally and with SMEs from other countries to co-produce supply to the value chain of these global factories.

While Singapore manufacturers cannot compete with the emerging countries on low cost, they can however, partner with companies from these countries to expand to other parts of the world such as the Africa and Latin America which are going through rapid industrialization. By value-adding their know-how in doing business internationally, this presents an opportunity for Singapore-based manufacturing companies to transform their value propositions.

Singapore manufacturing companies can also work with overseas manufacturers, particularly overseas SMEs, to co-produce or assemble products in Singapore. The goods can carry a “made-in-Singapore” brand, which has become a strong and trusted global brand.

Singapore manufacturers can also collaborate more among themselves. The larger ones can support the local SMEs in terms of assigning more jobs and contracts to them. Together, Singapore manufacturers can be presented as reliable value chain suppliers to multi-national manufacturers already in this region so that Singapore manufacturers can leverage on new overseas business opportunities by following the MNCs as they expand into the global markets.

The current SMF logo introduced in 2012 portrays the need for dynamism, flexibility, fluidity and an ability to change with the times as well as collaborations in the manufacturing eco-system and embracing high technology in a technology-driven era.



SMF moved to its current location at Jalan Bukit Merah in 2012

Future challenges

Singapore's competitive advantage goes beyond its pro-business environment and mind-set, political and social stability and strong legal and governance framework. The country's world-class logistics infrastructure and sophisticated supply chain networks provide dense connectivity to the rest of the world. Furthermore, Singapore's strong intellectual property protection creates an environment conducive for companies to innovate, which will be critical for the success of the manufacturing sector.

In addition, Singapore has a globally respected education system that is highly geared towards meeting the industries' needs. This system, that has served the nation well, is going through its own “model innovation”. Taking on the recommendations by the Applied Study in Polytechnics and ITE Review (ASPIRE) Committee to further strengthen Singapore's applied education pathways, provide more opportunities for Singaporeans to realise their full potential and aspirations, and to support better alignment of the supply of and demand for skills, these recommendations are now being implemented through concrete initiatives announced during the recent budget 2015.



The SMF Flower, Ascocenda SMF 80th Anniversary, symbolises SMF's continuous efforts to meet the demands of an evolving manufacturing industry

With people being the nation's key resource, the challenge is to overcome the talent shortage particularly in the manufacturing sectors and SMEs (which constitute about 97% of manufacturing entities in Singapore). This can be done by igniting interests in engineering amongst young students, reducing leakage in the education system through education and career guidance as well as structured internships, as well as profiling careers in engineering and the manufacturing industry as attractive options.

While Singapore's manufacturing industry has made progress in terms of productivity, more manufacturers now realised that they need to go beyond mere cost-cutting measures. More innovative approaches to bringing their businesses to the next level have to be adopted. This encompasses more than

offering innovative products, services and processes that are largely easy to duplicate. An innovation-led productivity paradigm requires mind-set change and an open culture to introduce new strategies that will capture, create, develop and deliver value propositions for customers at the right timing.

As the Singapore economy continues to restructure, our local manufacturers must continue to anticipate and respond to change in the business environment to remain competitive and grow. One way for the smaller manufacturers to scale up to the next level of growth is through mergers and acquisitions (M&As).

Indeed, the Singapore manufacturing sector has come a long way transforming from being labour-intensive as reflected by images of factories with chimneys to one that is knowledge-based and that embraces the entire supply chain of the manufacturing industry. Additive manufacturing, robotics, aerospace, logistics, advanced materials technology, Internet of Things and big data are now the strategic focus in which the manufacturing industry is teaming up with international experts in these fields to alleviate manufacturing to the next level.

Innovation and Technology to Take Packaging Industry to Greater Heights

24 June 2015 was a big day in the calendar of the packaging industry. It marked the day of the “Asia Future Packaging Innovation & Technology” conference, as well as the Singapore Packaging Star Award Presentation & Gala Dinner.

Both organised by the Packaging Council of Singapore (PCS), an industry group under SMF, the two back-to-back events attracted the attendance of over 200 industry professionals and stakeholders.



Mr. Douglas Foo declared the conference open



Ms. Annabelle Tan, PCS Chairperson, giving the welcome remarks

The conference featured international and local packaging experts from the industry and academia, who presented an array of informative topics focused on emerging trends in the industry, sustainable packaging, as well as smart packaging solutions and innovative technologies in food manufacturing. As the special guest at the conference, Mr. Douglas Foo, SMF President, declared the event open.

Amidst rising business costs, tightening of labour market, and increasing competition, the Singapore packaging industry must leverage on technology innovation to transform itself. The conference served as a platform to bring relevant industrial knowledge closer to local packaging community and help them adapt to the global and regional trends.

“With the changing lifestyles of consumers, as well as the evolving technology and business landscape of today, the packaging industry must focus on the entire packaging value chain and adopt the spirit of innovation,” said Ms. Annabelle Tan, Chairperson of PCS.

After the successful conclusion of the conference, the second event of the day - Singapore Packaging Star Award Presentation and Dinner Gala - was set to commence.

Inaugurated in 1988, the Singapore Packaging Star Award aims to raise the overall standards in packaging industry through recognising efforts in innovative designs, sustainable material use, and best industry practices. Using Singapore Packaging Star Award as a springboard, many companies have also won global acclaim, such as the Asia Star Award by the Asia Packaging Federation and the World Star Award by the World Packaging Organisation.



Speakers included Ms. Mayuree Paklamjeak from the Thai Packaging Association



PCS Deputy Chairperson (fourth from right) with the conference speakers



Q&A session during the conference



Guests were impressed by the award entries, which demonstrated a innovation-driven and environment-minded industry

This year's dinner gala saw the presentation of the Singapore Packaging Star Award 2014 to a total of 34 entries. They were submitted by local companies as well as students from Temasek Polytechnic and Nanyang Polytechnic. Out of these award-winning entries, 14 have also won the Asia Star Award, while 7 won the World Star Award.

Mr. Sam Tan, Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, graced the event as Guest-of-Honour. He praised the creativity and high quality of the award winning entries, and encouraged the winners to constantly improve and transform, so as to push the local packaging industry towards greater heights. The Minister also commended PCS for organising such a meaningful competition, so that both local and overseas practitioners can share good practices to raise the bar of packaging standards even higher.

"It is commendable that the Packaging Council of Singapore recognises and honours such creativity and good practices in the packaging industry. This award underscores the importance for our local packaging producers to deliver innovative ways to package products, for a competitive edge in the global market," said Minister Tan.

Both he and Ms. Annabelle Tan offered their heartiest congratulations to the award winners.

Close to 200 guests attended the gala dinner and enjoyed a scintillating night of sumptuous meal, captivating entertainment, and networking.



Congratulations to the winners of the Singapore Packaging Star Award 2014!



Minister Tan (third from right) took a guided tour prior to the gala dinner to look at the award winning entries



A scintillating night for the packaging industry

PCS would like to thank the organising committee and participating companies for making this event a success. Special thanks to the event sponsors and supporting organisations: Adsales Exhibition Services Ltd, Asiawide Print Holdings Pte Ltd, Brite Konzept Pte Ltd, e2i, LHT Holdings Ltd, Singapore Institute of Manufacturing Technology, Singapore Workforce Development Agency, and SPRING Singapore

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Safeguarding Employees' Safety and Health in the Manufacturing Sector

SMF's Health, Safety, Security and Environment (HSSE) Function Committee, together with the Workplace Safety and Health Council (WSHC) and the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), held its 7th edition of the annual Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) awards on 22 May 2015.

Two categories of awards were given out – WSH Innovation Award, which recognises companies that have put in place innovative measures to counter potential safety hazards, and the WSH Award for Supervisors to honour the efforts made by supervisors to advance health and safety in the workplace. There were seven recipients of the WSH Supervisor Award and nine team recipients of the WSH Innovation Award, receiving either a Gold, Silver or Bronze award.

The WSH Awards is significant as it upholds the manufacturing community's endeavours to keep employees safe and healthy at their place of work. In the opening address by SMF President, Mr. Douglas Foo, it was pointed out that when risks of ill health and injury is minimised, it encourages a positive work atmosphere, leading to a progressive impact on productivity.

"However, it is not solely about productivity that we should be concerned about. Employers have the moral obligation to protect every worker's life and health and must take necessary steps to ensure that their environment is free of health and safety hazards," added Mr. Foo.



The event brought in exhibitors from various companies to showcase their latest and innovative safety equipment

It was therefore heartening to know that supervisors and employers have genuine concern for their workers and have taken measures to ensure their wellbeing. Mr. Zalihan Bin Mohamed, Superintendent of AFPD Pte Ltd, one of the recipients of the Gold Supervisor Award, said: "I believe if my subordinates feel safe in the workplace, they will be happy and that creates a positive atmosphere. They'll even go the extra mile for you."

"We feel proud that we are contributing to the local industry's safety values and can be an example to the rest of the manufacturing companies. This is also a beneficial session to share and inspire others to advance their workplace health and safety," concluded Mr. Vash Low, team leader of Halliburton, a manufacturer of the energy industry and Gold awardee of the WSH Innovation Award.



Recipients of the WSH Supervisor Award, presented by Mr. Douglas Foo (far left) and Mr. Lim Meng Wee, first Deputy Chairman, Health, Safety, Security & Environment (HSSE) Function Committee (far right)



The team from Halliburton received the WSH Innovation Gold Award

Following the award presentation, guest speaker Mr. Chan Yew Kwong, Director of Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate Department, shared what 'Vision Zero' project means for WSH – it is a movement to bring about excellence in workplace safety and health. It requires both employers and employees to take on a mindset that all injuries and ill health arising from work are preventable and a belief that zero harm is possible. Mr. Edmund Low, WSH Audit Manager from Concord Associates Pte Ltd, on the other hand, gave an interesting presentation on building a sustainable WSH culture at the workplace through the CultureSAFE programme. It was also mentioned in the presentation that SMEs could capitalise on the government grant – WSH Culture Fund to defray some of the costs to embark on the CultureSAFE programme.



There was a Q&A session where participants could share their concerns regarding the future of workplace safety and health

Transforming the Manufacturing Industry

The attendance of more than 100 participants in the Future of Manufacturing Industry Talk on 29 May was a good indication of the interests and concerns of players in the manufacturing sector regarding the impending outlook of the industry. The session had senior officers from different government agencies sharing their programmes and initiatives companies from different industries could tap on.

“The future of manufacturing will play an important role in the future of Singapore’s economy. Presently, the manufacturing industry has been reported to suffer the steepest year-on-year decline in more than two years. Faced with such challenges, manufacturers must not operate on a ‘business-as-usual’ mindset. They must be prepared to transform their businesses so as to remain competitive and relevant in this changing environment. The government is taking steps to develop Singapore into an advanced manufacturing hub of tomorrow, by adopting disruptive technologies such as additive manufacturing and robotics,” said Mr. Sunny Koh, SMF Deputy President in his opening address.



The industry talk drew more than 100 attendees from various manufacturing fields

This transformation is essential for businesses to remain relevant in the manufacturing industry, and Mr. Koh went on to state how SMF has been assisting companies in this area through four key strategies – Collaboration, Innovation, Productivity, and Talent Management.

Speakers from IE Singapore were also present to speak about business opportunities in Vietnam and India. The potential of both markets were discussed and participants were encouraged to consider these export markets. Sharing on the prospects of expanding into the Indian market, Mr. Benjamin Yap, Group Director for South Asian Group, IE Singapore, stated that more investments have been entering India in recent years – a sign that there is an affluent consumer base emerging there. He urged the participants to look further into moving their businesses into India, given its optimistic outlook.

During the panel discussion, Mr. Yap expounded on the prospects of manufacturing in the region. He said: “Manufacturing will take place in Southeast Asia or South Asia. This is an area where



Mr. Sunny Koh, SMF Deputy President, delivering the opening address

multinationals will establish their plants around. Many of our customers here are preferred vendors of multinationals that we serve, so it is important to see where these multinationals are going regionally so that you will also be able to capture a business opportunity when they go offshore. Certainly some of it will be done in Singapore and they will be looking at a high level of productivity because of the lack of land here.”

To this, Mr. Lam Joon Khoi, SMF Secretary-General, added: “The high value-added industry that we want to continue in Singapore, supported by JTC and SPRING, does not exclude companies from transferring their lower value-add function and production overseas. This concept is well supported by IE Singapore in this respect. Large companies, such as big industrial parks developers for example, can help facilitate Singapore companies to establish overseas- that is something that came up very evidently in the afternoon’s presentations on expanding into India and Vietnam.”

On a similar note, representative from SPRING Singapore, Mr. John Lu, Director of Manufacturing and Engineering, Industry Development Group, shared how SPRING is assisting SME’s value-added chain for them to remain relevant in future. “We are looking at Business Model Innovation, something quite in line with what SMF is doing. It is about helping SMEs take a hard look at where they are today and see whether the business model that they have today will be still be relevant in the next five or ten years. There is a concern on what they should do - how should they change. What can they do to value add to a particular model? These considerations are very important,” said Mr. Lu.



The industry talk ended with a dialogue session with the speakers

Productivity Learning Trip to Makino Asia

On 21 April 2015, the Singapore Innovation and Productivity Institute (SiPi), one of SMF's Centres of Excellence, organised a productivity learning trip to Makino Asia Pte Ltd. More than 30 participants from across industries took part on this productivity benchmarking trip to learn more about the best practices implemented by Japanese companies, which are regarded as the pioneers in the areas of raising productivity of employees and company operations.



A "Productivity Corner" in Makino Asia, where employees can undergo continuous training to further their capabilities



Participants learning about the best practices of productivity improvement

Before setting off to Makino Asia, the participants gathered at SMF for a brief introduction to one of SiPi's latest initiatives: "Creating Productivity DNA within Organisations" MasterClass Programme. The programme was launched in July 2015 and specially customised for SME business owners, Chief Executive Officers, and the senior management. Partnering with the Japan Productivity Centre (JPC), the second phase of this programme will bring participants on a five-day learning trip to Japan to study successful methodologies of Japanese companies.

Upon arrival at Makino Asia, the participants were warmly greeted by Mr. David Heng, Senior Human Resources Manager, who gave an insightful presentation on the company's journey of growth and progress from a small company with a workforce

of 15 to a multinational enterprise with close to 4,000 staff across the globe. Through the presentation, the participants gained a glimpse into the efforts that made Makino Asia's success today. Following the presentation, the participants took a guided tour around the factory building and learned about the steps Makino Asia implemented to ensure both quality and productivity. To wrap up the visit, a Q&A session was held after the factory tour for the Makino Asia representatives to address the queries raised by the participants.

The visit to the company proved to be an eye-opener for the participants, who gained nuggets of knowledge from both the factory tour and the presentation. One of them, Mr. Vincent Teo, said: "It is a very fruitful day as we were able to look at the equipment and how the company adopts lean manufacturing. During the tour, I noticed that the factory layout is very well organised and the visual displays are well published, which can help increase operation efficiency. These are the key takeaways for me today."



A successful learning trip

Creating Productivity DNA Within Organisations

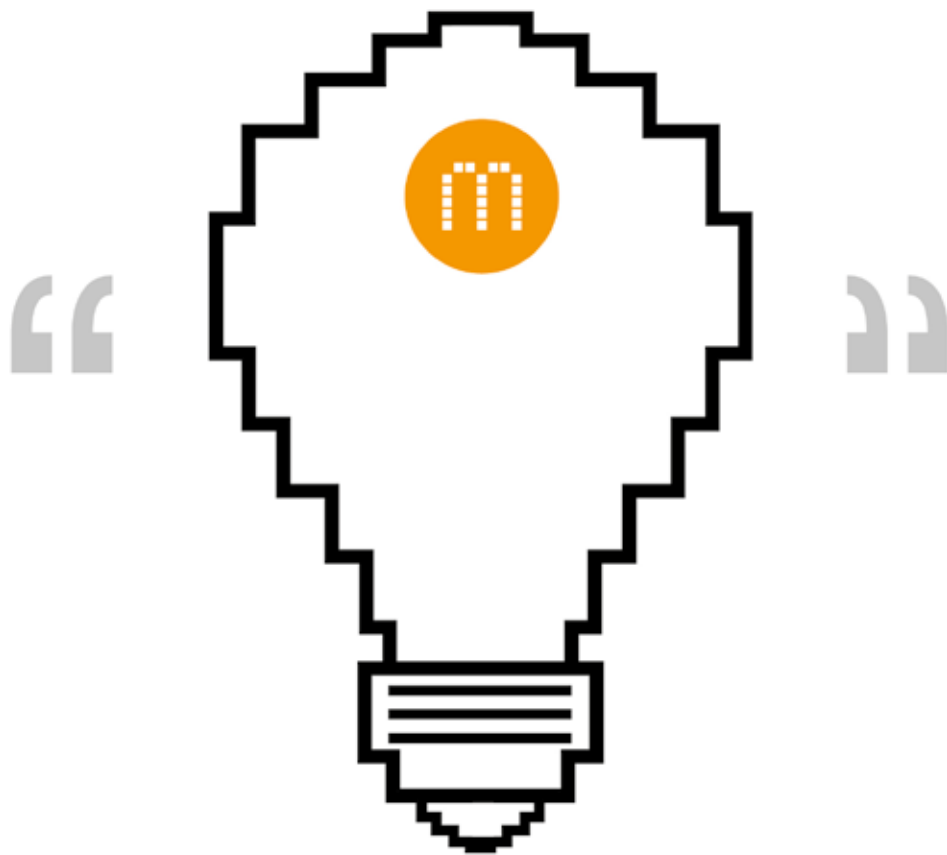
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Business Model Innovation MasterClass

For CEOs, Business Owners and Senior Managers



WHAT IS BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION?

Business Model Innovation, or BMI, is defined as an innovative way to capture, create, develop and deliver value to the customer and market. Many SMEs in Singapore need to transform their business models which are becoming irrelevant. What we are witnessing today is an explosion of business model innovation that is not only changing the rules of the game but the entire game itself.

WHY IS BMI IMPORTANT FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

Rising business costs, a tight labour market, globalisation and disruptive technologies are causing SMEs to lose market share and have their margins eroded. It is no longer “business as usual” and companies need to go beyond just cost-cutting measures. To survive and succeed, companies need to re-look at their business model to bring their business to the next level.

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Learn the comprehensive and unique assessment tools to identify cultural fit, bottlenecks and possible challenges during implementation

PHASE 1

Duration: 4 days of coaching over 3 weeks

Outcomes:

- Understand different components of business models using visual tools
- Map out current business model using Business Model Canvas (BMC)
- Identify potential growth strategies
- Gain exposure to different business model patterns
- Prioritise business model innovations
- Apply tools for charting out growth plans
- Complete the implementation-readiness checklists
- Identify current stand within 3 phases of turnaround (Plan, Manage Strategies and Tactics)
- Learn from success stories of companies who have innovated their business models

PHASE 2

Duration: 3 days of engagement with SiPi's consultants over 3 weeks

Outcomes:

- Trigger employees' thinking about current business model and growth; and rectify future business model
- Assess the employees' readiness to change
- Compare gaps between CEO's and employees' assessment scoring to identify gaps and implementation risks.
- Align future plans on business models
- Draw out roadmap with milestones, investments, areas for development and risks involved

To enquire please contact: www.businessmodelinnovation.org.sg • Email: enquiry@siipi.org.sg • Tel: (65) 6826 3111

Singapore Innovation & Productivity Institute

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SME Centre Conference 2015: Building the Winning Team



Mr. Douglas Foo, SMF President, addressing the participants



Minister Teo Ser Luck delivering the opening address

Following the good response from the inaugural SME Centre Conference held last year, the conference was held once again on 22 April 2015 at the Singapore Expo, with over 800 participants in attendance.

The event is an annual occurrence, jointly-organised by the five local SME Centres under various trade associations and chambers of commerce, and supported by SPRING Singapore. It is a valuable channel for SME business leaders to gather and learn how to grow their businesses through practical and timely information about business outlook and future trends. SME Centre@SMF, a Centre of Excellence under SMF, hosted the conference for this year.

As Singapore undergoes a period of economic restructuring, many SMEs also face a host of challenges such as rising business costs, a tight labour market, as well as difficulty in retaining talents. Under such circumstances, the human capital management can be a crucial driver of success for SME businesses. As such, the SME Centre Conference for this year held the theme of “Building the Winning Team”, which covered topics on human resource strategies, such as how to raise productivity through employee engagement, and an analysis of Singapore’s workforce in the future.



Participants at the second annual SME Centre Conference, hosted by SME Centre@SMF

In addition, there was also an interactive panel discussion on the issues of talent recruitment and retention for SMEs. During the panel discussion, moderated by Mr. Tay Jih-Hsin, SMF Council Member and the Managing Director of a family business, the panelists and the participants exchanged insightful views and commented on the key problems that SMEs face.

Mr. Teo Ser Luck, Minister of State for Trade and Industry, stressed the importance of human capital at the conference. In his opening address, Minister Teo said: “In today’s competitive business environment, the ability to attract, retain, and develop talent, is crucial to success.”



The panel discussion offered insights on the hiring and retention issues

“Many SMEs require guidance to learn about what steps they can take to strengthen their businesses, and this is where the government can come in to help. This is where our network of 12 SME Centres comes in. the SME Centres serve as a first point of contact for SMEs, providing business diagnosis and advisory services, and helping SMEs identify the government schemes that best meet their needs,” said Minister Teo.

SMF President Mr. Douglas Foo also attended the conference. He urged SMEs to continuously upgrade their capabilities and value-add to the economy, saying that “skills development is not static, but a lifelong learning process” and that “changes and transformation within a company can only happen successfully if we have the people with the right skills and mindset, and the right team dynamics”.

The one-day conference had received positive feedback from the participants. Mr. Wilson Chong from Unified Consultancy, said: “SMEs are facing common challenges. Hence, it is important that we attend such events to learn and find out what are the options and assistance channels available for us. The conference also presents networking opportunities for us, which us to link up with relevant business partners.”

Efficient Consumer Response Forum by GS1 Singapore



The event ended with an interactive dialogue session

15 May 2015 saw a successful Efficient Consumer Response (ECR) Singapore forum organised by GS1 Singapore. Attended by over 160 people, the forum created an opportunity for retailers and manufacturers to understand the needs of emerging new consumers and the evolving trends of the consumer market.

With the increasing digital lifestyles of consumers, coupled with the rise of the middle class population, new markets are proliferating at a rate so swift that it is now an increasing challenge for retailers and manufacturers to capture this new wave of consumers. The ECR forum thus could not have come at a more opportune time, where the convergence of CEOs, retailers, manufacturers, practitioners and quality experts presented an excellent platform for an exchange of ideas, knowledge and success stories.

During the opening address by Mr. Tng Ah Yiam, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of NTUC Fairprice, Mr. Tng shared that

studies have revealed a middle class consumer boom in China, India, and the Southeast Asia region, and these consumers are fast playing a pivotal role in shaping the industry.

It is therefore imperative that closer attention be paid to the needs of these consumers. Ms. Chong Nyet Chin, Director of Food Safety and Quality of NTUC Fairprice Co-Operative Limited shared this sentiment. Reminding participants of the forum that today's consumers are more informed and aware, she urged them to consider their needs so as to save time and cost.

Said Mr. Thomas Yeo, RFID Project Manager, who spoke on pallet tracks and traces: "ECR is a strategy to improve consumer choice, satisfaction and service and at the same, reduce total costs, inventories and physical assets. ECR requires distributors and suppliers to focus jointly on the efficiency of the total grocery chain, rather than the efficiency of individual components." He then went on to expound on the benefits on leasing ECR pallets, and the challenges in pallet pooling.



The ECR forum took place at the NTUC Fairprice Auditorium

From Paper to Web: GS1 Workshop on e-Commerce

In response to the growing e-commerce market, GS1 Singapore, a Centre of Excellence of SMF and part of the GS1 Global, organised a half-day workshop on the implementation of GS1 eCom Standards for Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). EDI refers to the computer-to-computer exchange of business documents, such as invoices and purchase orders, in a standardised format between business partners.

Held on 26 June 2015, the workshop saw the attendance of a small but niche group of participants, including solution providers, retailers, and distributors, who were eager to learn more about the supply chain management and integration through GS1 standards.

The knowledge sharing session featured Mr. Anders Grangard, Director of eCom, GS1 Global. He gave an insightful presentation on EDI and its benefits, as well as the general trends in the e-commerce sector. In the second half of the workshop, Mr. Grangard also presented some notable case studies on EDI implementation, for participants to gain a better understanding on how GS1 standards can be used in retail "order-to-cash" processes.



Mr. Liew Wai Leong, Chief Executive Officer of GS1 Singapore, presented a token and certificate of appreciation to the keynote speaker and sponsor of the event respectively



Keynote Speaker Mr. Anders Grangard gave a comprehensive presentation on EDI

One of the emerging trends in e-commerce mentioned during Mr. Grangard's session was the increase of involvement from authorities – a spot-on observation as the workshop welcomed representatives from government agencies as well as e2i and NTUC Fairprice.

"It is a good workshop as it drives more awareness on the standards in the B2B sector. From the IDA's perspective, it allows us to get closer to the industry and find out how to facilitate them to leverage on these standards," said Manager of Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) Ms. Eunice Tan, SME Infocomm Enabler.



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SMF-SDO Drives Food Standards



Mr. Timothy Hromatka, Owner of Fin Fisher Pte Ltd, gave an interesting presentation on organic aquaculture

In May 2015, SMF Standards Development Organisation (SMF-SDO), one of the Centres of Excellence under SME, organised several workshops focused on food standardisation. The series of workshops consisted of in-depth sharing sessions by esteemed speakers from the industry and academia, in response to the needs of local food companies that are interested in implementing standards to build up their capabilities and improve productivity.

To start off the series, the first workshop was held on 5 May 2015, titled "Food Safety Management Systems for Retailers and Wholesalers". It aimed to introduce and educate participants on the types of food safety standards available as well as to provide an overview of the Food Safety Management System in Singapore.

The workshop was conducted by Ms. Angela Chua, Director/Principal Consultant of Synergy Asia Training and Consulting, who addressed some of the food safety concerns for retailers and wholesalers. In addition, Ms. Chua also discussed the typical challenges faced by certification companies, and offered insights on the implementation of Food Safety Management System.

With consumers becoming increasingly health-conscious, organic food products have been gaining popularity over the years. In view of this trend, the second workshop in the Food Standards Industry Series focused on the development and implementation of organic standards and principles. Held on 14 May 2015, the workshop featured three industry sharing sessions, in which representatives from local organic farms shared unreservedly their experience and the standards they implement to ensure quality of their products.

"The workshop is very informative as we learned how to differentiate the various organic standards in the market. It is nice to hear from the industry and learn what is being done to monitor the organic market," said one of the participants at the end of the session.

Building on the success of the previous two workshops, a third one was organised on 28 May with more than 100 participants



in attendance. The workshop was specially customised for food companies that are looking into means of implementing standards to improve productivity and move up the value chain.

Participants were exposed to innovative material and packaging concepts such as natural, biodegradable, water soluble solutions. Food packaging importers, distributors and suppliers, and food packaging manufacturers formed the bulk of the attendees that afternoon, and it was a good opportunity for them to acquire knowledge on how to implement standards, adopt good practices, and improve productivity in order to move up the value chain.

Dr. Allan Lim, Chairman of the Food Standards Committee was the opening speaker that afternoon. He shared that the committee promotes food standards in order to improve the capabilities of Singapore organisations and enhance their competitiveness. Looking to the future, the focus is now on how to reduce food wastage by increasing productivity and food security.

On a similar topic of productivity improvements, Mr. Ng Ruisheng of Singapore Institute of Manufacturing Technology spoke on the importance of innovation and appealing to green consumerism so as to reduce our carbon footprint. He then went on to give examples of case studies on how companies like Coca-Cola, have been improving on their resource efficiency through innovation, ensuring zero wastage in their production process.

Mr. Tan Meng Chong from Geometria Pte Ltd, a design house for biodegradable packaging, participated in the workshop to learn about the future of packaging. He said: "We want to understand the direction of the standards in packaging, the technology available for us to tap on, and also the current concerns of the industry. This workshop is good in the sense that it provides us with information on who to approach if we encounter any problems. As an SME, this is very important."



The third workshop in the series saw a good turnout of more than a hundred participants

Riding on SkillsFuture to Stay Competitive

What are the common challenges faced by Human Resources (HR) these days? How does the changing landscape of the workforce impact an organisation? How can your organisation accommodate the emerging pool of Generation Y in the workplace? These were some issues addressed during a seminar and dialogue session on 19 June 2015. Organized by SMF Centre for Corporate Learning (SMF-CCL), and supported by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), it was a fruitful session where more than 100 participants, comprising of HR personnel from SMEs and MNCs, came together to receive a comprehensive analysis on HR trends, mulled over the various SkillsFuture initiatives programmes available to them, and learned from each other's experience in attracting and retaining staff.

Opening the session was SMF Assistant Secretary-General, Dr Michael Teng, who highlighted the importance of a company's business model to address manpower challenges and business sustainability. "Although there have been outcries in the market about increasing labour and rental costs, businesses must understand why such problems are so severe now. With globalisation and technological change, many SMEs that played the middleman role are increasingly being marginalised. Therefore, companies have to get their models right," he said.

Following that was Ms. Cynthia Leong, SMF Director of Human Resources, who shared how employers can align their HR strategies to SkillsFuture initiatives. "SkillsFuture will demand a recalibration of employees and employers,"



The panel of speakers responded to questions from participants. L-R: Mr Roy Ong (Senior Manager, SMF-CCL), Mr Kwan Lifeng (Enterprise Development Manager, CKE Manufacturing Pte Ltd), Dr Michael Teng (Assistant Secretary-General, SMF), Mr Jason Tay (Assistant Director, Singapore Workforce Development Agency), Ms Cynthia Leong (HR Director, SMF)

she said, and will transform the workplace into a major site of learning. She identified three challenges - training, recruitment, and retention - for human resource professionals today, explaining how SkillsFuture programmes can combat these challenges.

The event also allowed for an interactive dialogue session, during which the panel of speakers took questions from the participants. Apprehensions over the training and retraining of staff were a major source of concern amongst the HR personnel present. With the current generation of workers that are known to job-hop, what is the point of training them? To this, panelist Mr. Kwan Lifeng from CKE Manufacturing, who has much experience working with young talents, said that he has had his share of staff and interns leaving the company after receiving training. "But we treat everyone as a team; we want the best for them, and they appreciate it. If we are constantly worried about staff leaving after we have spent the effort to train them, then we will get nothing done," he said.

"We have to acknowledge that we have an increase in Gen Y joining us, and we must align what we believe in to what we are doing for them. Even though we are from an MNC, there is still a lot of value in learning from the SMEs in areas like retention of staff. There was a good mix of topics in today's event, all of which were relevant and useful for us as we identify with most of them," said participant Ms. Arlenny Ahmad, HR Manager of Sony Electronics Asia Pacific Pte Ltd.



The event drew more than 100 participants, who wanted to learn more about HR trends

SME Talent Programme: Engaging Your Staff for Peak Performance

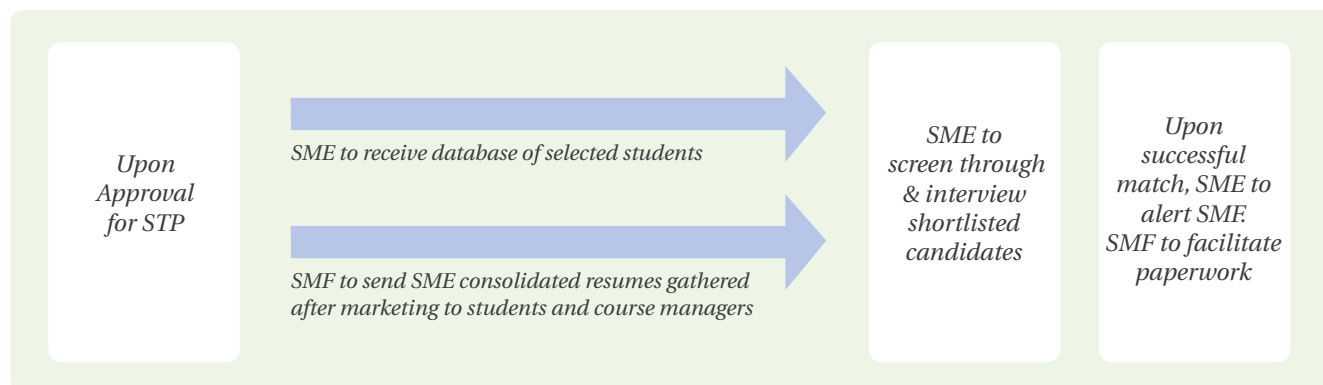


Diagram: STP Matching Process between SME and Candidate

Part of the managerial and supervisory roles is about bringing out the best in every staff under their wings, so as to fully achieve the company's goal. However, just many of managers and supervisors are capable or in the process of doing so?

According to the application of "Lean Six Sigma", underutilisation of employees' talents, skills, and knowledge is one of "The Eight Wastes". Underutilisation could occur in a workplace due to the limitation of authority and responsibility, or putting the employee on a wrong job. In the recent research by Universum, close to half (46%) of those in Human Resources and the talent recruitment services said that they expect or prefer higher engagement from top management in the next five years. In view of this, how should companies avoid staff underutilisation and account peak performance for every employee? In the context of the SME Talent Programme (STP), it employs several measures for companies to adopt and engage their staff, hence increasing staff performance.

The STP is managed by SMF and other SPRING Singapore-appointed trade associations. Annually, the STP team reaches out to more than 3,000 students and graduates in the local University, Polytechnics and the Institute of Technical

Education and assist to match interested candidates to suitable SMEs. Candidates are attracted to the STP because of the attractive salary, sign-on bonus, and perhaps most importantly: a clear career progression pathway and a personalised one year training and development plan for the young talents.

Such features are desirable to the candidates as it communicates the commitment of the company to groom and nurture them. The candidates are also informed that the sign-on bonus will be disbursed in two tranches during the first and twelve month of employment. The following diagram explains the matching process between the company and candidate:

Upon a successful match, the company will discuss the proposed training and development plan to the candidate and communicate the desired goals. In return for training the candidate, a training grant of up to \$15,000 is made available for companies to defray development and/or operating cost.

In addition, the STP team @ SMF will hold a quarterly communication platform to receive feedback on the programme. This process has been proven to greatly reduce the rate of bond breakers and improve performance.

SME Talent Programme

To find out more details on the STP, please contact the STP team at:



stp@smecentre-smf.sg or 6826 3148

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