

## MEDAL OF COMMENDATION

### **Benjamin Chua**

Chief Executive Officer  
Speco Singapore Pte Ltd

*Nominated by the Building Construction And Timber Industries Employees' Union*

Benjamin Chua founded Speco in 2017 as a social enterprise, providing housekeeping and cleaning service and partnering with more than 90 social service agencies to provide jobs to marginalised Singaporeans such as ex-offenders, persons with disabilities and persons with mental health backgrounds. Even as a small company, Brother Benjamin was enlightened to see the merits of unionising his company and partnering with NTUC to benefit his workers.

The company has trained, upskilled and provided employment opportunities to more than 300 individuals. The company also invested in new productivity tools to ensure workers can carry out operations more efficiently and safely, including using electrostatic machines for infection control and disinfection even before COVID-19 hit. The more efficient operations allowed the company to scale when disinfection demand increased during the pandemic. Brother Benjamin saw the need early to pivot from labour-intensive cleaning services to clean tech. As he focused on creating higher-value jobs and productivity gains, he could also pay his workers higher wages than the minimum recommended wage under the Progressive Wage Model.

Brother Benjamin is a firm believer in the welfare of his workers. He was open to working with Building Construction And Timber Industries Employees' Union (BATU) and developing a solid partnership with the union over the years to enable workforce growth. He was progressive, such as accepting BATU's proposals to adopt good employment practices. Examples include Speco sponsoring its workers' NTUC membership fees to extend social benefits to them, providing family care leave and increasing its retirement age to 65. To help his older workers and persons with disabilities have productive and meaningful work, Speco adopted job redesign solutions to make their work easier and safer.

Over the past two years, through the Company Training Committee (CTC) collaboration with the union, the company also sent its workers to training focused on infection control courses at Republic Polytechnic, which equipped staff with the right skills to help Singapore combat COVID-19. As CEO, Brother Benjamin believes that as the company adapts and transforms its business model and expands into the region, its workers must continually upskill to stay ahead of the curve. The collaboration would not have been possible without regular conversations between BATU and Speco, in line with the CTC process.