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Quick, Catch The Second Wind

GEMS Up Gives Service A Leg Up

Think like a marathon runner and strategise like you would for a marathon race. That in essence was NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee

Say's strategy for Singapore's service industry "in the global marathon race for service excellence," and the same applies to all other sectors as well.

SG Lim was speaking on 7 September 2009 at the unveiling of the GEMS Up logo, the second phase of the GEMS (Go the Extra Mile for Service) movement that is a part of the CCI (Customer-Centric Initiative) to achieve an excellent service culture in Singapore.

The winds of change are blowing, and "the global economy we are in today has entered the inter-monsoon season. The winds of the downturn are subsiding and the winds of the upturn are gathering strength," forecasted SG Lim.

He said the uncertain and uneven double U pattern in the global economic recovery indicates that different countries, economies and sectors don't have the same pace of recovery, adding that "when the dust settles, when the global economy goes back to growth again, when the global foreign direct investments go back to full swing again, we can be very sure that there will be a big rush for investments, for jobs, for growth. This big rush will be one of the biggest we have ever seen because in many countries unemployment rates are just way too high."

SG Lim pointed out that countries like the United States, Europe and elsewhere are all working very hard but "it may take them three years, it may take sometimes even five years to bring their unemployment rates back to normal levels again.

"Meantime, we can be very sure competition for investments, competition for jobs will be very keen because there will be a big rush for foreign direct investments. Along the way, we are going to see many changes in the global economic landscape. Countries, companies, economies are going to compete on a different basis."

"Now, who will take off faster as we go through this double U recovery?" he asked.

"We cannot be big in size but we must be big in our steps in terms of repositioning ourselves and that is why in recent weeks you have heard a lot about this call for our companies, our economy and our industries to be cheaper, to be better, to be faster.

"Because being cheaper, better, faster is the only way for the Singapore economy to compete in the world where the better competitors are getting cheaper and the cheaper competitors are getting better."

He said that this concept of being



Sharing A Common Vision... CCI Icons join hands with NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say (front centre), Minister of State for Manpower Lee Yi Shyan (front third from left) and CCI Committee Co-Chairperson Yeo Guat Kwang (second from left).

cheaper, better and faster applies to all sectors of the economy, whether low productivity or high productivity; whether export-oriented or domestic; whether manufacturing or services; and for all collars and types of workers with different strategies for different sectors.

Coming back to "the global marathon race for service excellence," SG Lim said that Singapore is definitely not one of the frontrunners. In a marathon race where the packs of runners comprise the breakaway pack, the chase pack, the lead pack, the main back and the back of pack, Singapore is "sometimes in the back of the lead pack and sometimes drops to the front of main pack.

"The question is are we satisfied with that type of position? Are we happy to be just at the front of the main pack and at the back of the lead pack? We should not be satisfied.

“If the whole of Singapore is to become cheaper, better and faster, the service industry must be part of the concerted effort to transform the Singapore economy.”

SG Lim added that there is no better time to break away and surge ahead than now during the uncertainty and unevenness of this "inter-monsoon period" when many countries are distracted.

AN INITIATIVE of SPRING Singapore, Singapore Tourism Board, the Singapore Workforce Development Agency, the Institute of Service Excellence at the Singapore Management University and NTUC, GEMS Up was launched to take service to a higher level over the next three years in three ways - promotion, publicity and recognition for service; service capability development; and research and thought leadership for service.

The first three potential CCI Icons to be developed in this plan are Changi Airport Group, ION Orchard and Sentosa Development Corporation.

Since its launch in 2005, CCI has assisted 214 companies representing 6,200 establishments and 172,000 workers in the tourism, food and beverage, retail and transport sectors. The latest hospitality sector adds 92 new companies and 40,000 more service workers.



By
Marcus Lin

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Help For
Mums
'Going
Solo'

Foreign Workers Need All The Help They Can Get



By
Zee Yoong Kang
Chief Executive Officer,
NTUC LearningHub Pte Ltd

Last week, I had the good fortune to be involved in two launch events. The first was the launch of the Migrant Workers Centre by NTUC and the Singapore National Employers Federation. The second was the launch of a new training framework by ISS, a major facilities company, to cross train and up-skill its entire workforce. Both were important initiatives.

NTUC has always advocated the rights of foreign workers. The MWC puts into practice what we have always preached. Conceived by NTUC Alignment Director (All Nationalities; Quality Worklife) and Co-Chairman of the MWC Yeo Guat Kwang, the MWC aims to be a temporary shelter for homeless migrant workers. The MWC will also give them advice on their rights, provide food and housing assistance, and organise activities which help them to integrate more easily into Singapore society.

The MWC has also tied up with NTUC LearningHub Private Limited to develop a basic conversational English enrichment course for migrant workers so that they are able to speak a common language with those they interact with on a daily basis. The MWC is targeting to get at least 1,000 migrant workers to take up the course by March 2010.

Meanwhile, ISS has teamed up with NTUC LearningHub to train up to 1,300 of its employees over the next 36 months. Through the Integration Skills

Development Programme launched on 4 September 2009 by NTUC LearningHub and ISS, ISS hopes to develop and invest in the professional development of its employees, from contract and casual workers such as cleaners to PMETs (Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technical people).

During the MWC, I noticed that the two trainees in the English Language course presented to the press were two very positive and energetic workers from China who were sponsored for the English course by their employers. At the ISS event, in addition to many Singaporeans, there were more than a handful of Myanmar and Indian workers in the training classes showcased.

It is clear to me that there are many far-sighted employers who are prepared to invest in the skills not only of their Singapore workers, but also their foreign workforce. However, as a litany of complaints have made it clear, too many foreign workers still end up working in Singapore who by all appearances are poorly trained and who do not have a basic level of English proficiency.

I wonder if we should leave it to employers to wake up to the fact that foreign workers, like every member of the workforce here, need to be properly trained so that they can serve customers well. Or should the Government play a more aggressive role in helping set minimum skills standards for our workers here?

Enhanced Benefits For TOA Members In Tie-Up With Raffles Medical



By
Peggy Chen
Principal Executive, Taxi Operators' Associations

In the spirit of do good and do more for our members, the six Taxi Operators' Associations' Presidents signed their second agreement in two months on 31 August 2009 to tie up with Raffles Medical Group to bring affordable outpatient consultations to members and their family. The event was witnessed by our Advisor, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Seng Han Thong and the General Secretaries of the six TOA.

From 7 September 2009 onwards, TOA members will be able to seek GP consultation at the selected 35 Raffles Medical Clinics island-wide by paying a preferential rate of \$23. This would include consultation and three standard medicines. Compared to the usual price of \$35 to \$40 for such consultations, this special rate presents great savings for our members where every cent counts.

Being a premium healthcare provider in Singapore, Raffles Medical Group is noted for its comprehensive and integrated range of medical services. Therefore, we believe that this tie-up would give our members and their family more choices. What is especially notable is that Raffles has agreed to extend the concessionary



rate to its two airport clinics. This would bring convenience to our members who may need to seek medical attention should they feel unwell while working at the airport.

In fact, the 'U Care-TOA Immediate Relief' for TOA members which is a \$15 subsidy for each flu-related outpatient consultation unveiled earlier in July will also be extended to Raffles Medical Clinics. The objective of the subsidy is to encourage drivers to seek medical attention when they are unwell. Therefore, each TOA member only needs to pay \$8 for each visit and they could enjoy up to three times of this subsidy till 31 December 2009.

Under this new tie-up, members can also enjoy attractive rates of \$16 for physical examination for Vocational Licence without chest X-ray and \$25 for physical examination for Vocational Licence with chest X-ray for their Taxi Drivers' Vocational Licence renewal.

Other offers include a 5 per cent discount for standard consultation rates at their specialist clinics and 10 per cent for dental services and health screenings. These offers (except for 'U Care-TOA Immediate Relief' subsidy) will also be extended to members' immediate family members subsequently where each of them would be getting their own concession cards.

To Make Quantum Leap For The Taxi Industry Companies Need To Be 'Cheaper, Better, Faster'



By
Shirley Tan-Oehler

When the first Compressed Natural Gas station opened in Singapore, many coined "CNG" as "Cheap 'n Good". In a sense, CNG can be considered "cheap and good" as a litre of petrol costs about \$1.60 and the equivalent amount of CNG is under 80 cents – half the price.

This means a driver can go further for lesser, pointed out NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Seng Han Thong, who officially opened the world's largest CNG station at Old Toh Tuck Road on 9 September 2009.

With 46 pumps, including two for trucks and buses, it is the fifth CNG station to be opened in Singapore – after Jurong Island, Mandai Link, Jalan Buroh and Serangoon North Avenue 4. Lima, Peru, which had the largest CNG station in the world in April 2008 operates 32 pumps.

The Old Toh Tuck Road station, which dispenses the C-nergy brand of CNG, is managed



by Union Gas Private Limited, a member of the Union Energy Group which also owns a fleet of 2,600 taxi under the Transcab Taxi company. Transcab has some 1,000 taxis running on CNG and intends to increase this number by another 3,000 in the next one to one-and-a-half years.

ASG Seng, who is also Advisor to the NTUC-affiliated Taxi Operators Association of which TransCab Operators' Association is a member, said as Singapore

greens itself, it is commendable that enterprises such as the Union Energy Group is taking the lead in boosting the move towards a cleaner environment and be "Cheaper, Better, Faster".

"It will not only give the green vehicle owners and taxi drivers more choices, but also contribute to the promotion of the use of environmentally-friendly vehicles such as CNG and hybrid vehicles through the Green Vehicle Rebate Scheme which narrows the cost differential between green vehicles and conventional ones.

"The Green Vehicle Rebate Scheme has been reviewed on a regular basis since its introduction in 2001. The rebates were enhanced from 20 per cent of the open market value of the vehicle to 40 per cent. Since then, the number of green vehicles has increased from about 200 to more than 5,400 as at end-2008," said ASG Seng.

This number makes up for just under 1 per cent of the total private car and taxi population in Singapore. The setting up of more CNG stations can be seen as the private sector's response to the changing operating environment and government's initiative, added ASG Seng.

"Cheaper, Better, Faster" is also the Labour Movement's mantra to encourage companies in Singapore to work towards the upturn of the global economic slump.

"Being faster means being flexible to changes in the global market. Being better means companies should build better capabilities. And being cheaper means increasing productivity.

"Union Energy Group Managing Director Teo Kiang Ang has said that he is looking to build a few more stations in the northern and eastern parts of Singapore. This is indeed moving faster, to be ahead of the competition.

"His CNG station is also better - in service. He tied up with convenience store 7-Eleven, which tied up with halal-certified hot food caterer Banquet, to become part of his business. In doing so, he is capturing the public users as well as providing a useful and helpful

service to his own taxi drivers, who now have an air-conditioned café to fill up their stomachs and rest awhile.

"The Labour Movement, together with all the taxi companies and the Land Transport Authority, will be encouraging the 'Cheaper, Better, Faster' strategy. We are confident that the tripartite partners will achieve a quantum leap in service standard and our taxi drivers will have better income and live better lives," said ASG Seng.



Top Her Up... Union Energy Group Managing Director Teo Kiang Ang (third from left), showing NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and TOA Advisor Seng Han Thong (fourth from left) how a Compressed Natural Gas car is fuelled up, looked on by TCOA General Secretary Teo Han Cheng and TCOA President Ong Hian Teck.

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Time For The Big Re-Employment Push



By **Marcus Lin**

Quite apart from simply complying with re-employment legislation beyond the age of 62 that will take effect in January 2012, it makes business sense to retain and re-employ older workers especially so in a tight labour market when the economy turns around.

Minister-in-charge of Ageing Issues and Chairman of NTUC ElderCare Co-operative Limited Lim Boon Heng shared this observation at the 2009 AARP International Innovative Employer Awards presentation on 10 September 2009 when three Singapore companies were winners.

"Although we are now at the tail-end, I hope, of a global downturn, there are already signs of the labour market tightening. I hear Small and Medium Enterprises tell me that they can't find enough workers. So it is time for us to push harder for the retention and re-employment of older workers," said Mr Lim.

Singapore's well-documented rapidly ageing

society and longer life expectancy should make both employers and employees think: "Employers would be concerned about how they can recruit and retain good staff. Employees would need to work and save longer to match their extended lives."

"Against this backdrop, those who can should work longer and contribute to the workforce and community for as long as possible. Working longer helps people stay physically active, mentally alert, socially connected and financially self-reliant. This will be increasingly possible as our new old, baby boomers, are better educated, more independent and expect to live active golden years.

"Despite that, the common lament heard in society is: 'I want to work, I can work, but no one will hire me once they know my age'. Or it will be the case of older workers being the last to be hired, but first to be asked to go. These perceptions are not always true. In the current downturn, even PMETs (Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technical people) in their 30s and 40s have been affected.

"In a labour scarce country like ours, employers need to understand that older workers are increasingly assets that we should tap on. Many employers are still learning how to do this well, although I am reasonably optimistic that this can be achieved. Our employment rate for workers aged 55-64 years is 57 per cent today. So we still have a long way to go to reach our target of 65 per cent by 2012."

Mr Lim said that in spite of the many schemes that the Government and tripartite partners have rolled out, there are still many employers who are dragging their feet:

My advice is: Don't wait; start working on it now. You have only just over two years to get ready."

He added that there is a misconception among some people that training for older workers is not funded when in fact they are, just the same as younger people so long as it is for a job.

"There are schemes that can be tapped



Standard bearers for re-employment... (from left) National Healthcare Group Chief Human Resource Officer Olivia Tay, HDB Chief Executive Officer Tay Kim Poh, Manpower Minister Gan Kim Yong, Minister-in-charge of Ageing Issues Lim Boon Heng, Royal Plaza on Scotts General Manager Patrick Fiat and C3A Chairman Gerard Ee.

to help companies recruit, retain or re-employ mature workers. The ADVANTAGE! Scheme which started in 2005 has seen more than 1,200 companies participate in this programme. These companies have committed to recruit over 5,300 mature workers, retain 19,300 older workers and re-employ 8,800 older workers. In this current downturn, we have intensified skills upgrading and training for all workers, including older ones."

Mr Lim also stressed that it is foolhardy for employers to sit and wait for legislation to do magic: "There is only so much that legislation and schemes can do. The key challenge still remains: How do we ensure that jobs and workplaces are suitable for older people, with diverse skills and education and help them to stay employed?"

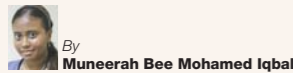
All parties have a role to play to make this happen. There are ways that employers can

AARP, a US-based non-profit organisation representing nearly 40 million older Americans, and Singapore's Council for Third Age (C3A), an independent body that promotes active ageing, announced three Singapore winners of the 2009 AARP International Innovative Employer Awards. The award, designed to promote innovative human resource and workforce practices around the world, recognised the Housing & Development Board, National Healthcare Group, and Royal Plaza on Scotts among ten international award winners selected from a worldwide pool of applicants. The award recognises employers who have demonstrated best policies in retaining, attracting and engaging their 50 plus workers.

harness the wisdom and years of experience that these mature workers bring with them. Counseling plays an important role. Older workers need to understand the physical, emotional and social needs to stay employed. Companies that have regular engagement with older workers tend to get more satisfied re-employed workers."

Mr Lim also urged older workers to play their part "by staying current with the changing economic environment. They can enroll themselves for courses at any of the current 48 Continuing Education and Training (CET) Centres."

Secret Re-hiring Recipes



By **Muneerah Bee Mohamed Iqbal**

This year's AARP International Innovative Employer Awards recipients reached out to their mature workers and offered them opportunities that cater to their needs and skills.

Royal Plaza on Scotts

A branch of the Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union, Royal Plaza on Scotts focuses on a healthy worklife balance when it comes to retaining and rehiring older workers.

The Flexiwork programme creates special roles for their mature employees that match their set skills. Some employees are affixed to a permanent shift to meet their family commitments.

A grandmother of eight, Madam Tan Kim Heng, 63, is on permanent afternoon shift as a housekeeper at the hotel. This allows her to prepare breakfast for her family and spend time with her grandchildren before sending them off to school. Madam Tan is happy she can look after her family and maintain an active lifestyle. She commented: "I am very happy to be working as it allows me to keep current and in touch with modern society. I am also able to contribute to society as it gives me the opportunity to share my wealth



Tan Kim Heng's age does not deter her from faithfully serving in her job with passion.

of experience with the younger colleagues in the hotel."

RP on Scotts also encourages a buddy system where the mature and younger workers are paired up to learn and value each other's contribution. General Manager of Royal Plaza on Scotts, Mr. Patrick Fiat explained: "The mature employees are valuable assets to the organisation as they are able to share their wealth of experience with the younger

employees. The hotel taps on their expertise by pairing the mature employees with the younger generation of new hires to provide guidance and encourage cohesiveness."

Under the hotel's Preparatory Programme, workers undergo the Re-employment: Equipping & Developing yourself (READY) programme 23 months before they turn 62 where re-employment prospects are discussed. To understand and manage the issues and concerns of pre-retirees, the Human Resource personnel will also be attaining the Certificate in Pre-retirement & Re-employment Counselling offered by the Centre For Seniors.

At the same time, the RP on Scotts is adopting the Tripartite Advisory for Re-employment of Older Workers and they are the first hotel to be elevated to NTUC's highest level status of re-employment (Level 4). This reflects the hotel's commitment to create an age-friendly workplace. Mr Fiat said: "Royal Plaza on Scotts has aligned our re-employment framework with the Tripartite Advisory on the Re-employment of Older Workers to provide the opportunity to retain and attract mature workers with attractive re-employment packages that can cater to the needs



Patrick Fiat

of the individual employees and suit their lifestyles."

National Healthcare Group

The National Healthcare Group understands the importance of re-employment while keeping up with the healthcare industry. NHG's ENCORE programme takes a holistic approach

to re-employment and it sets a standardised framework for all NHG institutions.

Chief Human Resource Officer of NHG, Mrs Olivia Tay explained the choice for the name of the programme: "What we are trying to tell our older employees is that you have done us proud, we want you to continue and gives us a repeat performance. We had an event in June 2008 where all our institutions signed a pledge and we became the first healthcare organisation to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with Healthcare Services Employees' Union to implement the provision and recommendations in the Tripartite Advisory framework."

Among its rehiring practices, NHG looks into redesigning jobs such as the position of Clinical Support Assistant at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Employees in this role go through in house training for a National Skills Recognition System certification and candidates learn blood drawing skills, infection control and the use of computerised systems. Currently, about 58% of Clinical Support Assistants are mature workers.

NHG also engages employees in counselling sessions three months before they turn 60 where their employment desires are explored. Sometimes this requires the workers to change their mindset and think in a different perspective in taking an alternative career. At the same time, NHG recognises the need to address the dynamics of a multigenerational workforce. Younger supervisors who supervise mature workers undergo training to build a good working relationship between them.

Mrs Olivia Tay believes that training

opportunities should not be limited by age. She said: "Age is not a criteria where training is concerned, as long as there is a willingness to progress." Partnering learning institutions such as NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), NHG actively identifies employees, even as young as 55, for training.

Ergonomics is also taken into account for mature workers at NHG. Increasing the font size of words on bottles helps older workers with weak eyesight carry out their job accurately. Such simple solutions make mature workers feel comfortable to continue working.

Housing Development Board

Since 2007, 36 staff from the Housing Development Board have been re-employed in various job scopes and about 35 per cent of its 5000 staff are aged 50 and above.

Under its re-employment framework, HDB provides lifelong learning and development opportunities and a structure for mature employees to be systematically considered for re-employment and prepare them for retirement.

CEO of HDB Tay Kim Poh explains: "The number and profile of staff due for retirement are monitored at the corporate HR level with the re-employment process initiated at least one year ahead of the retirement date of staff. This will enable the supervisors to review the work requirements and identify suitable positions that will best tap on the expertise of the retiring staff."

Programmes such as the Self Directed Learning Scheme were introduced for those aged 50 and above to offer them more training options and pursue their areas of interest after their re-employment years. Launched in 2006, about 250 staff have since benefitted from the scheme. HDB will also assess the learning needs of their mature

staff and add new courses such as Planning Now for Retirement, Networking Skills and Worklife Balance.

Our people are our valued assets and our mature staff possess the required technical expertise and experience to contribute to the success of the organisation. We have therefore institutionalised re-employment as a key means for HDB to effectively manage and deploy our manpower resources."

Tay Kim Poh, Chief Executive Officer of HDB

Retiring staff who qualify will be offered a one-year re-employment contract or they could be re-employed on flexible work arrangements like part-time work.

In future, HDB will continue to adopt an integrated approach in the rehiring practices, taking into consideration areas of manpower shortage. Besides investing in programmes that will enhance workers' competencies and professionalism, HDB will also continue to explore new initiatives to best meet the needs of their mature staff.

"One key success factor in HDB's re-employment effort is that we have the firm support of our staff union in the implementation of the framework. HDB and the HDB Staff Union have also signed a Memorandum of Agreement for re-employment as a commitment to provide re-employment opportunities for our retiring staff. HDB will continue to work closely with our staff union, the departments and line managers to plan ahead for our retiring staff," Mr Tay assured.

UWEEI Reaches Out To Affected Seagate Members



Story and pictures by
Roy Chua

Industrial Relations Officer, United Workers of Electronic and Electrical Industries

Over 700 workers from Seagate Singapore affected by the impending retrenchment exercise turned up at Scarlet City in Ang Mo Kio Hub for communication sessions organised by the United Workers of Electronic and Electrical Industries on 18 and 20 August 2009.

The affected workers came with many concerns for clarification. The plans to engage these workers were set in motion once the company approached UWEEI to discuss the entire procedure of the re-location of its Ang Mo Kio production plant.

UWEEI has worked closely with Seagate Singapore to ensure the union's fullest support is given to these members. The communication sessions are the first initiative by UWEEI to ensure that the workers have the platform to raise questions about their future.

UWEEI, together with NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), were out in full force on the two days of communication sessions held. Credit goes to the Branch Committee for getting the news out to the union members and convincing them to attend. The workers listened attentively to how UWEEI's benefits can be continued to be extended to them even after they have left the company.

e2i's officers explained to them the job-placement process of undergoing the ASK (Attitude Skills and Knowledge) workshop as well as current job-market conditions. The presentations were critical in giving the affected workers a broader understanding of current market conditions, and learning how to leverage on UWEEI's resources to help them through this challenging period.



UWEEI Executive Secretary Halimah Jacob gives encouragement to Seagate workers.

The question and answer segment brought out genuine concerns on the ground where workers sought to understand in depth the training process and the union's various help channels that they could tap on. With regard to training, questions on the duration of the training, types of training, whether or not age will be an impeding factor as well as subsidies involved were patiently answered by e2i.

The continuation of union benefits and job concerns were explained to the workers by UWEEI's officers who ensured all questions were addressed. Dozens of workers also expressed willingness to explore the chances of being transferred to Seagate Singapore's Woodlands plant which UWEEI has agreed to discuss further in detail with the company on the feasibility of this plan.

Madam Halimah Jacob, UWEEI Executive Secretary, addressed the crowd on various union-help issues, even speaking in Malay in order to better connect with a significant number of Malay operators present. Mr Ong Ye Kung, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General, was

also present to reinforce the commitment that e2i has towards helping the affected workers in terms of training and job placement.

UWEEI also distributed U-Stretch vouchers to the union members who attended the communication sessions. "It's good to see that the union is here to help us in these ways. It helps us understand the situation better and be better able to make plans for the future," said Madam Siti Amnah, a Singaporean production operator.

Her positive attitude and determination when discussing about her job prospects is what stood out. "We've worked so long in the company and definitely will find it a bit difficult in the beginning to change to any new jobs. But I'm willing to give it a try and my best shot because I still need to support my family."



U-Stretch vouchers were given out to ease the pain.



Mdm Siti Amnah (left) will not give up.

It was heartening to see that after the sessions had ended, many workers stayed back to further clarify their concerns and discuss their personal plans with UWEEI and e2i's staff. They are able to take things in their stride and make the most of the situation. It is certain that these workers, with the union's support, will be able to tide through this challenging period and emerge stronger.

Lay Offs In Textile Companies Create Tough Challenges For SISEU



By
Roshini Mohan Krishnan

It is undeniable that the textile sector in Singapore has faced many challenges especially in garment production and this economic downturn has worsened it. From a one-time peak of 38 textile branches with 1,835 members belonging to the Singapore Industrial & Services Employees Union, only 19 branches remain today with only 319 members.

For SISEU, helping retrenched workers is one of their topmost priorities and one that wrought with many challenges.

“Besides securing a good retrenchment package to help them, our aim is to get all these workers successfully re-employed so that they can move on with their lives. With the textile industry contracting, we need to prepare them to work in other sectors like the hospitality or food and beverage industries. It is a difficult process as most are mature workers, having only primary or secondary school education and have worked in the textile industry for most of their life. Thus, a change of mindset and willingness to venture out will be required,” said SISEU President Tan Peng Heng.

To help the workers cope, SISEU was quick to step in. NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and SISEU Executive Secretary Josephine Teo explained: “What we have done is to take the journey with them step by step. We encourage

them not to lose hope. That’s why we are very insistent that there is no time gap between the time they are retrenched and the time they start their courses at with NTUC’s e2i (Employment and Employability Institute). For many, they go for training on the same day they are retrenched. The success rate from the previous batches of workers displaced from garment factories gives us hope. About half of the workers we sent to e2i found new jobs in new industry sectors.”

Feedback has been encouraging. Madam Chan Su Dsa, 56 who has been taking the English course for about two weeks found it a good learning experience as she can understand a little English now. Taking the course with her fellow ex-colleagues, she finds it easier to learn and practice English with them. She acknowledges the importance of English in today’s workplace. “Living in Singapore, you have to understand English because no matter what jobs you find, you must have English knowledge,” she said.

SISEU has been doing its best to help prepare these workers for different jobs by working closely with e2i and NTUC LearningHub Private Limited to train and place these workers.

Said Jenny Siew, e2i Senior Employability Coach: “They have been working in the same job, same industry for many years and mostly cannot speak English and fearful of attending training. So, we ease them in by starting them off with an Attitude, Skills and Knowledge workshop



SISEU Executive Secretary Josephine Teo (right) reaches out to an affected worker.

conducted in Mandarin. At the workshop, these workers will learn that there are training programmes to assist those weak in English. The more adventurous workers will sign up for these programmes first. Thereafter, the rest will decide that training is not so scary after all and also sign up.”

Added NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Ong Ye Kung: “Economic restructuring is a reality. e2i is here to work the ground and soothe the impact of restructuring. The Oceansky International exercise is another example of how e2i helps workers adjust to new and hopefully better jobs. So long as Singapore continues to progress, there will be more restructuring, there will be more of such exercises, and e2i will continue to try our best to help.”

Apart from arranging workshops and re-training classes, SISEU has provided financial assistance in the form of U Stretch and U Care Immediate Assistance vouchers. To date, about \$133,500 has been given out by the union to the members from the textile branches.

- Additional Reporting By Muneerah Bee Mohamed Iqbal

Standing By Workers In Tough Times



By
Vanessa Teo

The drop in passenger flights is not just a test for Singapore Airlines Limited’s business sustainability, but also a test for the Singapore Airlines Staff Union in terms of managing members’

needs. Since the downturn launched its massive attack on the airline industry, SIA has taken cost-cutting measures of a shorter work month, and effected a Monthly Variable Component cut of 10 per cent for all staff.

SIA Engineering Company, a subsidiary of SIA, has introduced a two-days no pay leave for all staff. While both companies’ management has led by example by taking cuts of up to 20 per cent, SIASU members are feeling the effect of these measures due to the downturn. Some members on the ground have approached the union expressing strong concerns and anxiety to the leaders, and SIASU General Secretary Rathakrishnan s/o Sinnappan shared on a recent event that left an impression on him.

“There was a member who came to me and took out a \$50 note from his pocket and started raising his voice. Waving the note in the air, he told me that he has three children and can’t even afford their milk powder, and even a \$50 pay cut goes a long way for them,” he said.

SIASU Vice President Bahaudin Kamaruddin also added: “Members can also get



quite impatient, and do not want to wait long for improvements; they expect a remedy to the problem instantly. But you can’t blame them because you are talking about a cut into their pockets.”

SIASU understands that there is no quick solution to the challenge that they are facing. Extraordinary times like this require extraordinary patience and resilience. Understanding the concerns of the members, SIASU is in the process of working with management to help minimise the pain for the lower income workers. On the union’s part, SIASU has increased the number of bursary grant recipients from 300 recipients last year to 377 this year. SIASU is also in the process of applying for NTUC’s U Care Immediate Assistance Scheme to help members tide through this difficult period.

“With the full 10 per cent MVC pay cut together with the shorter work month, it is really too great for our workers to bear, especially for the lower income workers. While there are no immediate solutions to the challenge that the



The Singapore Airlines Staff Union was formed in 1984 and represents employees of Singapore Airlines Limited and its subsidiaries except for Singapore Airport Terminal Services. It currently has 10,300 Ordinary Branch Members and 160 General Branch Members.

airline industry is facing, SIASU will continue to work closely with the management by keeping a close watch on business trends, and at the same time continue to explore ways to cut cost to save jobs,” Mr Rathakrishnan said.

Reaffirming this promise was also Executive Secretary Davidson Daniel Jeyasingham. He said: “The most affected by this downturn are really our members working at SIA in the lower income group. We hope that through working together with the company, we can find a win-win solution for both management and members.”

Besides having to deal with the number game, SIASU also organises regular meet-the-member sessions at SIA Engineering to explain the company’s situation to them and also the reasons for having to implement various cost-cutting measures, so that members have a better understanding and at the same time, enable the union leaders to get relevant feedback on implementation issues and challenges.

WDS Launches Book For Single Mums

'Going Solo – A Guide For Single Mothers' Arms Single Mothers With All The Resources They Need To Turn Their Lives Around For The Better



By Nicolette Yeo

One day, she is a contented housewife who spends her days taking care of her husband and children. The next, her husband has left or passed away, and she is suddenly sole breadwinner to the family, as well as mother and father to her children.

What the single mother needs – and fast – are a multitude of resources at her disposal to help her put her life back together and achieve a better life for her family in the future.

WeCare for U Project, the single mother initiative under the NTUC Women's Development Secretariat answered her prayers with 'Going Solo – A Guide For Single Mothers'.

Officially launched on 9 September 2009 at NTUC Centre, the book contains listings and information ranging from emotional and back-to-work support to financial and legal assistance from 12 working partners: single parent agencies, women's associations, Family Service Centres, self-help groups and legal organisations. It is also funded by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, the Lee Foundation, and the Singapore Tote Board.

Also included in 'Going Solo' are stirring stories by four brave single mums who have gone through the darkest days of their lives and emerged stronger and more resilient, thus



The Labour Movement works together for the betterment of the women in our society.

offering hope to single mothers who are currently going through a tough time.

Guest-of-Honour NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say took the opportunity to point out that the WeCare for U Project, in tapping on its wide network of working partners, had done the right thing to employ the "many helping hands" concept advocated by MCYS.

"When you look at the challenges faced by single mothers, it is beyond one agency, entity or organisation to extend the kind of help needed

by them. We can be more effective by extending these many helping hands.

"So, as you go through this book, you will find that the list of organisations serving as partners is indeed a very impressive and comprehensive one. With this many helping hands under the overall policy framework spearheaded by MCYS, we can ensure that all of us can do whatever we can to reach out to single mothers."

SG Lim also offered added comfort to the single mothers in the audience by reassuring them that the WeCare for U Project will always be their strong helping hand to guide them through their darkest times.

"It is not a perfect world we live in but we can do everything possible to make this imperfect world less imperfect for single mothers," he said.



"I found the book useful; the stories by the single mothers was the most useful for me. It gave me some motivation to know that they have made it."

Jolene Lim (left), 36, single mother of one

"The book is very, very useful for single mums. It helps to tell them where to get assistance; for example for housing, legal matters and employment."

Habibah Bibi, 43, single mother of three

WeCare for U Project Achievements

The launch of "Going Solo" also marked the six month milestone of the WeCare for U Project. Key driver Suseela d/o Singaram was on hand at the event to deliver the progress report. Here are the highlights:

- Built a database of nearly 500 single mothers and their children
- Tied up with Community Development Councils to offer nearly ten types of cash assistance, such as Centre-Based Financial Assistance Scheme, Kindergarten Financial Assistance Scheme, and Service and Conservancy Charges relief
- Organised four events and activities, including a Breakfast Session-Cum-Outing to McDonald's Boat Quay and Qian Hu Fish Farm; Sharing Session-Cum-Outing to NTUC Centre and Snow City; "Colors of Ballet" performance by Singapore Dance Theatre at Victoria Theatre; and Financial Planning Talk-cum-Children's Arts Workshop at NTUC Centre.

Coming up: A mega event with SINDA and HELP (Help Every Lone Parent) Family Service Centre, Legal Talk-Cum-Children's Workshop, and movie screening.

Computers As Good As New

Young NTUC Embarks On PC Project To Help The Needy



By **Vanessa Teo**

Pictures by **Young NTUC 20/20 Photography**

The journey to getting used computers in tip-top working condition began on 5 September 2009, when Young NTUC volunteers gathered to dismantle, clean, assemble and bubble wrap used computers donated by the National University Hospital and facilitated by the Healthcare Services Employees' Union.

On 6 September 2009, despite a thunderstorm in the wee hours of the morning, passionate Young NTUC volunteers still gathered together in a final attempt to 'perfect' up the old computers by installing basic software programmes making it as good as new, before sending 100 refurbished computers off to the homes of needy union members.

Young NTUC Executive Secretary Steve Tan said: "NUH had the intention of upgrading their computers, so they got in touch with us through HSEU's union leaders, and the union leaders felt that it was a pity to let the computers in working condition go to waste. So they contacted Young NTUC and asked if we were keen to do a refurbishment project. We bounced the ideas around with our volunteers which received favourable responses, and that began our journey towards this pilot PC project."

Knowing that school-going children are the ones who are in need of a computer the most, Young NTUC chose needy NTUC General

“The aims of this project are two-fold: one is to enable the needy families among our union members to have new computer equipment for their children's education. The second aim is to enable our young volunteers to be able to make a difference in the lives of fellow union members. This project has duo purposes, and I think it has turned out to be a very meaningful project for us to have worked on.”

Josephine Teo, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and Alignment Director (Uth! Movement)



Branch members whose children just received the bursary grant not long ago, to be the first batch of recipients for this pilot project. Having a passion for the young, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Josephine Teo who is also Alignment Director (Uth! Movement) highlighted that all children should be allowed access to the most basic form of Information Technology.

"Indeed, if you look at the technology behind these computers, they belong to the Pentium 4 generation. But they are definitely usable, and will make a difference in the children's education, and that is what we want. We want all children to be able to have access to IT, even if their family finds it hard to afford brand new computers," ASG Teo explained.

One of the recipients was 39-year-old Madam Haminorrashid Idris who was deeply grateful for the gift personally delivered by ASG Teo. Madam Haminorrashid is a homemaker

“Like the Labour Movement, this project shows that it cares about the needy families, even during this downturn. Volunteering has always been in my blood and I was more than willing to help when approached by Young NTUC.”

Isaac Lee, 31, IT Executive and Young NTUC volunteer

“Young NTUC provides good platforms for us to do such meaningful activities. I don't really have to go outside and find different organisations to volunteer. By just committing my time to help, I can be a volunteer too.”

Adelia Lim, 25, Information Technology Executive and Young NTUC volunteer

depending on her husband to support their family of four. Working as a kitchen helper, Madam Haminorrashid's husband earns a meager amount of money to see the family through their daily needs.

"I am really very thankful to Young NTUC for giving us this computer. You don't know how much this means to us. My husband gets paid only \$30 a day, so there is no way we can afford a computer. Now with this new computer, my children can use it for their education," said Madam Haminorrashid.

Damai Primary student Peggy Kuan, 12, was also delighted at having a new gadget that allows her to spend more time at home instead of camping in school just for the sake of having to use the computer.

"With a computer, it will be more convenient for me as I can do projects at home. I am very thankful to Young NTUC for this computer because before I had this computer, I always had to stay back in school to do projects, but now I can at least come home earlier," Peggy said.

Young NTUC is looking at giving out another 500 computers to needy union members in the near future to benefit 600 families in all.



Grateful Moments... Haminorrashid Idris (right) overwhelmed with emotions when NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Josephine Teo personally delivered the computer to her family.



Happy Moments... Peggy Kuan (third from right) and family awaits the moment to use their "new" computer set up by Young NTUC volunteers Adelia Lim (fourth from right), Isaac Lee (left), and Nordin Haqin Mohamad (second from left) along with ASG Teo (second from right).

Understand Your Employment Contract



By

Rema Sreedharan

Deputy Director, Legal Services Department

What rights does a worker have if his/her contract has a clause prohibiting him/her from working in the same industry after he/she leaves his/her current employment?

If Company A gives a worker a letter offering him/her a job with Company B, which company is the actual employer?

If an employee goes on a long period of sick leave soon after starting work at a new company, can he/she be dismissed?

These were some issues discussed at the legal seminar “Understanding Your Employment Contract” held on 11 August 2009 at the NTUC Auditorium and attended by nearly 300 union leaders, union members and NTUC staff.

The seminar, second in a series under the “Law Awareness & U” initiative, was jointly organised by NTUC and the Law Society of Singapore. It helped union members better understand their rights and obligations as employees and avoid breaching their employment contracts.

NTUC Deputy Secretary General Halimah Jacob pointed out that this knowledge is especially important for workers not covered by the Employment Act, as their terms and conditions are wholly governed by their contracts.

Mdm Halimah, who is also Director of NTUC’s Legal Services Department, highlighted difficulties faced by employees whose contracts unreasonably prohibit

them from working in similar jobs after leaving their current employment. This seems to be increasingly common. She cited a security officer whose previous employer had imposed such a condition, although the security officer had no access to any customers’ or

confidential information.

Although such clauses are not enforceable if unreasonable, they do intimidate workers who seek only to legitimately use the skills and experience gained from previous jobs to earn a living. Fearing legal action and having no legal or financial means to challenge their former employers, many simply comply with these clauses to their own detriment.

Mdm Halimah urged employers to practice corporate social responsibility and use fair and reasonable employment practices. Instead of relying on restrictive covenants, employers should be creative in offering attractive career paths, competitive remuneration packages and a supportive workplace environment to motivate and encourage employees to stay on.

Mr Ling Tien Wah, a partner at the law firm Rodyk and Davidson LLP, spoke on the legal principles governing employment contracts. He elaborated on the fiduciary duties which an employee owes to the employer. Some examples of fiduciary duties are: A duty to act in good faith and in the best interests of the employer, and not to disclose confidential information obtained in the course of employment. A person may continue to owe these fiduciary duties even after leaving that job.

A lively question and answer session let the audience seek clarifications on many issues from Mdm Halimah, Mr Ling and Mr. Joseph Lee, a senior associate at Rodyk and Davidson LLP.

A third seminar on the Work Injury Compensation Act and the common law tort of negligence will be held in September.

Free Legal Clinics

TO GIVE union members more access to free legal assistance, especially during this economic downturn, NTUC and the Law Society have, in addition to the seminars, kicked-off a free legal clinic held monthly at the Members Services Centre, NTUC Centre. The free legal clinics are conducted through sessions of 20-minute, one-to-one consultation with a rotating panel of qualified lawyers who are volunteers with the Law Society’s Pro Bono Services Office.

The first legal clinic was held on 31 July 2009, with 12 union members benefitting from legal consultation with a qualified lawyer. The issues covered ranged from employment contracts to matrimonial, bankruptcy, tenancy agreement and timeshare matters. Union members must pre-register with the Law Society first before attending the legal clinics. They will enjoy priority registration.

The upcoming legal clinics will be held on 28 August 2009 and 25 September 2009.

必须尽力帮助外籍工友

撰文：徐永刚

上个星期，我有幸参加职总与新加坡全国雇主联合会联办的外籍客工中心开幕式，以及ISS设施服务公司的新培训架构开幕式。后者的目标是安排其属下员工参加交叉培训和提升技能。

职总经常维护外籍工友的权益，外籍客工中心也实践职总的主张。根据外籍客工中心联合主席杨木光，外籍客工中心的任务是提供暂时住所和食物给那些无家可归的外籍客工，同时教导他们认识自身的权利，并主办活动帮助他们融入新加坡社会。

外籍客工中心也与职总恒习中心私人有限公司合作，开发英语会话强化班，并争取在2010年3月之前培训1000名外籍客工，帮助他们用英语和其他同事沟通。

此外，ISS公司也与职总恒习中心合作，计划在今后36个月内培训属下1300名员工。ISS希望9月4日起展开

的综合技能培训计划，能帮助他们的清洁工等合约工人和临时工人，乃至专业人员从中提高自己的业务水平。

在外籍客工中心开幕式上，我留意到两位向报界介绍英语会话班的中国工友。他们的态度积极，充满活力。在ISS公司的新培训架构开幕式上，除了新加坡工友，还可以看到许多参加培训的缅甸和印度工友。

我清楚地看到，有许多有远见的雇主，不但赞助新加坡工友学习，也帮助外籍工友提升技能。然而许多投诉显示，有太多仍在新加坡工作的外籍工友，看来很少接受培训，也不能讲基本英语。

我感到疑惑，我们是否要等到雇主认识到他们聘请的外籍工友也和本地工友一样，须要培训才能为顾客提供良好的服务？要不然，政府是否能扮演更重大的角色，设定技术门槛？

“我清楚地看到，有许多有远见的雇主，不但赞助新加坡工友学习，也帮助外籍工友提升技能。”



外籍客工中心的任务是提供暂时住所和食物给那些无家可归的外籍客工，同时教导他们认识自身的权利，并主办活动帮助他们融入新加坡社会。





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www.ntuc.org.sg/just4u

公司欲逆势而上 更好、更快、更省是方向

“‘更快’指的是迅速反应，跟进国际市场的变化；‘更好’指的是加强公司的实力；‘更省’指的是提高生产力。如果新加坡公司能做到这三点，就能扭转乾坤，逆势而上。

— 职总助理秘书长成汉通

记得我国第一家压缩天然气加气站开张营业的时候，很多人把压缩天然气的英文缩写CNG称为“Cheap 'n' Good”，即价廉物美的意思。事实也是如此，汽油一公升售价约1.60元，而天然气只需8角钱，少了一半。

职总助理秘书长成汉通在2009年9月9日于旧道德路为全球最大的天然气加气站主持开幕仪式时指出，使用天然气驾驶汽车，既省燃料，又走得远。

兼任全国德士师傅协会顾问的成汉通对于优联能源带头推广环保，并朝“更好、更快、更省”的方向努力表示肯定。

“我国工运组织、德士公司和陆路交通管理局都应该采取‘更好、更快、更省’的策略迎接挑战。我相信依靠这套策略，劳资政伙伴必定能够

大大提高服务水准，而德士师傅们的收入也会随之增加，生活也会更加美好。

“优联能源董事经理张健安说，他想在我国北部和东部地区建立新的加气站。这就是‘更快’和领先竞争的表现。

“该公司不只给环保车主和德士师傅提供选择，也在鼓励人们借助环保车税务优惠制度，使用天然气或混合燃料驱动的环保车，从而缩小环保车和汽油驱动汽车的价格差距。

“环保车税务优惠制度自2011年推出以来，不时根据情况进行修订。据现行的税务优惠制度，购买天然气驱动汽车可享受有等于公开市场价值40%的税务回扣。由于优惠诱人，我国公路上的环保车数量从原先的200辆激增到2008年底的5400辆。”



优联能源董事经理张健安(左二)向职总助理秘书长成汉通(右二)讲解灌气的方法。

成汉通说，这个数目只占全国私家车和德士的1%。所以私人企业增设加气站可视为对环境变化和国家政策的反应，其精神与工运的“更好、更快、更省”口号一致。

“‘更快’指的是迅速反应，跟进国际市场的变化；‘更好’指的是加强公司的实力；‘更省’指的是提高生产力。如果新加坡公司能做到这三点，就能扭转乾坤，逆势而上。

“至于他们的服务也可以用一个‘更好’字来形容。优联新开张的加气站和7-Eleven便利店合作，联系售卖回教认证食品的餐饮业者，三方互惠互利组成营业网，既方便了顾客，

也方便属下德士师傅在冷气餐馆用餐。

位于旧道德路的天然气加气站是继裕廊岛、万礼连路、实龙岗北第4道和惹兰布罗之后的第五个加气站，备有46个灌气泵，其中两个泵为货车和巴士专用，其灌气泵的总数量比2008年4月在秘鲁首都利马投入服务的32泵加气站还多。

旧道德路天然气加气站由优联能源经营，该公司也是得胜德士公司的业主，车队规模达2600辆，其中约1000辆是依靠天然气驱动。为推广环保，该公司打算在接下来一至一年半内另外添购3000辆天然气驱动德士。

樟宜机场服务雇员 加倍援助会员



樟宜机场服务雇员联合会秘书长素帕特在大约一个月前接受记者采访时透露，樟宜机场的支援和行政部门实施每月上班天数减少措施。

一个月过去了，樟宜国际机场私人有限公司的业绩仍没有起色，业绩更下降了10%。64名员工在这种情况下，工资被削减，净收入也减少了。

樟宜机场服务雇员同情这群会员的处境，在U关怀即时援助金获得批准之后，便马上分发总值1万2800元的职总平价礼券给他们。这次，会员收到的职总平价礼券面额并不是往常的100元，而是200元。

素帕特解释道：“由于全体1200名员工当中，只有64人受到影响，我们便把援助额提高，帮助这一部分的会员。对于工运发动筹款资助生活受到不景气影响的会员，我们感到非常

高兴。因为这样，我们更加高兴共同资助会员。”

感谢万分

39岁的会计助理罗丝玛是一名单亲妈妈。她获得200元的职总平价礼券后表示高兴。罗丝玛的担子不轻，必须照顾一家八口人的生活。对于工会雪中送炭，她感激万分。

“在每月工作日减少的三个月里，我的收入少了大约35%到40%。我的家庭人口多，200元的职总平价礼券真的帮了很大的忙。通常我们一家的水电账单约三四百元，有了平价礼券，就可以分摊一些开销。

“对于一个单亲妈妈来说，礼券来得正是时候。感谢工会和U关怀基金的帮忙。”

来自印尼的另外一位会计助理尼



欢乐的时刻...罗丝玛(左)和库苏玛莎莉(右)兴奋地接收了总值200元的职总平价礼券。

玛蒂(33岁)，在新加坡居住已有十年的时光。她育有两名女儿，年龄分别是七岁和九岁，都在求学。

尼玛蒂对记者说：“我的收入受到这次经济不景气的影响。公司为了应付成本压力，要我们请假在家，这样一来，我们的收入便减少了。再加

上现在百物起价，家庭开销明显增加，负担很重。职总平价的礼券来的正是时候。省下的200元，我可以多买几本书给女儿阅读。他们喜欢看书。感谢樟宜机场服务雇员，感谢U关怀基金。”

外籍客工中心 维护工友权益



来自孟加拉的阿南胡申(左),以及来自中国的吴丽君(中)和黄家林(右)现身说法,鼓励在本地工作的外籍工友加入外籍客工中心。

“为了减少不公正的现象,我们将和人力部一起推广良好的雇佣行为,更重要的是让外劳知道他们拥有的权益,以及怎样才不会被雇主欺负。

— 外籍客工中心主席杨木光

王得天报道/摄影

职总和新加坡全国雇主联合会合作成立外籍客工中心,为本地80多万名客工服务。除了处理投诉之外,中心也开办基本英语课程,协助客工融入本地社会。外籍客工中心的办事处设在实龙岗一带的仰光路。

外籍客工中心自今年四月成立以来已经协助超过350名来自中国、印度和孟加拉的外劳解决工作或生活上的相关问题。

记者于2009年9月2日出席了该办事处的开幕仪式,并向当局了解中心今后将通过何种管道为陷入困境的客工提供援助。

占地1200平方英尺的外籍客工中心设有咨询角落、小型图书馆和一个能容纳20人的接待厅。中心除了为有需要的客工提供咨询服务之外,也是无家可归的客工的临时栖身之所。外籍客工平时可以在这里阅读到他们家乡出版的教育材料和刊物。

中心主席杨木光表示:“成立外籍客工中心的目的是要协助对我国有贡

献的外籍工友解决短期的难题,比如当他们陷入困境的时候为他们提供食物和短期住宿。此外,也协助他们解决劳资纠纷。之所以会发生劳资纠纷,是因为有些雇主没有遵守劳工条例。遇到这种案子,我们就会找人力部介入。为了减少不公正的现象,我们将和人力部一起推广良好的雇佣行为,更重要的是让外劳知道他们拥有的权益,以及怎样才不会被雇主欺负。我们也非常重视组织活动,让外劳了解我国的生活和文化,缩小他们和本地人的习惯差距。”

关于外籍客工中心的活动经费,杨木光表示在劳资政三方伙伴的支持下,短期内不成问题。但他透露将在接下来向外界募款,以设立一个客工基金作为支持长期运作的经费,也希望能够同一些非盈利的福利组织合作,并在明年申请公共慈善机构资格。

人力部兼卫生部高级政务次长贺华吉当天为该中心主持开幕仪式。

外籍工友勤学英语

分别来自中国的吴丽君和黄家林目前在当地的希尔顿酒店工作。他们参加了外籍客工中心和职总恒习中心联合开办的英语会话课程,掌握了好多英语单词和常用句。

担任客房清洁服务员的吴丽君说:“刚开始上班时,上司和顾客用英语交谈,我根本听不懂。比如说transformer,开始我不知道是指什么,后来因为顾客经常索取transformer,我问了上司才知道原来指的是变压器,加上我平时上英语课,学会了不少英语单字,现在工作起来就顺利多了。”

确实,上课是有好处的。30岁的黄家林上个月刚从家乡来到新加坡工作,不谙英语,但上了四堂课,现在便能开口说简单的英语了。

“在中国,我们是用普通话沟通,来到新加坡之后必须以英语交谈。职总恒习中心的英语课程结合实际,将工作中常用的词汇和

句子融入教材之中,比如说good morning, good afternoon和 good evening等等。每一天跟同事碰面时都要讲这些话,讲多了就永远记在脑袋里了。”

外籍客工中心联合职总恒习中心为外籍工友开办的初级英语会话课程反应热烈,在短短的两个星期内就吸引了本地八家酒店的90位外籍职员报读。外籍客工中心和职总恒习中心希望明年三月之前能吸引至少1000名外籍员工来学英语。英语会话课程共分18堂课,每星期上课一次,雇主津贴部分学费,学员只须承担30到40元的学费。

职总恒习中心总裁徐永刚解释不让雇主津贴所有学费的原因。

“最重要的是我们希望外劳付出一点责任。如果课程完全免费,他们就会失去责任感。”

联系外籍客工中心

有须要寻求援助的外籍工友请拨打65362692求助或询问。网址: www.mwc.org.sg



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合作培训 提升整体实力



职总副秘书长王志豪(右二)见证了职总恒习有限公司总裁徐永刚(左)跟ISS新加坡总裁温接泉(右)签署谅解备忘录的仪式。

王得天报道/摄影

职总恒习中心与丹麦ISS集团合作,根据工作的实际需要,推出“综合技能发展课程”,培训ISS在本地的1000多名员工。

职总副秘书长兼建筑与木业雇员联合会执行秘书王志豪于2009年9月4日,以嘉宾的身份在就业与职能培训中心见证了职总恒习中心跟ISS签署谅解备忘录。

总恒习中心也将协助ISS公司在2011年之前把培训课程推广到ISS在全球50个国家的分公司。

王志豪表示:“我国上半年的经济情况比预期中来得好,总有一天我们将走出阴霾。现在正是我们未雨绸缪,为暴风雨过后的日子做好准备的时刻。对公司来说,应趁这个时候提高生产力,加强竞争力;在员工方面,也必须提升受雇能力。”

谈到提高生产力的课题时,他补充道:“在我们为经济复苏做好冲刺准备的时刻,希望各行各业都朝着‘更好、更快、更省’的方向走。职总恒习中心和ISS的合作对设施服务行业提高竞争力的帮助很大。他们推出的培训课程是综合性的,培训的内容包含该行业的方方面面。不久前,制造业也推出类似的综合培训年计划,对制造业产生了良

好的影响。其实不管是制造业或服务业,每一个行业都需要在这个时候尽快提升竞争力和生产力。”

当天陪同王志豪参加活动的嘉宾还有职总恒习有限公司总裁徐永刚和ISS新加坡总裁温接泉等人。

“我的主要职务是监督技术人员和处理客户的投诉。在恒习中心上课让我学会应付客户的技巧。我特别喜欢上课时同学互相交流的方式。很期待接下来的形象提升课程。”



— ISS助理设施经理蔡剑文

“我的工作任务是确保准时提供食品给客户。上了课程之后,让我学会更多服务技巧,也增强了自信心。服务至上,以客为先。”



— 食品供应项目经理陈美燕

好的影响。其实不管是制造业或服务业,每一个行业都需要在这个时候尽快提升竞争力和生产力。”

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合作双赢

职总恒习有限公司总裁徐永刚在签署合作备忘录之后表示,他对于职总恒习成为ISS公司的培训伙伴感到高兴。

“我们和ISS合作开发的综合技能培训课程,是以该公司的所有员工为对象。相信我

们的合作能给其他跨国机构提供参照,为大型的培训合作铺路,也进一步巩固了我们在新加坡市场的地位。”

ISS新加坡总裁温接泉则认为,员工掌握多种技能是提高生产力和创造美好前程的途径。更重要的是员工从培训中所掌握到的技能永远不会被偷走或丢失。

“通过培训,我们把分配到医院里工作的单技能员工提升为多技能员工,其中的过程复杂但充满活力。我们希望不断跟职总恒习中心一起总结培训经验,不断加强培训的质量,以便与时俱进。”

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外籍客工中心

维护
工友权益