

# 求职网站调查 超过40%人

# 哑忍职场骚扰

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面对职场骚扰，每10个受访者中，竟有超过4人选择默默忍受，或顶多发两句牢骚！

求职网站ST Jobs针对职场骚扰现象进行调查，共有95人参与。

19%的网友（18人）表示会默默忍受，当成职场的一部分，25%（24人）则会向同事发牢骚。

简而言之，44%受访者面对职场骚扰时，不会采取任何实际行动。

只有56%（53人）的网民，表示会向管理层反映问题，确保自己或其他人不会再受欺负。

受访公众坦承，鲜少将职场问题“上告”高层。

曾小姐（27岁，销售助理）表示：“就算投诉，人事部也未必采取行动，那又何必让老板留下坏印象，觉得我是个难搞的员工呢？只要问题不太严重，能忍则忍，最多向旁边的人诉

苦。”  
罗先生（26岁，行销人员）也同意这个观点，“感觉在我们的工作文化中，忍是一种美德，尽可能避免把问题激化，要不然对谁都没好处”。

人力资源公司仁立国际执行董事梁昌国表示，这样的调查结果在意料之中。

“新加坡人面对职场骚扰所采取的立场，大多是大事化小，小事化无。这是一种职场文化，要改变国人面对不合理对待时息事宁人的态度，是需要时间的。”

反观，西方国家的上班族对捍卫本身权益显得更为积极。

梁昌国表示，向高层反映问题才是正确做法，“一个好的管理层，会向骚扰者及被骚扰者了解问题症结，寻求解决方法”。

他认为，默默忍受或向同事发牢骚不是长久之计，前者可能导致问题积累，最后爆发成不可收拾局面；后者则可能构成诽谤，影响日后求职机会。



杰引集团企业服务部副主任吴坤豪（图/档案照）



仁立国际执行董事梁昌国（图/档案照）



常见的职场骚扰包括了性骚扰。（图/档案照）

## 常见骚扰：

## 性骚扰 言语侮辱

常见的职场骚扰，包括性骚扰和言语侮辱。

人力资源顾问公司杰引集团企业服务部副主任吴坤豪说：“不论是男性还是女性，都可能面对职场性骚扰，这种骚扰最有可能以玩笑形式出现。男性比女性更不去投诉，因为他们担心被认为小气、开不起玩笑。”

“当然，也有男同事会爱动手动脚，让女同事觉得很不舒服。”

梁昌国说：“如果经常以体形、甚至是狐臭等个人特征来取笑工作伙伴，足已构成言语骚扰和侮辱了。”

“不论如何，职场骚扰都不应被容忍。现在的年轻

上班族越来越敢讲，所以勇于向管理层反映职场骚扰的人也越来越多。”

到了现在，李文华每天要为60名到80名，有时则要100名产妇送陪月餐；而且从2013年6月起，需在勿洛工业区另找地方和聘用两名厨师扩充业务。

顾客要定送上门陪月餐，需至少连订14天，如果每天只吃午餐或晚餐，一餐收费（包括消费税）447元，要是每天两餐，收费则为875元。

“根据我们的观察，这些顾客大半是住在私人公寓，属于中上层家庭，相信也是专业人士。他们大多数是到我们的餐馆，或是订过我们的自助餐后，知道我们也有送上门陪月餐。”

李文华认为，提供送上门陪月餐的意义，除了给顾客方便，就是可以在产妇生产后大约一个月里，协助照顾好产妇。

## 首星期着重驱风 最后一周滋补

陪月餐请教中医师，先驱风，后滋补。

李文华举例，如果是14天的陪月餐，首个星期着重的是驱风食物，最后一个星期则是滋补食品。

“每餐包含两道菜肴、一道汤、白饭及龙眼花，由于是陪月餐，只适合产妇食用，对其他家庭成员来说，可能太过补了。”在驱风的食品中，包括有猪脚醋和姜葱鸡肉等，滋补食物则有麻油鸡及木瓜鱼肉汤等。

李文华说，由于是陪月餐，食物与食材都没有味精，使用的是天然食材，比如有机鸡肉与进口的加拿大猪肉等。

## 今日 简讯

### 探讨树立标准指示牌

方便年长者辨认使用，新加坡标准新局（SPRING）属下的新加坡标准理事会，探讨树立一系列标准，包括在公共场所的指示牌。

理事会咨询业者意见后，在2年前成立银发行业标准委员会，该委员会计划明年针对公共场所的指示牌发表一套标准，列出怎样的指示牌容易让人理解和辨认。

委员会发言人说，好的指示牌系



新加坡标准理事会探讨明年制定公共场所指示牌标准。（图/档案照）

统能让年长者容易使用，一些地方指示牌太有风格，以致令人难以辨认。

## 达曼裕廊购物中心 罗厘撞毁闸门横杆

田捷 报道

准备离开停车场，罗厘却撞上进口处的横杆。

昨天早上8点左右，在永升路的达曼裕廊购物中心，有辆罗厘把进口横杆撞毁。



杆的位置，已越过横杆。照片显示罗厘驶出停车场。（图/读者提供）

# 祥阁肉干 恭贺各界新年快乐 应节送礼自吃皆宜

文/可妮

## 商业资讯

马年将至，祥阁肉干全体同人祝大家马年行好运，健康快乐。

位于位于惹兰加由263号（263, Jalan Kayu Singapore 799491）的祥阁肉干专卖店，店里充满喜气洋洋的春节气氛，年货也排列得整齐美观，不







## Polys can get even better

Singapore's polytechnics have done well in producing practical-minded graduates attuned to the needs of business. But they can do much more.



EYE ON SINGAPORE

By SANDRA DAVIE  
SENIOR EDUCATION  
CORRESPONDENT

**W**HEN the Singapore Polytechnic was set up in 1954, the Government had a specific role in mind for the pioneering institution.

As the late Senior Minister of State for Education Tay Eng Soon put it in an interview in 1993: "Polytechnics fill a very important middle section - sub-degrees but producing competent and confident people who can do their jobs immediately upon graduation."

The reality today is that the lot and aspirations of polytechnic students have changed.

Those who take the polytechnic route are not necessarily junior college rejects. In fact, Education Ministry figures show that a third of the 25,000 students who enter the five polytechnics qualify for a junior college. The latter have a higher cut-off entry score than the polytechnics in terms of O-level results.

When they graduate with a diploma after three years, polytechnic graduates are no longer content with their "sub-degrees" and filling the "middle section" in industry. At the first opportunity, many head to universities here and abroad, notably Britain and Australia.

The top students usually aim for the local universities. In recent years, increasing numbers have been applying for the more competitive courses such as business, law and medicine, and have successfully gained entry.

Those who cannot afford the cost will look to private schools such as the Singapore Institute of Management.

Those whose financial circumstances require them to work will turn to SIM University to study part-time.

Five years ago, the estimate was that more than half of all polytechnic graduates go on to secure a university degree within five years. These days, polytechnic officials estimate that the figure is probably closer to 80 per cent.

Several thousand also head out

into the job market, where their skills are valued.

Employers appreciate those who have come through the polytechnic route, saying they tend to be job-ready, practical-minded and willing to roll up their sleeves to get the job done.

But there is also a growing recognition that polytechnic education has to evolve with the times, to match the growing aspirations of young Singaporeans as well as to continue to support the Singapore economy.

It is timely then that the Government is undertaking a review of polytechnic education along with the Institutes of Technical Education (ITEs). The Education Ministry has been short on details, only saying that the review committee led by Senior Minister of State for Education Indranee Rajah will look at how studies at the ITEs and polytechnics can better connect classroom lessons to the working world.

I have always admired how the polytechnics are able to cater to a big cohort of students and yet provide courses that suit their individual talents. One suggestion, then, is to build on this.

### Combine work and study

THE polytechnics should consider offering a route combining work and study, similar to the cooperative education provided in some American universities.

In many ways, this approach is also similar to the highly-prized apprenticeship scheme in countries such as Germany and Switzerland, which turn out master tradesmen and certified professionals in different areas.

But as Republic Polytechnic principal Yeo Li Pheow cautions, it would not do to call the proposal an "apprenticeship scheme" because of the negative associations the term has locally. Apprenticeship schemes are seen to be for students who are weak academically.

A better term to use would be "professional certification". If students on these routes are going to alternate between work and study, then the course has to be longer - maybe extended to four or five years.

On top of earning a diploma, in the course of the five years they can also earn various professional certifications. These would be professional qualifications, recognising the holder as a specialist in a particular field. This is already



**Preparing graduates who understand world affairs, and who have premium skills and knowledge in specialised fields, will ensure that a polytechnic education continues, over time, to produce positive outcomes in terms of pay and opportunities as well as bolster the Singapore economy.**

done in some areas. There are licensed aircraft maintenance engineers, for example, who take courses and acquire a series of certifications.

But the idea need not apply to the science or technology-related fields alone. It can also be done in a range of other areas, including nursing, psychology, physiotherapy and computer programming.

But of course this would require companies coming on board

to see themselves as training partners. This is because the kind of jobs that a student is tasked with while on work stints would have to build on what they were learning in the polytechnics. Similarly the polytechnics would have to ensure that what was taught in their courses was industry-relevant.

Social economists such as Philip Brown, Hugh Lauder and David Ashton, who wrote the book, *The Global Auction: The Broken Promises Of Education, Jobs And Incomes*, have argued that class distinctions among graduate workers are emerging. At the top, there will be a cadre of thinkers and decision-makers - perhaps 10 per cent or 15 per cent of the total. The remainder will perform routine functions for modest wages.

Mr David Leong of People Worldwide Consulting, who recently visited Germany, says remuneration has to follow. Local companies have to be willing to pay a premium for those with good skills, similar to the high salaries they offer to those with impressive academic qualifications. "At the moment, although they want highly skilled workers, they are not necessarily willing to pay them well. That has to change."

### New teaching approach

ANOTHER way in which polytech-

nic education can be improved is in the area of communication skills.

The polytechnics run communication modules and require their students to write and present project reports. This goes some way towards nurturing communication skills. But as many employers and universities would argue, more needs to be done to shore up the spoken and written skills of polytechnic graduates.

A general studies programme that would nurture critical thinking skills, independent thinking and the proficient use of language is worth considering.

It should cover world affairs and the pressing issues of today, such as poverty and pollution, to give students a better understanding of the world they live in and Singapore's place in it.

They should also be given an understanding of how knowledge is attained in the various disciplines and taught to see an inter-relationship of ideas across disciplines.

### Case studies

A SEASONED polytechnic lecturer at one of Singapore's leading polytechnics said he presents his economics students with a case study of an actual struggling business. He then asks them to act as

business consultants to come up with a plan to save the business.

Alternatively, he would ask students to explain why the richest people in Singapore tend to live in the Bukit Timah/Holland Road belt, and why is it that you cannot get a taxi in Singapore when you need one the most.

This way, not only is the learning of economic concepts or world issues made more interesting, but it also becomes more relevant to Singapore and to their lives.

Polytechnics have come a long way since the first one was set up in the 1950s. And their graduates are making their mark both in further education and the job market.

Now is the time for the Government to enlarge the role of polytechnics. It should build on their known strengths for nurturing hands-on workers, attuned to the practical needs of industry and business.

Preparing graduates who understand world affairs, and who have premium skills and knowledge in specialised fields, will ensure that a polytechnic education continues, over time, to produce positive outcomes in terms of pay and opportunities as well as bolster the Singapore economy.

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# 从淡马锡控股获得股息 政府无需提高税率 有财力推行各项计划

淡马锡控股派发给新加坡政府的股息，让政府无需提高税率，仍有财力扩大社会安全网，推行各种扶贫济困计划。

淡马锡控股主席林文兴说，政府从淡马锡和新加坡政府投资公司

等机构获得的净投资回报，为政府带来约15%的额外财政收入，相当于经济总值的2.2%至2.6%。

截至今年3月的2012财年，政府获得76亿5000万元的净投资回报，包括淡马锡每年派

发给唯一股东——也就是我国政府的股息。

林文兴今年8月接任淡马锡控股主席。他昨天在第4届主权财富基金年度论坛上，首次代表淡马锡对外公开演讲。

他说：“过去10到15年，来自淡马锡、政

府投资公司和其他来源的投资回报，协助政府在教育、医疗和其他方面，拨款扶持有需要的国人，不分老幼，同时又能让整体经济和工作人士维持着低税务负担。”

林文兴也说，淡马锡也直接拨款推行各种社区计划，自1974年创立以来，累积投入超过15亿元。

他强调，在新加坡宪法下，淡马锡控股的责任是保护过往所累积的储备金，确保这一代和下一代的新加坡人能公平分享回报。



# 政府不参与决策 淡马锡独立运作

政府虽是淡马锡控股唯一股东，不过从不参与淡马锡的日常运作和投资决策，淡马锡一直是独立运作的商业投资公司。

林文兴说，一般人

往往对主权财富基金抱持着一种观点，指它们都依据本国政府的外交政策进行策略性投资。

他说，淡马锡捍卫它不受政治干预的决策

自由，而政府也展现智慧，以国家利益为先，由始至终都将国家决策者和淡马锡股东的角色明确区隔。

“此外，为提高透明度，淡马锡控股自2003年开始，每年定期发布年度报告，向市场提供投资活动和回报率信息，并发行多个债券项目，在市场建立起公开的信贷评级指标。”



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林文兴昨天首次以淡马锡控股主席身份对外公开演讲。(图/海峡时报)

# 遭巴士上行李箱砸伤脚 轮椅汉拒救护车 坚持巴士载入院

大闹  
3小时

巴士上的行李箱从行李格掉下，轮椅汉申诉脚趾被砸，不但拒上救护车入院，还在巴士上大闹三小时，最后由车长载他入院后，又拒绝接受治疗而离开。

这场闹剧于周二下午2时30分，在一辆从樟宜机场前往乌节路的新捷运36号路线巴士上发生。

自称30岁的轮椅汉胡玛，当时被行李箱压伤脚趾，惊动车长布拉古鲁立刻把巴士停在巴士站，急召救护车。

当民防人员于大约3

时许赶抵现场时，胡玛却以无法“连人带椅”登车，坚持拒绝上车。

不仅如此，无论民防人员如何费尽唇舌苦劝，胡玛仍无动于衷，在巴士上整整呆了3小时，直至车长在公司指示下，把他载到樟宜综合医院，才善罢甘休。

期间，车上8名乘客陆续下车，改搭其他巴士，继续各自行程。

回忆起该事件，开了36号路线7年的车长布拉古鲁坦言：“我入行多年，还是第一次碰到这种

情况！我们尽力给他援助，但他什么都拒绝！”

原以为胡玛被送院后事情就告一段落，但胡玛却拒绝接受治疗。

据《新报》报道，胡玛其实是因为无法确定新捷运是否会负责他的医药费而迟迟不肯就诊。他最后在还没有登记的情况下，匆匆离开急诊部。

新捷运企业联络高级副总裁陈爱玲表示，公司一向重视乘客的安危，这次是因为别无他法，才安排车长把乘客送往医院。



轮椅汉胡玛昨天到大巴窰巴士转换站，要新捷运给交代。(图/新报)

# 事隔两天到总站 要新捷运给交代

事隔两天，轮椅汉抵现场时，胡玛正大声嚷嚷，不停大喊：“我

调查显示

# 75%上班族 工作没动力

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最新调查显示，本地上班族，4个有3个工作没动力，甚至自称工作像梦游，7个人中有1个想诈病或窃取公司财物。

据盖洛普昨天公布的全球雇员工作投入程度调查，76%新加坡上班族自称工作没动力，比英美的57%和52%还严重。

另外，只有9%受访者自认工作起劲，低于全球13%的平均水平。

共有142个国家的人民接受调查，本地有600人在去年受访，回答有关做得好时上司是否会称赞，有没有讨论职业发展等问题。

调查也显示，7人中有1人透露，他们曾想诈病或偷窃公司财物。

盖洛普发言人说，造成工作不投入的原因包括：缺乏工作所需



▲4人有3人工作没动力，甚至说工作像梦游。

的适当设备、表现好没受肯定、职场上没好朋友，和没获得职业发展的指导。

人力资源公司老板梁昌国(仁立国际执行董事)受访时说，他对调查结果感到惊讶，毕竟我国的高GDP(国内生产总值)增长和紧缩的劳动力市场，无法建立在微弱劳动力的基础上。

但他也指出，职场阶级和同辈压力，有可能影响工作的投入程度。

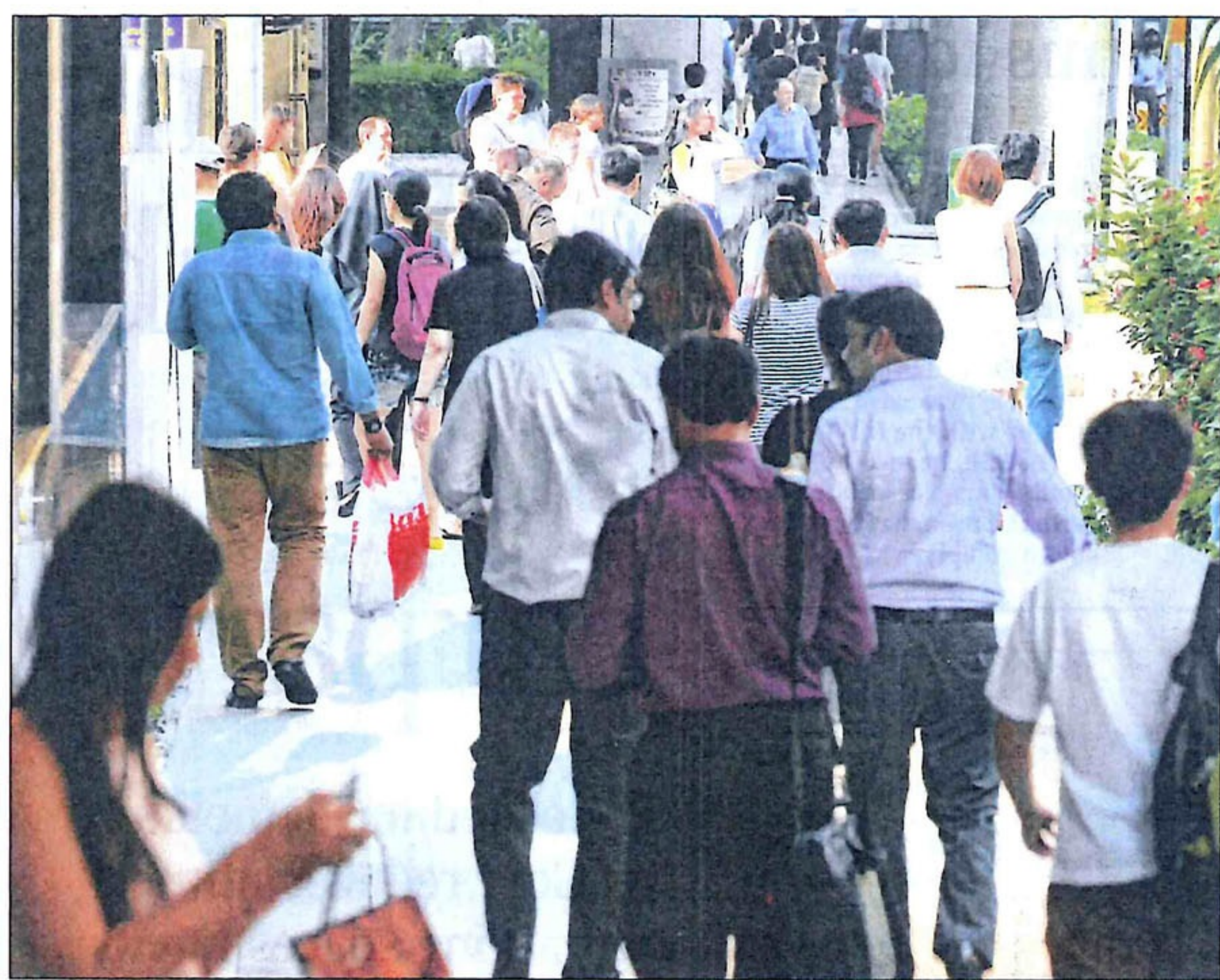


昌国  
人力资源公司老板梁

他说，科技发达反而减少当面的沟通，企业必须加强同事面对面的情感交流，才能有效促进投入感和生产力。







A survey conducted by Gallup last year as part of a global study found that Singapore's ratio of "disengaged workers" - at 76 per cent - is higher than in the US (52 per cent) and Britain (57 per cent). ST FILE PHOTO

**4 REASONS WORKERS ARE NOT ENGAGED**

- 1 Not having proper equipment to do their work
- 2 Not receiving recognition or praise for doing good work
- 3 Not developing close friendships at the workplace
- 4 Not getting advice about career progression

**3 MEASURES BOSSES CAN TAKE**

- 1 Hire or assign managers who can engage staff
- 2 Help staff discover their strengths and develop them
- 3 Pay attention to their physical and mental health. Encourage them to develop healthier lifestyle habits such as exercising and having a proper diet

# S'pore staff 'not engaged' at work

Just 9% here passionate about their firm, committed to work, says global study

By TOH YONG CHUAN  
MANPOWER CORRESPONDENT

THREE in four workers here feel unmotivated and are "sleepwalking" through their work day, according to a survey conducted by Gallup.

And what is more startling in the survey findings is that one in seven are so unhappy that they are "more or less out to damage their company" through acts like malingering or even stealing.

"Close to two million people (in Singapore) are just showing up at work every day, doing what they need to do, but not feeling emotionally invested in their companies," said Gallup's Singapore and South-east Asia manager Leong Chee Tung, who presented the findings at a talk yesterday.

In contrast, only fewer than one in 10 workers here are "engaged" at work, that is, they feel passionate about their company and are committed to their work.

In the poll of some 600 Singapore workers conducted last year, respondents were asked a series of questions. These include whether their bosses had praised them for doing good work or talked to them about their career progression.

The Singapore survey was part of a global study of 142 countries.

The ratio of "disengaged workers" here - 76 per cent - was one of the highest in the world. Singapore fared worse than countries such as the United States (52 per cent) and Britain (57 per cent).

Similarly, the ratio of "engaged workers" here - 9 per cent - also paled in comparison to the global average of 13 per cent.

Mr Leong said the findings should be a cause for concern for employers as disengaged staff affect company productivity and performance.

They should therefore take concrete steps to engage their staff, he added. Among the things that firms can do is to hire or assign managers who can motivate workers to perform better, Gallup said in its report.

The findings came as a surprise to human resource consultants.

"I believe that the majority of the employees are aligned with their companies in Singapore, thereby driving our GDP growth. Our growth cannot be premised on a weak workforce," said Mr David Leong, managing director of recruitment firm PeopleWorldwide Consulting.

Given the tight labour market here, he added it is unlikely that firms would risk losing their workers by not engaging them.

Mr Kurt Wee, the newly appointed president of the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises, said bosses must take the initiative in the engagement process. "Workers look to their bosses for leadership and bosses must show by example that they value their workers."

The Gallup findings struck a chord with former security guard Vincent Pereira, 40, who worked for two security firms in the last nine months and resigned from both because he felt he was mistreated. "The firms did not care about our health, delayed paying salaries and treated us like dirt," he said. "Who will want to work for companies like that?"

tohyoc@sph.com.sg

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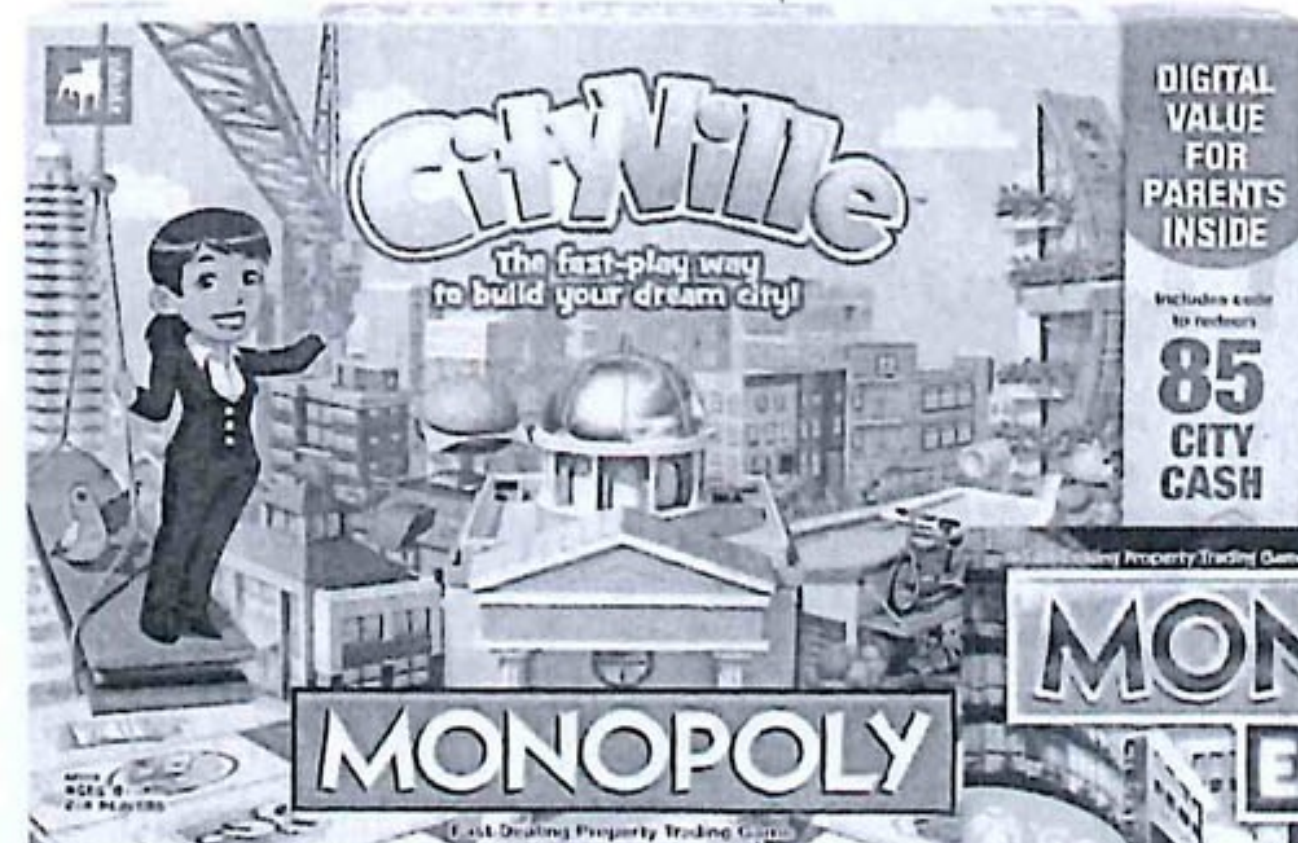


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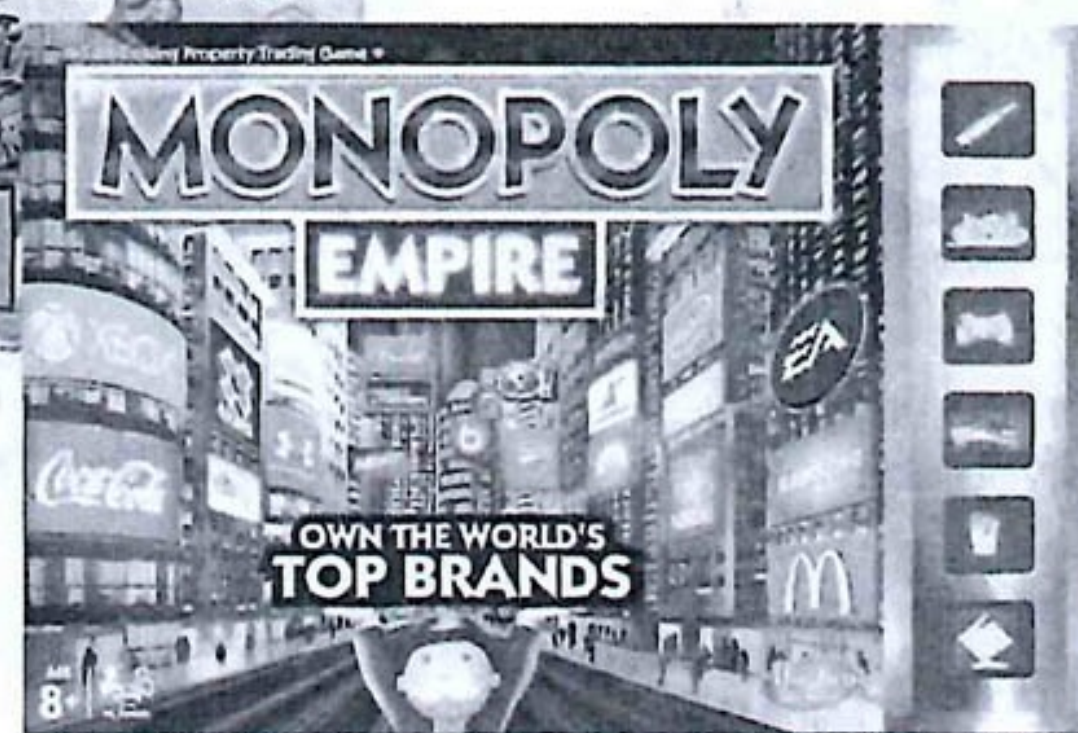
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SUSTAINABILITY PEOPLE OF THE WORLD



**Arvind Agarwalla**  
CEO  
FACT Software International Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE'S journey from 1965 has been remarkable. While we have built our nation on strong foundations, we have also reached out to the world.

I have a simple, yet very powerful, idea. I urge our government to gift a small flag of Singapore to every Singaporean by the year-end. Easily foldable, the flag can be carried by Singaporeans on our travels, and we can post photos on the 50th birthday website, displaying our red flag proudly.

This initiative would engage every citizen in the celebrations and create a buzz like no other. It would achieve a very important goal of involving every citizen in this historic event.

**John Koh**  
Managing Director  
WMRC Private Ltd

I WOULD think that besides the usual party and fireworks associated with the celebration, it is good to look back and reflect on how we, as a nation, have progressed over the past 50 years. A story can be crafted to highlight the key milestones achieved since we became an independent nation. More importantly, we need to look forward to the next 50 years. How will the Singapore Dream evolve as we pace ourselves for a centennial celebration? What can Singaporeans look forward to as we strive in nation building? What plans do we have in place to make Singapore an even better and more exciting place to live and do business in? All these and more should be addressed as we move closer to Singapore's birthday in 2015.

**Dileep Nair**  
Ambassador  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

THERE should be an island-wide tableau depicting the values that have brought us to where we are today – trust, discipline, courage, industry and inclusiveness. And then the vision of where we are heading to. The key message should be keeping faith with these core values and having an unwavering eye on the future – which is ours to make.

**Hugues Delcourt**  
Country Executive, ABN AMRO Bank NV Singapore and  
CEO of ABN AMRO Private Banking Asia & Middle East

THE focus of the golden jubilee celebrations should be on the people who played a part in Singapore's success, be it big or small. There is no better way to celebrate than to take a trip down memory lane and recount the highs and lows of Singapore's history.

ABN AMRO is proud to be a part of the Singapore heritage, with our first branch opening in 1858. The impressive story of Singapore's financial and banking sector deserves to be told, including the role of local and foreign banks in shaping the landscape and making a difference in the lives of customers and employees.

Among the things we can do to commemorate this occasion should include giving back to the Singaporean community.

**Maachu Pte Ltd**  
WHEN Singapore celebrates its golden jubilee in 2015, I feel that its citizens must come together to forge a new and meaningful vision that rallies the nation to strive for many more golden years.

I first came to Singapore 10 years ago as the CEO of a company and, since then, I have become an entrepreneur and started Maachu, a Singapore technology firm, to match the skills sets and experience of applicants to specified jobs. I hope Maachu can play a contributory role to facilitate the growth of talent in the next phase of nation building.

Singapore's foundation of success was laid by the pioneering immigrants who strove to establish themselves. Next came the visionary politicians and the enterprising businessmen and women who made Singapore a first world country. Today, we need more nimble and talented entrepreneurs to perpetuate this journey of growth and excellence.

**Tan Hak Leh**  
Chief Executive Officer  
AIA Singapore

SINGAPORE'S golden jubilee should be a celebration of the strength of the family unit, which is the building block of our society. As we continue to create a cohesive community, let us also reflect on how families can be further empowered to live fuller lives together. Two important aspects are to bolster their resilience through sound financial planning and by encouraging families to adopt a healthier lifestyle. AIA Singapore believes in the combined efforts of the public and private sector, together with the individual, to ensure Singaporeans are adequately insured and stay healthy. As we work together to achieve this, AIA Singapore will continue to serve the nation's protection needs and invest in Singapore's health through initiatives such as AIA Vitality, so that families can lead happier, healthier lives together.

**Lim Soon Hock**  
Managing Director  
PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd

A UNIFYING theme such as "Our people first – always" will not only address the concerns of Singaporeans today but reassure them that their livelihood and wellbeing will always be taken care of in the future. It is an important statement for the government to make, going into the golden jubilee. Singaporeans today are concerned about losing jobs to foreigners, the high costs of living, healthcare, transportation, homes – not to mention the overcrowded MRT, long wait for public housing, etc. The 50th anniversary is a great opportunity, following the national conversation, for the government to reassure Singaporeans and make an unequivocal and strong commitment to look after Singaporeans, and to ensure that everyone has a fair share of the economic growth and prosperity. An "Our people first – always" theme will take the celebrations to a new high. It will be remembered not just for the celebrations of the country's many accomplishments but also for the emotionally appealing new compact between the government and citizenry. Although the future may seem more uncertain for Singaporeans, there should be no doubt that there is much to look forward to and, therefore, cause for celebration and jubilation.

**Sam Yap**  
Group Executive Chairman  
HTwo Investment Holdings Pte Ltd

FORMING an S50 Committee to plan the country's 50 years of independence is a right move to ensure wide participation from all segments of the nation and getting ideas from all walks of life. The celebrations should include documentation of our experiences as a young nation in our journey through these 50 years.

A commemorative book reflecting our journey through these years would serve as a good reference of our history, especially for our younger generation to

## THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:

How should Singapore mark its golden jubilee in 2015?  
What would be the key message of the celebrations?

# A high-five for Singapore 5-0



appreciate the contributions of our pioneering leaders. Recognising people, both local and foreign, who have contributed to our growth is important. Possibly a special S50 Golden Jubilee Fund should be set up for deserving pioneering generation Singaporeans who may now need help in their golden years.

In my view, the key message should be that we should always be integrated as a nation, be team players, and that everyone has a part to contribute, regardless of where they stand in society.

**Angeli Beltran**  
Managing Director  
jobsDB Singapore and Malaysia

SINGAPORE has come a long way from its humble beginnings to the truly global city it is today. Riding through times of economic crisis and financial difficulty, Singapore has always been resilient, striving to excel and achieve its true potential as a nation. jobsDB is similarly all about providing the best job opportunities for Singaporeans to explore their true potential in their careers. As Singapore turns 50, I believe the key message should focus on learning from the nation's past 50 years, to ensure the country continues to prosper for the next 50 years and beyond. May its spirit of exploring opportunities and achieving excellence continue to bring the Singapore nation to greater heights.

**David Leong**  
Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE is an accidental nation. For the country to survive miraculously the trials and challenges to reach 50 years is a great feat, and for it to become a First World developed nation in the same time is a greater feat. This would not have come to pass if not for the great determination, grit and convictions of our

first-generation leaders. The 50th jubilee celebration must not miss out on marking the life of every pioneering Singapore leader. The public should nominate a list of 50 leaders, each to be featured in a good writeup. Singaporeans should know their leaders' journeys and be inspired by their dedication to our nation. The arts and culture that form the tapestry of our diversity must also be highlighted and celebrated. Our artists can be spurred to put up their creative works for all to see and to support. These can be small public projects or large commissioned works of art – sculptures, murals or statues – that can serve as a reminder of our past and of the present to celebrate our limitless hopes and collective hearts.

**Dhirendra Shantilal**  
Board Director & Head, Asia Pacific  
Fircroft

THE golden jubilee is a great opportunity to share Singapore's remarkable achievements and to set a new vision for the future. Our highly skilled workforce has been integral to our nation's success and transformation into a global metropolis. Singapore is now home to many top talents and we should mark the golden jubilee by celebrating our people. We should showcase top talents in different industries and also demonstrate how these industries have evolved. An example is in the engineering and technical sector, which has been a cornerstone of Singapore's economic growth. We remain dedicated in developing the engineering and technical talent pool in Singapore for the oil and gas, power and energy and engineering services industries which require specialist knowledge and niche skill sets.

A complete list of views from CEOs is also available at <http://businesstimes.com.sg>



# Keeping pace with workplace changes

That is the aim of last week's amendments to the Employment Act. How well do they stand up to scrutiny? And what more needs to be done?

By TOH YONG CHUAN  
MANPOWER CORRESPONDENT

THERE is a story behind almost every number in the new Employment Act, a story of tough talk and compromise in the search for a right balance between what unionists and employer groups were fighting for on behalf of the workers and businesses they represent.

Take overtime pay. With the change, white-collar workers earning up to \$2,500 a month - up from \$2,000 - are assured of overtime pay at a rate of 1.5 times their basic pay.

That extends protection to workers like Ms Pauline Lim, an accounts clerk, whose former employer used to ask her to put in an extra five to six hours a day during crunch times but never once paid her for those extra hours.

Behind closed doors though, during the 19 months of negotiations leading up to the amendments which Parliament passed last week, employers and union leaders fought hard over the numbers \$2,500 and 1.5.

Unionists wanted the salary ceiling for workers protected under this law raised to \$2,500 from \$2,000, as that would bring an additional 150,000 under this law's protective umbrella. But employers wanted to draw the line at \$2,250, citing worries over ballooning overtime payments.

In the end, they compromised by setting a ceiling for the salary used to calculate overtime pay at \$2,250.

Employers were also keen to knock the overtime rate down from 1.5 to 1.25. Their justification - the lower rate was the norm in countries like Switzerland and Japan. Union leaders refused to budge on that figure. "We told them 'No'. The moment you introduce 1.25, it will be applied throughout. In future we won't smell 1.5 any more," National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) assistant secretary-general Cham Hui Fong, who attended the talks, told Insight.

Insight looks at the compromises and breakthroughs, and whether the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) found the right balance of protecting workers without hurting firms.

## More protection

TWO groups of workers will get more protection.

The law extends its coverage to 150,000 more rank-and-file workers by raising the income cap from \$2,000 to \$2,500 a month.

The Act, which is Singapore's main labour legislation that spells out the minimum standards such as payment of salaries, working hours and leave, was last updated in 2009.

Mr Erman Tan, president of the Singapore Human Resources Institute, says the move to protect 150,000 more workers is "very significant" because it makes labour laws more accessible to a bigger group of workers.

"This shows that the MOM is very serious about protecting workers, yet pragmatic enough to give firms breathing space," he tells Insight. "MOM has to adjust the threshold because median salaries have gone up. Not adjusting means workers may fall out of protection when their salaries rise."

According to MOM salary data, the median gross monthly salary of local workers rose from \$2,600 in 2009, when the law was last updated, to \$3,000 last year.

One of those who will come under the law is Mr Roger Lee, a junior executive at security firm Soverus who handles the rostering of guards.

The 63-year-old earns \$2,300 a month and falls out of the Act's coverage now. But from April next year, his employer will be required by law to provide paid rest

days and annual leave, benefits which he already enjoys.

"It is reassuring to know that the law protects us, although it is more important to have good employers who are willing to do more than the minimum in the law," says Mr Lee.

The MOM agrees. "Beyond legislation, employers are encouraged to be progressive and provide better employment terms and conditions," says a spokesman.

Besides rank-and-file workers like Mr Lee, another 300,000 professionals, managers and executives (PMEs) earning up to \$4,500 a month can take sick leave and be protected against unfair dismissal. They were not entitled to this previously.

Labour MP Patrick Tay, a member of the NTUC negotiation team, says the move to give more protection to PME is "not just mere enhancements but a milestone change". He tells Insight: "PMEs form a growing segment of the workforce. If they are not brought under the Employment Act, it will make the Act less relevant in protecting workers."

About three in 10 local workers now are PME, but the proportion is expected to swell to two in three by 2030.

Some changes in the law give more teeth to it. Firms will face heavier punishment for failing to pay salaries, for example. The maximum fines triple to \$15,000 for first-timers and \$30,000 for repeat offenders. First-timers will be fined a minimum of \$3,000 and repeat offenders, \$6,000.

But firms get "face" too - in the form of no longer having to grant sick leave or pay consultation fees for workers getting... cosmetic surgery.

## Compromises made

HIGHER-PAID workers may be smiling about the changes, but Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) executive director Koh Juan Kiat tells Insight that firms fear the impact of the changes. "Every amendment to the Act has the potential to raise costs and introduce rigidity for employers."

But some observers still maintain that the updates do not go far enough, especially in areas where the bar is set too low. Human resource consultant Martin Gabriel of HRMatters21 points out that the law will require firms to give paid sick leave and medical leave to PME. "But most firms already provide these to executives, so I wonder what is the point of introducing a minimum standard that is below market practices."

Retrenchment benefits is another area. Mr David Leong, managing director of recruitment firm PeopleWorldwide Consulting, says that although workers can claim retrenchment benefits after working for two years instead of three, firms are not required by law to compensate retrenched workers. "This move is effective only if there are unions to fight for workers or if firms follow the market practice of paying two weeks' salary for each year of service. Most do, but there is no guarantee all will," he adds.

An issue that divides views is the cap on overtime pay. Although white-collar workers earning up to \$2,500 are now entitled to overtime pay, the salary used to calculate their overtime pay is capped at \$2,250, to help keep down labour costs.

Some workers find it unfair. Mr Francis Cheng, 58, an industrial sales business manager in a local SME, says: "If a worker is productive and contributes by putting in extra hours, he should be paid overtime according to his pay, not a lower figure."

Some MPs also want to see more PME covered.

## Overtime pay adds up to treats for parents

IN her previous job at a multinational company, when project deadlines rolled around, accounts clerk Pauline Lim would leave her office late, at 11pm.

This worked out to five hours of overtime a day for which she and her colleagues were not paid, though the company provided meals and transport home.

"It was stressful because we had to work longer hours to meet deadlines. Other people were working the same long hours, so I just followed," said the 37-year-old.

"It would have been good (to be paid overtime). At a bigger company, it's hard to get this benefit. You have to go through so many supervisors and red tape."

Ms Lim welcomes the change in law which will soon make it mandatory for workers like her - those who earn up to \$2,500 a month - to be paid overtime, up from a previous salary cap of \$2,000.

The business administration diploma holder earns \$2,200 a month keeping the books of restaurant chain House of Seafood.

Once a week every quarter, she already gets paid between \$50 and \$100 in total to work overtime. This can go towards buying goodies for her parents, said Ms Lim, who is single. For her friends with families, the overtime pay helps pay for a tin of milk powder costing between \$50 and \$80, she said.

Making overtime payments compulsory for the higher pay bracket will be "good for those workers whose bosses are not so good" and don't pay their workers, she noted. Indeed, at her previous workplace, her monthly salary was \$2,000, within the ambit of the Employment Act - but because no one else there asked for their entitlement, neither did Ms Lim. **CHARISSA YONG**



Accounts clerk Pauline Lim earns \$2,200 a month, and she will benefit from a change in law that raises the salary cap from \$2,000 to \$2,500 for workers claiming overtime pay. ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO

## EMPLOYMENT ACT

# MAKING IT BETTER

1968 Employment Act enacted.

1995 Monthly salary ceiling for workers covered by the Act is raised to \$1,600, from \$1,500 in 1992 and \$1,250 in 1980.

JAN 1, 2009  
 ■ Some 82,000 workers earning up to \$2,000 a month are covered by the Act.  
 ■ About 44,000 PME who earn at most \$2,500 a month are, for the first time, able to turn to the Labour Court to pursue

their salary claims. Previously, they would have had to pursue costly civil suits if underpaid.  
 ■ Those who have worked for a firm for at least three months, instead of six months, qualify for paid sick leave.

MP Hri Kumar Nair says that the Labour Court - where work grievances are heard - should help more PME, not just those earning up to \$4,500 each month. "The alternative of going to (civil) court is intimidating, the case may take a year to resolve, and the legal costs may be far greater than the compensation you receive." A "simple, inexpensive" channel like the Labour Court, which settles disputes quickly, will give better protection to workers, he says.

Employment law expert Ravi Chandran from the National University of Singapore (NUS) agrees: "I don't think someone earning \$5,000 or \$6,000 can bargain for himself. Thus, from the employee's viewpoint, the limit should be higher. But, of course, the implications on employers must also be considered."

Non-Constituency MP Gerald Giam of the Workers' Party adds that since most workers cannot negotiate employment contract terms to sufficiently protect their interests, "it is important that the law, and not just a mutually agreed contract, protects them".

## Who is protected by new law

Amended Employment Act kicks in on April 1, 2014

**Workers earning up to \$2,000 and manual workers earning up to \$4,500 each month**  
**A+B+C**

**White-collar workers earning between \$2,000 and \$2,500 each month**  
**A+B+C\***

**Professionals, managers and executives earning up to \$4,500 each month**  
**A+B\***

NOTE: \* New

## How employers are affected

- Cannot deduct more than 25 per cent of a worker's pay for accommodation and services.
- Heavier penalties for firms that fail to pay salaries: Maximum fines tripled to \$15,000 for first-timers, and \$30,000 for repeat offenders. Minimum fine of \$3,000 for first-timers, and \$6,000 for repeat offenders. The maximum composition fine will go up five times to \$5,000.
- The Manpower Ministry will use its website to distribute payslip booklets and guides to employers.

Source: MINISTRY OF MANPOWER

Still, higher-earning PME do have some recourse. The Industrial Relations Act allows rank-and-file unions to represent executives individually in unionised firms, in areas such as negotiating retrenchment benefits and resolving work-related disputes.

MP Foo Mee Har feels the Act should have been expanded to cover flexible work arrangements to promote better work-life balance. Workers with children aged below 12 should have "the right to request flexi-work arrangements, and to have those requests considered seriously by their employers", she tells Insight.

The MOM would not comment on specific areas where the Act was seen by some to fall short, saying only: "We have carefully considered various suggestions and public feedback, and the amendments are the outcome of extensive tripartite negotiations."

"In making any amendments to the Employment Act, we need to strike a careful balance between better protection for more workers and giving employers flexibility to create good jobs. Or else, we affect the employability

of our workers."

## Left empty-handed

BUT some omissions trouble those like labour MP Zainal Sapari, who is concerned about society's most vulnerable workers. "There is nothing for low-wage workers in this round of Employment Act changes," he laments.

Unionists wanted issuing payslips and the availability of payroll records to be made compulsory, but small and medium-sized enterprises protested. The MOM decided to hold off the move.

It also rejected the idea of making firms pay for the medicine dispensed by government doctors to low-wage workers. Firms continue to pay only for consultation at polyclinics.

"It may just be a few dollars, but it means a lot to low-wage workers," Mr Sapari tells Insight.

But SNEF defended these concessions. "Many countries recognise the practical problems faced by small companies to comply with employment laws. Issuing payslips is one such challenge," says Mr Koh, who claims that issuing payslips is not mandatory in New Zealand and Hong Kong.

And while Mr Sapari says there is little in the changes for low-paid workers, nevertheless the same day the Employment Act was amended, changes were made to the Central Provident Fund (CPF) Act to enhance protection for these workers when it comes to employer CPF contributions.

Employers who default on paying or are late in contributing to their workers' CPF accounts now face stiffer penalties, including, for the first time, a jail term and minimum fines. First-time offenders can be jailed up to six months or fined up to \$5,000, or both. The minimum fine will be \$1,000.

Repeat offenders may be jailed up to 12 months or fined, or both. A minimum fine of \$2,000 will be imposed and the maximum fine stays at \$10,000.

## Balancing act continues

WITH the changes, the Act will cover about 2.2 million workers, or seven in 10 of the workforce.

Experts say the MOM will continue to walk a tightrope between employers and workers as it redraws the lines of protection for workers. "There has to be a balance. Where exactly this line should be drawn, (it) is difficult to say," says NUS' Mr Chandran.

Acting Manpower Minister Tan

Chuan-jin acknowledges the balancing act. In his Parliament speech peppered with the word "balance" last week, he said: "As we safeguard the interests of workers, we also cannot forget that at the same time, we also need to balance this with employers' needs."

But has the balance tilted too much towards employers, given the various concessions employers won? The views are split.

Employers dismiss the suggestion that things are tilted in their favour. "On the contrary, we think the Act is going the other way and we are losing some flexibility in employing and managing employees," warns SNEF's Mr Koh.

Nominated MP Eugene Tan takes a different view. He says: "I think, for too long, the employers had it good, so good that recalibrating the balance strikes them as being anti-business and pro-employee."

UniSIM's labour economist Randolph Tan says it boils down to poor timing: "The burden on employers has risen significantly in the last year or so. A better timing for the moves would have been when employers had less other restrictions to contend with."

Besides timing, the MOM will have to deal with societal changes. Says NUS' Mr Chandran: "Employees seem to be getting more and more rights as society matures and expectations change."

The MOM has started looking at how the labour law can be further beefed up to protect contract workers and resolve disputes between employers and workers. It says it has received feedback and it will provide updates in due course.

Now, all eyes are on next year when more changes to the law are due, and on how MOM will once more seek to strike a balance between protecting workers and making sure enhancements do not hurt firms' competitiveness.

Laws also help to set norms for employers, signalling to them what society expects of them in terms of fair treatment of workers.

But beyond these legal provisions, what ensures employers treat workers well is a tight labour market where jobs are plentiful. To flourish in such conditions, workers need to arm themselves with the right skills for the jobs being created. That way, employers will do what they must to woo these workers to their side.

tohyoc@sph.com.sg

ST GRAPHICS



# NTU students to get career skills boost

New programme to prepare them for world of work kicks off next August

By AUDREY TAN

STUDENTS of Nanyang Technological University (NTU) will get a leg up when they enter the job market, thanks to a new programme that will arm them with career skills and values.

The programme is mandatory, with 10 modules that will cover such topics as resume design and dressing for interviews.

It will be conducted over the four years of their study and was made possible partly by a \$12 million donation from philanthropist Margaret Lien, widow of the late banker and hotelier Lien Ying Chow.

Her donation, plus government funds, went into the building of a \$30 million career development centre, to be called the Margaret Lien Centre for Professional Success.

Said NTU's Associate Provost for undergraduate education Kam Chan Hin in a statement: "We'll begin working with students from their first year so they will be well prepared for the challenges of a dynamic global workplace."

The structured curriculum is a departure from the ad-hoc programmes offered previously.

What it covers is crucial as "first impression is very impor-



Philanthropist Margaret Lien has donated \$12 million for the building of a career development centre at NTU.

tant", said managing director David Leong of human resource firm PeopleWorldwide Consulting.

First-year engineering students will kickstart the programme next August as they belong to the largest of five colleges, with six schools. About 10,000 of them are expected to attend it by 2017, after which the programme will be rolled out at the other colleges. NTU has five colleges, including Humanities, Business and Science.

Said 18-year-old Leow Yixuan, who may apply to study bio-engineering at NTU: "I think it's good to have a head start in knowing how to carry oneself at work... and also (to ensure) less friction in adapting to working life."

Values such as integrity and resilience will also be taught through modules like "Rev up my professionalism", which aims to help students understand and apply values to ethical dilemmas.

Parents too are enthusiastic. Manager Amy Quek, 55, whose son is finishing his A levels, said: "To succeed in a career, character is important as it shapes the way you respond to the different challenges of working life."

The initiative comes amid a rise in demand for career services.

The NTU and National University of Singapore (NUS) are seeing more students seeking career coaching and advice.

The director of NUS Career Centre, Ms Corrine Ong, said demand for advice on internship and career options has doubled from two years ago. "In the past, (more sought) resume critique service."

This is similar to the situation at Singapore Management University, which has a mandatory career preparation programme. Its staff are increasingly "hard-pressed to keep career counselling sessions within the allocated time of one hour", said the director of its Office of Career Services, Mr Sim Cher Young.

✉ audreyt@sph.com.sg



Second-year students (from left) Dinesh Raj, Shahiran Anuar and Abigail Low learning how to make an espresso from service instructor Tye Yee Nen at the new Republic Hospitality Centre (below). ST PHOTOS: DESMOND FOO



## RP hospitality students get new training lab

By LINETTE LAI

FOR Republic Polytechnic (RP) student Joel Yeo, who is pursuing a course specialising in food and beverage, lunchtime is not spent on having a leisurely meal.

Instead, the 19-year-old is busy preparing food in the school's new training kitchen for customers at a 70-seater restaurant.

The kitchen and restaurant are part of the polytechnic's \$2.4 million investment in training facilities for its 2,400 hospitality students. Other new facilities include three fully furnished hotel rooms and a barista lab with five coffee machines.

These facilities help the students to learn more



## THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Do minority shareholders have a voice? How can Asia, and Singapore in particular, build a culture of shareholder activism in enhancing corporate governance?

# Making their voices heard

**Ronald Lee**

Managing Director  
PrimeStaff Management Services Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE'S Code of Corporate Governance was recently updated, and it is important to review and revise it periodically to keep in step with international best practices, especially if we want to position the country as a strong financial hub. While the Code provides a good foundation for corporate governance, it does, after all, represent the minimum that companies are expected to abide by.

To build a culture of shareholder activism against a backdrop of enhanced corporate governance, both parties – companies and individual shareholders – need to do their part. Companies should strive to do more than just comply with the Code; they should actively work towards aligning their internal control measures with international standards. Certainly, this is easier said than done, particularly when it is a voluntary move and companies are not being threatened to do so with a stick.

Thus, for their part, shareholders need to demand good corporate governance, be it in the form of activism or by sending a signal to the market by choosing to invest in companies that exhibit good corporate governance. But this needs to be done en masse or there will be little impact.

What is really needed is a collective paradigm shift and positive reinforcement aided by greater awareness and education via the media and other avenues such as the Singapore Corporate Awards, which recognise and celebrate excellence in corporate governance.

At the end of the day, shareholders – especially minority shareholders who cannot afford to incur major personal financial losses – should always remember the principle of *caveat emptor*. As the buyer, you must take responsibility for managing your own risks and you need to do your due diligence on the company before investing in it.

Nicholas McGrath

views are strong enactments towards corporate transparency.

On their part, shareholders should push for more information, clarity, independence and for strong internal controls and risk management. The entire effort will, initially, hinge on the help of the regulatory framework in the Code, the oversight of the Singapore Exchange, and organisations such as SIAS. Over time, strong board professionalism and corporate governance should eventually prevail.

**David Leong**

Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

THE culture of shareholder activism matures with the state of development of the country and sophistication of the financial ecosystem. Financial play is the domain of educated and sophisticated investors. Activism must come complete with knowledge of corporate governance matters and the rules of the game.

In Asia, shareholder activism is stronger in the more mature economies such as Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. But you don't see as much combative minority action in Asia as, say, in the United States.

Still, minority voices are increasingly heard across Asia, though they still belong in the minor league. As the minority voices gather in the form of organised bodies, they can become a powerful pack, like in the case of SIAS.

The power of the minority voices comes from knowledge and the right to demand disclosure and transparency. Those who have vested interests in the shares of companies generally have to accept the majority rule – but the power of the pack protects their interests and ensures that they are treated fairly. The power of association lies in the pack so long as minority shareholders can form a bargainable bloc to represent their interests. The power of the pack comes from knowing the game and knowing how to play to the rules of the game.

## Tan Chong Huat

Managing Partner  
RHTLaw Taylor Wessing

A CULTURE of responsible shareholder activism is not built in a day, or even in a few years. Minority shareholders in Singapore are becoming more vocal, but to build a culture of responsible shareholder activism requires the long-term participation of all stakeholders, such as boards, directors, regulators, investors and even the media.

Instead of pitting stakeholders against one another or stakeholders working in silos, it is timely to explore whether a cross-functional committee comprising representatives from each stakeholder should be set up to discuss ideas or collaborate on ways to promote responsible and effective shareholder activism.

Also, while efforts have been made to inform investors about their rights, training programmes should also be organised for directors to let them understand that responsible shareholder activism is to be welcomed, not feared.







Mr Leong's resolve comes from some unsettling things he saw growing up: Loan sharks who knocked on his family's door late in the night and staff from the Official Assignee's office carting away his family's possessions. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

# 'Barbarian at the gate'

**Constant hunger, daring to be different, grit and steely calm secret to businessman's success**

It was a helluva ride. In two short years at the beginning of the new millennium, Mr David Leong went through what most entrepreneurs would not experience in their lifetime.

There was euphoria: He formed a company, raised millions in funding and got approval to list on the Singapore stock exchange.

Heartbreak, however, swiftly followed. Recession hit, a corporate coup ensued, he was booted out of the board, and the company was liquidated after a protracted series of David and Goliath duels.

Mr Leong was then just 32.

There are deep scars from that episode but he wears them proudly. "I'm the barbarian at the gate. I am always hungry, I want to be different, I want to move the cheese and I want to do more," says Mr Leong, who went on to found leading manpower agency PeopleWorldwide Consulting and more recently, mKu, a social job network.

Looking dapper in a sharply cut suit, Mr Leong, now 43, is ensconced in a plush leather seat in the confines of the Tower Club – a private business club – on the 64th floor of Republic Plaza in Shenton Way. The glass panels behind him offer a breathtaking view of Singapore's waterfront promenade, including the spanking new Marina Bay Financial Centre and Marina Bay Sands integrated resort.

The Hublot watch, the sleek designer eyeglasses and the bespoke brown shoes hint at a man with a penchant for the finer things in life, something he does not deny. "As a young boy, I told myself I must make it," he says.

The resolve came from some unsettling things he saw growing up: Loan sharks who knocked on his family's door late in the night and staff from the Official Assignee's Office carting away his family's possessions when his father was made a bankrupt.

The elder of two children of a contractor and his wife, Mr Leong grew up in Toa Payoh.

They lived with their paternal grandparents and half a dozen uncles and aunts in a three-room flat in Lorong 1 until he was four and his parents got their own flat in Lorong 2.

His father worked as a construction foreman in Sarawak where he met and married his mother, a laka-seller's daughter.

"When he came back to Singapore, he started a couple of businesses but they didn't work out. He often couldn't pay labour suppliers who provided workers for his contracting business, and also borrowed money from loan sharks."

Mr Leong remembers several occasions when these labour suppliers and illegal moneylenders – with their thick gold chains and gold Rolex watches – would come to his home demanding money.

"They didn't splash paint on your door in those days. But they would come late at night, hoping to find my father at home," he says. "But my father wouldn't come home, to avoid them, so my mother had to face them on her own. She is a very brave woman; she negotiated payment terms with them."

Things came to a head when he was in his early teens.

"My father was building a doctor's house and didn't do a very good job," he says.

His father was made bankrupt by an insurance company after the doctor claimed against it for damages.

"I remember it was evening when the Official Assignee came and took everything away from the house. My mother did not cry," says Mr Leong, adding that he inherited a lot of her steeliness and calm in dealing with difficult situations.

The incident invited a lot of gossip. "People looked at us differently. Luckily, my grandfather and a few of my uncles were very good to us."

Those difficulties helped toughen him up. As a boy – he attended Westlake Primary and Anderson Secondary – he held his own in the playground and in school against the many gangsters in the neighbourhood.

"I told myself I was one with them but I was not one of them," he says.

His teachers, he says, probably knew that he could turn out very wrong. "Maybe that's why they always made me class monitor or prefect," he says.

His fearlessness was also handy when it came to dealing with ruffians in Anderson Secondary.

While other prefects gave those characters a wide berth, he relished rounding them up for coming to school late or smoking in the toilets.

"I was a target," he freely admits. "But I took them on, one on one. I would close the toilet door and fight it out with them. After that, I earned their respect."

And respect, he says, was important to him.

"I was not the best student but I wanted people to respect me for something, even if it was for being cocky," he says, using a coarse Hokkien epithet to make his point.

After his A levels at Nanyang Junior College and completing his national service, he became a business student at the National University of Singapore.

Very quickly, he set his sights on becoming president of the Business Administration (Bizad) Club.

"I wanted to be on top," he says candidly. "I saw how powerful the club and the president were."

And he did, in his second year.

**Wong Kim Hoh meets...**

**David Leong**



The stint changed him in more ways than one.

As club president, he led the way in raising funds and staging events.

"I realised that making money was not difficult. We bought T-shirts for \$5.50, designed them and sold them for between \$10 and \$12.50," he recalls. He also knocked on doors of sponsors for funds to stage concerts and other events, some of which even featured pyrotechnics.

He also loved the cut and thrust of club politics.

"There was a lot of in-fighting. People would convene extraordinary general meetings to fight over something as trivial as the use of funds. But they fought within the Constitution. It was very challenging, and I learnt a lot."

The gig gave his entrepreneurial inclinations a boost and in his third year, he set up INC Marketing Consultant with two classmates.

Besides selling items such as shirts, perfumes and shoes, they did advertising and promotions for restaurants. The trio operated from a room in one of their homes.

His partners left INC after graduation. With \$10,000 borrowed from his mother, he moved into a 900 sq ft office in Prince Edward Road, which he shared with one of his uncles who ran a shipping company.

**Early drive to succeed**

"My father had a pickup truck and my sister and I would sit at the back. When I looked down at the passing cars in the excruciating hot or sometimes rainy weather, I told myself that I must do well so that I can buy a good car."

MR DAVID LEONG, who now owns a Jaguar XJL and a BMW 730L

**Missing dad**

"My father had more failures than successes but even though he had little money, he would sometimes give it to people in need. His generosity with people gained him merit. My greatest regret is that when I achieved success and could afford many things, my father was no longer around to enjoy them with the family."

MR LEONG, whose father died, aged 58, from kidney failure in 1999

to visit his office. That led to the next big adventure in Mr Leong's life.

"His office was in Amoy Street, had two floors and employed more than 30 people," he says. "After that, I asked myself what I was doing with my life."

He quit his marketing job, and decided he too should ride the dot.com boom.

"I knew nothing about the Internet or technology but I knew most tycoons made their fortunes from a few industries – shipping, finance or property. I told myself I wanted to do property."

A firm believer that domain knowledge can be acquired, he got himself a Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) licence, which all real estate agents need in order to practise.

"I knew that if I were selling IT solutions for the property industry, I needed to convince real estate agents I was as good, if not better, than them."

Together with a more tech-savvy friend, he started iProperty in 1999, at the height of the dot.com boom, with an initial capital of \$30,000.

The start-up raced off the blocks, raising \$700,000 in just four months, and another \$11.4 million barely a year later. It managed to rope in major players such as Century 21 and DTZ Debenham Tie Leung and even sealed partnerships with property portals abroad.

A year later, the company sought, and got approval, for a public listing. By then, it had more than 100 staff in several countries, and a 10,000 sq ft office in Ubi.

Then the dot.com bubble burst and markets tanked, putting paid to all IPO plans.

One of the investors bought out several smaller shareholders to hold the majority stake of more than 60 per cent in the company. They unceremoniously kicked Mr Leong and his partner – who had a 10 per cent stake each – out of the board.

"They wanted to merge iProperty, which had nearly \$7 million in cash, with one of their other companies. It was very painful."

Mr Leong, however, did not take that lying down. Pleading minority oppression, he went on the offensive and rallied all the remaining shareholders behind him.

"The combativeness of my Bizad days in NUS came back. Every other month, I would call for an extraordinary general meeting, and make objections to what they planned to do," he says. "Even though they lost money, all the other shareholders gave us power of attorney. It showed the level of confidence they had in us."

The battles raged for several months. The majority shareholder called off the merger and liquidated iProperty in 2002, which was what Mr Leong wanted.

(In 2007, Australian Internet entrepreneur Patrick Grove acquired iProperty.com in Malaysia and grew it into a network of property portals in Asia.)

As part of the liquidation settlement, Mr Leong walked away with more than \$1 million.

"The first thing I did was to buy myself a Chesterfield armchair," he says, referring to the classic chair with the distinctive tufting.

He did not rest on his laurels. He started investing in property, and now has more than 10 residential and commercial units, including the Seletar Hills semi-detached house he lives in with his homemaker wife and two sons aged nine and 11. Many of his properties are worth three or four times what he paid for them.

Almost immediately too, he pumped in \$100,000 to start ManpowerCorp International, a manpower agency.

He was inspired by the labour suppliers who used to supply workers to his father. "They were rolling in cash," he says with a laugh. "But I wanted a legitimate set-up with no dirty business."

His first break came when the director of human resources at the National Healthcare Group – impressed by his knowledge of health-care recruitment – gave him his first project: To recruit 40 nurses from Hyderabad.

The business grew from strength to strength. The company changed its name to PeopleWorldwide Consulting two years later in 2004, when Mr Leong Horn Kee, the former MP who now runs his own boutique corporate finance advisory firm, came on board as chairman and shareholder.

From just one employee working in a small office in International Plaza, Mr Leong now has more than 20 working in a 6,000 sq ft office he bought in Jalan Pemimpin.

The company supplies workers to industries ranging from offshore marine firms to integrated resorts and shipyards. It also runs training facilities for workers in different industries in several countries, including China, India, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Recently, he ventured back into the portal business with three other partners by setting up mKu, a platform where professionals can share trade, career and business opportunities.

The company won a gold medal at the Global Mobile Internet Conference held in Beijing earlier this year in June.

Financial services manager Christopher Pua, 43, has been friends with Mr Leong since they were both undergraduates in NUS.

"David can paint a vision and rally people. If he thinks it's worth doing, he will jump into the pool without caring whether he has his swimming trunks on," he says.

This barbarian, meanwhile, is hell-bent on rattling a few more gates.

"I know I am not there yet and there is yet a higher climb for me. I'm just waiting for the right wind to blow me there."

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# 红娘公司指 工程师娶‘霸王妻’ 讲好1万只给3500

**陈凯松 报道**  
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说好1万, 却只给3500元, 工程师被指娶“霸王妻”, 带走新娘竟“赖账”, 红娘公司老板怒报警。

搭霸王德士、吃霸王餐的事大家时有所闻, 但娶霸王亲的案例, 在本地恐怕还真不多见。

在乌节路营业多年的越南新娘婚姻介绍所, 上个月就遇上一名客人, 娶了老婆却不肯还钱, 老板林马可(51岁)屡次追讨不到钱, 气得报警。

林老板称, 娶“霸王妻”的男子自称是电脑工程师(38岁), 出身马来西亚, 但已成为澳大利亚公民。对方9月初电邮询问, 价格讲

好1万新元, 但得预先支付3000元定金。

“他9月10日到我公司, 先付1500元, 同天上网申请签证, 两天后就在我和中介的带领下, 动身到越南。”

工程师在越南胡志明市呆了两天, 敲定对象之后, 便表示要先回澳大利亚张罗婚事, 两星期后再到越南正式结婚。

“他过后又分两次支付了500元和1500元给我。我原本以为, 9月底完婚后, 工程师会支付拖欠的6500元, 哪里知道老婆娶回澳大利亚之后, 他就闹失踪不理我。”

林老板事后多次拨打电话给工程师, 可是已经打不通; 电邮对方也不被理会。

“这个星期四是我给他的最后通牒, 他依旧不理睬, 我只好报警。”



林马可出示工程师和越南妻子的合照。(图/林马可提供)

**‘赖账’不还  
老板报警**

## 动用5组养妈找 20越南姑娘相亲

动用5组养妈, 先后带了20几个越南姑娘相亲, 林老板“尾数”收不到, 百忙一场还得倒贴。

林马可说, 工程师有过一段失败的婚姻, 再娶会更谨慎, 他因此一次过动用了5个养妈, 带了二三十名越

叔叔上门“谈判”, 可最后不欢而散。

林老板追不到钱, 转而向工程师住新加坡的叔叔要钱, 对方10月14日代表侄儿上门“谈判”。

“叔叔开口就杀价, 表示最多只愿意再给1800元, 也就



梁昌国: 本地大学生穿着越来越随便。(图/档案照)

**林心惠 报道**

limxh@sph.com.sg

上了大学, 越穿越邈邈? 国大女生被指, 4年大学生涯变化大, 穿着一年不如一年, 从摩登女变邈邈女。

国大告白面簿(NUS Confessions)日前刊登, 一名学生对人文与社会科学院女生装扮演变的观察。

他说, 大一女生非常“养眼”, 爱化妆和穿上五彩缤纷花裙或迷你热裤。到了大二, 有时看起来还有模特儿风范, 有时穿牛仔裤或短裤, 配搭T恤、拖鞋、眼镜和背包。

大三女生和大二女生衣着相似, 牛仔裤搭配T恤的装扮, 成为呆在图书馆温书的“校服”。

这名网友说, 大四

# 国大女生被指 上大学变邈邈

## 4年穿着一年不如一年

女生是“我不管穿什么衣服, 只要确保我不是裸体上课就可以了!”

大学生穿着越来越邈邈, 一些受访大学生说, 这个说法相当准确。李先生(24岁, 国大学生)说: “高年级学生课业比较重, 所以很多人不太注重穿着打扮了。”

吴慧敏(23岁)也说: “女生刚上大学时, 毕竟会认识很多新同学和新的男生, 可能因为这样比较注重外表吧。”

不过, 也有大学生不认同这个说法, 南大学生黄小姐说: “很多大四女生比较懂得打扮。校园里也流传另一种说法, 某些院系如商学院和传播学院的比较会打扮, 理工科的相对朴素一点, 而不是以年级划分。”



网民在国大告白面簿主页上说, 女大学生穿着越变越邈邈。(图/国大告白面簿)

## 大学生穿着‘太随便’

人力资源公司老板: 本地大学生穿着越来越随便。

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国受访时说, 许多女学生穿的短裤都非常短, 再搭配一件无袖背心就上学去, 太随便了。

90年代在国大上学的他说: “当时学校有规定, 学生

不能穿拖鞋或短裤上课, 所以大家都穿得比较正式。”

不过, 大学生在求职培训上还是相当谨慎, 他说, 近几年来看到的应聘应届毕业生, 在穿着上还是相当得体的, 并不随便。



叔叔上门





**THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:**

How has the contribution of local universities to Singapore's business sector grown over the years?  
What more can our universities do to boost local business and entrepreneurship?

# Business brains from S'pore universities

**Max Loh**

Country Managing Partner  
Ernst & Young LLP

LOCAL universities are producing an increasingly diverse pool of talent across traditional and new disciplines, and such diversity of thought and knowledge is key for Singapore businesses to thrive in today's globalised economy. However, the knowledge and ideas generated in universities can sometimes be under-exploited commercially. Universities would thus benefit from strong relationships with industry and even angel groups – not just those based in Singapore – so as to provide students with real-world learning and connections, through collaborations such as attachments, mentorships or idea sponsorships.

Establishing entrepreneurship schools or partnering world-renowned entrepreneurship institutions that offer graduate and post-graduate certification, as well as embedding the spirit and values of entrepreneurship in the curricula of other disciplines, are worth exploring further. University programmes could also take on an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach where, for example, the science and technology students with innovative ideas are not separated from the business students who could add values to those ideas from a business perspective.

**Joshua Soh**

Managing Director, Singapore and Brunei  
Cisco

OUR local educational institutions, government agencies and private sector companies have always enjoyed a symbiotic and collaborative relationship. What will be critical for the future is having industry engagement so students can benefit from the industry insights, leadership and experience. And educators can weave these insights and learning into their curriculum so that the lessons remain relevant as the world transforms, and continually matches what the industry

of six universities, as well as more than 5,000 students in Singapore have benefited from Red Hat Academy annually.

**David Leong**

Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

AS a small country with limited natural resources and human resources in particular, it is paramount that Singapore develops a tertiary education framework which not only draws Asia's best to our shores but also trains our locals to compete with the best globally.

The competition will bring out the best in our local graduates since the best of foreign students will raise the bar. Retaining the best brainpower in Singapore for our local businesses should be one of the primary objectives of our universities. It is not good enough to train and release these local and foreign talents to open markets. If the brainpower, innovation and creativity are not captured for the good of Singapore, then our local industry may not be able to leverage on the academic output from our local universities. Our graduates have to be employable and the universities must work with small and large business to build talent for the industries and to train for "fit of use". Globally, graduate unemployment is on the rise, particularly in Europe and the United States. The value of the degree will depreciate sharply the longer one is unemployed.

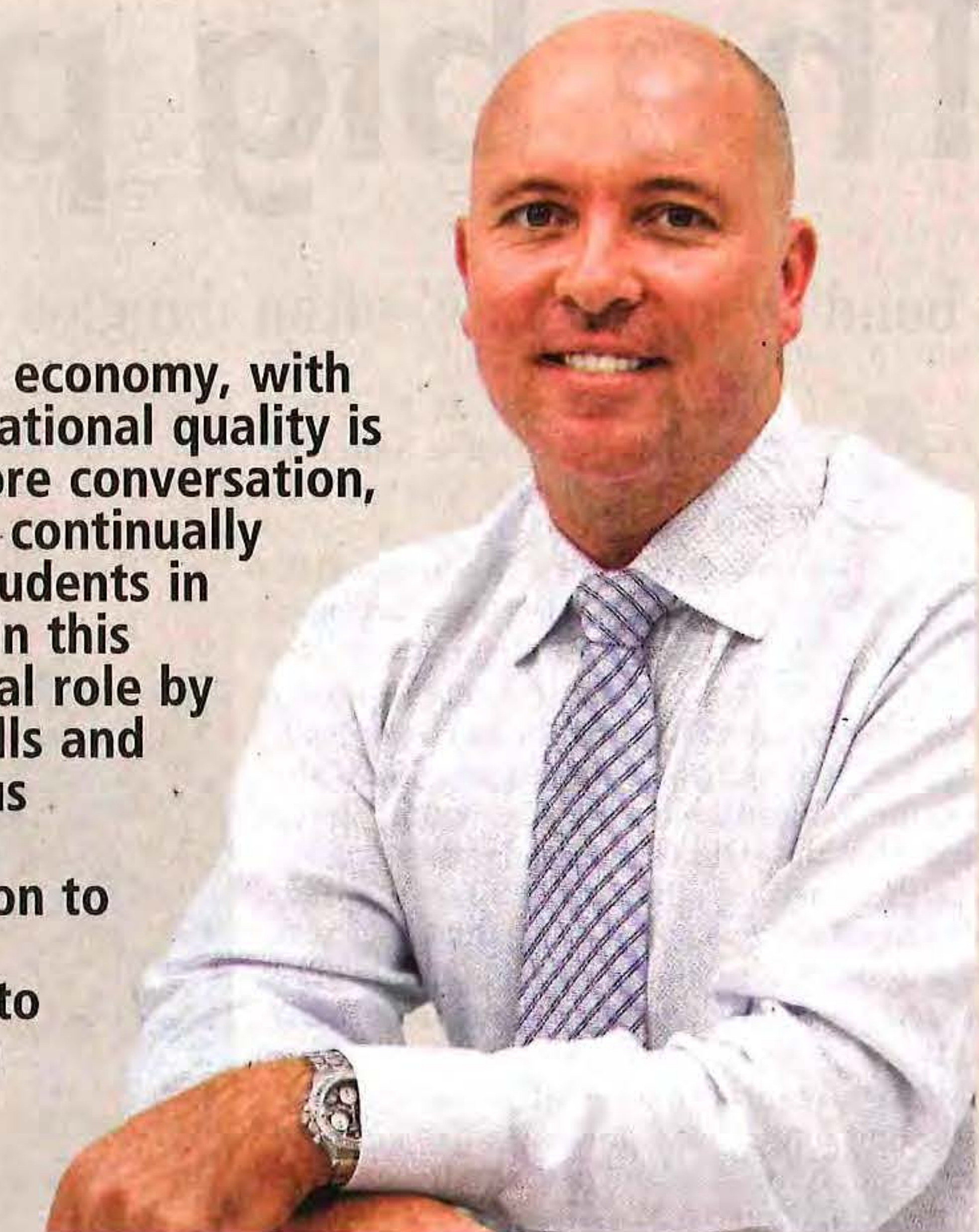
While we train graduates to take up leadership roles in the public and corporate sectors, entrepreneurship must also be encouraged. The traits that foster innovation and creativity cannot be taught from textbooks in the classroom. What are required are ventures, adventures and the acceptance of failure. Failure cannot be seen as a dirty word. Entrepreneurs and industry leaders can serve as adjunct university professors, for instance, to inspire, incite and excite students into going into business. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

**Brad Gray**

Regional Director, South-east Asia  
Polycom

SINGAPORE is a knowledge-intensive economy, with people being our talent capital. Educational quality is thus a significant part of our Singapore conversation, and it is necessary for the country to continually invest in nurturing and developing students in order to bring out the best in them. In this regard, local universities play a critical role by equipping students with practical skills and shaping them into future leaders, thus serving as important catalysts for businesses. It is essential for education to reflect current business needs, and universities need to remain relevant to today's globalised economy by going beyond the academic curriculum, adopting new approaches and facilitating a creative, innovative learning environment.

This can be enabled through technologies such as video collaboration, which challenge traditional learning boundaries, overcome physical barriers and grant students exposure to a wealth of knowledge from international experts. Such enriched educational initiatives expose students to global perspectives, moulding them into well-rounded and capable individuals, and ultimately contributing significantly to the quality of our future workforce.





## THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:

Was the 2013 Singapore Grand Prix an improvement over the previous years, and if so, in what ways? What can be done to make the event even better?

# Making F1 Singapore even better



**Thomas Zilliacus**  
CEO and Chairman  
YuuZoo

THE 2013 Singapore Grand Prix was a strong improvement from previous years. The night race concept creates a unique advantage, as events that would not work well in the daytime, such as concerts and parties, can be linked to the event and built around the circuit area.

The next step should be to extend the time spent with fans and tourists before and after the event. This can easily be done with social networking tools, thereby creating a deeper engagement and additional revenues.

**David Leong**  
Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

2013 Singapore Grand Prix was a resounding success for Singapore and the marquee event once again put Singapore on the global stage. Singapore indeed boosted tourism spending with the Grand Prix.

While the F1 effect affected the shopping belts surrounding the Marina Bay areas, the hotels surrounding the circuit were operating at almost full occupancy.

Compared to the previous race, 2013's F1 compounded visitors' arrival in short bursts, and the good thing coming out from this growth spike is that the tourism receipts grew at a better rate.

The Orchard Road Business Association projected a 5 to 10 per cent increase in business for the 2013 Grand Prix season which is higher than the previous year.

Singapore made international headlines with its world-class entertainment and parties and to make the next Grand Prix shift into a next higher gear and adrenaline-pumping action, Singapore Tourism Board may want to consider a parallel "Great Singapore Sale" to coincide with the event to boost tourism spending and to give tourists enough reasons to stay in Singapore longer with sensorial food indulgence and shopping.

Go full throttle with out-of-the-world sales and gastronomic delights that will leave our tourists spell-bound by our Singapore magic.

**Liu Chunlin**  
CEO  
K&C Protective Technologies Pte Ltd

IMPROVEMENTS have been witnessed in the 2013 Singapore Grand Prix. Besides the improvement in ticket sales and hotel booking, the change in Turn 10 of the circuit has been well received by the F1 drivers.

The planning and diversion of human and vehicle traffic by the event organiser have been improved to reduce the inconvenience during non-race periods. These changes also show the world that the Singapore organiser has carried out continuous improvements.

In order to make the event even better, more participation by Singapore businesses promoting their brand names, with or without the sponsorship of government aid, should be encouraged so that they can gain maximum exposure to potential foreign markets when the eyes of the world are focusing on Singapore during this event.

**Craig Mapleston**  
Managing Director  
iris Singapore

WHILE the Singapore night skyline makes for one of the most dramatic settings on the F1 circuit, the actual race was less dramatic.

With similar circuit characteristics in Monaco, race organisers there look for partnership opportunities to spice up the action. In 2005, Star Wars transformed the Red Bull team's pit crew into Stormtroopers. Steinmetz Diamonds unveiled diamond-encrusted steering wheels and helmets. And at this year's race, the be-helmeted French music duo Daft Punk looked very much a part of the Lotus race team to promote their "Get Lucky" release.

With a bit more flexibility from Singapore GP organisers, sponsors can add even more interest and excitement into the race, creating more talking points, more visibility and further boosting the status and appeal of the event.



**Toby Koh**  
Group Managing Director  
Ademco Security Group

SINGAPORE F1 has no doubt been a resounding success. What would be good is to increase the level of engagement by the F1 drivers into the local sights and local community. Showcase the F1 drivers in a more sustainable media campaign run-up to the actual event.

This media campaign could be shown in key markets where Singapore targets tourist dollars like in China's major cities.

This will highlight Singapore as the race with the highest fun factor and draw not just the tourist but perhaps MICE into Singapore for the week preceding and after the race.

The second thing I would do is try to lengthen the circuit. This will serve to allow an increase in the number of people watching the race. The change in circuit will refresh the race not just for the audience but the drivers too.

**Lim Soon Hock**  
Managing Director  
PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd

I HAVE always looked forward to the Singapore Grand Prix. It truly is a three-day kaleidoscope of festivities that puts Singapore on the international F1 racing stage.

2013 was no exception. Judging from the stellar cast of international artistes and the record turnout at all

the events, the Singapore Grand Prix has definitely improved year after year.

It is not an easy task to sustain the appeal, to say the least. There is always something for everyone at the Grand Prix. The programme lineup caters to almost every population demographic and age group.

To make the Singapore Grand Prix even more memorable for our international delegates, it would be good to dedicate one day to performances by our home grown talents.

This would enable our guests to have a deeper understanding of Singapore.

This would also be a good platform for our performers to gain more exposure by interacting with international guests – an opportunity that is often hard to come by.

We can definitely add a touch of local flavour to the crown jewel of the F1. It will enhance the event to be "uniquely Singaporean" and one which is culturally and mutually beneficial to Singaporeans as well as our international guests.

**Zaheer K Merchant**  
Regional Director (Singapore & Europe)  
Qi Group of Companies

THE Singapore GP has on-track and off-track elements. On-track, even the BBC acknowledges that the race is "testing to the physical and mental limit in the face of the toughest competition. Singapore provides that". Other than road surface or lighting enhancements, there seems little to improve.

Off-track, the overall atmosphere surrounding the F1 makes for a spectacle. From the fantastic acts, performances and stars, to the entire surrounding of the carnival atmosphere, Singapore has constantly regenerated the "hype" that surrounds the event.

Resting on laurels cannot be our paradigm. To that effect a pet peeve needing attention would be the sound and acoustics at the performances, which have at times been wanting. Easier access points, and different venues in the vicinity which showcase our vibrancy could be found, in my view.

Local acts and events showcasing Singapore's diversity and talent would be a definite plus, since they would not simply focus on banking the tourist dollar, but lead to a greater "wow-factor" from an arts and cultural scene.

This would add to the overall attractiveness and the F1 event being even better than the very good one it already is.

**Sam Yap**  
Group Executive Chairman and Co-Founder  
HTwo Investment Holdings Pte Ltd

IN MY view, this year's SGP event was a success and an improvement over the previous years. There was an increase in international visitors to the country during the period surrounding the race event.

This can be attributed to not only racing fans from all over the world coming for the race but also other visitors to non-race events like international conferences that were scheduled around the race date. It was indeed brilliant for such events, including concerts of stars of international fame, to be organised during the same period.

The night race is a novelty and puts Singapore apart from all the other races. The location of the race circuit right smack in the centre of our business district with good accessibility for all shows how we can leverage on our business and economic landscape to showcase our country to the rest of the world.

Yes, it's only a matter of time before another venue will want to do a night race also. To be on top, we must continue to think of creative ways to stay competitive.

Organisers may want to promote the event in such a way that more locals in the community like HDB heartlanders will have interest in it.

Though generally, F1-SGP is a commercial venture, the possibility of famous drivers doing charity work outside racing dates would be good to connect it to a social cause.

That way, more ordinary people will be involved in the series of events surrounding the actual race itself.

Drivers can also be ambassadors of safe driving and visit schools and institutions to emphasise this to our young in schools.

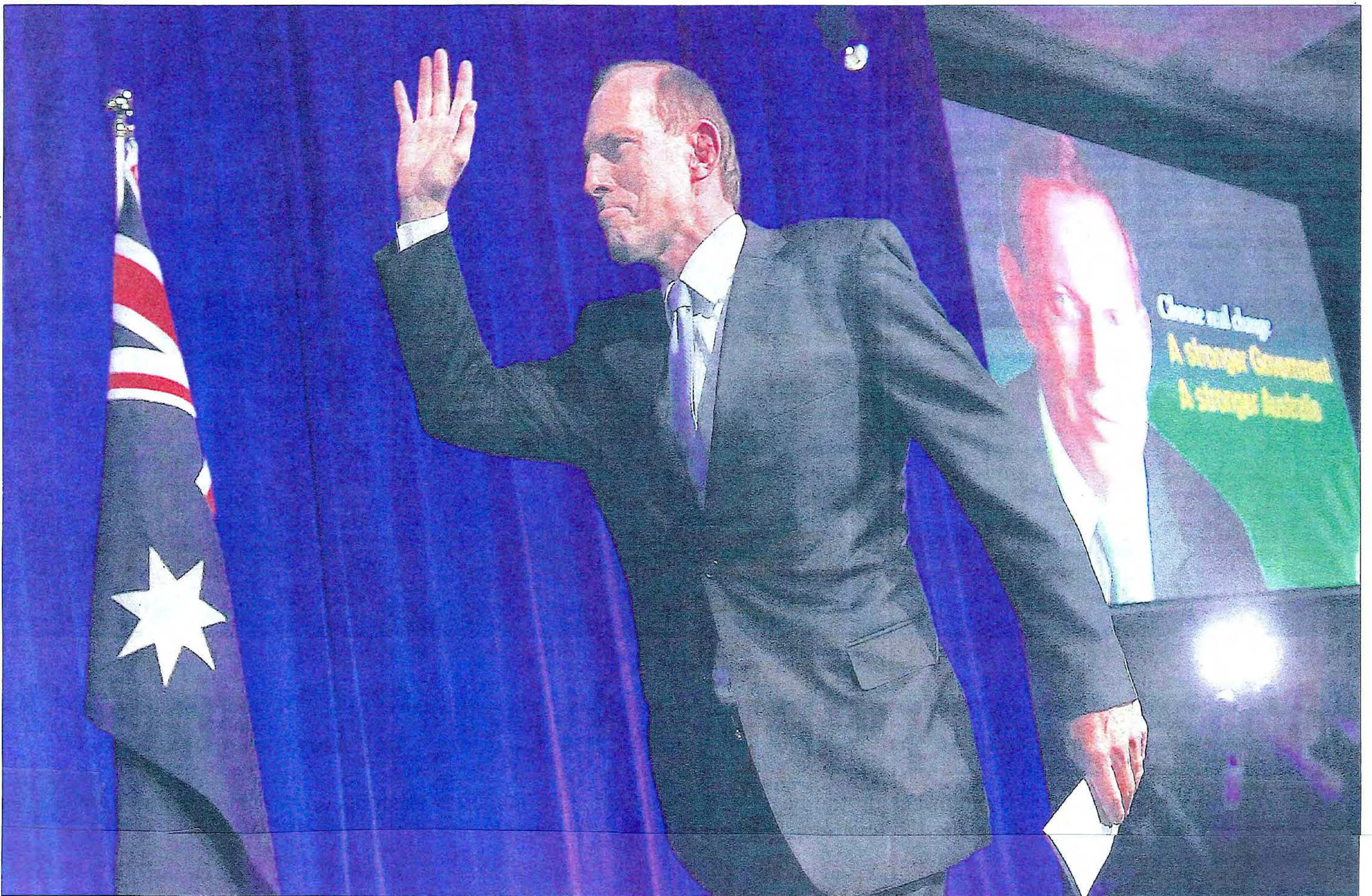
Organisers can link up with other tourist outlets to tie up ticket sales with other perks making it a two-in-one benefit for tourists and locals.

For the complete list of views  
from CEOs, go to  
<http://businessimes.com.sg>



**THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:**

What changes do you anticipate in Australia following the recent change in government?  
How will the changes impact Australia's neighbours, including Singapore?



# New star of Australia

**Zaheer K Merchant**

Regional Director (Singapore and Europe)  
Qi Group of Companies

ABBOTT'S "look East" government opens Australia "for business" with an agenda to visit Indonesia, China, South Korea and Japan before the United States. This is refreshing. However, sceptics wonder if he will be focused on a defining foreign policy given the campaign platform on carbon-tax, pensions, local debt reduction, foreign aid cuts and the asylum issue.

Certainly the talk seems to be of investment and free-trade with surrounding Asian countries which may lead to better market entry terms, price competition, mutual ties with the corresponding knock-on economic effect of these benefits regionally. But with the inevitable focus on pressing localised issues and given the stark contrast with the previous Labor government's trade/foreign policies, I remain cautious on whether the change will have any significant impact on Australia's neighbours and Singapore for the time being.

**David Leong**

Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

SHELL-SHOCKED by the protracted farce within the Labor Party's leadership and a nervousness surrounding the economy's retreat from a China-led boom and perceived intrusive investments in farmland, voters gave a heads-up victory to the coalition. Tony Abbott's government may adopt a selfish nationalist stance and his campaign rhetoric highlighted such nationalist predilections. Mr Abbott pledges to kill carbon and mining taxes, never mind what the world thinks and how the Greens in Australia will react. His public posturing does seem strong and contradictory all at the same time. Even though he promises to be an "Asia first" leader with an "open for business" approach, it is left to be seen how he will do that.

The rumblings over fiscal rectitude in Australia and the strength of the Aussie dollar will be the immediate fiscal concerns that Mr Abbott will look into. The world, particularly Asia and Singapore, will be watchful.



**Karen Harris**  
Director, Macro Trends  
Bain & Company (New York)



**Lothar Herrmann**  
CEO, ASEAN-Pacific, Siemens



**Parag Khanna**  
Director, Hybrid Reality Institute



**Rohan Mahadevan**  
Vice President, PayPal Asia



**Simon Tay**  
Chairman, Singapore Institute of International Affairs



**Tim Johannessen**  
Director - Strategy, Mondelez

**About Global Entropolis @ Singapore**

Singapore will host the region's leading business leaders' forum - Global Entropolis @ Singapore - for the 10th year from 28-31 October 2013. GES 2013 is an excellent networking and business matching platform for influential senior business executives, entrepreneurs, high net-worth individuals, founders and policy makers who attend the forum each year.

GES 2013 will present its annual outlook on the global financial landscape and provide insightful analyses of the impact of leadership transition in major economies on regional businesses.

Presented by the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), the republic's APEX business chamber, this forum brings the global business community together to discuss the latest outlook on the changing economic climate, business model trends, thought-provoking perspectives and new approaches to growth.

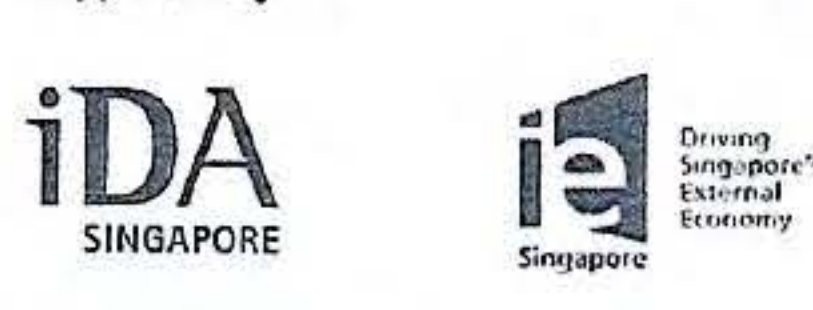
**Events At A Glance**

28-Oct-13	29-Oct-13	30-Oct-13	31-Oct-13	
SBF SME Convention 2013	GES Business Leaders Summit		Asia Pacific Sustainability Leadership Forum 2013	
	Plenary Session The Global Perspective	Market Insights Track C: China Track D: Indonesia		Supply Chain Leadership Forum 2013
	Networking Lunch	Networking Lunch		
	Market Insights Track A: Japan Track B: Myanmar	Plenary Session Business Insights In-Conversation		
GES2013 Networking Cocktail		Singapore Sustainability Awards Gala Dinner		

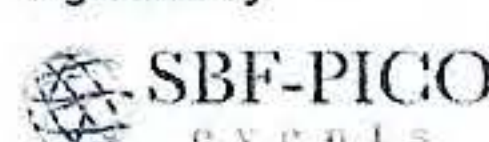
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Supported By



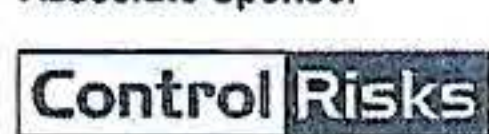
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**Concurrent SBF Forums At GES 2013:**



A complete list of views from CEOs is also available at <http://businesstimes.com.sg>

Visit [www.globalentropolis.com](http://www.globalentropolis.com) for more details.



**Yeoh Oon Jin**  
Executive Chairman  
PwC Singapore

THE age-old adage of "prevention is better than cure" comes to mind and can be aptly applied with regard to the broader planning and implementation of Singapore's national healthcare programme. The mindset to remain healthy should be instilled from a young age as physically active children and youth typically develop fewer medical complications later in life, which will thereby reduce pressure on the public health system.

Some countries, such as Canada, have a fitness tax credit programme for children which provides tax credits to parents who register their children in eligible physical activity programmes, including sport and dance. To make a similar policy relevant for Singapore, the government can consider providing tax credits and/or grants to private organisations to run these programmes for children and youth from low-income families, who might otherwise not be able to benefit from such programmes. Other similar incentives can be given to promote and sustain various programmes that encourage the young and young-at-heart to remain physically active throughout their lives.

The government should work with employers to consolidate resources to achieve the common goal of keeping Singaporeans healthy and effective in the workplace. It should take a longer-term investment approach to fund these initiatives as it would pay for itself in terms of reduced healthcare and social cost in the long run.

**Janet Ang**  
Managing Director  
IBM Singapore

CITY leaders need to look at not just the chronic and acute end of healthcare, but the more holistic model that takes into account smarter city planning, where and how many parks and recreational facilities are about, what public transport and parking management options there are – all aspects that help keep a population more active and healthy so that resources can be right-sited to those in most need.

The future of medicine should include a focus on health outcomes rather than serial treatments by clinicians, overall value of health interventions, and changes to all domains affecting health. This starts with the patient as the end-user of healthcare, and it ends with a hundred-fold increase in productivity.

Singapore can "right size" and harness the power of a healthcare generalist heading an interdisciplinary team of clinicians.

Recent pilots conducted by IBM globally, where the primary care physician or general practitioner is leading an interdisciplinary team and is managing a patient population, has resulted in huge benefits such as a 36.3 per cent drop in hospital days, 32.2 per cent drop in Emergency Room (ER) use, and up to 15.6 per cent reduction in total cost.

Today, healthcare stakeholders have a unique opportunity to engage in technology-driven initiatives including the power of transforming (or building) digital hospitals – hospitals that are instrumented, interconnected and intelligent – from the point of care systems and IT systems to the facility systems.

**Tan See Leng**  
Group CEO and Managing Director  
Parkway Pantai Ltd

THE proposed creation of MediShield Life to provide Singaporeans with universal healthcare coverage is truly a conceptual sea change. The fact is, those who need insurance the most tend not to have it. So, it is heartening to see that the government has taken such bold steps to ensure all Singaporeans have greater access to critical healthcare services. A carefully calibrated co-payment system may be implemented to create that balance between adequate coverage and affordable premiums, and I foresee that to dominate the debate in the months ahead. We are looking forward to see how our national healthcare programme will continue to offer patients with the expanded choices of private healthcare but still remain under the widened and lifelong coverage of MediShield Life.

**Scott Burnett**  
Managing Director, South-east Asia  
Towers Watson

IN funding MediShield Life, cross-subsidies will need to be considered carefully – how do the healthy subsidise the less healthy, how do the young subsidise the old, how does one generation subsidise another – and a clear policy communicated. The government will need to play a supporting role for the elderly and lower-income groups. Awareness campaigns should be planned and executed on how healthcare premiums increase with age – to allow Singaporeans to better plan their retirement. Focus should also continue to be made on preventative healthcare and well-being measures, as this is the best way of managing such costs in the longer term.

**Kenny Goh**  
CEO  
MACROKIOSK

ANNOUNCED during Singapore's 2013 National Day Rally speech, the revised MediShield Life programme aims to be comprehensive in coverage with a priority to cover the needy. In order to achieve its objectives, the government needs to sufficiently plan for effective execution of the national healthcare programme and support this with technological deployments.

Given Singapore's advanced technology infrastructure, the proliferation of smart devices and its highly mobile-savvy society, the government and healthcare providers should consider leveraging mobile services and solutions to creatively engage with patients, their families and caregivers. Paperless, real-time mobile services such as mobile appointments and reminders, healthcare monitoring applications including heart trackers and patient information enquiry enable the healthcare system to be more productive, efficient and also environmentally friendly – thereby reducing redundancies and delivering cost savings.

By utilising technology as an enabler for seamless mobile healthcare services, governments and healthcare providers can not only reduce operating costs but also deliver better healthcare and expand its coverage capabilities to ensure sufficient protection for the less-fortunate in society.

**Joe Poon**  
President  
Xchanging, South-east Asia

## THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

What key elements should MediShield Life and, more broadly, the proposed national healthcare programme include? How can this programme be funded?

# Creating a wider safety net



FILE PHOTO

this concern, there is a need for the national healthcare programme to provide a more holistic approach. Funding and medical coverage should be carefully aligned to the new policies, providing citizens with the necessary support in ensuring and maintaining personal wellness on a daily basis.

Apart from funding coverage, there is also a need to consider introducing technology and process innovations into the healthcare system. This will enable integrated care, and also enhance efficiency through streamlining existing processes and improving communication between the various facets in the healthcare cycle, namely healthcare providers, payees, the community, and individuals. Care regimes will see vast improvements in outcomes, with increased efficiency aiding in reducing the pressure of providing funding for such healthcare policies.

**Lam Joon Khoi**  
Secretary-General  
Singapore Manufacturing Federation

IT is encouraging to see the government's new initiative to enhance the medical coverage for Singaporeans. In view of the ageing population, this initiative will enhance the current benefits and provide peace of mind to many. With a wider coverage, the premium fee that the individual has to pay will definitely increase. Cost is an important factor for consideration. Companies should look at their staff insurance and make the necessary adjustments to avoid overlapping with national coverage.

**Chris Wei**  
Group CEO  
Great Eastern Holdings

GREAT Eastern applauds the government's move to be inclusive and provide universal health insurance for all Singaporeans.

With Singapore's population ageing rapidly and the cost of healthcare ever on the increase, MediShield Life is a bold step in the right direction. As a market leader in Singapore, we look forward to working with the government to bring this to fruition.

Key considerations are affordability, equity and sustainability.

To keep premiums affordable at old age, one option is to charge higher premium rates, relative to risk, at younger ages to pre-fund the expected steep increases in premiums due to old age when the cost of receiving medical care is highest. Although premiums may still increase due to medical inflation, by pre-funding, the impact of the increase should be more manageable at older ages.

To ensure equity, those with pre-existing conditions may need to pay higher premiums as they are considered to be of higher risk.

For MediShield Life to be sustainable, we believe government funding support may be necessary. There will be a need to review the utilisation of all forms of medical facilities and services, as well as consider new innovative models in healthcare provision, to enhance system efficiency and ensure that the overall medical inflation cost is well-contained.

Ultimately, we encourage a nationwide effort to

**Angie Kim**  
Managing Director  
Novartis Singapore

IT is a bold and heartening move that the Prime Minister is making MediShield Life a universal plan. Falling seriously ill and being saddled with large hospital bills are major worries for many Singaporeans. Many chronic diseases are preventable or, at the very least, their burden can be greatly reduced. New therapies for treating serious illnesses like cancer or acute heart failure bring hope to patients.

There is definitely a role which the pharmaceutical industry can play in bringing innovative drugs to patients or building disease awareness that would lead to early detection of disease. By conducting more clinical trials in Singapore, we are better able to bridge clinical development and unmet patient needs.

As funding a project as large as MediShield Life is a mammoth task, I believe that public consultations led by the government are the correct step forward to engage the medical community and this would potentially lead to more public-private partnerships. These partnerships could include collaborating with healthcare payers and providers with the goal of improving patient compliance.

As a healthcare industry partner in Singapore, we in Novartis believe that patients are central to our mission of caring and curing. All our actions are focused on the improvement of our patients' lives.

**Sam Yap**  
Group Executive Chairman and Co-Founder  
HTwo Investment Holdings Pte Ltd

THE prime minister's announcement on MediShield Life will benefit a lot of people especially those from the lower income group and the needy who cannot afford private health insurance. The proposed scheme will take care of the health needs of the overall population particularly the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

Rising health costs is indeed an area of concern for many as we grow old. Although, I agree that we should as individuals maintain and practise a healthy lifestyle and be responsible for our well-being and health, it is inevitable that we do at times need to see the doctor and seek medical treatments at different stages of our lives.

While MediShield Life will benefit many of us, care must be taken to ensure that there is coverage for all and for those with or without pre-existing medical conditions. Effort should be made to ensure that premiums payable via CPF or cash should be affordable and offer good coverage. For the needy and those without CPF, government subsidy or top-up might be necessary.

**Lee Kheng Hock**  
President  
The College of Family Physicians Singapore

IT is important not just to focus on the issue of premiums for our medical insurance schemes. The

more cost-effective. The best evidence tells us that investing the public health dollar in primary care and improving efficiency through an integrated healthcare system is the most cost-effective.

**David Leong**  
Managing director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

STATISTICALLY, MediShield Life should cover the universal set – everyone. The weak, the vulnerable, the poor, the medically excluded and all those who fall through the cracks must avail themselves to coverage. This group should form a minority.

Statistically, the majority's premium should provide cover for the minority. The government's annual national budget must provide for the topping-up of the insurance premium for the minority by designating a certain percentage towards this expense. Otherwise, to cover all and to provide cover for extended life span will be unsustainable statistically and most importantly, financially.

The insurance cost inevitably will go up and correspondingly the premium will go up.

The amount of increase in premium must be moderated to become fair and equitable. To be fair and equitable, a larger number must participate. For a larger number to participate, it will mean that those who work in Singapore including the foreigners will need to contribute towards the insurance but their coverage must be different from Singaporeans. They can have the same coverage as Singaporeans except that their premium must be enhanced and their cover is limited to their work-passes validity in Singapore. Simply put, Singaporeans enjoy life insurance cover and foreigners enjoy term insurance cover for the same premium contribution.

Singaporeans have our privileges and this should be one of those.

**Lim Soon Hock**  
Managing director  
PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd

MEDISHIELD Life should provide for preventive healthcare. It is the most effective way of managing and controlling healthcare costs downstream. One possible use of MediShield Life is to fund telehealth services for triage management, chronic disease management, wellness management, care for the aged and help for caregivers. Telehealth services have proven to be a very cost-effective way of right-siting healthcare. It is becoming an essential component of the new continuum of healthcare from acute care in hospitals to stepped-down care in community hospitals to home care.

It is a known fact that when a diabetic does not follow a regime of treatment, his or her condition will worsen, resulting in higher costs of treatment. Telehealth intervention can prevent this. It is a win-win situation not just for the individual, but for the government and the insurer as well. The key to keeping MediShield Life affordable is proper and clever utilisation of the funds. In this regard, a sum or percentage should be set aside for preventive healthcare, such as telehealth services. When more individuals take more personal ownership of their





**B14** Call to review insolvency laws

**B10** Machine doctor and his WireXpert

## Firms on hiring spree as economy improves

Service sector leads jobs growth as labour market tightens, costs rise

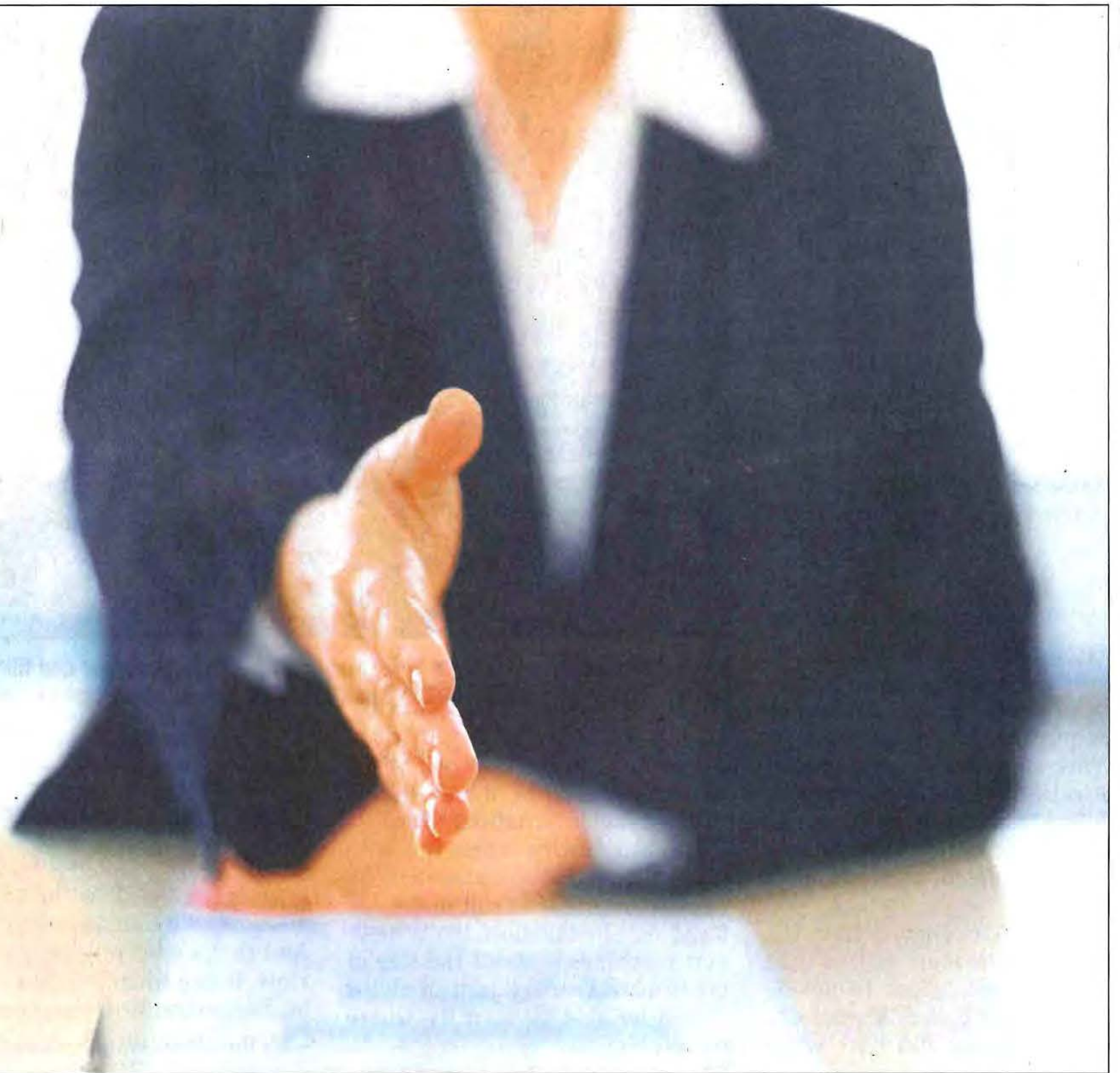


PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO

By CHIA YAN MIN

BOSSES are shrugging off higher business costs and continuing to hire more staff in expectation of better times ahead.

A stronger-than-expected second quarter has raised optimism among firms, especially those in the financial services sector, so more "help wanted" signs are going out.

New hiring will come on the back of an already bullish second quarter when employment grew by 32,500.

The new jobs added in the three months to June 30 exceed the 28,900 created in the first quarter and the 31,700 in the second quarter last year.

Services drove the rise in employment growth with 21,700 new jobs created.

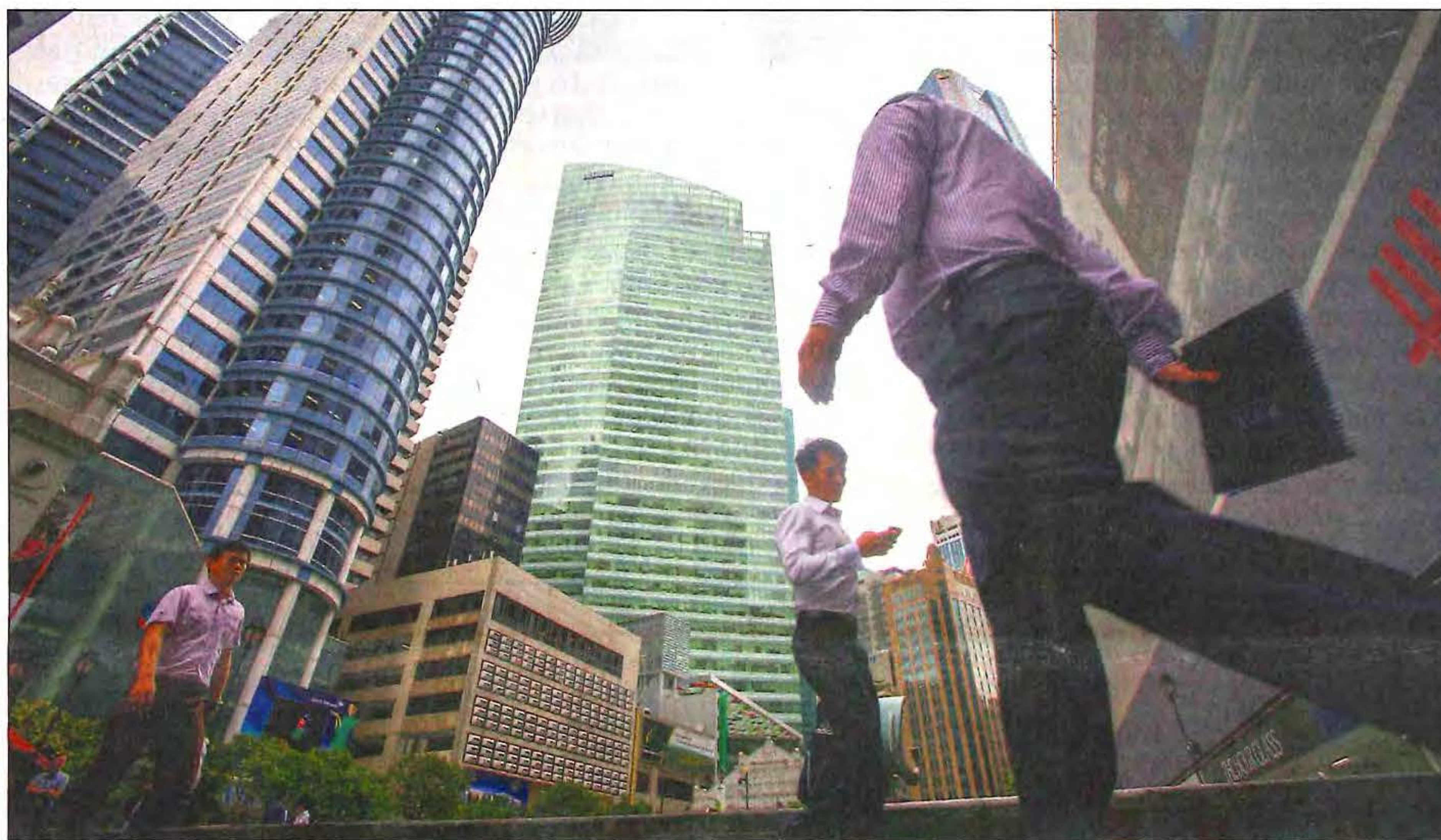
The hiring surge reflects the unexpected 3.8 per cent increase in gross domestic product growth in the second quarter.

The finance and insurance sector led the pickup in second-quarter economic growth, expanding 13.1 per cent over the same period last year.

Banks told The Straits Times that they expect to continue hiring through all economic cycles.

A DBS spokesman said it is hiring locally for its consumer banking division as well as for support functions such as technology and operations, finance, compliance and risk.

Tighter foreign worker quotas and higher levies mean that em-



Findings from the latest SBF-DP SME Index - a quarterly survey that measures the sentiments of 3,000 SME bosses - reported stronger optimism over expansion for the rest of the year. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

ployers in search of staff are turning to Singaporeans, said Mr David Leong, managing director of PeopleWorldwide Consulting, a human resource firm.

But wanting to hire is not the same as being able to find the right person, given the manpower crunch in the labour-intensive service sector, noted Mr Leong, who added that "it should not be difficult to get a job over the next three to six months".

"Employers are trying to attract older workers and women returning to the workforce in order

**The new jobs added in the three months to June 30 exceed the 28,900 created in the first quarter and the 31,700 in the second quarter last year.**

to deal with the manpower shortage."

Dairy Farm Singapore's director of retail development, Mr Lester Quah, said the company's outlook for the rest of the year remains "cautiously optimistic" and consumer confidence is expected to remain stable.

"Despite rising costs and challenging labour resources, we will continue to step up our hiring efforts and productivity initiatives," he said.

Property group CapitaLand's president and group chief execu-

tive, Mr Lim Ming Yan, said there is "a global war for talent".

The group's staff costs rose about 15 per cent in 2012 over the previous year to about \$343.5 million, according to its latest annual report.

"The company is always on the lookout for talent, in both the up and down cycles," added Mr Lim, noting that CapitaLand is optimistic about the urbanisation, rising middle class and burgeoning consumer demand in Asia.

The Singapore Business Federation's (SBF) chief operating officer, Mr Victor Tay, said sales and profits of small and medium-sized enterprises are poised for a cautious pickup over the rest of the year.

But growth is likely to be more subdued compared with last year as there are still concerns over rising business and rental costs and the tight labour market.

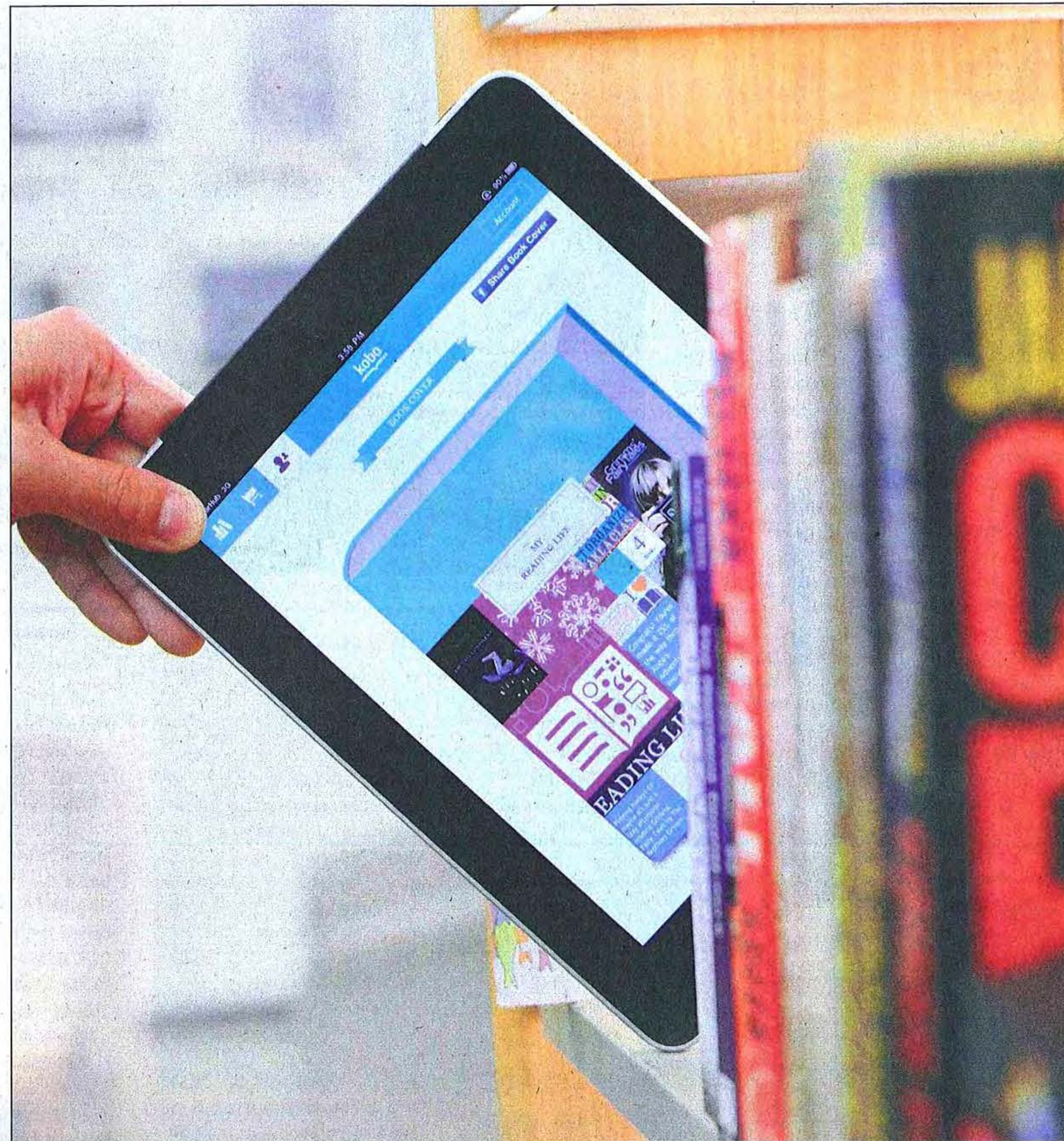
Findings from the latest SBF-DP SME Index - a quarterly survey that measures the sentiments of 3,000 SME bosses - reported stronger optimism over expansion for the rest of the year.

"(The index) signalled SMEs are more confident of their growth strategies, which include targeting new markets or introducing new goods and services," said Mr Tay.

"(It) also showed that businesses are increasingly tapping better processes and equipment to drive productivity rather than relying exclusively on hiring."

✉ [chiaym@sph.com.sg](mailto:chiaym@sph.com.sg)





**Handy:**  
The accessibility and convenience that e-books offer enhance the reading experience, especially for a mobile and jet-setting generation.  
FILE PHOTO

**THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:**  
How are books changing, and why? Are we moving towards an e-book future?

# The writing on the wall

**Jack Chua**  
CEO  
ERA Singapore Pte Ltd

IT is amazing how technology advancement has changed the way we read in this current age. With just an electronic device on your hand, you can immerse yourself in a sea of books.

The ease of use and access to online books certainly frees up the need for physical storage space, provided of course, one has access to a reading device and fast Internet speed.

E-books are changing the way information is being disseminated and knowledge being imparted as accessibility boils down to a few clicks on the keyboard. Its impact on society cannot be ignored. Words are a

powerful source of citation and influence for both good (when used for knowledge) and evil (when used for propaganda). Therefore, when books of all sorts are so freely available online, it is important for readers to exercise discretion and discernment.

However, for an old-fashioned book lover like me, nothing beats the appeal of physically possessing a book you love, and not forgetting the nostalgic feeling of seeing the pages, yellow with age and, yes, dog ears included!

**Max Phua**  
Executive Director  
World Scientific

THE rise in the usage of e-books will definitely continue

beauty of the written word.

**Craig Tegel**  
Regional President  
Adobe Japan and Asia Pacific

THE increase in e-book readers in South-east Asia is a testament that readers are choosing digital over paperback – a sentiment affirmed by research unveiled at the first Asean e-book conference.

The shift to digital, and the integration of images, Web links, multimedia, audio has helped change consumer expectations of how content can be consumed, and this has had wide-reaching implications for the entire publishing sector.

E-books have not only provided a new way for authors to reach audiences, the format has also provided new insights through digital marketing analytics, allowing authors to better analyse the performance of the book, collect real-time reader intelligence and maximise the success of their titles.

Because of this, authors and publishers can no longer focus solely on traditional book publishing models, but need to look into creating cost-effective

and can have the best of both worlds.

**Leon Perera**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Spire Research & Consulting Group

E-BOOKS represent the third revolutionary advance in the history of the written word, after paper and the printing press.

Two impediments to an e-book future have been overcome.

Firstly, technology now allows e-book pages to be lit by ambient light.

Secondly, the business of making affordable e-book readers that can download all kinds of content has achieved mass-market viability.

Physical books and magazines will still attract aficionados, but over time, these will go the way of vinyl discs, as new generations are raised in a digital environment.

But while the medium will change, the essence will not. Good writing – the marshalling of readable prose behind meaningful content – will remain as relevant and attractive as ever.

Managing Director  
PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd

I CONTINUE to read books in the traditional printed form. From the evidence out in the market, this appears to be an entrenched habit and choice.

E-books will take a while to be an attractive alternative to printed ones. When that happens, it is likely to be driven by our Internet savvy younger generation.

I see a parallel in newspapers and documents. When soft copies are available, many thought that the printed form would be obsolete, and predicted the demise of the printing and paper industries. The opposite happened.

The Internet is a great source of information. One can google easily and instantly. Except for novels, the Internet will continue to be a threat to printed books.

**Dora Hoan**  
Co-Chairman/Group CEO  
Best World International Ltd

WITH the advent of tablet computers, books are getting more accessible and cheaper online. Gone are the days of lugging thick but limited volumes of books

**David Leong**  
Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

BOOKS are perennially evergreen and will not go out of fashion.

E-books and digitalisation of print to screen is sexy and full of hype.

For short reading, it is still manageable to read over a device but for extended reading, it can really be a strain. I like reading while on the bed and sleeping over my books. I am not sure if the e-book will take the weight of my rolling over it.

For me, a good book is one which I can fold, scribble, highlight, leave marks and roll over and after a good read, leave on the shelf for me to know that I read it. Nothing less.

**Thirumalai Chandroo**  
Chairman/CEO  
Modern Montessori International Group

DESPITE the apparent expediency of e-books, there is something visceral about turning the pages of an actual



民生民财

# 要值夜班 本地人不干? 月薪2500元 请不到管账员



仁立国际执行董事梁昌国。(图/档案照)

温伟中、陈诗雨  
报道

woonwj@sph.com.sg

不用搬运,也不用做包装,只要在巴西班让蔬果批发市场值夜班做账,月薪就可达2500元,这样的工却一个本地人也请不到!

聘请外劳政策收紧,本地雇主转向请本地人,但人力资源公司仁立国际执行董事梁昌国说,一些本地雇主即使调高薪金吸引本地人,还是困难重重。

他说,公司最近帮忙招聘一份月薪2000至2500元的夜班工作,主要在巴西班让蔬果批发市场的办公室,负责夜间蔬果进口到本地的账目工作。

“工作时间晚上10点到清晨5点,但不用动手搬运或包装,主要负责账目。几个星期来,我们却一个新加坡人都请不到。”

梁昌国说,外劳税提高,本地雇主请外籍员工得在月薪之余包吃包住,总费用好比请本地员工。

“雇主其实偏好请本地人,因为可以训练他们,有望工作更久。问题是本地人有很多条件不能接受,像蔬果批发市场的晚班工作,就是没人要做。”

建煌基建工程董事经理颜毓莹也说,建筑业缺人,已到人手不足怕延误



珍宝火锅聘请的两名台湾籍侍应生,他们都看好本地酒店和餐饮业前景。(图/档案照)



颜毓莹(图/档案照)建煌基建工程董事经理

## 餐饮业改请台湾人 只能‘暂时救火’

应对外劳收紧困境,餐饮业改请台湾人,专家坦承“不实际”,台湾员工对生活素质要求高,只能“暂时救火”,不是长久之计。

最近有报道指出,餐饮业在人手不足下聘请台湾人,因为人力部规定来自台港澳韩等“北亚”区的外劳配额,可达服务业总人手的40%,比中国大陆外劳不超过8%松很多。梁昌国说,台湾目前失业率高,所以台湾人愿意出国找工。但台湾人较多是带着“游学和体验”心态来工作,常不满两年合约就离职。

“台湾人对找工作有要求,月薪少过1600元的工不做,技工和捧咖啡的工也不要,主要找的是管理级工作。他们对生活素质的要求高,台湾的文化生活又丰富,会觉得新加坡相对较闷。”

他说,台湾人只能“暂时救火”,要靠他们来补足不能从中国多请的职位是“不实际”的。

工程被罚钱,所以出现有工程也不敢接的情况。

“建筑业也希望聘请和训练更多本地人,但就是请不到。”

梁昌国分析,本地职场出现矛盾。

“我们不能说本地人懒、不要加班或不做值班和夜班,因为国人也希望取得工作与生活平衡。这当中出现一个矛盾,我们已向政府反应了职场困境。”

### 保健 10分钟

## 预防脂肪肝 每周酒量不应 超过2瓶啤酒

文/潘勇全

预防脂肪肝,每周酒量不应超过2瓶啤酒,还要避免肥胖及定期做检查。

今时今日,最常见的肝病是脂肪肝,它是肝细胞内脂肪堆积过多而引发的肝脏病变。

鹰阁医药中心肠胃与肝脏专科医生韦俊韬说:“根据我的临床经验,脂肪肝已成了最普遍的肝病,过量饮酒是导因之一。”

患脂肪肝的其他5个风险因素包括:肥胖(新加坡人10-20%肥胖)、高胆固醇、高甘油三酯、高血压、糖尿病(10%人口)。有研究结果指出,只要存在其中一个因素,其他的极有可能一一出现。”

预防胜于一切治疗,韦俊韬医生建议,首先应该适量地喝酒,不要酗酒,再来调整饮食习惯,不让自己出现上述的5个因素。



▲ 韦俊韬医生

“喝酒方面建议每周饮用不超过2个单位的酒精,一个单位相当于一瓶啤酒,或一杯红酒或一小杯烈酒,超过的话就有患肝病的风险。”

他说,已患肝病的人则应该滴酒不沾,常喝酒的人应该每半年定期做检查;不抽烟、平时遵照少油少糖少盐的饮食习惯能避免三高和肥胖,由于肝病会悄悄来袭,所以最好是定期做检查,才能保护好肝脏。



预防脂肪肝,喝酒要适量、避免肥胖、定期做检查。(图/档案照片)

### 脂肪肝患者 常死于3疾病

脂肪肝患者最常死于3种疾病:一、心脏疾病,二、癌症(肝以外的癌症),三、肝硬化和肝癌。

韦医生解释,上述的5个风险因素也都是中风和心脏疾病的因素,因此一旦病人出现气喘和胸痛症状,就应该做心脏相关的测试。

乳癌、大肠癌、胰腺癌、子宫癌,都和肥胖有关,因为科学家认为肥胖人士的血液含有增加患癌几率的生长因子。由于脂肪肝患者一般较胖,因此容易患上这些和肥胖有关的癌症。

韦医生说:“香港有研究发现,患脂肪肝的肥胖者更早生大肠息肉,大概在40岁左右,而息肉可能变成大肠癌,因此该族群应该更早在40岁做大肠内窥镜检查。”

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B4

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B7

Ex-STTA head's acquittal: Notice of appeal filed

## Salary for staff already re-hired to be reviewed

Govt will ensure they are not worse off when new pay terms kick in

By **TOH YONG CHUAN**  
MANPOWER CORRESPONDENT

THE public officers re-hired before the latest change in rules will not be short-changed.

The Government will review the salaries of some 1,150 officers who were re-employed when they turned 62 between July 2011 and December last year.

This is to ensure that they are not worse off when the new pay terms kick in tomorrow.

"Their salaries will be aligned to the new guidelines," a Public Service Division (PSD) spokesman told The Straits Times last night.

The PSD had announced on Monday that junior officers, such as clerks in the public sector, will not suffer a pay cut when they are re-employed at 62 years old.

Some senior officers like teachers and management support officers will still have their salaries reduced, but the cut will be capped at 15 per cent, down from 30 per cent now.

It is the right move to equalise the pay between existing officers and those re-hired under the new rules, said human resource analyst David Leong.

"It is good human resource practice to do so, otherwise some (workers) in the same cohort can feel disgruntled," said the managing director of recruitment firm PeopleWorldwide Consulting. "Disgruntled employees can affect productivity."

But while the change is apace in the public sector, some private firms told The Straits Times yesterday that they will not take their

### RE-EMPLOYING OLDER PUBLIC OFFICERS



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCKPHOTO

cue from the Government's latest move. This is because some did not cut the pay of their re-hired workers in the first place.

A check with more than 20 large companies found that some re-employ their workers on the same terms after they turn 62 if they continue to do the same jobs.

These firms included ComfortDelGro Corp, DBS Bank, OCBC Bank, StarHub, CapitaLand and Marina Bay Sands.

The companies cite various reasons for not slashing the pay of older workers. Re-hiring workers at the same terms provides "added certainty and peace of mind"

“

#### WHAT EMPLOYERS SAY

Older colleagues tend to have lower absentee rates than younger ones. Some of them also possess the ability to mentor and coach younger workers.

– Ms Tammy Tan, ComfortDelGro's group corporate communications officer. Workers in the transport firm can work until 67 with no change to their employment terms.

Regardless of age, as long as they are willing and able to contribute in the same capacity, we want to be fair to them by offering the same remuneration.

– Ms Chan Hoi San, StarHub's senior vice-president of human resource

The decision to re-employ workers should be based on individual capability and skill sets, job function and health condition rather than solely on the age factor.

– Mr Thomas Chua, president of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry

”

to them, said a DBS spokesman.

Singapore National Employers Federation executive director Koh Juan Kiat added: "Companies do not cut (the) salaries of workers who are in short supply."

But others, like Resorts World Sentosa and Sheraton Towers Singapore Hotel, preferred to wait and see, saying they may make changes.

Among those that did not reply to The Straits Times were SingTel, Singapore Airlines and United Overseas Bank. PSA Corp and SMRT Corp declined to comment, with the latter citing a Singapore

Exchange gag order as its reason. The transport firm released its quarterly financial results yesterday.

For Dr Moh Chong Tau, president and chief executive officer of precision engineering firm Maki-no Asia, the question of cutting older workers' pay should not have arisen at all. About 20 of the firm's 500 employees were re-hired at 62 without pay cuts.

"An employer who cuts the pay of older workers should remember that he will also grow old one day," said the 62-year-old. [tohy@sph.com.sg](mailto:tohy@sph.com.sg)



## THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

What are the strengths and weaknesses of Singapore's current entrepreneurial landscape?  
What needs to be done to take entrepreneurship in Singapore to the next level?

# Encouraging entrepreneurship

**Kenny Yap Kim-Lee**

Executive Chairman & Managing Director  
Qian Hu

THE strengths of Singapore's current entrepreneurial landscape are a pro-business government, a vibrant venture capitalist market, and ease of starting a business. The weaknesses are Singapore's parents wanting their children to be like them instead of being themselves. Also, for many Singaporeans, career decision is based on money and not so much passion or a desire to make an impact. Of course, an unforgiving environment - Asian society's attitude towards failure, causing people's sense of well-being to plummet when they fail - is detrimental to promoting entrepreneurship.

To take entrepreneurship in Singapore to the next level, first and foremost, parents should pay more attention to the development of their children as human beings and let them be themselves. This is because before you learn how to do business, you must first have humanity. Secondly, we must also believe that money is a means, not an end. Last but not least, those who tried but failed should be accorded greater respect from our society than many people who only talk but do nothing.

**Ingrid Sidiadinoto**

Managing Director  
UPS Singapore

SINGAPORE'S fundamental advantages such as its robust financial hub status, good governance, solid infrastructure and logistics capabilities, are optimum factors to facilitate an entrepreneurial landscape. Through active investment in a range of initiatives and policies that aim to facilitate business creation and expansion, the Singapore government has been successful in encouraging a spirit of entrepreneurship, especially among the young demographic within certain industries such as technology.

From a logistics perspective, a trend that we are noticing is that more entrepreneurs taking advantage of the mature logistics landscape in Singapore to drive business growth - for instance, by harnessing reliable e-commerce solutions such as marketable labels which improves the start-up's visibility, to navigate regulations and help grow their business internationally.

Moving forward, to further support new companies

JOB creation and the overall economic health of the country are dependent on the entrepreneurial landscape. In Singapore, there are favourable government policies targeted at firms, including favourable taxes and licensing and industry regulations. The education sector has also seen reform to encourage more entrepreneurs who benefit from government funding; however, sometimes they are too dependent on government intervention before venturing out on their own.

At the socio-political level, our educational system and social bias for scholastic achievements coupled with the concentration of talent in governmental sectors have a negative impact on entrepreneurship. An immediate action for the government will be to ensure that rising business costs and foreign talent issues can be balanced alongside favourable growth of entrepreneurs.

**Steve Melhuish**

Co-Founder and Group Chief Executive Officer  
PropertyGuru

WHAT is most critical to creating a purposeful entrepreneurial environment is the presence of successful role models, entrepreneurs who have built their companies from scratch and minimal self-funding to become a successful Singapore story.

When I first started my company, I met fresh graduates who were really passionate about building products with minimal cash. Now, the entire scene has fundamentally changed. We have local and international entrepreneurs with government-backed investments as well as international heavyweights entering the scene. I have an enormous admiration for people who have the drive to do the things that they believe in.

The environment is favourable now, which makes it much easier to embark and explore entrepreneurship. My personal maxim is simply this: Just do it! Even if the market is small, just go for it. Be very focused and be brave about starting a new concept with the aim of investing in other markets, and eventually IPO.

Don't make the mistake that I did by stretching the company and people to its breaking point. Ambition is an excellent trait to have but manage your human resource platform well. Continue to hire and emphasise strongly on product development. Aim to do well in one market first, and then use that successful model to expand to other markets.

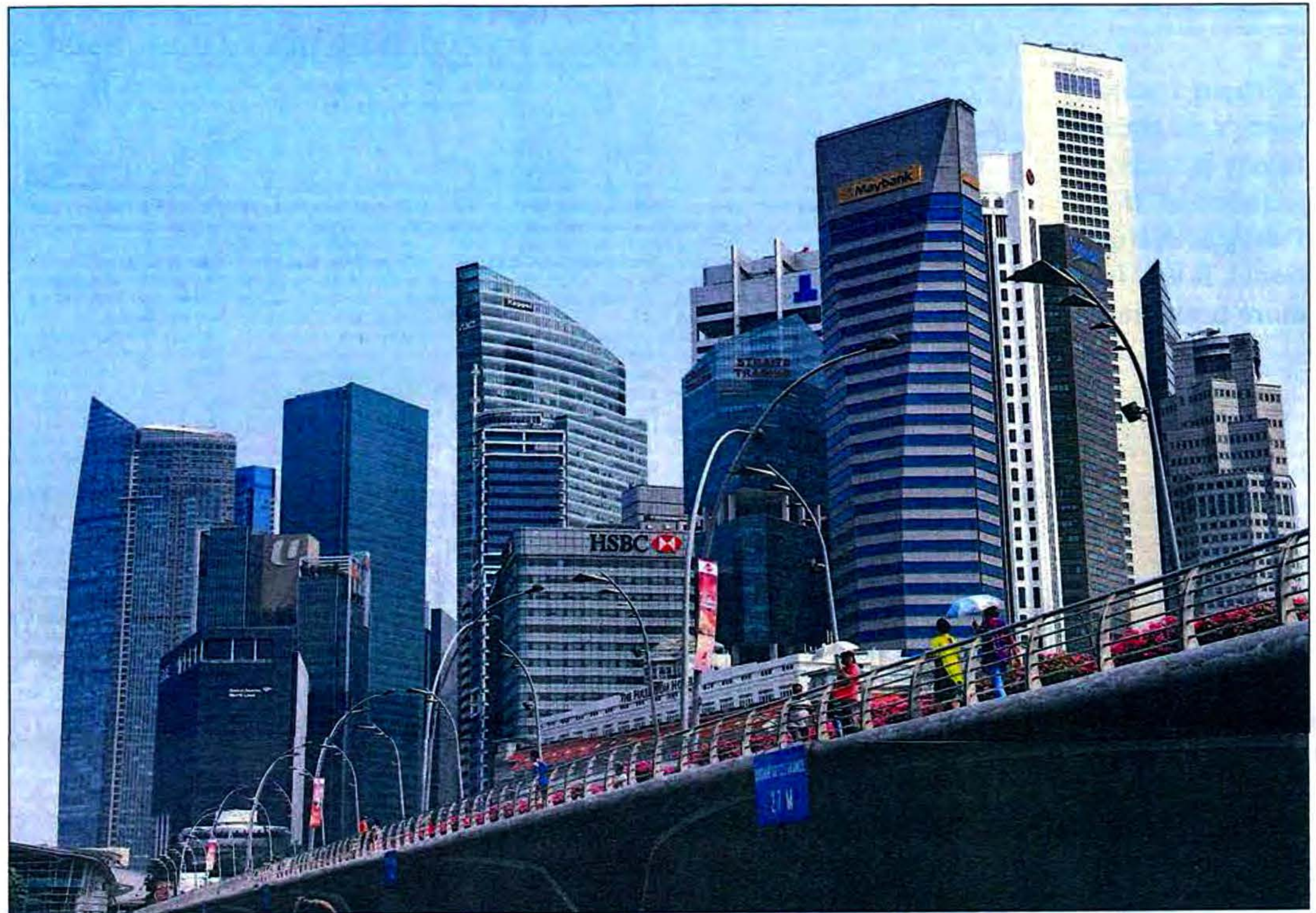


PHOTO: AFP

**David Leong**

Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

THE whole gamut of financial assistance and grants rendered by the government points to its proactive support of entrepreneurship in Singapore. It is therefore not the lack of support but what kind of support really helps. The all important question is: Is such help effective in promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship, the spirit of risk taking and acceptance of failures?

To promote real risk taking, the government should provide cheap loans capped to a certain amount for entrepreneurs within the initial start-up phase or within a fixed period from incorporation. Business plans and pitches are still needed but they take on the risk of the debts. The load of debts will heighten entrepreneurs' sense of survival as the fire behind their backs spur actions. Loans can be structured on different phases - start-up, growth, expansion - and short-term loan and loan interests can be premised on stages of growth and quantum and tenure of loan. Such help will carry the entrepreneurs further.

I know because I started my business with \$10,000 borrowed from my mother. I know I cannot afford to fail. The fire spurred me to a fury to see my businesses through.

**John Koh**

Managing Director  
WMRC Private Ltd

TO be an entrepreneur takes a lot of courage. It means leaving the security of a regular job (with its associated stable income and career progression), and having to deal with unknowns which can work for or against a person. Singaporeans are not conditioned to be natural entrepreneurs. The reasons are varied but the main one could be attributed to our education system, which is extremely structured and academic based.

For the complete list of views  
from CEOs, go to  
<http://businesstimes.com.sg>

Real estate prices have gone up substantially over the last two years. Similarly, rental for commercial space has increased by more than 50% in some parts of Yangon. We project that this upward trend will continue.

**Q1: As Myanmar's economy is still under-developed, what is the mid to long term investment outlook?**

Myanmar's goals include its desire to modernize and industrialize. The government also seeks to create jobs for its population, create sustainable growth as well as re-engage the international economic community.

Businesses that are involved in infrastructure development, property development, construction, tourism and hospitality, education and training, and healthcare have huge market demand and growth potential in the mid to long term.

**Q2: Which are the most promising sectors for foreign investment?**

Real estate, tourism and hospitality are the sectors that have great growth potential in the next two decades.

Currently only a third of the country's population is urbanised. With the influx of foreign investments and developments, more people will move into the cities for opportunities. This migration dynamics often brings about exponential growth in real estate prices.

Visitor arrivals are set to reach 1.5 million this year and are projected to hit 7.5 million by 2020. Following 50 years of isolation, the country is a splendid destination for visitors with its untouched, virgin natural landscape.

**Q3: What sectors is Zochwell investing in and why?**

Zochwell Group is invested in real estate and the tourism & hospitality industry.



Zochwell Group

Real estate prices have gone up substantially over the last two years. Similarly, rental for commercial space has increased by more than 50% in some parts of Yangon. We project that this upward trend will continue.

The severe shortage of hotels and the lack of infrastructure in the country to support increasing visitors' arrival are set to see this sector grow by leap and bound. Zochwell Group has recently acquired an island in the Myeik Archipelago and intends to develop it into the next tourism hotspot in Myanmar.

Zochwell Group is currently partnering various companies and consortiums to invest or participate in various development projects. With our strong foothold and wide network in Myanmar, we have worked with consortiums like Asia Capital Holdings, formed by a group of investors from China, investing in our hotels and island development project.

**Q4: Are there any incentives that Singapore investors can tap profitably?**

President Thein Sein, being a pro-reformist, has rolled out many new policies that are pro foreign investment. Under the latest amendments to the Foreign Investment Law, Singaporeans can now own 100% shares of a foreign company and there is a 5-year tax holiday and other tax incentives. Myanmar also has a double tax agreement with Singapore. Investments in Myanmar are protected from arbitration and nationalization. All these policies are in place to minimize risks for investors and maximize their profits.





# 中元节烧猪订单比去年增加20%

郭倩婷 报道  
kwokst@sph.com.sg

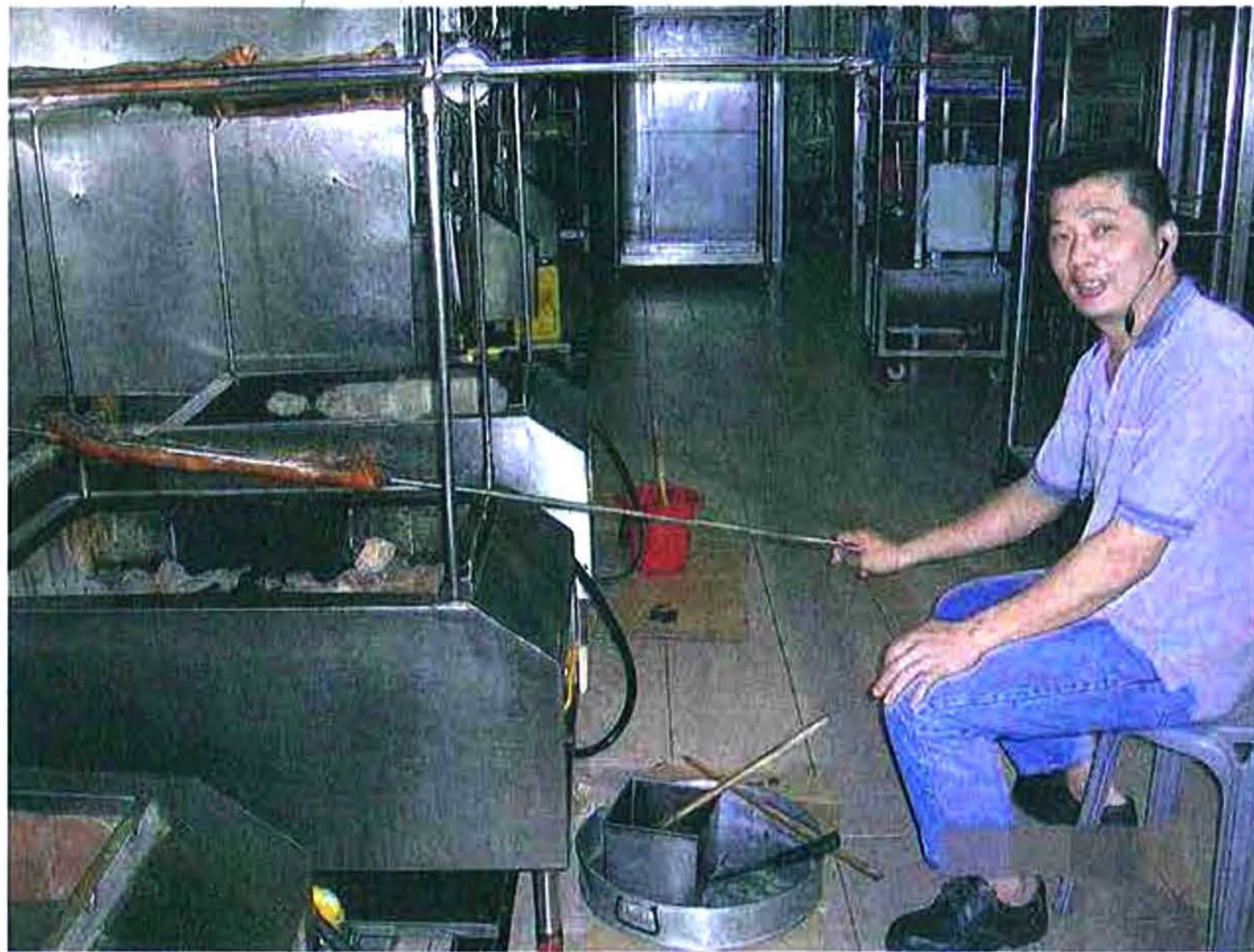
今年行情不错, 冰冻生猪供应充足, 受访商家表示, 中元节烧猪订单比去年增加10%至20%。

中峇鲁烧猪专卖店老板卓侑星说, 超过两公斤(3公斤以下)的乳猪, 每只售价168元; 大只乳猪(13至14公斤)388元。

“今年订单比去年多, 增加了10%至20%; 筹办中元节的商家都舍得预定乳猪来办中元会。”

我国食用的冰冻生猪主要来自中国湖南、浙江、江苏和西班牙。

李炳鸿烧腊供应商(烧猪专卖店)老板傅成发说, 目前接到的乳猪订单比去年增加20%。



李炳鸿烧腊供应商(烧猪专卖店)老板傅成发在烧烤乳猪。(图/档案照)

高, 工厂老板们在筹办



仁立国际执行董事梁昌国(图/档案照)



建煌基建工程董事经理颜毓莹(图/档案照)

## 外劳配额政策收紧 餐饮业聘台湾人 建筑业请斯里兰卡人

温伟中 报道  
woonwj@sph.com.sg

企业面对外劳紧缩困境, 各出新招应对, 餐饮业聘请台湾人, 建筑业改请斯里兰卡和菲律宾客工。

本月开始, 政府进一步收紧外劳配额, 包括建筑业外劳配额下调15%、增加外劳税等, 各行各业面对“人手不够”困境。

《海峡时报》报道, 包括同乐和珍宝在内的6家餐饮集团, 已开始从台湾聘请厨师和侍应生。

原来, 根据人力部规定, 来自台湾和港澳、韩国等“北亚”区的外劳配额, 可达服务业总人手40%, 比中国外劳不能超过8%松很多。

新加坡餐馆协会希望本地员工能学习观摩台湾人的热情和微笑, 提升服务水平。



珍宝火锅聘请的两名台湾籍侍应生, 他们都看好本地酒店和餐饮业前景。(图/海峡时报)

人力资源公司仁立国际执行董事梁昌国说, 过去3年他带入近300名台湾人, “台湾人的优点是工作认真, 能说流利中英文, 雇主对他们的评价都不错。”

另一方面, 建筑业近30万名工人, 一向以中国和印度客工为主, 如今也因两地经济腾飞而少来, 业者转向斯里

兰卡和菲律宾求救兵应急。

业者希望在10月以前, 每月能从这两个国家请到大约400名员工。

建煌基建工程董事经理颜毓莹说, 整体来说, 目前是“工多人少”, 工程成本飙升, 因人手紧而拖延进度, 业者担心罚款或亏本, 不太敢接工作。



**Abdullah Ibrahim**  
 Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer  
 UEM Sunrise Berhad

AS master developer of Nusajaya, the epicentre of Iskandar Malaysia, it is our priority that businesses continue to thrive, as they are the key drivers and success indicators of the economy. The year 2012 was the "tipping point" in the regional city's development, which we define as the moment "when a slow and reversible change becomes irreversible with dramatic consequences".

The first phase of projects has been completed and they include Puteri Harbour, Southern Industrial and Logistics Cluster, Nusajaya Residences, Afiat Healthpark, EduCity, Kota Iskandar, Puteri Harbour Indoor Theme Park and Legoland® Malaysia. The Coastal Highway which connects Nusajaya and Johor Bahru also ensures excellent connectivity to and from the city. The second phase of development will drive Nusajaya towards its full potential as a truly attractive destination for businesses.

Now is the right time to go to Nusajaya and it is only going to get better. Our journey has just started and there is more to come.

**Lam Joon Khoi**  
 Secretary-General  
 Singapore Manufacturing Federation

THE Iskandar Malaysia project remains an attractive proposition for many Singapore companies and individuals. It certainly widens the options available to them when they consider expansion, restructuring or relocation. They will, of course, have to factor the availability of labour, the cost of land and compliance with the regulation in their decision-making. Being close to Singapore, companies in Iskandar can continue to leverage on the value chain provided by companies in Singapore, eg, design, logistics and financing.

Investing in Iskandar is not a one-off decision. Current and prospective participants need to regularly assess their needs, seek professional advice and monitor the development plan of Iskandar. At Singapore Manufacturing Federation, we have taken the initiative, with the support of Spring Singapore, to assist companies that are interested in Iskandar. We endeavour to provide up-to-date and relevant information, and facilitate companies to access business networks in Iskandar. Ultimately, the decision rests with the companies.

**V Hariharan**  
 CEO  
 Singapore Mercantile Exchange

COMPANIES and individuals have been drawn to Iskandar by the promise of cheaper land and labour, and generous tax breaks. But where sufficient cheap labour will come from continues to be a big question mark. One has seen similar plans in China not taking off and there were haunting images of ghost cities like Chenggong, Yunnan in early 2000. An indicator of the challenges closer home is Singapore's own labour shortage in sectors such as hospitality and new offices with the varied initiatives needed to successfully manage a business. With the reported labour shortage and rising manpower costs, prospective employers are considering how to secure and retain top talent.

**David Leong**  
 Managing Director  
 PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

ISKANDAR Malaysia project is not a faddish movement and proposition. Iskandar Malaysia will become an integral part of Singapore's production extension and our fates will be tightly interweaved and intertwined together. It is to become a tale of two cities with many shared interests. Iskandar provides the space for Singapore's expansion. For what Singapore lacks - physical land and manpower constraints - Iskandar can provide.

However, as both cities share the same development tale, the governments on both sides must develop predictable sets of governing laws and policies to regulate the movement of goods and services, including ease of immigration control. The transportation grid from Singapore must be extended to Iskandar with ease.

Businesses in Singapore should have an "Iskandar Strategy" at some point in time for their manufacturing expansion. It will be a smarter way to grow with lower cost. The fervour in Johor in the Iskandar development region will intensify over the years.

**Dora Hoan**  
 Co-Chairman/Group CEO  
 Best World International Ltd

TO ascertain whether the Iskandar Malaysia project is suitable, companies need to re-evaluate their priorities. If their pressing issues are land cost and manpower constraints, then these can be resolved by Iskandar. Furthermore, even though the shortage of skilled labour can be problematic, this is most probably only a short-term issue since staff can be trained.

With the imperative problems resolved, companies would then need to manage their expectations in other areas, such as the skill level of staff, infrastructure, logistics, etc. In addition, companies need to be cautious about the Malaysian import duty; they have to study whether their products or raw materials are taxable.

While Iskandar can be an appealing solution in face of the rising business costs in Singapore, the project is, by no means, a panacea.

**Ang Swee Meng, Allen**  
 Group Managing Director  
 Aldon Technologies Services Pte Ltd

NOTWITHSTANDING the current favourable investment climate, Singapore companies contemplating investing in Iskandar Malaysia should do their homework and not rush into it. In addition to the cost factor, manufacturing companies should consider other factors including availability of skilled labour, logistics, proximity to customers and intangible costs like security, communications, bureaucracy and supply chain. In addition, manufacturers should consider the longer-term scenario and manage their risks appropriately as factories and machinery are long-term investments.

**THIS WEEK'S TOPIC**

Is the Iskandar Malaysia project still an attractive proposition for Singapore companies and individuals? Do current and prospective participants need to readjust their expectations and strategies, and if so, how?

# Assessing Iskandar



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very helpful and it has been a pleasant experience working with them.

**Mr Alvin Yap**  
 HR Manager  
 IKEA Singapore

**Ms Lydia Cheong**  
 Marketing & Business Development  
 Manager  
 SEED Institute

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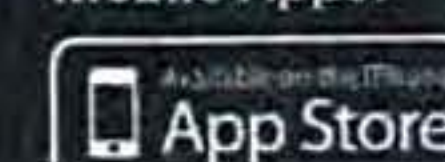


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**Cameron Vernest**

Managing Director of Singapore & the Philippines  
BlackBerry

MANY see the F1 Grand Prix race in Singapore as one of the season's best races and the only night race available. A race along an iconic skyline, watched by millions of viewers worldwide, is definitely one way to elevate Singapore's presence on the map.

Also, there are not many events that currently showcase Singapore's appeal as a tourism and investment destination the way the Singapore Grand Prix does. BlackBerry is collaborating with the Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 Team on both technical and marketing opportunities.

This opportunity definitely brings tremendous value to us as a brand, similar to the value driven (pun intended) by the F1 in Singapore.

As an avid sportsman, it would be great if Singapore would consider hosting a National Hockey League (NHL) game.

**Jeremy Lee**

Regional Manager, S-E Asia & Taiwan  
Moog

GLOBAL events like the F1 GP definitely enhance Singapore's profile internationally. In fact events like this put Singapore on the world stage and to that extent it is necessary to have a few marquee events on an annual or biennial basis.

Hosting these events not only brings out the best side of the country but also demonstrates the capability to manage mega projects.

Given the size, we may not be able to host the Olympics or World Cup soccer, but can definitely host signature sporting events like a Singapore Open WTA Championship and even create more industry specific events that set the trend.

Also tourism is a significant contributor to Singapore's GDP and such global events will go a long way in enhancing the arrival of business and leisure travellers.

**Kemmy Tan**

Chief Operating Officer  
M+S Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE'S spectacular skyline which sets the backdrop to the world's first F1 night race has been pivotal in placing Singapore in the international spotlight as a vibrant global city over the past five years. We are confident that it will continue to do so.

The skyline showcases a number of award-winning and internationally renowned architectural gems such as Marina Bay Sands, the Singapore Flyer and Esplanade Theatres on the Bay. We believe that number will only flourish under the Marina Bay Masterplan, which outlines a grand vision for the area.

Besides global events, we believe, as property developers ourselves, award-winning architecture will also cement Singapore's position as an international city.

More so for projects with sustainability at their core such as Gardens by the Bay with 101-ha of prime waterfront land dedicated to lush greenery as part of URA's City in a Garden initiative.

Looking into the future, Marina One will incorporate a unique garden ecosystem that will be a sanctuary and green space for communities to come together; a first for a Central Business District (CBD) development in Singapore.

**Iain Twine**

CEO, South-east Asia and Australasia  
Edelman Public Relations Worldwide Pte Ltd

THE focus needs to be on volume of traffic. Traffic of people through the airport and hotels, across media, and through their spend.

The real time benefit of Singapore featured globally on social networks, in the papers, on TV, and through conversations with friends around the world, is hard to measure but it has value. It also creates points of pride for Singaporeans.

Big box events that show Singaporeans know how to support and get behind global sports, arts and culture, and the issues of tomorrow should be the sweet spot. If we don't go big, we will lose out.

**David Leong**

Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

F1 Grand Prix attracts eyeballs. It is a global advertisement and a sustainable attraction for Singapore. Singapore needs such constant fireworks that can spark international interest.

Mardi Gras is the most famous Brazilian season. Brazil attracts 70 per cent of its tourists during this period.

The largest carnival celebration in Brazil and the world occurs in Rio de Janeiro, where two million people are found celebrating in the city.

Singapore is an Asian melting pot and could get different countries' dances to be paraded with a water-festival-like celebration followed by a celebration of Asian food. Such dances and food festivals are attractions for tourists.

Events and carnivals like these will add to Singapore's sparkle.

**Hugues Delcourt**

Country Executive, ABN AMRO Bank NV Singapore and  
Chief Executive Officer of ABN AMRO Private Banking  
Asia & Middle East

THE Singapore F1 night race has certainly done wonders to put Singapore on the global map. The soft power of international sporting events delivers tremendous visibility, trumping the impact of other noteworthy business event activities such as the MICE industry.

At ABN AMRO, at least I as a keen tennis player, would like to see Singapore stage a major tennis tournament like the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament (in Rotterdam) of which ABN AMRO has been a proud sponsor for 40 years.

The appeal of the sport is indeed universal and tennis tournaments consistently score among the top 10 TV audiences.

We can testify to this as today the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament is broadcast in 172 countries, and is covered in every corner of the world, in newspapers, sports magazines, online and on TV.

Although there is not yet a significant number of Asian tennis stars, staging a world-class tournament here in the region would be sure to inspire more young Asians to take up the sport, and who knows - perhaps Singapore could produce a Wimbledon men's champion

**THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:**

Are global events like the Singapore F1 Grand Prix the best way to enhance Singapore's profile internationally? What other events or projects would you like to see hosted in Singapore?

# SHOWCASING SINGAPORE



**A burst of national pride:** Fireworks lighting up the night sky over the brightly-lit Marina Bay street circuit of the SingTel Singapore Grand Prix Formula One (F1) race on Sept 25, 2011. FILE PHOTO

**Kenny Goh**

Group Chief Executive Officer  
MACROKIOSK

SINGAPORE has put itself on the world stage after hosting major sporting events such as the Youth Olympics and F1. The nation was proven to be an excellent setting for such world-class events and strong awareness was generated, among locals and foreigners alike, of the city's financial and infrastructure capabilities, rich heritage and beauty. With Singapore's Sports Hub due to open sometime next year, I very much look forward to seeing a major sporting event such as the Asian Games or even the Olympics being held in Singapore.

We at MACROKIOSK believe that, given the state of Singapore's technology infrastructure coupled with the proliferation of smart devices in the hands of an increasingly mobile savvy community, organisers can explore taking a step further and utilising mobile services and solutions to creatively engage audiences at home, on the move or abroad with more interactive, real-time informational experience in a way never before possible.

By leveraging on mobile technology engagement, Singapore will succeed in positioning itself, to the ever growing mobile society of more than 6 billion worldwide, as a country that is not only good and safe for business but an exciting place for leisure as well.







B6

University eyes 'open, 24/7' campus

B4

An award for helping young people

## Fresh grads banking on finance sector

### Tough competition as aspirations do not match hiring demand: Experts

By JANICE HENG

AFTER finishing a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering, 25-year-old Samuel Chan is ready to start a career - in banking.

The Nanyang Technological University graduate will join UOB Group's Management Associate programme next month.

As an undergraduate, Mr Chan had an academic interest in engineering. But when it came to jobs, he decided that the sector was not for him. "I felt that it was probably less commercial, less dynamic and less fast-paced than banking," he said.

And then, there is the pay. Industry surveys suggest that entry-level pay in engineering jobs is around \$2,800 monthly, compared to over \$3,000 in finance.

The job market for fresh graduates is seeing a mismatch between aspirations and employer demand. This may mean tough competition in areas such as finance, and too little in those such as engineering, say experts.

"Our engineering cohorts each year do not enter the industry but

seek opportunities in other industries, particularly in the finance field," said managing director David Leong of human resource firm PeopleWorldwide Consulting.

Besides better pay, the finance sector is also perceived by some as being more attractive in terms of job scope and prospects.

On the Manpower Ministry's list of degree-level jobs with the most vacancies, engineering jobs took up three of the top 10 places last year. These jobs were in the fields of civil, mechanical as well as industrial and production engineering.

The other positions in need of workers included posts such as management executive, teaching and software developer.

So while jobs for graduates are not scarce, it could be harder to get the specific one young graduates want.

Despite anecdotes of degree-holders having trouble in the job market, such candidates are a small minority.

Last year, 85.6 per cent of graduates landed a full-time permanent job within six months of

their final examinations.

The issue might instead be high expectations, said human resource experts. "They're demanding competitive salaries, immediate career growth and exciting job content - ideally wanting their first role to tick all the boxes," said Randstad country director of Singapore Michael Smith.

Kelly Services Singapore vice-president and country general manager Mark Hall added that graduates may thus take longer to find a job that meets their expectations.

Another issue is that in sectors such as banking, fierce competition may make it seem as though the market has worsened - even though most banks said they have not scaled back graduate hiring.

Some have even ramped it up. DBS Bank, for instance, hired 20 per cent more fresh graduates last year.

But the number of applicants is still far in excess of the number of places. Last year, there were nearly 7,000 applications for 60 places in two DBS Bank programmes.

Banks also welcome candidates from all educational backgrounds. Said OCBC Bank's head of human resource planning Jacinta Low: "We value diversity in our workforce."



Fresh graduate Samuel Chan, who studied aerospace engineering, will join UOB Group's Management Associate programme next month. ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO

This is good news for those without related degrees, but it could mean even more competition. If graduates want a less heat-

ed fight, where should they look? Mr Hall suggested that it will be easier for them to find jobs in growing industries like hospitali-

# 60

Number of places in two of DBS Bank's programmes last year

# 7,000

Number of applications for those places

“

ATTRACTED ELSEWHERE

Our engineering cohorts each year do not enter the industry but seek opportunities in other industries, particularly in the finance field.

- Managing director David Leong of human resource firm PeopleWorldwide Consulting

”

ty, retail and the medical sectors. Still, those with their hearts set on finance could consider specialist or niche roles in areas such as risk and compliance, which banks say remain hard to fill.

Demand for these roles seems likely to stay strong. Said Mr George McFerran, managing director for Asia-Pacific at finance job site eFinancialCareers: "Since the financial crisis, banks are facing more regulatory obligations, forcing them to increase the size of their compliance teams."

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联合

# 晚报

Lianhe Wanbao



北京

## 政府下月推出‘劳动市场数据网站’

公众预料下个月就能上网与同行比较薪水，多数受访民众表示这提高薪水透明度，有助于他们同雇主谈薪酬条件。

副总理兼财政部长尚达曼昨日在“电子政府环球交流会”(eGov Global Exchange)宣布这项服务。

他说，政府一直在了解公众的需求，尽量满足他们所需要的服务，也改善沟通渠道。



公众赞好!

### 上网与同行比薪水!

# 清楚行情 方便‘讲价’

张承尧 报道

changcy@sph.com.sg

由人力部即将推出的“劳动市场数据互动网站”，民众只要输入自己的行业、年龄与公司规模，还有雇佣条件如薪资、薪水增长率与员工福利，就能知道自己的薪水在同行中属于哪个百分位(Percentile)。

这个网站采用人力部调查的1万7000多家公司，300多种职业。

受访民众多认为服务能帮助他们与雇主“讲价”。

詹伟国(27岁，市场销售人员)就说一定会上网比较自己的工资。

“如果以后换公司或更新合约，心里就会有底，知道如何争取合适的工资。”

他表示这也是一个很好评估自己表现的指标。公司肯定明白员工发现自己的薪水比市价高还是低。

“如果发现自己的薪水过低，那可能是表现不如意。我会努力表现更好，下次谈工资的时候就更有筹码。”

部分民众认为这项服务无助于与公司谈薪酬。

林惠芳(24岁，社工)就说，即使知道自己的薪水比市价低，公司还是有101种理由告诉你为什么你拿这个价钱。

“而且大家大概都明白自己行业的薪水标准，我觉得服务所带来的效用并不大。”

谢智信(26岁，秘书)也认为，其他因素如公司的人事、工作职务，才是影响找工作的主要因素。

## 人力资源顾问：有助国人提高工资



人力资源顾问梁昌国。(图/档案照)

人力资源顾问梁昌国受访时表示，这项服务借由提高薪水透明度，帮助国人，尤其是低收入民众，提高自己的工资。

“政府近年方向是提高国人的工资，除了减少外国劳动人口以及要求雇主加薪，这项服务是让公众知道自己的定位在哪，促使雇主能提供员工更合理的薪水。”

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“政府近年方向是提高国人的工资，除了减少外国劳动人口以及要求雇主加薪，这项服务是让公众知道自己的定位在哪，促使雇主能提供员工更合理的薪水。”

他说过去有不少私人机构调查不同行业的薪水，所以这项由政府推动的服务，背后的意义比实质效果更重要。

也可查询我国各区人口分布



副总理兼财政部长尚达曼。(图/档案照)

尚达曼昨日在“电子政府环球交流会”(eGov Global Exchange)上也宣布另一项人口查询(PopulationQuery)的服务。

公众可以透过这项服务了解新加坡各区人口的分布，并按照家庭语言、居民收入和职业等22项条件进行检索。

系统会分区显示符合条件的人口分布，让民众在购物或开店之前获得更多信息。



**Ronald Lee**  
Managing Director  
PrimeStaff Management Services Pte Ltd

FROM the perspective of low-income employees, this would certainly be a welcome move as Singapore's cost of living has been rising. At the other end of the spectrum is the business community, which has been struggling to stay competitive by restructuring their business models in the face of rising business costs and a tight labour market, against a backdrop of moderate economic growth forecast of 1 to 3 per cent. SMEs especially may find it challenging to implement these new wage guidelines.

The guidelines most likely to have the strongest impact would be the \$60 wage hike for workers earning \$1,000 or less. Should companies adopt it, this would add to their long-term fixed business costs, regardless of economic conditions.

Ultimately, these are not rules that will be enforced by the authorities but merely recommendations, and it is the prerogative of the company to choose to adopt them. Companies that choose not to adopt these guidelines, however, may lose employees to others who are willing to pay higher wages in line with the National Wages Council's recommendations.

**Thomas Zilliacus**  
Chairman & CEO  
YuuZoo Corporation

WHILE I am a strong supporter of letting the market determine wage levels, I understand the thinking of the NWC in making sure those at the lowest steps of the ladder are not left behind. In view of this, I do not consider the recommendation by the NWC excessive.

At YuuZoo, we have a strong belief in sharing good results among all employees, through options and bonuses. Staff who can feel the success of the company in their own pocket will be much more motivated than those who, regardless of results, get a fixed salary increase.

**Christophe Duchatellier**  
CEO  
Adecco Asia

THESE recommendations address the needs of the current workforce, particularly the lower-income group earning \$1,000 and below. The recommendations, coupled with last year's initiatives, will positively impact this particular group.

However, with employers facing rising costs as well as the higher cost of living, the assistance provided has to be sustainable in the long term. Regardless of the various income groups, companies and government have to work together towards providing tangible real-world solutions that may not necessarily result in an increase in salary but offer other benefits that can include childcare, eldercare and healthcare.

**Annie Yap**  
Managing Director  
AYP Associates Pte Ltd

THE National Wages Council's recommendations to raise wages for all workers are fair and appropriate albeit having a strong impact on workers and companies themselves.

Amid the problem of rising costs, we see it as an opportune time to relook into our business model as rising costs and wages are an issue that is here to stay. We should hence look into how we can increase our

**David Leong**  
Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

OUTSOURCING has been a pervasive trend and such a practice locks in wages for workers as the contract pricing binds the service providers and service buyers. There is no leeway for any wage adjustments for these workers despite NWC's recommendations without profitability impact on the service providers.

In such an arrangement, if the service buyers can allow for contractual inclusion to allow for wage adjustments based on NWC's guidelines and allow service providers to charge back the adjustments, this will be a real worker-centric initiative that will benefit workers.

The quantum of \$60 adjustment only exceeds slightly the rate of inflation and such adjustment is nonetheless meaningful for low wage workers.

Outsourcing must evolve to become best-sourcing. In the end, in a race of the bid price to the bottom with the lowest bid always winning, the likely victims of such practices will be the workers whose wages will always be priced low. The workers are mostly in non-bargainable positions and if service buyers and service providers can break this intractable chain of stagnant

## THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Do you consider the National Wages Council's latest recommendations fair and appropriate given the current economic climate? What are the guidelines most likely to have the strongest impact on workers, and companies themselves?

# Wages and sustainability



help them achieve these gains by investing in numerous technology initiatives.

wage for low wage workers, NWC will have scored a meaningful goal.

**Leif Agnéus**  
Senior Vice-President and General Manager,  
EMEA and APAC  
Kelly Services, Inc

THE proposed recommendations by the National Wages Council are likely to attract public attention given the current economic climate. The suggestion to uplift salaries of low-wage workers will help this group cope with the increasing cost of living.

However, some companies may struggle to manage their budgets to cover these additional overheads. Incentives, such as the Wage Credit Scheme, rolled out in Budget 2013 are partly designed to help ease such manpower-related costs and make it more affordable

ease the burden of daily living costs.

While it means higher operational costs for companies, the nominal increase could likely boost staff morale and could also serve as a form of talent retention within these companies.

**Zaheer K Merchant**  
Regional Director (Singapore & Europe)  
QI Group of Companies

THE NWC's recommendation is appropriate and commendable. The jury is out on whether it's "fair". It's fair to say the recommendations for lower wage workers, particularly in the unionised perspective, are required. They are arguably very modest, given the present weak economic climate with heightened inflation. The problem, though, is that implementation by companies is low. The statistics depict a stark three in 10 adoption rate for non-unionised entities.

Guidelines with the strongest impact will be strong incentives ranging from cost rebates to tax incentives, leaving companies with the ability to make direct payments, either as wages or bonuses. Greater clarity and flexibility in the Wage Credit Scheme announced in Budget 2013 will definitely help, especially if long-term and sustainable across wage sectors.

for companies to pay out more attractive wages or bonuses.

The NWC recommends rewarding strong performance with bonuses which is likely to have a positive impact all round. They are a financially sustainable way for companies to encourage productivity, and they also help to keep employees happy and motivated.

**Joshua Yim**  
CEO  
Achieve Group

THE recommendation of a minimum raise of \$60 for employees earning less than \$1,000 is definitely a good initiative. It's the right step to start addressing the income disparity between the low-wage workers and the median income, which is in excess of \$3,000. However, I personally feel that the \$60 increase is very



**Sam Yap**

Group Executive Chairman  
HTwo Investments Holdings Pte Ltd

FROM the business perspective, we do not see any drastic change or risk in our line of business in Malaysia with the recent outcome of their General Election.

Our services to the Malaysian population in the area of early childhood education and pre-school services would be well-received irrespective of the political leadership as education is a core component in the overall strategic direction of the country.

Parents are more enlightened on the need for early headstart for their children and understand the importance of child development in the early years.

Our provision of these services in the private sector would complement the programmes provided by the public sector and NGOs and other agencies like PERMATA. We look forward to further business development in Malaysia.

**David Leong**

Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

WHATEVER the political outcome arising from the recent election in Malaysia, the relationship will freeze, thaw and warm up according to the chemistry between the respective political leaders.

The relationship between PM Lee Hsien Loong and his Malaysian counterpart PM Najib Razak is warm and they have good chemistry, rapport and mutual respect. When businessmen see such rapport, with good and stable political relationship, they will be more comfortable about investing. There is predictability which is good for businesses.

The fervour in Johor in the Iskandar development region will intensify over the years. Singapore will be the Manhattan and Johor the New Jersey. Whatever, it will be a situation of prospering together because Malaysia is indeed an inseparable hinterland.

**Dan McConaghy**

President  
FICO Asia

AFTER any election where the incumbent stays in power, it means a continuation of policies and governance. This is important for companies and organisations that have made a significant investment in the economy, to be able to keep the momentum and increase growth and productivity.

What I do see, though, is the future potential of a credit crunch for the working class. In the run-up to the election, several election promises totalling a few billion ringgit were made.

According to some analysts, funding these incentives may require introduction of additional taxes like GST which will impact consumers and SMEs directly in the near future. The government can take steps to ensure

**THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:**

How do you view Malaysia from a business viewpoint after the election?  
What opportunities do you see, and what risks?

# Positive about Malaysia







Two in three Singaporeans are expected to hold jobs that require brains over brawn. But can the economy cope with such a high

number of PMET workers? A fundamental shift in the way we define success has to be part of the new landscape.

## How many PMET jobs can S'pore support?



By AARON LOW  
ASSISTANT MONEY EDITOR

**T**HE traditional route to success in Singapore has always been to do well in school and snag a scholarship to study in a prestigious overseas university.

Even if the grades do not merit a scholarship, most parents still want their children in university at least. After all, a degree opens doors to an office job, preferably one that pays well.

This expectation is likely to intensify, according to the population White Paper released in January, which said that most workers will be in a position that requires more brains than brawn.

"Overall, two-thirds of Singaporeans will hold (jobs as professionals, managers, executives or technicians) in 2030, compared to about half today," it stated.

But is this an unrealistic expectation? Will there be enough of what are called PMET jobs for this growing group of Singaporeans?

### Great expectations

THE problem with setting out estimates so clearly is that it anchors people's expectations.

The two-thirds estimate can be easily read in this way by many people: The majority of citizens here will have a cushy job in 20 years' time that pays well.

But a check with the Manpower (MOM) and Trade and Industry (MTI) ministries showed that the two-thirds figure was not a projection but rather an estimate based on the expected rise in the levels of education and the kinds of jobs such graduates are now working in.

"It was a supply-side estimate based on the projected educational profile of Singaporean workers in 2030 and historical education to occupation trends," said the ministries in a reply to The Straits Times.

"The actual number of PMET jobs available will depend on companies' demand."

In other words, the two-thirds figure is an indication of Singapore's aspirations rather than a projection of how many of us will be in such jobs.

This changes things dramatically. It essentially means that the country could well be on course for a fundamental mismatch in aspirations and what the economy can meaningfully deliver.

### Growing vulnerabilities

IT IS not surprising why many Singaporeans prefer to be on the paper-chasing career path. Degree holders tend to get higher starting salaries and have better promotion prospects.

Bachelor of Arts graduates from the National University of Singapore commanded gross median starting salaries of \$2,825 a month last year.

In contrast, the gross median starting pay of a polytechnic graduate was \$2,007.

Data does not exist for how fast a degree holder rises up the ladder, but anecdotally, they tend to advance faster than non-degree holders in the same company.

The gap in pay and prospects has naturally led to the rapidly changing education profile of the labour force, largely reflecting the demand for higher qualifications.

In 2002, just 18.5 per cent of the labour force had a degree. This had gone up to 29.4 per cent last year.

Most degree holders will eventually hold white-collar jobs and join the ranks of PMETs, which formed 52 per cent of the labour force last year.

But while getting a degree is now seen as a must-have, the simple fact is that being a white-collar worker comes with its own set of risks.

Globalisation and technological progress have undermined much of the middle class in advanced economies.

Offshoring and technologies like the Internet have displaced workers in the middle, such as sales and administrative staff.

Sales counter staff are now irrelevant for companies such as Amazon, which sells billions of dollars worth of products through its Web portal.

Salaries of the middle class have stagnated and many have been laid off amid the jobless re-



covery in the United States and Europe.

Singapore's middle class, or the PMET group, faces similar stresses.

An MOM report on the labour market last year suggested that PMETs are becoming increasingly vulnerable even though they continue to earn good wages.

Last year, 11,010 workers lost their jobs, a 10 per cent rise from 9,990 workers the year before, the MOM said. About 5,960 of them were PMETs, or more than 50 per cent.

This was significantly higher than the 41.7 per cent in 2011. In 1998, just 18.6 per cent of those laid off were PMETs, about a third of last year's figures.

Similarly, the re-entry rate for workers who have been laid off was much worse for the PMET group, with just 48.6 per cent of them finding a job within six months of being laid off.

In contrast, clerical, sales and service workers had a 60.2 per cent rate of re-employment, while production, cleaners and labourers had a 68.6 per cent re-employment rate.

### The two-thirds challenge

APART from helping to address the vulnerabilities of the PMET group, the bigger challenge is providing jobs that meet aspirations.

That goes to the question of whether Singapore can continue to attract foreign investment and whether local enterprises will keep expanding.

If the economic restructuring now under way succeeds, productivity will rise and higher-value enterprises can grow and generate worthwhile jobs.

"If we make good progress with economic restructuring into higher-value activities across industries, we should see a broad-based increase in PMET jobs for Singaporeans," said the MOM and MTI.

The second part of the solution is harder to achieve. Many capital-intensive industries require a strong knowledge base and specialised skills that a general university degree may not provide.

A case in point is Dyson, a British manufacturer. It opened a \$100 million plant in February that produces four million motors a year.

The motors produced at its Pioneer Crescent facility are used in the production of Dyson's vacuum cleaners and hand dryers.

Yet, the factory requires only 13 operators, while the bulk of the work is done by 50 or so robots.

This points to the dilemma for policymakers, says DBS economist Irvin Seah.

While productivity and high-value enterprises are good for the economy in terms of pure growth numbers, they may not generate the kind of levels of employment required to absorb the growing ranks of degree holders.

Then there is the skills gap. Increasingly,

employers demand abilities that go beyond academic content.

Nee Soon GRC MP Patrick Tay, the professional, managers and executives unit director at the National Trades Union Congress, notes that even traditional jobs will require a high degree of skills.

"Increasingly, we can see those with highly specialised and niche skills getting jobs more easily. The challenge for workers is more than just getting a diploma or degree qualification but rather, the type of diploma or degree qualification," he says.

### Changing attitudes

BEYOND thinking about skills and industries, a fundamental re-think on what defines success is also essential.

Mr David Leong, managing director of PeopleWorldWide consulting, says the economy as it is now could not support having two-thirds of the workforce in PMET jobs.

"If the Government hopes to achieve having two-thirds of the local workforce to be PMETs, we need to reconfigure job receptacles and industries to accommodate the growth and aspirations of Singaporeans," he says.

Many new graduates harbour ambitions to join the well-paid finance and banking sector, but in the future, the biggest demand is likely to be in the social, health and education services as Singapore ramps up its social infrastructure.

Likewise, transport and physical infrastructure will continue to be essential industries, but these sectors do not attract Singaporeans and remain dominated by foreign workers.

A big issue is pay, says Mr Leong. Pay enough and there will be people lining up to do the job.

But jobs in transport and construction are seen as being of low status and so pay is some way behind traditional PMET sectors such as banking and sales.

But this is not set in stone. In Australia, electricians, bricklayers and plumbers can earn A\$100,000 (\$124,000) or more a year, given shortages in manpower, according to the Master Builders Association in Victoria.

If pay does rise, can Singaporeans rewire themselves to take up the abundance of opportunities in sectors not traditionally seen as providing coveted careers?

Maybe the largest employer here can help take the lead.

While it is justifiable for the civil service to pay and hire people based on their paper qualifications, surely there are some jobs where technical expertise and experience trump educational profile? Is there an over-reliance on paper qualifications?

Parents will also have to adjust their own expectations of their children and recognise that success is not simply linked to degrees and cushy jobs.

These are not easy changes to make. But the sooner society realises that traditional notions of success are less relevant in tomorrow's world, the better prepared the next generation will be for the new economy.

aaron@sph.com.sg



**Lim Soon Hock**  
 Managing Director  
 Plan-B ICAG Pte Ltd and also  
 Chairman of National Family Council and  
 Centre for Fathering

BOTH men and women in Singapore today want to work. Fathers therefore have to play a bigger role to complement their wives in bringing up the children. The modern Singapore father's role goes beyond being the breadwinner. A fatherhood perception survey commissioned in 2009 by the government confirmed that fathers have a strong influence in shaping their children's values (82 per cent), as well as affecting general behaviour (80 per cent) and psychological health (77 per cent). Further, 96 per cent of fathers felt very committed to their role as a father. Despite this, fathers still spent less time with their children than mothers. Work responsibilities were cited as one of the core reasons.

Companies can and should make it easier for men to be more active and responsible fathers. Beyond the one week of government-paid paternity leave and one-week of government-paid shared parental leave that have taken effect this month, businesses can do more. For a start, work performance should focus more on quality and be less time-based. Companies can exercise more flexibility by considering fathers' time-off requests to attend family occasions or emergencies on a case-by-case basis.

Most crucial to the success of any effort is the need for positive organisational culture and mindset change. Employers, especially CEOs, must walk the talk. Front-line managers must also be trained and equipped to meet business goals, using work-life strategies. Co-workers also need to truly embrace such practices, and not discriminate against fathers who claim their parenting privileges.

Studies have shown that organisations that upheld their employees' needs and interest with as much importance as other business goals and imperatives delivered higher revenue growth, increased employee productivity and retention, and fostered high staff morale. There is therefore a compelling business case for workplaces to be more father-friendly and to adopt a family first work culture.

**Yoshimi Nakajima**  
 Singapore Country Manager  
 American Express

AMERICAN Express is a strong advocate for work-life balance, and we applaud the new measures brought by the enhanced Marriage & Parenthood package. American Express offers an additional six days of childcare leave and six days of flexi leave to all employees. Many of our male employees have utilised these leave entitlements for their family commitments. American Express also promotes a flexible working arrangement, BlueWork. This allows our employees to plan their work time and workplace according to their job and family needs. Recognising employees' personal needs is key for any company to retain and engage talent.

**Vishnu Shahaney**  
 CEO  
 ANZ Singapore

WHILE in Asia there is a much more traditional approach to customs and family values, I can see fundamental changes coming through.

ANZ recognises that working fathers today play a more active role in care giving, and provides an environment that allows employees to contribute at work while balancing their personal priorities.

We have several policies in place to support employees with childcare obligations. We offer part-time and flexi-hour work options to ensure that employees enjoy fatherhood with minimal stress, while continuing to achieve at work. Shared parental leave will become the next addition to our policy. I believe we have a healthy parent-friendly workplace that employees value.

**Lim Kok Hin**  
 Vice-President & Head of Domestic Business Operations  
 Canon Singapore

THE roles of fathers have changed in recent years. Fathers want to be able to both play a more active role in the upbringing of their children and be competitive in the workplace.

At Canon, we encourage our employees to do more and work less. If a task is necessary, let's do it well. If it isn't, then forget about it. By eliminating unnecessary work processes and taking advantage of technology and skills development to be more efficient, we can be more productive at work so that we can spend more time with our loved ones.

**David Leong**  
 Managing Director  
 PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

NO workplace will be designed specifically to be father-friendly in the first place. Annual national obligations such as national service for operationally ready servicemen may already be disruptive for some employers, and disruptions at work are not something many employers would have preferred.

A father-friendly work environment will take time to gain employers' universal acceptance. From a human resource perspective, work-life balance and family-centric initiatives are good motivators and retention strategies for stable-state companies. Many employers are short of staff, and any shortfall of manpower inevitably will have operational impact.

More can be done at the level of governmental support. The government must be seen to be supportive of family-centric initiatives.

The effort is more a conscious effort and psychological hindrance for employers than anything else. The push and advocacy by the government is already a big jump and meaningful step forward.

**Mike Muller**  
 President, Asia-Pacific  
 Avaya

THE government's initiative to provide both parents with additional time to spend with their children is terrific. Not many countries offer this kind of programme. It acknowledges the role that both parents play in raising a child, and supports them in doing that.

My family and I certainly make the most of that. Last year, I used this leave to both attend some of my daughters' events at school and to spend time with

**THIS WEEK'S TOPIC**

Do you consider your workplace to be father-friendly, and if so, why?  
 What can be done to make workplaces more father-friendly?

# Dad's the way to do it



PHOTO: REUTERS

**DADs for Life**

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOPS  
**2013**

31 May (Fri) @ 1 pm & 1 June (Sat) @ 9 am

Singapore Expo, Max Atria

**Dads for Life Conference and Workshops 2013**





AT WORK WITH JOYCE TEO

# Want that job? Don't bad-mouth ex-boss

## HR experts highlight some pitfalls to avoid at job interviews

YOU attend a job interview and are so grateful for the opportunity and so eager to land the job that you decide, in your excitement, to give the interviewer a big hug.

Needless to say, that sort of approach will not make a good impression.

Just as unhelpful are bad posture or lack of eye contact.

Securing an interview may not be easy, and the last thing you want to do is to kill your chances quickly at an interview.

Here are more sure-fire ways of making a bad impression.

### Take mum along

A JOB interview can be intimidating. You will be nervous and even fearful, but this is no excuse for taking the woman or man in your life to the interview.

"We have come across interviewees who bring their parents, boyfriend or girlfriend to the job interview," says Mr Josh Goh, assistant director of corporate services from recruitment firm The GMP Group.

"A job interview is never an outing for family members, children, a spouse or partner. So, job seekers should not bring anyone else other than themselves to the interview."

### Bad-mouth past employers

YOU just left your previous employment because your boss is from hell. You can't contain your anger and are ready to tell the whole world about it. But stop yourself.

Never talk negatively about previous employers, say human resource experts.

"We've seen many candidates ruin their job prospects by making derogatory remarks about their current or previous employers and experiences. This is absolutely inexcusable," says Ms Gwen Lim, human resource division manager at Robert Walters Singapore.

"Try to find the positive aspects of your employment history and focus on these instead.

"In particular, some contrac-

tors can also be too honest regarding their situation and why they are considering a contract.

"Whatever your reasons for looking for a new job, you should present them in as positive a light as possible."

### Focus on coffee breaks

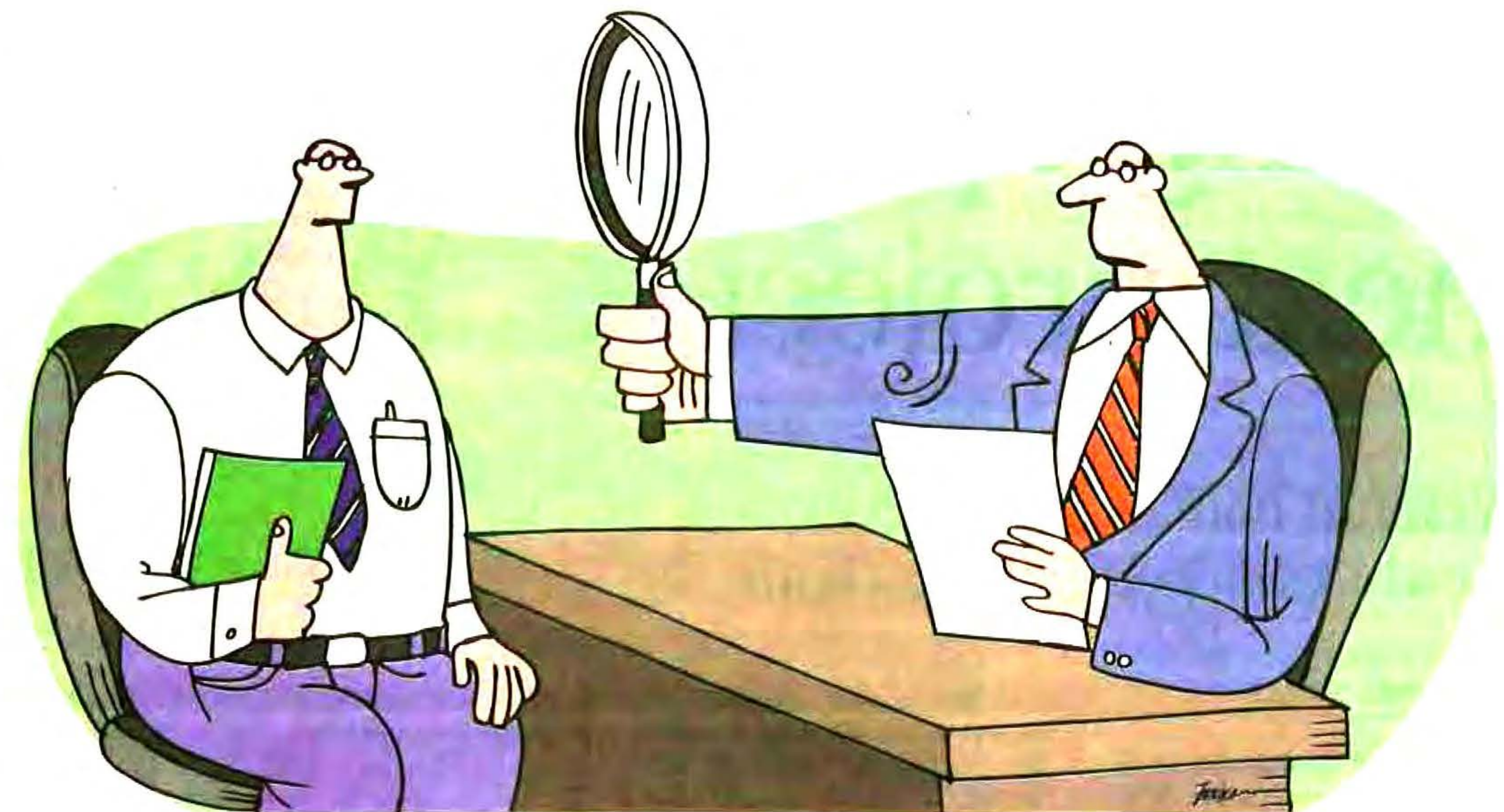
A MID-DAY caffeine fix is what you live for at work. Nevertheless, a coffee break is not something that you raise early in the interview.

Employers are keen to find out how you can contribute to the organisations and you should be focusing on this.

"The attitude of some inexperienced job seekers can be rather atrocious," says Mr Goh.

"Instead of exuding the feeling of 'ask not what your employer can do for you, but what you can do for your employer', young job seekers often focus on their individual demands before the employer's needs.

"They would focus on coffee breaks, allowances, bonuses and other trivial details, instead of positioning themselves as the best candidate for the job and how they can contribute to the organisation."



### Be hostile or defensive

SOMETIMES, an interviewer may become difficult or may throw interviewees off guard with an irrelevant question.

Interviewees should remain calm and never respond with the same hostility, says Mr Goh.

Listen carefully to the ques-

tions and take a bit of time to compose your thoughts before responding, he adds.

"Candidates must be aware that some interview questions are meant to probe and pressure them, so as to see their natural response to situations," says Mr David Leong, managing director of PeopleWorldwide Consulting.

Remember, it's a no-no to tell the interviewer that his question is irrelevant, he says.

"Questions can be irreverent and irrelevant so candidates should not take these personally or be exceptionally defensive.

"Have an open mind and reply with a tad of humour and ease."

joyceteo@sph.com.sg





ST FILE PHOTO

**Yeoh Oon Jin**  
Executive Chairman  
PwC Singapore

The policy intent of the government behind the Wage Credit Scheme (WCS) and the wider Budget 2013 is clear. As an employer, any initiative that raises the ability of our staff to cope with the rising costs of living while curtailing total business cost is welcome. This helps to ensure that lower-waged staff are less impacted with "livelihood" concerns and could be more focused on work and developing their career. However, it will also be a challenge for employers to commit to additional permanent wage increases based on a three-year grant period without certainty that they will be able to increase productivity by that time so as to sustain these increases on their own.

Many businesses have already recognised that increasing innovation and productivity are the sustainable means to respond to the current challenges facing Singapore. While financial incentives in the form of the WCS are good catalysts to accelerate innovation and increase productivity in businesses and such plans and effort on transformation are commendable, the issue remains that many businesses do not know how to transform themselves. The winners are those who work with workers. We have recently implemented an ERP system that streamlines data entry and improves production planning and control, inventory control, financial management, quality control and general management. We have been able to increase efficiency and reduce man-hours in performing such functions. However, the benefits of the productivity improvement may not be fully realised until months later when all the kinks in implementation are completely ironed out. In the meantime, the productivity gains are offset by drastic increase in overall business costs.

Under our wage policy, we will reward workers with salary increments based on their performance and contribution to the business. In this respect, the WCS will be useful. However, what should we do after the tenure of the scheme (three years)? The scheme does provide some cost savings but, on the other hand, it may send the wrong signal to employees who may demand a higher pay rise. Thus, the WCS can be a double-edged sword if companies are not able to manage the expectations of their workers appropriately.

**Dora Hoan**  
Co-Chairman/Group CEO  
Best World International Ltd

The tightening of foreign worker supply will add to the cost of business for SMEs and effects of productivity measures will need time before they can materialise. Hence, the WCS will act to help companies reduce some manpower cost during this transitional period. Companies should bear in mind that the subsidy is only applicable to pay increments for Singaporean employees earning a gross monthly wage of up to \$4,000 and the scheme will only be implemented for three years. After that, the full wage increase will become the company's manpower cost. Hence, when companies plan for salary increments, they should take into account employees' productivity and reward more those who have improved their productivity.

On the whole, the measure will bring about a positive outcome, such as increasing employers' sensitivity towards Singaporeans. Besides that, local companies still need to retain talent despite the rising business costs. The WCS will provide timely help in this aspect.

**Lynne Ng**  
Regional Director (SEA)  
Adecco Personnel Pte Ltd

The WCS addresses certain areas of focus which include increasing the number of Singaporeans in the workforce and providing assistance to smaller organisations. However, this may not be sustainable in the long run for low-wage fixed income earners as well as for those employers reliant on foreign labour.

Another point to ponder is whether the scheme will benefit all SMEs, particularly if they are struggling financially. It may benefit only MNCs. Providing financial assistance does not always result in higher productivity. More important, as a recruitment agency and an employer, what happens after three years needs to be carefully considered.

**Andrea Ross**  
Managing Director (Singapore & Malaysia)  
Robert Walters Singapore

## THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

From the perspective of an employer, what are the pros and cons of the Wage Credit Scheme?

# Raising pay, raising hope

WCS is predicted to benefit 70 per cent of the Singapore workforce. While this aids the lower-wage population, drawing less than \$4,000 a month, we have identified some pros and cons to the scheme. First, with 40 per cent of salary increments subsidised by the government, this is likely to reduce the income gap among the levels of seniority. These aided salary increments also ensure employees gain the deserved recognition and reward for their contribution to the company. This will consequently benefit morale and productivity levels in the office.

On the flip side, we also have to consider that, with this scheme in place, employees might also assume they are guaranteed a higher increment regardless of performance. When granting salary increments, employers need to bear in mind the individual's appraisal, and reward accordingly.

**Annie Yap**  
Managing Director  
AYP Associates Pte Ltd

Definitely, the WCS is a step in the right direction. Cost is the major concern for companies undergoing restructuring to boost productivity, particularly for smaller businesses, and the WCS directly addresses the consequent rise in wages. Nonetheless, monetary incentives alone may not be enough for firms to upgrade and be self-sufficient after three years, and employers may encounter a shock at the end of the period.

Hence, providing solutions and knowledge support in conjunction with the WCS may be equally valuable to employers. Proper implementation of the WCS must also be ensured to prevent potential exploitation of the scheme.

**Joshua Yim**  
CEO  
Achieve Group

As an employer myself and head of a firm that offers employment services to other businesses, I have a couple of perspectives.

Overall, the scheme is beneficial to employers as it definitely helps to reduce staff cost. Now the tricky factor here is how employees will react to, and use, this knowledge of the WCS. Knowing that the government will be subsidising 40 per cent of their salary increments, the employee may have certain expectations and make demands. This may cause disgruntlement among the staff and may even lead to greater attrition rates, thus actually working against the national mandate of productivity and efficiency.

Should the employer decide to match the expectations of the employees, what will happen when the three-year timescale for this scheme is up? The increments given within these three years may have artificially propped up salaries way ahead of any productivity gains a company may experience.

The intention of the scheme is good but it gives rise to the sensitive situation described above. It is thus vital to manage employees' expectations well, otherwise it may end up being detrimental to the company's well-being. There must be clear and open communication with employees to manage their expectations. SMEs can easily engage an external consultant to handle these situations sensitively and effectively. Spring Singapore has appointed a handful of

Capability Voucher (ICV) initiative. Bigger companies can also tap on the new Productivity and Innovation Credit (PIC) bonus to foot the cost of such knowledge transfer initiatives while enhancing their employee engagement and communications programmes, so that the original intent of the Wage Credit Scheme comes to fruition.

Overall, I am glad this scheme has been implemented, as it is a shot in the arm for Singapore companies, lowering their operational costs and raising wages of lower income earners in Singapore.

**Lim Soon Hock**  
Managing Director  
Plan-B ICAG Pte Ltd

Businesses should devote positive energies to working more closely and collaboratively with the government to take maximum advantage of the WCS, to overcome the contentious issues of less reliance on foreign labour and productivity improvements. It is achievable when government, industry and businesses make a concerted effort to work together to fully understand the "how" of overcoming these two intertwined challenges.

While companies take full advantage of the WCS, at the individual level we can reciprocate by continuously upgrading ourselves to be trained and retrained, to be more competitive and better than foreign talent, if we are to be the employee of choice. Singaporeans, especially our PMETs, need to improve on creativity, innovation and eloquence, to be equal with if not better than foreign talents, all other attributes being equal. There is no other way, if Singaporeans are to beat foreign talents for the best jobs. Difficult, tough and unpleasant decisions are often the right decisions.

Going forward, businesses and employees should rally behind the government, and be part of the solution rather than a problem, to unleash the full benefits of Budget 2013, including the WCS, for a better Singapore.

**David Leong**  
Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

Understanding the underpinning rationale for manpower curbs and the advocacy of higher local wages is important to understanding the reason for the Wage Credit Scheme. They are parallel policy initiatives to motivate behavioural change for employers and to shift the mindsets of the employers to hiring Singaporeans. Calibrating wages is never a precise science as it involves motivations and money. The government is encouraging employers to pay more to Singaporeans and to focus on productivity improvement per unit of local labour. First, an upward adjustment of wage is necessary to attract Singaporeans to certain jobs where there are high shortfalls and the government is setting aside a budget to fund the upward wage adjustments to spur hiring shift towards Singaporeans. In view of the higher pay, employers should focus on generating higher productivity per unit of labour. The government has also set aside separate funding assistance to help companies embark on this productivity bandwagon to improve on process and output gains.

Productivity gains may be a slow grind from the start; pay-offs will take time but the government is proactively pushing funding aids to help employers move rightwards and upwards from a quadrant of low

productivity.

The pro is that it is an all-cylinders firing to help companies migrate into high gear for productivity improvements on a lean workforce approach. The \$5.9 billion budget is a huge investment focused on quality growth.

The con is that the support is a three-year transitioning support and, after three years, no one knows better what is next with the increased wage bill, and what shape and momentum the quality growth will take.

**Patrick Liew**  
CEO  
HSR Global Limited

The scheme does not resolve one of the key challenges in the current market and may even exacerbate it. As a result of the tight labour market, job hopping is rearing its ugly head. Employers may be inclined to relieve their manpower crunch by offering pay increases to retain existing workers and attract new workers. Employees may also take the opportunity to pressurise their employers to increase their salary. Instead of focusing on and making sacrifices with a view to improving productivity, they may be inclined to look for better offers in the job market. The WCS may have an unintended outcome of raising salaries even though they are not in tandem with productivity improvements. It will eventually affect our competitiveness and potential for increased business investment and growth.

There is also a concern that it may drive enterprises to adopt a short-term outlook in remunerating their employees. If the incentive is withdrawn after three years, they may not be in a position to support the additional labour costs. I am personally concerned that the WCS may be perceived as "free" money or, worse, an entitlement. It should not be seen as a handout but as a helping hand and, therefore, there should be a more direct correlation in motivating both employers and employees to enhance their value-add, results and growth. When we implement similar schemes in the future, we should perhaps lay down meaningful and achievable conditions to enjoy the benefits. They may be as simple as just endorsing a commitment or initiating a plan to improve productivity and innovation.

The WCS should create a multiplier effect so as to generate ongoing and sustainable results. One way to do so is to highlight case studies on how enterprises have leveraged on WCS to improve their results. These studies can become potential roadmaps to help other enterprises achieve best practice. There should be well defined KPIs to measure the effectiveness of implementing the WCS. They cannot be based on the amount of money distributed but on whether it has helped enterprises improve the multifaceted aspects of productivity and innovation. The feedback from the ground should be tracked and used to improve the scheme and its execution process and to help craft other business schemes.

For the complete list of views from CEOs, go to <http://business-times.com.sg>



## THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

What key messages and insights can we take from the ongoing debate on the Population White Paper? What are the areas most in need of urgent action, and what specific actions/policies do you hope to see implemented?

# Not just a numbers game

**Patrick Liew**  
CEO  
HSR Global Ltd

MY concern is that many people have been overly focused on the planning parameter of 6.9 million and not paying closer attention to questioning and challenging the assumptions supporting it. For example, it is not just the number of people that will help us improve the quality of life but also whether we can improve our economic, social and environmental infrastructure and programmes to support the overall well-being of our people.

The outcomes should be addressed on a holistic basis and should include improving happiness levels, social well-being, work-life balance, and life satisfaction. We should not only work on improving productivity but also on how we can create and develop higher value-added industries and enterprises, innovate and export future technologies and services, develop game-changing business architectures, and become market-makers rather than market-takers in order to strengthen our economic growth.

To do so, we need to start improving our educational systems to produce the next generation of professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs) and also human resource policies to attract, develop and retain not just the appropriate quantity but also the quality of foreign talents.

Instead of taking a top-down approach to housing higher densities of population, we need to actively find out residents' real and perceived concerns and respond to them in the most palatable way. It bodes well to remember that whatever motion that has been passed in Parliament, currently and in the future, will not work if there is no strong buy-in and support from the people. We need to improve our ways of communicating policies and harnessing talents, energies and contributions of the people so as to promote and execute policies effectively and achieve positive and sustainable results.

**Liu Chunlin**  
CEO  
K&C Protective Technologies Pte Ltd

IF the Population White Paper (PWP) was set out to get the participation of our society, then it certainly has accomplished its goal. Incidentally, the publishing of the PWP has also increased the level of transparency of the decision-making process of our government and that alone is a great achievement. Nonetheless, we can still learn a lesson from this case about communication breakdown. The public in general didn't get the message that the proposed population for 2030 was not meant to be a target but simply a benchmark to measure how well-prepared our infrastructure would be by then. Any misunderstanding of a similar nature should be avoided in the future.

After all, the most important issue to be addressed is that a nation needs sufficient population growth for its economy to progress. Without fresh blood, an ageing nation will not be able to provide sufficient care to their elderly. We are fortunate to have a government that is willing to engage its people in the participation of decision-making process. With this increased transparency, it will definitely have the support of the majority, if not all, of its people.

**David Leong**  
Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

WITH slower growth and a diminishing and ageing population, it is almost a death knell for a resource-less Singapore if the government does not realistically deal with the population issue in the White Paper. Whether it is organic growth of the Singaporean core or through immigration substitution, we must have a build-up and replacement strategy to sustain the vitality and vibrancy of our country. Otherwise, we are likely to die young as a country with an aged population.

In the geopolitical part of the equation, Singapore is weak with the lack of resources. Not enough land, not enough Singaporeans, not enough workers, not enough of many things. Apart from the strengths of our strategic location and having built a trusted brand name, these things will not last without the vibrancy of people. We need to attract flows through Singapore and people attraction is one of them. Positioned as a strong transport and financial hub, Singapore needs to have the constant flow of people, capital, goods and services and, without the volume of throughput, Singapore will be seriously disadvantaged.

Singapore works, not by accident, but by the planning and execution efforts of the government. I hope when the government sets its policies on the inflow of people, it should not be reactionary but based on the strength of its belief that this is one core reason for the sustainability of our economy. I agree we cannot be on the same growth trajectory for manpower as the ballooning effect causes strains. We cannot grow at all costs but to purposely shift to a lower gear for lower growth can be detrimental and irreversible. Growth in the economy is really not at the disposal of the government to control. It is easy to run an economy aground like many developed countries but to build growth is not easy. We cannot take our growth in Singapore for granted. We have to be realistic about this.

This time, the government is doing it right - planning and building capacities for 2030. The question is not 5.8 million, 6.5 million or 6.9 million. The numbers have no magic. The magic is in the execution of the plan. Let's hope we can outdo ourselves again and build a better Singapore by 2030.

**Tan Tiong Cheng**  
Chairman  
Knight Frank Pte Ltd

PUBLIC reactions to the government's population policy have contributed little to what is essentially a



PHOTO: AFP

well-meaning document. The policy has invoked a lively debate, ranging from the fear of overcrowding, to the dilution of Singapore's identity to Ponzi demography. With the rising cost of living and immigration as hot-button issues, the top-end planning parameter of 6.9 million population in the next 17 years has no doubt evoked great concern among the citizenry.

Despite the White Paper's emphasis of an ageing population with falling birth rates, the question is whether 6.9 million - with almost half foreigners - is really necessary for Singapore given our land constraints and the declining proportion of the Singaporean core. The Paper touched on the need to have a complementary workforce of Singaporeans and foreigners to create a dynamic economy, which I think is important in order to ensure Singapore's relevance in the global stage and indeed our long-term survival.

The economic and demographic challenges are increasingly real, so it is timely for us to debate and think of ways to solve these issues. Following this Paper, there is an urgent need for the government to design a sustainable economic model with comprehensive strategies that can address the rationale for a larger population. This should include a long-term plan to provide employment opportunities for Singaporeans, against the backdrop of economic growth rates at sustainable levels.

Growing a young population rooted in Singapore should be given top priority so as to strengthen our Singaporean identity. So, a more innovative and encompassing scheme to promote family building and to improve our birth rates ought to be implemented with exigency, rather than what appears to be the easier solution of bringing in more foreigners. I believe the government can do better in this area and in so doing may find the consensus it needs.

**Harish Nim**  
Chief Executive  
Emerio Corporation Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE needs foreign talent for growth and prosperity of the nation. This is a fact. Singapore by itself will find it very hard to succeed in the future if we have to depend upon our indigenous workforce.

The government ought to do more to distribute the country's wealth, in meaningful ways, to its citizens so that we are not left behind to struggle while the nation progresses. There is no joy in being one of the richest nations in the world and still expect our seniors and elderly folk to work in order to support themselves. They have contributed all they could meaningfully to our country.

Our ministers in charge of urban development, namely transport and housing, need to admit their failure to the people in their duty to ensure that the influx of foreigners lagged behind the infrastructure that needed to be in place prior to the population increase. They need to promise us that the population growth will trail the infrastructure growth and when the population reaches 6.9 million, we will be better off.

The People's Action Party (PAP) is the only party in my mind that can steer Singapore to greater heights, but they need to show very clearly that they care for its citizens in ways that cannot be questioned by the fledgling opposition members. My request to the PAP is to deal with all issues with equal amounts of intelligence quotient (IQ) and emotional quotient (EQ). Using either one will not work.

I am shocked at some of the suggestions the

opposition has made and these comments lead me to believe that they do not know the ABC of how to plan for a country's future. While I am not against housewives and seniors rejoining the workforce, I doubt if even the opposition thinks that these people can run global banks or complex IT systems or MNCs.

**Philippe HJ Huinck**  
Regional Managing Director, South and South East Asia  
International SOS

FOR me, the Population White Paper raises broader questions around the impact of a growing population - foreign or local - on our healthcare infrastructure. As the Singaporean population increases, so does the need for increased healthcare - public and private.

Singapore is renowned for its efficient and widespread system of healthcare, and I am certain the government will continue to prioritise this sector as we move forward, both to accommodate the already ageing population, as well as the results of encouraging more Singaporeans to marry and have children, supplemented by an adjusted pace of immigration to prevent the citizen population from shrinking. Many Singaporeans already have supplemental private health insurance, often provided by employers, for services not covered by the government's programme and this will play an increasingly important role as demands on the healthcare system increase. Proficient universal healthcare will be fundamental to the government's vision of "a sustainable population for a dynamic Singapore".

**Lim Soon Hock**  
Managing Director  
PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd

THERE was a clear divide between government and businesses and people on the issues of population, growth, total fertility rate (TFR), workforce and foreigners. Businesses and people wanted short-term issues to be solved before addressing the longer-term challenges of our population.

A major issue is the increased dependency on foreigners to solve our population challenges and the concomitant declining indigenous workforce. People are not objecting to the inflow of low-skilled workers such as those from the construction, hospitality, and food and beverage industries as well as maids, as these are jobs which Singaporeans shun. The government should not belabour this point, but instead should focus more on helping PMETs compete, going forward.

PMETs will face a greater threat of competition from foreigners, as they now do, because businesses find the latter more affordable, for the same skill and expertise, if not better in many instances. I think this group, which is planned to be at least 55 per cent of the workforce, will want to know how the government can help them compete, not on salary or costs, but through other means.

I think more can also be done to promote and increase TFR. People are seeing actions taken by the government falling short of the rhetoric. The recent Marriage and Parenthood Package, taken as a whole, was more parenthood-centric than marriage-centric. It does not address fully the issue of rising singlehood. It is this tentative step that is being taken rather than going all out to solve the TFR problem that is at the heart of unhappiness and disappointment of the people and businesses. We are at an inflexion point. The

government therefore ought to demonstrate more seriousness in wanting to tackle the declining TFR. The government should only resort to complementing our population with more foreigners as a contingency. The government did the right thing to clarify.

**Lynne Ng**  
Regional Director, Adecco SEA  
Adecco Personnel Pte Ltd

THE intense public discussion on the Population White Paper has served as a reminder that this is a very important area for both locals and foreigners. The opinions expressed by many show that Singaporeans and other residents take very seriously the direction that our country is heading, from both its population size going forward, as well as the structure and composition of the workforce. Areas which require urgent action include an understanding of how we benefit from foreign talent in many areas of commerce and industry and ensuring that as a country we have the balance of local and foreign talent required to ensure our continued competitiveness. How we plan for our workforce of the future is an area of great importance.

**Ray Ferguson**  
CEO, Singapore  
Standard Chartered Bank

IN the short term, maintaining a delicate balance between developing a core pool of Singapore talent and integrating existing non-Singaporean employees is key. At Standard Chartered, while our diverse workforce gives us global perspectives and insights, building a Singaporean core is absolutely an integral part of our talent strategy. We believe in grooming a sustainable pipeline of local talent and we place great emphasis on the training and development of our people. Each year, we actively recruit from local universities and have an excellent management trainee programme which gives our trainees exposure to different business areas as well as international work experience.

In integrating non-Singaporeans, employee volunteering is the most direct way to help newcomers understand and interact with locals while helping the community. The bank has built a robust employee volunteering programme including three days of paid leave for volunteering activities; a one-hour interactive online cultural awareness training resource and the "International Network", where foreigners can learn first-hand about the country from local employees. In the long term, we believe that companies can do more to create a pro-family environment and help to boost the total fertility rate in Singapore.

Standard Chartered has introduced a number of flexible working arrangements - from flexi-time, part-time to working from home - to help employees with the pressing challenge of balancing work and personal commitments. We offer employees leave ranging from two days to 16 weeks for marriage, family care, childcare, paternity, maternity and adoption purposes. Currently we already provide adoption leave of 16 weeks for our staff. Employees who wish to take a longer break can take sabbatical leave for three to 12 months for reasons including pursuing family responsibilities. We also provide an online resource centre for expectant mothers and managers of those going on maternity leave; and nursing rooms at our Changi Business Park and Marina Bay offices for the use of mothers who return to work.



## THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Will the new marriage and parenthood incentive package have its desired effect, or does more need to be done? What is the likely impact on businesses and the economy generally?

# The family way

## Hugues Delcourt

Country Executive, ABN Amro Bank NV Singapore; and Chief Executive Officer of ABN Amro Private Banking Asia & Middle East

SINGAPORE'S low birth rate is worrying as it will have to support a rapidly ageing population. In the long run, this could affect the nation's population size and its workforce numbers, leading to possible economic problems. The latest package certainly encourages couples to build their families as it reduces the monetary burden and time constraints of raising children in our busy society. As an extension to this, more women will likely enter and stay in the workforce, should the incentives be effective.

At ABN Amro, we recognise that there may be some short-term costs in accommodating additional leave when the incentives are introduced. However, we take a long-term view of the new measures and believe that through adopting flexible work practices, we can complement the incentives to make child-raising a less tedious and more enjoyable task for our employees, while allowing us to retain valuable talent. Besides helping to boost Singapore's fertility rate, we believe that this adds to work-life balance, allowing couples to continue contributing to our economy. I hope to see these new measures take off to allow Singapore to enjoy a sustainable workforce for its future economic growth.

## Kong Chee Min

Chief Executive Officer  
Centurion Corporation Limited

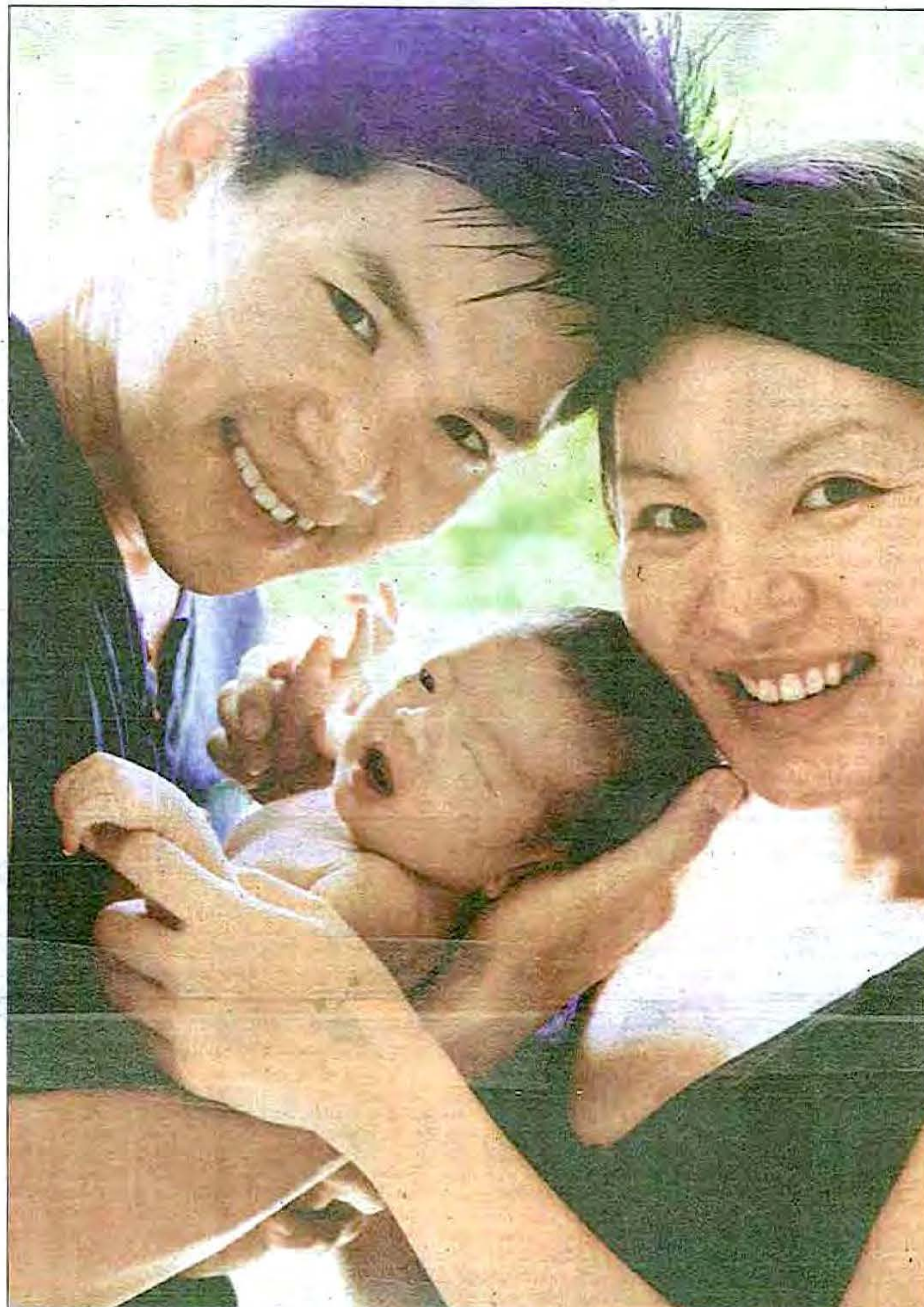
AT THE current record-low fertility rate, Singapore would face a population squeeze in the future, leading to potentially severe socio-economic issues. These new incentives certainly address some of the problems which couples may face in building their families today. Companies should examine how these measures fit into their operations and leverage off them to allow employees to devote more attention to their families whilst keeping productivity up.

At Centurion Corporation, one of our family-friendly initiatives is the built-in flexibility of our human resource policy which allows employees to take time off work to tend to family matters, where possible. In addition, we are open to further discussions with our staff on how we can introduce or tweak these initiatives to allow for a more well-balanced family life as we believe that this would translate into job satisfaction. I encourage couples to make use of these incentives to enjoy their family life and do their part for the nation in ensuring its long-term viability.

## Gerald Foo

President  
Walton International Group (S) Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE'S population is ageing, and we need as many able-bodied persons with years of work experience as possible to stay in the workforce. It is also necessary to replace our dwindling population as the country is not producing enough babies. One of the



ST FILE PHOTO

decision is driven by the responsibility of family commitment, rather than because they lack the skills, qualifications or experience needed. If the number of women having babies increases, it is important to make sure it does not impact the number of women in the workforce. It's a commonly held belief that women are under-represented in the workforce, particularly at a senior level. A further decline would increase Singapore's talent shortage, creating difficulties for the labour market and the economy.

This means it is important to strike a balance that encourages women to have children while keeping them in the workplace. To achieve this, the development of more flexible working arrangements is essential. This goes further than giving more leave allowance; it is about flexibility towards working hours, working location and business travel for fathers, as well as mothers.

## Toby Koh

Group Managing Director  
Ademco Security Group

THE new marriage and parenthood incentive package is fairly comprehensive and is certainly welcomed by citizens in general, especially the lower income group. The financial support to encourage couples to have babies is absolutely spot-on. Rising cost is certainly a consideration among young couples in their consideration for more than one child. It is a national concern if our birth rate falls.

I fully agree and support in the investment to aid Singaporeans with cost of having children. The way I see it, it is better that we address it now because either we invest now or pay later with declining birth rate. I am cautiously optimistic that the government will build and develop more quality childcare facilities. This will be a huge catalyst for more women to return to the workforce. Singapore's biggest asset is our workforce and we need to capitalise on it as competition heats up not just between companies but countries.

## Leif Agnéus

Senior Vice-President and General Manager,  
Regions EMEA and APAC  
Kelly Services

THE new incentive package is a welcome step towards making parenthood more viable and affordable in Singapore. However, it is unlikely to encourage career-focused employees to start families unless companies further support it with more flexible working arrangements.

There are many ways to do this without putting a strain on the business. One method is to allow employees to work remotely, when it is difficult for them to be in the office. The use of mobile devices gives employees the capacity to complete their work from home. Initiatives like this can improve work-life balance without damaging productivity, and even benefit the employer in the long run by creating a flexible and adaptable workforce.

## David Leong

Managing Director  
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

THE new marriage and parenthood incentives form probably the most comprehensive package assembled considering the constraints and challenges of having a family in Singapore. Overall, the package is comprehensive and the thrust is in the correct direction. Its effectiveness will therefore be on the strength of the thrust - which is the translation into amount of subsidies, grants, tax reliefs and all monetary supports given to support the programme.

This naturally will increase costs for the employers, but the government also has offsets, leave subsidies and support to help companies move along. Employers should also institute more flexible working arrangements to allow Singaporeans to have modular work arrangements - a flexible hybrid of permanent and short-hours workdays - so that more of the indigenous workforce, especially mothers, can participate. If the government can provide support even to working mothers with children under 16 on such flexi-programmes, I think employers can contemplate frameworks which would be more inclusive and beneficial to more working mothers.

## Mayda Jutahkiti

General Manager  
The Hoffman Agency Singapore

IT IS certainly a step in the right direction and would incentivise couples who have thoughts or plans to start a family. However, the measures will mean little to those who do not intend to have children. Starting a family must come from the heart and couples must truly want children and be committed to bringing them up.

As an employer, I welcome these new measures because they support the efforts of companies who are pro-family and a growing population is required for the economy to thrive. For the fence-sitters, these measures could spur them on to incorporate some pro-family policies, seeing that the government and society are going that route too. The impact on businesses should be minimal but employers and

## Lim Soon Hock

Managing Director  
Plan-B Icac Pte Ltd

WHEN compared to 2008 and 2004, the new marriage and parenthood (M&P) incentive package, taken as a whole, continues to be more evolutionary than revolutionary. The new package would have been more effective in addressing our M&P challenges, if more attention has been given to promote marriage, on top of the new measures for parenthood.

The new measures, such as increased baby bonus and a week of paternity leave and shared parental leave, are steps in the right direction. However, additional support could further tilt the balance, to reduce singlehood, encourage early marriages and early parenthood. As an example, the interim housing scheme could be extended to couples yet to have children, to address their oft-complaint of affordable housing (2012 National Population and Talent Division Survey). Further, even as one week of shared parental leave is a good start, making the fourth month of maternity leave gender-neutral would send an even stronger message on the importance of shared parenthood, while offering women an opportunity to return to the workplace earlier.

Importantly, any measures introduced will only be effective if more fundamental issues relating to mindset and values are changed. Our National Family Council (NFC) believes that we need to inculcate a 'family first' mindset for youths, families and employers at large. To that end, NFC recently organised the CEO Breakfast Roundtable, which was attended by 250 business leaders. At the event, top leaders shared that investing in employees' families is the best way to retain talent and gain their loyalty, amid the tight labour market and war for talent.

Ultimately, society has to view marriage and having children as important milestones to celebrate, and which contribute to, rather than deter, corporate productivity, business growth and long-term sustainability of the economy.

Note: Lim Soon Hock is also the Chairman of National Family Council and Centre for Fathering.



Scheme could be made available for couples planning marriage and married couples without children to facilitate early family planning instead of having to join the housing queue for years before they get to have their own home. In addition, instead of benchmarking needs for subsidies based on gross monthly income, there could be tiers of subsidies offered based on disposable monthly income. A young family could

an overzealous and competitive society with rising costs in healthcare, housing, transport and child-related expenses, may see couples delay marriage plans and/or adjourn parenthood. Additional concerns that may hinder the desired effects include the time to commit to the relationship when the trend for young adults today is to focus on building and enhancing their careers in order to survive in the corporate world. Ultimately, it

happy and fulfilling. There should be a more concerted plan to communicate the joy of parenting and to educate couples on the implications of a low birth rate and positive benefits of having a larger family. It should be developed and driven by representatives from key sectors of society so as to help strengthen a pro-family culture.

Having babies is a personal choice, based on criteria



民生民财

榜鹅通道

本地第一家

# 咖啡店外 不让人抽烟

苏世鹏 报道  
sohsp@sph.com.sg  
王彦燕 摄影

咖啡店里外不让人抽烟,烟客要“礼让”其他顾客,这可能是本地第一家。

这家名为大路(Broadway)的咖啡店,就在榜鹅通道第612座1楼,自去年8月初开业以来,就规定为“无烟”咖啡店。

## 提供清新环境

大路美食咖啡店集团执行董事陈图茂说,这样做是要提供大家一个清新的环境,非抽烟者无需吸入二手烟。

“烟客如要抽烟,需要走到离咖啡店至少10米以外的地方。”

环境局的规定是,

咖啡店外达20%的用餐区可以划为吸烟区,其余的地方则都是非吸烟区;陈图茂指出,还没有听说本地有其他“无烟”咖啡店。

福州咖啡酒餐商公会主席洪宝兴指出,一些咖啡店没有卖香烟,就应可规定咖啡店完全不让人抽烟,但这样做的业者不多。

在榜鹅的咖啡店也是大路集团18家咖啡店中最新的一家,陈图茂说,由于是规定为“无烟”咖啡店,他们在咖啡店外三根柱子上放上“非吸烟咖啡店”告示牌。

咖啡店设在多层停车场楼下,属于新式设计并有较高的天花板。咖啡店由3个较大的店面组成,一旁还有超市、诊所以及其他商店,主要顾客为附近居民。

## 酒少卖30%

由于是“无烟”咖啡店,陈图茂透露,咖啡店所卖的酒少了30%。

“烟酒形如‘夫

出,由于顾客喜欢“无烟”,过去近5个月的情况是,其他摊位的生意会好一些,“取长补短”。



▲“非吸烟咖啡店”告示牌。

▼咖啡店外柱子上,都放上“非吸烟咖啡店”告示牌,吁请烟客合作。



## 顾客: 很好的概念

受访的顾客都表示,“无烟”咖啡店是很好的概念。

顾客陈永发(54岁,德士司机)说:

“用餐时如果一旁有人抽烟,会给人不太健康的感觉,食欲和味道也会受到影响。”

常有人抽烟,我常为此烦恼,要是到其他咖啡店,我也都会找非抽烟区坐下来用餐。”

烟客黄亚财(50岁,摊位助手)表示,抽烟已有20多年,近来减到一天不

# 中国员工申请准证 须提交文凭认证

## 中介公司赞同人力部新条例

中国员工申请准证须提交文凭认证,本地中介公司赞同人力部新条例。

下月4日起,来自中国的员工申请或更新S准证及就业准证时,须提交专业文凭或更高的学历文凭。

人力部网上宣布,雇主和劳务中介为中国员工申请准证时,须先通过指定的网上平台申请学位认证,再上网提交证明。

指定网上平台共三个,分别是中国全国高等学校学生信息咨询与就业指导中心、中国学位与研究生教育信息网,及证件核对公司Dataflow Group网站。

受影响的是申请S准证、就业准证或受训就业准证的中国白领员工。

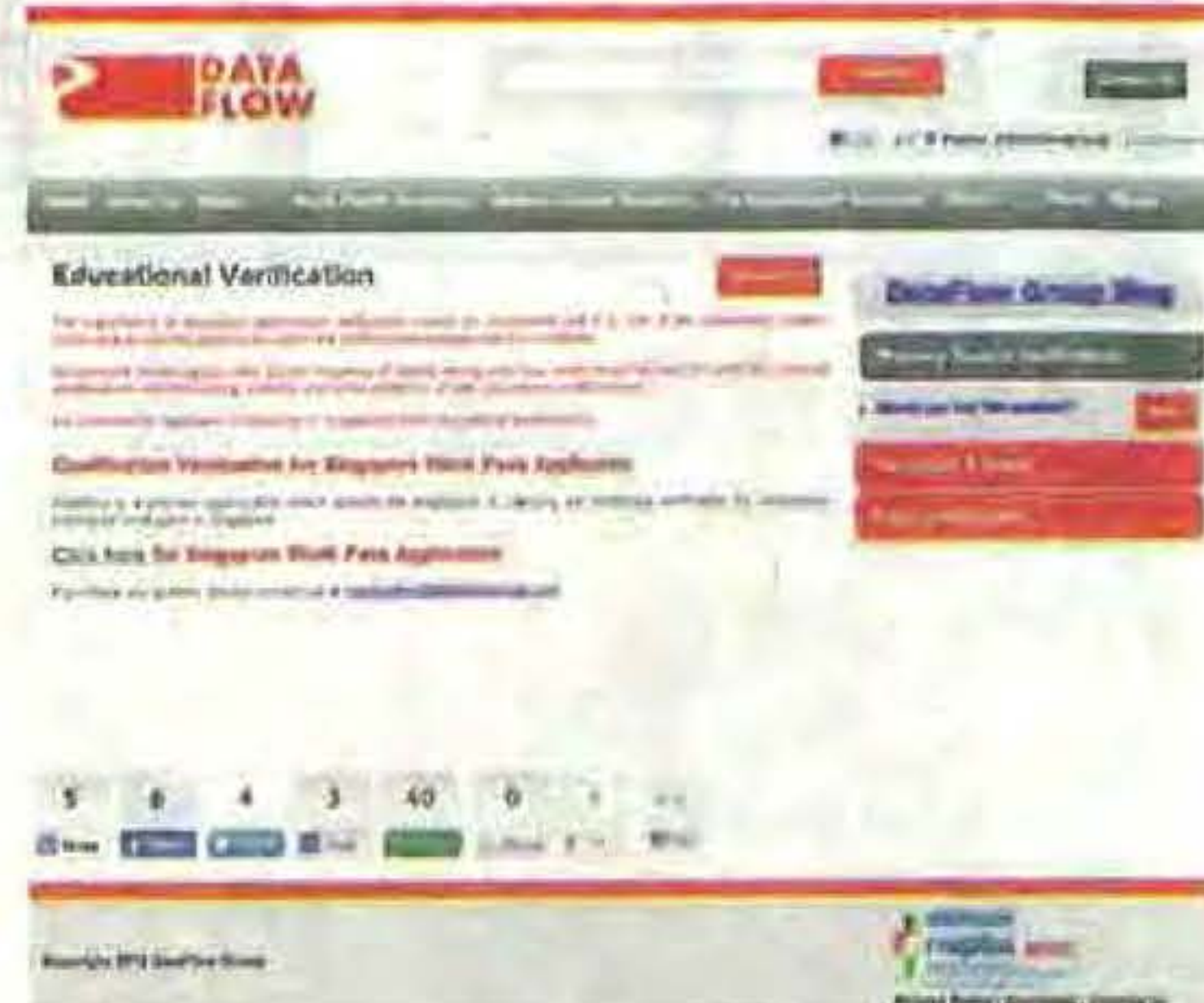
人力部发言人说,设核对证明的要求,可确保准证申请人学历的真实性。

2011年,有110名外籍员工虚报学历被定罪,去年则有52人。

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国今早接受本报访问时说,公司在安排外籍员工来新工作时,都会小心核对证书,



▲仁立国际执行董事梁昌国



▲Dataflow Group网站是指定的学位认证核对网上平台之一。

因此新条例对工作不会有太大的改变。

“新条例成立,可以警惕公司提防‘冒牌’,不让‘正版’错失机会。”

去年,雇用外来人力法令修订后,提供伪造文凭属刑事罪,违例者可面对最高罚款2万元,或监禁最长两年,或两者兼施。

新条例也加设推断条文,让违例外籍员工不能再以不知情逃避罪责,提供假文凭的雇主也将受到法律制裁。

邵氏机构 SHAW ORGANISATION advertisement for Hobbit movie showing theater locations and ticket information.

嘉华院线 advertisement for Taxi! Taxi! movie featuring a family and promotional text.