



MEDIA RELEASE

UP TO 11,000 WORKERS FROM 55 SMEs TARGETED TO BENEFIT FROM NEW WSQ PRODUCTIVITY AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME FOR SMES

- Customised training for top SME management and workers to diagnose and provide solutions to productivity and innovation challenges within SMEs
- Launch of inaugural WDA-SMa Productivity Awards for companies - 3 top award winners identified
- Opening of 2nd Productivity and Innovation Conference

1. Singapore, 21 July 2011 – Up to 11,000 workers from a pilot batch of 55 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in manufacturing and manufacturing-related industries will now stand to benefit from a new customised productivity and innovation training programme developed by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and the Singapore Manufacturers' Federation¹ (SMa).
2. This new programme will come under the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system, and is called “SME Quality Initiatives to Assist, Nurture and Grow” programme or SME Qiang (强). The landmark new programme for SMEs was launched today by Minister of State for Trade & Industry and National Development, Mr Lee Yi Shyan, at the 2nd Singapore Productivity and Innovation Conference held at Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel.
3. SME Qiang is a suite of WSQ modules bundled with a Productivity Improvement Project, and its training modules are tailored specifically to

¹ Please use 'SMa' if an acronym for 'Singapore Manufacturers' Federation' is required. Please note that the 'a' in 'SMa' does NOT stand for 'Association'.

address the needs of SMEs who needed more customized and contextualized training to address their specific challenges of optimising output despite having small workforce and infrastructure capacities.

4. Senior management will be able to acquire productivity concepts and knowledge, while workers identified to be productivity agents within the SMEs will learn about implementing Lean Six Sigma concepts through a Productivity Improvement Project under the guidance of Black Belt Consultants. These productivity change agents will also learn to sustain the companies' productivity drive by setting up a productivity framework within each company.
5. Today also marked a significant milestone in Singapore's productivity and innovation drive with the inaugural WDA-SMa Productivity and Innovation Awards 2011. This award aims to recognise the productivity efforts and best practices of companies that had completed the WSQ Certified Productivity and Innovation (CPI) Manager programme. Ciba Vision Asian Manufacturing and Logistics Pte Ltd has been awarded Gold while Advanex (Singapore) Pte Ltd and Canon Singapore Pte Ltd received the Silver and Bronze awards respectively.
6. They are among the 35 companies that have signed up for the WSQ CPI Manager programme till date. It was launched by DPM Teo Chee Hean in May 2010.
7. For Supervalu, a children's apparel and footwear distributor, the Lean Six Sigma methodology learnt in class came in timely for use in their peak period in June this year. Not only did they manage to raise labour productivity by 18 per cent, Supervalu also saved 68 per cent on delivery costs.
8. The success of Supervalu goes to demonstrate the potential gains that SMEs can reap from the WSQ CPI Manager programme, and moving forward, the new programme SME Qiang, which is an abridged version of former.
9. WDA's Director of Manufacturing and Construction Division Ms Julia Ng said, "With SMEs generally lagging behind in productivity improvement gains when compared to their non-SME counterparts, we recognise the need for the companies to direct their efforts at raising productivity and

driving innovation through Continuing Education and Training. WDA is confident that SME Qiang will address the specific needs of SMEs and help gear them up for global expansion as well increasing productivity back home.”

10. SMA Secretary-General Mr Gwee Seng Kwong said, “Among the companies that have completed the WSQ CPI Manager programme, we have noted an average productivity growth of 15 per cent. Based on this result, we are confident that SME Qiang can help SMEs raise their productivity by an average of 10 per cent over a year. This is about five times the national productivity target of 2-3% per year. Given that SMEs make up 99 per cent of the local enterprise population, SMA believes that this programme will have a far-reaching effect on the local productivity level.”
11. Besides productivity WSQ training, WDA and SMA have also collaborated with the Workplace Safety and Health Council (WSHC) to include a module on bizSAFE in SME Qiang, which educates companies on how workplace safety and health can increase productivity and make good business sense. This module will also prepare companies for the Workplace Safety and Health Act when it is enforced on all organisations in September 2011.
12. Already in its second year, the Singapore Productivity and Innovation Conference provides an ideal knowledge-sharing platform that features a distinguished line-up of speakers, who will impart their knowledge and experiences through informative and thought-provoking presentations on the key drivers of enterprise productivity, such as management practices, innovation and infocomm technologies.

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CHINESE TRANSLATION LIST

Singapore Workforce Development Agency(WDA)	新加坡劳动力发展局
Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications System	新技能资格系统
Mr Wong Hong Kuan Chief Executive	黄宏冠 局长
Ms Julia Ng Director Manufacturing and Construction Division	黄莉云 署长 制造及建筑事务署
Singapore Manufacturers' Federation (SMa)	新加坡制造商联合会
Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs)	中小企业
WSQ Certified Productivity and Innovation Manager	WSQ 生产力与创新 经理认证
Mr Gwee Seng Kwong Secretary General	危森光 秘书长
Workplace Safety and Health Council	工作场所安全与卫生 理事会
Workplace Safety and Health Act	工作场所安全与卫生 法令

FACTSHEET ON SME QIANG

Introduction/Background

SME Qiang (Quality Initiatives to Assist, Nurture and Grow) is a jointly developed training programme by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and the Singapore Manufacturers' Federation (SMA).

It is modelled after the successful WSQ Certified Productivity and Innovation (CPI) Manager programme, and is an effective training solution to enhance productivity in SMEs. Taking into consideration the constraints of small workforce and infrastructure limitations, the training programme is structured to cushion impact to SMEs' daily operations while addressing the specific challenges of optimizing output through productivity enhancements.

Course Outline

The whole programme is divided into 3 units as below

- **Unit 1: WSQ Manage Productivity Improvement to Achieve Business Objectives**

Management buy-in is half a productivity battle won. This unit offers senior management a 1-day Business Champion workshop to equip them with the knowledge and know-how to effectively deploy project teams, manage change and promote executive sponsorship. The workshop will also highlight key areas that are essential for achieving the breakthrough improvement in their business process performances.

Duration: 1 Day Classroom Training

Course Outline

- Understand Lean Six Sigma (using a Lean simulation game)
- Alignment with Business Strategy & Objectives
- Role of Executives and Champions in a Productivity Initiative
- Understanding, Leading and Dealing with Change
- bizSAFE Level 1
 - Overview of WSH Act, subsidiary legislation and Director's guidelines
 - Introduction to Risk Management concept, bizSAFE concept (etc), Corporate Social Responsibilities of companies
 - How to create a conducive safety culture in the company
 - Financial planning; balancing profitability and safety in the organisation
 - Business case studies, tangibles and intangible consequence of an accident

- **Unit 2: WSQ Implement Lean Six Sigma + Productivity Improvement Project**

Connect these knowledge and skills for maximum benefits. Recognising that SMEs take more positively to skills and implementation outcomes, this unit weaves classroom training into project implementation guided by black belts in a blended approach over an 8-week period.

The training mechanics involve segmenting the 8-week project implementation period into 4 x 2-week project phases. The start of each phase is a 1-day intensive classroom training to impart relevant skills for that phase, followed immediately by project work for the remaining phase. A 1-day workshop during the phase allows the trainees to be coached on how to apply the skills to the real project to maximise knowledge transfer.

Duration: 4 Days Classroom Training + 2 Months Productivity Improvement Project

Course Outline

- Introduction to Lean
- Lean Culture
- Value Stream Mapping
- Stability and Process Improvement
- Just-in-Time
- Measuring
- Sustaining

- **Unit 3: WSQ Plan and Implement Productivity Framework**

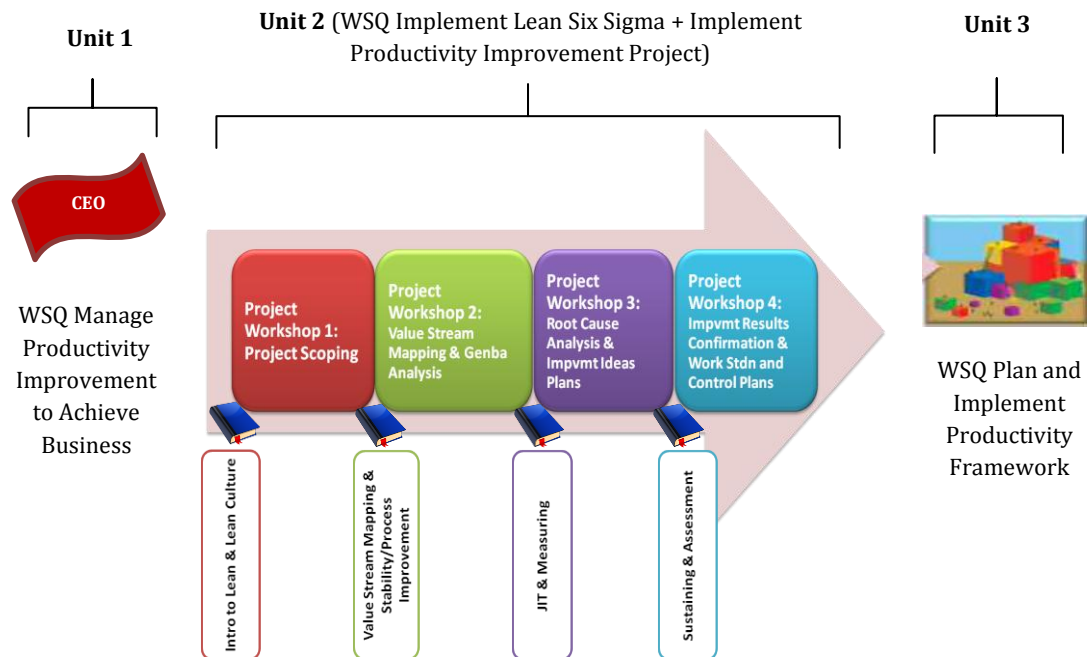
Productivity is not a destination but a journey. This unit helps the company to sustain its productivity drive by guiding the team of designated Business Champions and trained Productivity Managers to set up a productivity framework.

Duration: 1 Day Classroom Training + ½ Day Workshop

Course Outline

- Implement Project Identification Process
- Define Productivity Metrics & Implement a Progress Tracking System
- Implement Incentive Scheme

Overall diagrammatic representation



Attainment of Statements of Attainment (SOAs)

Candidates who completed the WSQ training and successfully passed the assessment will be awarded with Statements of Attainment (SOAs) for the respective competency unit.

Benefits of the programme:

By signing up for the programme, the senior management of the SMEs will acquire productivity concepts and knowledge. The productivity agents identified by the SMEs will be able to implement the productivity improvement project under the guidance of Black Belt Consultants from SMA, and be able to apply and contextualize skills and knowledge acquired during the training, by embarking on the continuation of the companies' productivity drive by setting up a productivity framework within each company.

Funding

WDA Funding is available for Singapore Citizens and PRs.

Funding Component	Funding Rate
Course Fee Support	Up to 70% course fee
Absentee Payroll Support	Up to 80% of hourly salary capped at \$4.50/hr

Application for the Programme

For more details, please contact SMA at

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Email: ccl@smafederation.org.sg

Quotes for WSQ CPIM

“On average our in-house delivery man makes 55 delivery trips to all departmental stores, hypermarkets and retail outlets island-wide every week. During peak periods like school holidays and festive seasons, we would increase delivery trips to 65 per week. To handle this sudden surge in delivery trips, we would usually engage an external delivery man to help.

By applying the productivity concepts we learnt in WSQ CPI Manager, we re-planned our delivery schedule and routes. For the first time this June holidays, our delivery man managed to handle all 65 trips all by himself! This increase in productivity also brought about a 68% saving in delivery costs,” said Ms Gwynn Wong, Director, Supervalu Pte Ltd.

“We have embarked on the WSQ CPI Manager programme to train our managers to be Productivity Champions to be able to continuously look into improving our manufacturing as well as business processes to achieve productivity growth,” said Ms Ann Lee, Director of EI Corporation Pte Ltd.

“Beyonics has been implementing continuous improvement programmes as part of its strategy to drive innovation and productivity. The WSQ Certified Productivity and Innovation Manager programme enables Beyonics to provide a more enhanced systematic approach to problem solving skills, leadership development and resource management for overall improvement in manufacturing activities and business performance,” Mr Goh Chan Peng, CEO, Beyonics International

Winner quotes from WDA-SMa Productivity and Innovation Awards 2011

Ciba Vision – Gold Award

“We were recently faced with an increase in production volume, that our existing plant capacity could not handle. But thanks to our newly acquired training on the Lean Concept, from the WSQ CPIM programme, we were able to optimise the capability of our equipment and shorten the time span for certain processes by more than 60% without incurring high capital cost. This would equate to the production of 15 million more contact lenses per year!”

Advanex – Silver Award

“Over the last 10 years, neither of our employees has undergone external training nor have we had much change to our production method. The WSQ CPIM programme has changed our mindset and taught us to re-examine our production process. Just by rearranging

our production floor layout and eliminating unnecessary stages in the our production workflow, our efficiencies has soared. Productivity level have increased by 44%, while sales has grew by 36%!”

Canon – Bronze Award

“The WSQ CPIM programme exposed us to a more systematic approach to creating sustainable changes that goes beyond cost-savings and productivity growth. We have since redesigned our delivery methodology to efficiently cover a wider area more efficiently. And the results have been brilliant – not only did we save 23% on cartage cost, CO2 emission was also reduced significantly by 71%! We also developed a new Productivity and Innovation Division to look into ways to further improve productivity efforts.”

Chairman (Prof Low Teck Seng)’s Quote on WDA-SMa Productivity and Innovation Awards 2011

“The top three winners all achieved high productivity growth with cost savings of approximately 20%. What is even more encouraging to note is the high level of commitment and ownership that was undertaken by the companies – from management to operational staff – in making their projects a great success. I hope their successes will inspire more companies to take on the WSQ CPI Manager programme and achieve the same, if not better success.”
– Professor Low Teck Seng, Chairman of Judging Panel for WDA-SMa Productivity & Innovation Awards 2011, Managing Director of Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR).

About Singapore Manufacturers' Federation (SMA)

Established since 1932, SMA's mission is to represent the interest of the Singapore manufacturing community and to drive its competitiveness and sustainable growth through serving industry-specific needs.

SMA is supported by 11 industry groups to serve diverse industry-specific needs, as well as Centres of Excellence to offer a holistic approach towards improving competitiveness, upgrading skills and capitalizing on new technologies to grow market share. Current membership stands at more than 2,800 corporate members ranging from SMEs to MNCs.

For more information, please visit www.sma.sg.

About Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA)

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) enhances the competitiveness of our workforce by encouraging workers to learn for life and advance with skills. In today's economy, most jobs require not just knowledge, but also skills. WDA collaborates with employers, industry associations, the Union and training organisations, to develop and strengthen the Continuing Education and Training system that is skills-based, open and accessible, as a mainstream pathway for all workers - young and older, from rank and file to professionals and executives - to upgrade and advance in their careers and lives.

For more information, please visit www.wda.gov.sg.

For media queries, please contact

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