



Singapore Manufacturers'
Federation

新加坡制造商联合会

Supply Chain and Productivity Cluster Technology Day 2011
7 October 2011, 9.40am
Republic Polytechnic

Opening Speech By
Mr Gwee Seng Kwong
Secretary-General, Singapore Manufacturers' Federation

-
- Minister of State for Trade & Industry, Mr Teo Ser Luck
 - Principal and CEO of Republic Polytechnic, Mr Yeo Li Pheow
 - President of Singapore Manufacturers' Federation, Mr George Huang
 - SMA Members
 - Distinguished guests
 - Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome

1. Good Morning to all of you. Thank you for taking time off your busy schedule to attend this seminar.
2. The Singapore Manufacturers' Federation or SMA is pleased to partner the Republic Poly, RP, in organising this year's Technology Day.
3. The RP Tech Day is an annual event held to promote productivity in manufacturing and supply chain management. This objective is in line with SMA's mission to raise competitiveness of the manufacturing sector and manufacturing-related industries, by promoting the adoption of innovative and productive processes.
4. With a common interest in raising industry productivity, SMA finds synergy in this collaboration with RP. Today, we bring a great line up of academia and industry speakers who will be sharing insights and best practices in innovation and productivity. From workflow process redesign to the use of IT tools and robotics, we hope to raise awareness of the various tools and practices that your companies can adopt to further your effort in raising productivity.

SMA's productivity journey

5. At SMA, productivity has been a key area of focus in the last two years. Our journey started from the partnership with the Singapore Workforce Development Agency or WDA, in the development of a training course called WSQ Certified Productivity and Innovation Manager programme, or CPI Manager for short. Since its inception last year, we have trained more than 30 companies and 180 productivity champions in process improvement and waste reduction. Companies that have completed the programme also reported an average productivity growth of 15 per cent for the projects they have undertaken.
6. While results have been encouraging, it is mainly large enterprises that have benefited. Many SMEs feedback that they were unable to commit to the five-month CPI Manager programme due to manpower and time constraints.
7. To ensure SMEs are not left out in productivity improvement, SMA has scaled-down CPI Manager into a two-month programme that is more concise and takes an on-the-job training approach to ease the two constraints. This new programme called SME Qiang was launched recently and training is expected to commence next month.
8. Now, with productivity training programme for SMEs already on track, SMA is not resting on its laurels. We will move on to address other imminent concern of the industry – the productivity of the mature workforce.
9. According to the “Report on Labour Force in Singapore 2010” released by the Ministry of Manpower, there are more than 300,000 employed residents in the manufacturing and service sectors who are aged 55 and above. This figure accounts for more than 15 per cent of the total employed residents in Singapore, and the percentage will continue to grow over the next 20 years.
10. Generally, companies are hesitant about hiring these mature workers because their cognitive, physical and social abilities would start declining and productivity level would be compromised.
11. However, under the new retirement legislation that will come into effect in January, companies would be required to offer re-employment options to eligible employees who reach the age of 62. Judging from the

current employment figures, manufacturing and services would be the most impacted sectors.

12. To help companies tackle this matter, SMA, with the support of the Employment and Employability Institute or e2i, will be developing a new productivity improvement strategy with RP, to enhance the productivity and performance of the mature workforce. Details will be announced by our Guest-of-Honour, Minister Teo Ser Luck in his speech.

SMA-RP collaboration

13. While SMA is strong in implementing process-driven productivity methodology like Lean Six Sigma, we also require skills like “Human Factors Engineering or HFE” to be truly effective in our effort to raise productivity of mature workers. RP complements us in this aspect. It is the only polytechnic in Singapore that offers the HFE module with a focus on supporting human activities in the workplace, as part of their Diploma in Industrial and Operations Management.

14. With eight years’ experience in conducting the HFE module and recognition in the discipline of Supply Chain Management, SMA is certain that RP is equipped with the ability and expertise to make a significant contribution. In addition, we believe the wide range of modern HFE laboratory facilities available in the campus will offer interesting and realistic simulation training, which can be translated into better job and workplace design for the benefits of mature workers.

15. Today, SMA and RP will be sealing our commitment to raise industry productivity in a Memorandum of Understanding. Through this engagement with a tertiary institution, SMA will be able to deliver more value-added seminars and training programmes to our industry members. We welcome RP in joining us on this exciting journey of productivity.

Conclusion

16. In closing, I would like to thank Minister Teo Ser Luck for showing his support at this event.

17. Have a fruitful session at this seminar. Thank you.