

NEWS RELEASE

MAPPING THE FUTURE WITH DESIGN DNA

*New initiative enhances SFIC's plans to make design
a hallmark of Singapore's furniture industry*

Singapore, 9 March 2009 – Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Mr Lee Yi Shyan today announced the launch of the ***Design DNA Programme*** at the official opening of IFFS/AFS 2009. The new initiative by the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) aims to boost overall design standards and capabilities of local furniture companies and designers. Supported by SPRING Singapore, the programme will be implemented over the next three years to assist the furniture industry in fully leveraging design as a key competitive advantage and driver for future growth.

Mr Andrew Ng, President, SFIC, said: "Design DNA (Develop, Nurture and Accelerate), will greatly enhance the Council's efforts in establishing the Republic as the Asian hub for furniture and design excellence. It is no secret that the only way forward for our companies to excel in the international arena will be to inculcate a design-centric mentality among all players in the industry. Coupled with SFIC's other current design initiatives, I am confident that the new programme will raise the bar in design excellence and encourage a more vibrant and robust design-led furniture trade in Singapore."

SPRING Singapore Chief Executive Mr Png Cheong Boon said: "Singapore furniture manufacturers have realised that well-designed furniture not only differentiates one's brand, but also raises its value. This is especially important in the increasingly sophisticated global market. The Design DNA Programme will help our furniture manufacturers to tap on local and international designers to develop innovative designs that would propel them up in terms of quality, value and image."

Design DNA is targeted at local furniture companies, designers and students and will focus on four main areas - design seminars, overseas design missions, an interactive e-platform for design promotion and outreach, and a capabilities-profiling of the furniture industry. To achieve this, SFIC's dedicated Design Development Unit will spearhead, enhance and formulate the various initiatives under the Design DNA initiative and will involve:

Design Seminars

Over the next three years, SFIC will be organising five local design seminars and workshops, as well as two overseas immersion programmes. Participants at these sessions will learn from renowned international and local designers, who will be invited to share useful tips and personal insights on design. SFIC will also organise mentoring groups of between eight to ten local designers and design management professionals to facilitate in-depth knowledge sharing.

Overseas Design Missions

SFIC will implement two design missions to countries that are well-known for their strong design focus and best trade practices. In the pipeline are visits to Europe and Asia. As part of these trips, participants will have the chance to visit furniture retail outlets, design studios and design-centric furniture trade shows.

These study tours will allow local designers and industry players to experience the international design markets up-close. More importantly, designers will have the chance to network with overseas designers and manufacturers, thus creating opportunities for the exchange of ideas and the development of future collaborations.

E-Platform

The Council will develop and implement an integrated furniture design online platform for design promotion and education. Targeted at designers and enterprises, it will include an e-calendar with relevant design events and a design directory to facilitate the matching of designers to manufacturers.

To further engage designers and enterprises, quarterly e-newsletters will be developed by qualified professionals from the design and furniture industry focusing on trends, innovations, new technologies and good business practices. The newsletters will be disseminated to SFIC members, furniture and design industry players and students with the aim of promoting design activities and programmes.

Profiling of Furniture Industries Capabilities

To highlight promising local design-led furniture companies and outstanding designers, Design DNA will put in place various branding and communication tools to reach out to practitioners, and industry users. This will include an annual design guide that will be published and distributed to ASEAN countries, Asia, Europe and international market players. Further to this, SFIC will also award recognition to good industry practices such as entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation as well as highlight design industry leaders through its various design-led initiatives and activities.

Besides SPRING, SFIC will also be working with International Enterprise (IE) Singapore and DesignSingapore Council on future projects and developments related to Design DNA.

For more information on SFIC, please visit <http://www.singaporefurniture.com>.

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About Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC)

SFIC was established in 1981 as the official representative body of Singapore's furniture industry. It currently represents 95 per cent of established furniture manufacturers in Singapore, of whom 65 per cent have subsidiary manufacturing plants in the region including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Its primary role is to promote the interests of its members and the Singapore furniture industry. Many of its initiatives aim to facilitate members' exposure to the world market, develop local talent and encourage entrepreneurship. SFIC organises the annual Furniture Design Award and PLATFORM to spur trendsetting furniture designs from Asia.

SFIC is the parent company of International Furniture Fair Singapore Pte Ltd, the organiser of the annual International Furniture Fair Singapore and ASEAN Furniture Show. SFIC also manages the International Furniture Centre, a year-round platform for international buyers to source and trade for a wide range of quality, well-designed furniture from Singapore and the region.

To ensure the industry's growth and viability, SFIC continues to forge close partnerships with the government and trade-related agencies to harness technology, knowledge and information for effective strategic planning.

Issued by : Foreword Communications Pte Ltd
On behalf of : Singapore Furniture Industries Council

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