



the year in r**e**view

the year in review

By all accounts, 2006/07 was a good and eventful year for SFIC.

As leadership expert John Maxwell once said, “Everything rises and falls on leadership”. Having good leaders in SFIC to chart the directions of the furniture industry has been a key factor of our success over the past 26 years. To continue the progress, plans for leadership renewal have been put in place since 1999, with the initiation of the Youth Furniture Committee (YFC), a dynamic platform for young leaders to network and benefit from the guidance of distinguished captains of the industry. The new Executive Committee for the 2006-2008 term demonstrates that the torch is being passed on. Several YFC visionary leaders who were groomed over the years have taken over

positions of responsibility within the Executive Committee, bringing about a good balance of fresh and experienced leadership to guide the SFIC to a new frontier.

In line with our six key thrusts, SFIC has consistently engaged in a number of initiatives under its Local Enterprise and Association Development (LEAD) Programme. This blueprint, which is supported by Spring Singapore and IE Singapore, focuses on nurturing a high value-added workforce, developing more design-centric companies and creating a synergized industry network to capture a bigger global market share.



SFIC's six key thrusts are:

- Grow and expand business globally
- Raise design standards
- Establish a Furniture Learning Institute
- Establish an International Furniture Centre
- Develop immediate measures to help industry players
- Develop and maintain industry growth profile

The collective efforts by SFIC and its stakeholders are starting to see results and the shape of things to come. Our furniture companies have done well in riding the global growth, with many moving up the value chain and internationalising to capture a bigger global market share.



THRUST 1 GROW AND EXPAND BUSINESS GLOBALLY

International Furniture Fair Singapore 2007/
24th ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS 2007)

IFFS/AFS 2007 etched another milestone in its 24-year history by being the largest, in term of scale. Spanning over five days in March 2007, the event once again proved to be an excellent trade platform for 17,322 visitors from 119 countries and 510 exhibitors from 28 countries, of which many had increased their exhibition space. This resulted in the show being 10.7 per cent bigger than 2006, spanning over 60,000 square metres in gross space (or 39,300 square metres in nett space) at the Singapore Expo.

The value of on-spot sales inked was an estimated US\$240.0 million, with US\$1.2 billion follow-up sales projected for the next 12 months. An estimated US\$38.0 million in revenue was generated for Singapore's Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) and tourism sectors. Singapore's reputation as a regional furniture hub has grown with mega trade events such as the IFFS/AFS, which added vibrancy to the furniture ecosystem.



From left to right: Mr Andrew Ng, President of SFIC, Mr Lim Hng Kiang, Minister for Trade and Industry and Mr James Koh, Chairman of IFFS Pte Ltd at the launch of IFFS/AFS 2007

Overseas Fairs, Business Missions & Business Matching Programme

To extend the global market reach of industry players, SFIC stepped up the industry's presence in strategic overseas locations. Members' participation in internationally acclaimed furniture fairs such as imm Cologne (Germany), Orgatec (Germany) and Index Dubai (UAE) as well as business missions to USA, Italy and China were actively organised to help members scour for new business opportunities internationally.

The SFIC was also instrumental in facilitating business-matching activities to help members develop business contacts and opportunities in the fields of outsourcing, investment, strategic alliance and technology transfer. Such efforts were complemented by the biennial Singapore Furniture Directory as well as the www.singaporefurniture.com portal.

As a further expansion of our portfolio of value-added services to the contract furniture manufacturing sector, our subsidiary company - IFFS Pte Ltd - and MP International joined hands to organise the first International Hospitality Furniture Expo (IHFEX) at the Bahrain International Exhibition Centre in September 2007. The timely launch of IHFEX will provide contract furniture makers and manufacturers/suppliers of related products and services with the platform to leverage emerging opportunities in the development of the hospitality industry in the Middle East and neighbouring South Asia and Africa.



Business Mission to China

Overseas Industry Cluster

Given Singapore's strategic location at the crossroads of Asia, SFIC members were actively encouraged to venture abroad to leverage on the relatively lower operational cost in neighbouring countries whilst maintaining Singapore as their HQ for knowledge-driven activities such as marketing, design, branding and product development. To date, many Singapore furniture manufacturers have spread their wings far and wide, setting up commercial presence in more than 16 countries across the globe.

To help SMEs establish a foothold overseas, SFIC promoted the formation of industry clusters or consortia in targeted markets. The Singapore Furniture Industry Park in Kunshan (China) is an excellent example of what industry players can achieve overseas through collective strength and collaboration.

New Exporter Mentoring Programme

The New Exporter Mentoring Programme is an initiative under the SFIC LEAD Programme to equip new and not-so-experienced exporters with the skills and processes to venture overseas. Potential exporters were placed through a series of programmes which taught them the framework to formulate concise and viable strategic plans. Experienced furniture exporters were also invited to provide guidance and export know-how to fellow members to help open doors to the international trade.



THRUST 2 RAISE DESIGN STANDARDS

With design becoming increasingly important as the key driver for growth, the second key thrust of the SFIC places emphasis on setting the tone for industry players to realign their focus from a manufacturing mindset to a design-led one. The SFIC is also focusing its efforts on nurturing budding design talents.

Through initiatives such as Furniture Design Award, FLIP Challenge, Designer Co-Development Programme, Platform, Furniture Design Forum and Design Conversations, our years of perseverance in honing design capabilities have allowed us to reach new heights. Overall, we have had excellent responses for all our design-related events and activities.



Furniture Design Award 2007 Press Conference

Furniture Design Award (FDA) 2007

Since its debut in 1993, the FDA has showcased many furniture innovations and kick-started the careers of a number of budding design talents.

FDA 2007 received a total of 377 entries in the Students, Young Designers and Open Categories, with strong international participation from 14 countries. In the Young Designers Category, entries grew by an impressive 27% from 2006 while the Open Category saw a 15% increase. The high participation rate is a testimony that the international furniture trade and design community has recognised the FDA as a high profile avenue for budding young designers to express their creativity and gain recognition in the industry.

To date, we have made some inroads in successfully matchmaking talented designers with companies that have manufacturing know-how and marketing networks. A number of our past FDA winners have gone on to make a mark for themselves in the design scene. Success stories from previous FDAs include personalities such as Andrew Pang of Lavaworks, Nathan Yong of Air Division, Adrian Chua of Sevensvine and Jeremy Ong of Designscale, all of whom are successful design entrepreneurs today. Other young designers like Jarrod Lim, Joseph Chia and Chen Xi have also made significant breakthroughs in their careers.

3rd Furniture · Lifestyle · Innovations · Perspectives (FLIP) Challenge

The FLIP Challenge is another dynamic initiative by the SFIC to challenge the younger generation to innovate and transform furniture into works of art within a restricted parameter. For the 3rd FLIP Challenge, participants from local arts and design institutions were tasked to fashion innovative furniture out of six pieces of American red oak each, courtesy of the American Hardwood Export Council. An overwhelming 60 entries were received from 10 institutions.

The creative works by both FDA and FLIP winners were showcased through avenues like the annual IFFS/AFS, National Library Board, National Museum of Singapore and the International Hospitality Furniture Expo in Bahrain, so that buyers and manufacturers from all over the world can see the capabilities of these designers and find potential partnerships with them.



FLIP Challenge Showcase at the National Library Board

Designer Co-Development Programme

The Designer Co-Development Programme was introduced during the year to spot promising young talents and reward them with a one-year employment contract with leading local furniture companies. Finalists of FDA and FLIP were given the priority to participate in this programme.

Seven designers have started on their practical mentoring programme with companies such as Air Division, Star Furniture, Henry Designcentre, Carsten Ovesen Design, Design Unit and The Home Merchant. Very soon, their commercialised works will be found in the stores and other relevant trade platforms.

Platform

In support of design entrepreneurship, the SFIC successfully launched the inaugural Platform in March 2007. The programme offered 67 emerging design entrepreneurs with an unparalleled opportunity to showcase their creative ideas and launch their furniture prototypes during IFFS/AFS 2007.

Many of those who exhibited at the international event are now collaborating with distribution firms and manufacturers to bring their products to an international audience. Kelvin Teo of Design Metaphyz was talent spotted by a local company, EXIT Designs, and invited to showcase one of his products at Salone Satellite in Milan this year. His products are also currently on display in Designed in Singapore Pte Ltd's showroom. Jarrod Lim of Jarrod Lim Design is currently designing furniture for two Indonesian furniture manufacturers and had participated in SPOGA 2007 in Germany. HybridMatter LLP will be collaborating with Getz Bros, an international manufacturer and distributor on some new designs and collections.



Platform 2007

Furniture Design Forum

The 5th Furniture Design Forum held in June 2007 was a resounding success. Based on the theme “Design-led Business”, this year’s forum targeted management teams to help them recognise the importance of design and motivate them to integrate design into their central business functions.

An overwhelming 250 participants filled the National Museum of Singapore auditorium to listen to renowned international design gurus, Mr Eugenio Perazza and Mr Stefano Giovannoni - founders of Italian-based Magis and Giovannoni Design respectively. Other guest panellists included accomplished design entrepreneurs from Hong Kong and Singapore.



Designers' Cocktail
Networking Session

Design Conversations

Two Design Conversations were also organised during the year for students and young designers. Close to 200 participants attended each session to listen to design practitioners as they shared their experiences and secrets to their success. The SFIC will continue to organise more of such events to motivate students to work harder towards their goal as practising designers.

International Furniture Design Advisory Panel, Design Partnership and Support

To help catapult the Council’s design initiatives to greater heights, nine distinguished local and international design personalities were appointed as members of the International Furniture Advisory Panel.

The success of the various SFIC design-centric initiatives was also attributed to the extensive support rendered by the various government and trade agencies such as DesignSingapore Council, IE Singapore, Spring Singapore, Designers Association of Singapore, Interior Design Confederation, Singapore Institute of Architects and the American Hardwood Export Council.

The National Library Board, National Museum of Singapore, Agility - Fairs & Events, V-Mark Woodcraft (S) Pte Ltd, IFFS Pte Ltd as well as many other sponsors also played a part in the Council’s push for design excellence as a key driver of national competitiveness in Singapore.

THRUST 3 ESTABLISH THE FURNITURE LEARNING INSTITUTE

To enhance the value-added of our furniture industry workforce, the Furniture Learning Institute rolled out 20 customised programmes and trained over 900 participants. Apart from capabilities development, FLI also emphasises on 'lifetime employability' to equip the workforce with the skills and mindset to adjust to changes of environment and work roles. More customised training courses for staff at different levels will be launched in the next few years. There will also be study missions to other countries to learn best practices and to cross-fertilize ideas.



Staying competitive,
staying relevant with FLI

THRUST 4 ESTABLISH THE INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE CENTRE

Taking centre stage is the development of the Sungei Kadut Industrial Estate into a premier furniture design and trade hub. A result of SFIC's relentless pursuit of strategic partnerships with the government and relevant trade-related authorities, the industry will soon be able to crystallise its vision of initiating and facilitating global trade from an International Furniture Centre (IFC) within Singapore.

Slated to be opened by end 2007, the five-storey IFC Building will house furniture showrooms on three levels, with the other two dedicated to offices and F&B outlets. The initial investment for IFC is over S\$15 million.

International Furniture Centre



THRUST 5

DEVELOP IMMEDIATE MEASURES TO HELP INDUSTRY PLAYERS

SFIC works closely with IE Singapore, JTC Corporation, Spring Singapore and Singapore Workforce Development Agency to ensure that plans for industry are useful and viable. SFIC also explores real-time relief measures to assist members in areas of need, develop their capabilities, better manage their business and add value to their products and services.

Over the past year, SFIC also collaborated with the Specialists Trade Alliance of Singapore and relevant authorities on pertinent issues to facilitate a more conducive business environment for local furniture contract manufacturing players.

THRUST 6

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN INDUSTRY GROWTH PROFILE

Singapore Furniture Industry Awards

The SFIC organised the 2nd Singapore Furniture Industry Awards in 2006 to honour outstanding companies and individuals who had made significant contributions to the industry.

Our heartiest congratulations to the following recipients for clinching the coveted awards:

The Furniture Manufacturer Award

Gold - Koda Ltd
Silver - Sitra Holdings (International) Limited
Bronze - Uhin Holdings Ltd

The Furniture Retailer Award

Gold - Air Division Pte Ltd
Silver - Zen Tradition Living Pte Ltd
Bronze - Eurosa Furniture Co (Pte) Ltd

The Interior Builder Award

Gold - Kingsmen Creative Ltd
Silver - Grandwork Interior Pte Ltd
Bronze - Pico Art International Pte Ltd

The New Entrant Award

Gold - Anthony Furnisshen Pte Ltd
Silver - NuBrand Incorporated Pte Ltd
Bronze - Massimmo

The Outstanding Individual Award

Gold - Rose Lim of Cellini Design Center Pte Ltd
Silver - Liong Siew Soon of Star Furniture Industries Pte Ltd
Bronze - Lena Tan of Momentum Creations Pte Ltd
- Raymond Tong of Cityneon Exhibition Services

From left to right: Mr Simon Ong of Kingsmen Creatives Ltd, Mr Nathan Yong of Air Division Pte Ltd, Ms Rose Lim of Cellini Design Center Pte Ltd, Mr James Koh of Koda Ltd and Mr Benny Phang of Anthony Furnisshen Pte Ltd



Industry Branding

The SFIC, Spring Singapore and IE Singapore have also embarked on a Singapore furniture industry branding programme to improve industry players' competitiveness in export markets. This will also complement the current LEAD initiatives to further enhance the position of the Singapore furniture industry on the world furniture map.

Formation of Strategic Alliance

On the national level, the SFIC has been an effective bridge between the government, statutory boards and trade bodies to ensure that the industry's views were heard when new legislations were being formed.

SFIC is represented in the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises, Singapore Manufacturers' Federation, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Singapore Association of Convention and Exhibition Organizers and the Specialists Trade Alliance of Singapore. On the regional level, SFIC continues to represent Singapore in the ASEAN Furniture Industries Council.



Other Industry Networking Activities

SFIC organises several annual networking activities to create opportunities for industry players, government, business associates and media representatives to build rapport and establish good business relationship. The activities included: Lunar New Year Luncheon, Designers' Cocktail Networking Sessions, Dinner & Dance and Golf Tournament.

From left to right: Mr Andrew Ng, President of SFIC, Mr Chong Lit Cheong, CEO of IE Singapore, Mr Loh Khum Yean, CE of Spring Singapore and Mr Eric Tham, Senior Vice President of UOB Bank



Get together at SFIC Dinner & Dance