

YEAR IN REVIEW



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It has been another landmark year, with the Singapore furniture industry witnessing continued growth and several new initiatives by the SFIC.

There are six key thrusts to SFIC's programmes. Collectively, they represent an integrated approach to creating sustainable strategic advantages for the Singapore furniture industry.

SFIC's six key thrusts are to:

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

2007 marks the second year since SFIC embarked on the Local Enterprise and Association Development (LEAD) Programme to nurture and strengthen the furniture industry.

The programme, which is a multi-agency initiative supported by SPRING Singapore and IE Singapore, aims to implement a S\$16 million plan over three years to help the local furniture industry sustain its strategic advantages and enhance its competitive edge in the international marketplace.

The approved initiatives under the Singapore furniture industry's LEAD Programme focus on three key areas – to nurture a high value-added workforce, develop more design-centric companies and to create a synergised industry network to capture a bigger global market share.



THRUST 1

GROW AND EXPAND BUSINESS GLOBALLY

International Furniture Fair Singapore 2008/25th ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS 2008)

The International Furniture Fair Singapore 2008 held in conjunction with the 25th ASEAN Furniture Show

(IFFS/AFS 2008) from 9-12 March 2008 soared to new heights this year with record-breaking deals.

The four-day trade show recorded an impressive attendance of 18,361 trade visitors from 129 countries.

Spanning 70,000 square metres at the Singapore Expo, the fair also played host to 517 exhibitors from 33 countries, showcasing the best of Asia and international furniture to great success.

As a result of the business partnerships and opportunities forged at the fair, the event recorded US\$271 million worth of spot orders with an estimated US\$2.45 billion in follow-on sales over the 12 months after the fair. IFFS/AFS 2008 also generated an estimated US\$45 million in economic spinoffs for Singapore's Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) and tourism sectors.



Overseas Fairs, Business Missions & Business Matching Programme

To raise the profile of Singapore furniture in international markets, SFIC led even larger contingents of local furniture companies to participate in internationally acclaimed trade fairs such as imm Cologne, Index Dubai, Batimat (Paris) and Salone Internazionale del Mobile (Milan). SFIC also embarked on business missions to Vietnam, Germany, France as well as a design mission to New York, USA.

At the four international shows, the Singapore exhibitors garnered a total of S\$14.7 million in spot orders and an estimated S\$116.3 million worth of follow-on sales in the 12 months after the show.



SFIC also continued to actively help members develop new business opportunities through its business matching activities. These efforts were complemented by the SFIC online portal, www.singaporefurniture.com, the biennial Singapore Furniture

Directory as well as trade contacts and leads from government agencies such as IE Singapore, SPRING Singapore and embassies.

Overseas Industry Cluster

Given Singapore's strategic geographical location, SFIC members were actively encouraged to venture abroad to leverage on the relatively lower manufacturing costs in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, while the Singapore office operates as the headquarters for knowledge-driven activities such as marketing, design, branding and product development.

Today, Singapore furniture manufacturers have a commercial presence in more than 16 countries across the globe, spreading their wings far and wide.



SFIC also promoted the forming of industry clusters in key target markets. A very good example is the Singapore Furniture Industry Park in Kunshan, China.

New Exporter Mentoring Programme

The New Exporter Mentoring Programme is an initiative under the SFIC LEAD Programme to equip local companies looking to expand their business with the skills and knowledge to venture overseas. These new exporters had to attend a series of workshops that provided them with key export information and the framework to formulate feasible strategic plans. Experienced furniture exporters were also invited to impart essential know-how and tips that will open doors to new international markets.



THRUST 2

RAISE DESIGN STANDARDS

Over the years, much effort was spent in honing design capabilities amongst students, young designers and enterprises. The ultimate goal is to leverage design as a sustainable and strategic advantage that will anchor the growth of the furniture industry in the competitive global market.

Furniture Design Award 2008

Since the Furniture Design Award (FDA) was launched in 1993, the annual competition has experienced encouraging growth in the number of entries each year. FDA 2008 saw a 41% increase in participants as compared to

the previous year, with a total of 530 entries from 12 different countries. This is also the first year where the Students Category was opened to the ASEAN region.

The high participation rate is testimony of the industry's recognition of FDA as an ideal platform to harness design gems, talent spot young blood and launch careers of budding designers.



4th Furniture • Lifestyle • Innovations • Perspectives (FL!P) Challenge

The FL!P Challenge is another programme developed in recent years to challenge students from design institutions to innovate and create furniture pieces which encompass both design and functionality, out of existing furniture or raw materials provided for the competition.

Based on the theme “Eclecticity”, the 4th FL!P Challenge received 54 entries from 10 local arts and design institutions. Students were challenged to design and construct original pieces of furniture through the mix and match of two different types of wood – red oak and yellow poplar, courtesy of the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC).



As a part of SFIC’s design outreach efforts, the creative works of the FDA and FL!P Challenge finalists were showcased at IFFS/AFS as well as at the National Library Board and National Museum of Singapore. The displays at these public platforms helped to cultivate the appreciation of arts and design among the masses and helped nurture young blood for a fulfilling career in design.

PLATFORM

Into its second year, PLATFORM is yet another launch pad to help young design entrepreneurs form fruitful partnerships with industry players.

Held in conjunction with IFFS/AFS, 61 up-and-coming designers from 17 design houses and institutions participated in PLATFORM 2008, exhibiting their works across 500 square metres of floor space.

In addition, a number of PLATFORM 2008 participants were given the invaluable opportunity to venture beyond Singapore to showcase their designs during imm Cologne 2008.

Many of these young designers who were given the opportunity to exhibit at international events have successfully tied up with established companies that have the manufacturing know-how and networks to produce and market their works.



Designer Co-Development Programme

Through the Designer Co-Development Programme, eight promising young design talents were awarded a one-year employment contract with leading local furniture companies. The salaries of the selected designers were jointly funded by SFIC and hiring companies. These young talents were placed on an intensive mentoring programme with senior designers in the companies and will work towards producing at least one design to be showcased at PLATFORM or the commercial production of their works.

Furniture Design Forum / Workshops

The 6th Furniture Design Forum held in June 2008 received overwhelming response from the



industry. Key-note speaker, the award-winning designer Mr Naoto Fukasawa of Naoto Fukasawa Design gave an inspiring presentation “The Core of Awareness”. Mr Fukasawa and a panel of four other acclaimed designers also had a lively discussion on their design concepts and philosophies with the 250 participants.

Three other design workshops were organised during the year for students and young designers. Close to 180 participants attended each session to hear established design practitioners share their experiences and the secrets to their success.

International Furniture Design Advisory Panel, Design Partnership and Support

To help catapult the Council's design initiatives to greater heights, 11 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 is also attributed to the extensive support from various government agencies and trade associations such as DesignSingapore Council, IE Singapore, SPRING Singapore, Designers Association Singapore, Interior Design Confederation (Singapore), Singapore Institute of Architects and the American Hardwood Export Council.

The National Library Board, National Museum of Singapore, Agility - Fairs & Events, IFFS Pte Ltd and 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 value-add to the capabilities of the furniture industry workforce, the SFIC set up the Furniture Learning Institute (FLI) in 2004 to provide customised and structured training programmes for the industry workforce.

Apart from capabilities development, the Institute also emphasises on 'lifetime employability' to equip the workforce with the skills and mindset to adjust to changes in the economic environment and work roles. More than 100 training courses/seminars have been conducted to date at the FLI.



THRUST 4

ESTABLISH THE INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE CENTRE

The International Furniture Centre (IFC) was officially launched by the Minister for Trade & Industry, Mr Lim Hng Kiang, on 13 December 2007. The IFC is a timely venture as it is the first step of the macroeconomics masterplan by the JTC Corporation to develop Sungei Kadut into an International Furniture Park (IFP).

Serving as a hub for global and local furniture companies, IFP aims to bring together high value-adding activities such as management, procurement, corporate business headquarter (BHQ) as well as design, quality control and prototyping services for the Singapore furniture industry.

The five-storey IFC is the first step in a series of initiatives to develop the IFP.

It complements the IFFS/AFS by extending international buyers the opportunity to do business beyond the show, thus contributing to the industry's vision to be an international hub in the region.



THRUST 5

DEVELOP IMMEDIATE MEASURES TO HELP INDUSTRY PLAYERS



SFIC works closely with all relevant government and trade agencies to roll out immediate measures to assist members in current areas of need, develop their capabilities, add value to their business and to provide them with opportunities to expand their operations.

THRUST 6

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN INDUSTRY GROWTH PROFILE

Singapore Mozaic

March 2008 marked an important milestone as the SFIC unveiled the all-new brand identity for the Singapore furniture industry, **Singapore Mozaic**, during IFFS/AFS. Singapore Mozaic was subsequently launched overseas at the prestigious Salone Internazionale del Mobile in Milan in April.

Singapore Mozaic is an industry programme by the SFIC with strong

support from SPRING Singapore and IE Singapore.

The B2B industry brand champions 'Singapore furniture's finest' and encapsulates the best of what the Singapore furniture industry has to offer. Singapore Mozaic brings together a group of successful local furniture companies bound by five key attributes. Singapore Mozaic ambassadors are **Agile, Vibrant, Discerning, Forward-looking** and **Transparent**.

Singapore Mozaic is also about doing business with passion and style.

Passion for improving the world consumers live and work in combined with experienced management, skilled workforce and proven infrastructure help Singapore Mozaic ambassadors to generate consistent, progressive solutions. With a fusion of East and West business practices, dynamic design capabilities and versatile production resources, Singapore Mozaic addresses the needs and expectations of customers anywhere in the world.

28 pioneer companies have been appointed Singapore Mozaic ambassadors during the year and more are in the pipeline.



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Formation of Strategic Alliance

SFIC is an effective bridge between the government, statutory boards and trade organisations and ensures that the industry's views are heard when new legislations and guidelines are 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 Organisers and Suppliers, as well as Specialists Trade Alliance of Singapore. Regionally, SFIC represents Singapore in the ASEAN Furniture Industries Council (AFIC).



Other Industry Networking Activities

SFIC organises several annual networking activities to create opportunities for industry players, designers, business associates as well as government and media representatives to network, build rapport and establish fruitful relationships.

These activities include: the Lunar New Year Luncheon, Designers' Cocktail Networking Sessions, Dinner & Dance and the SFIC Golf Tournament.