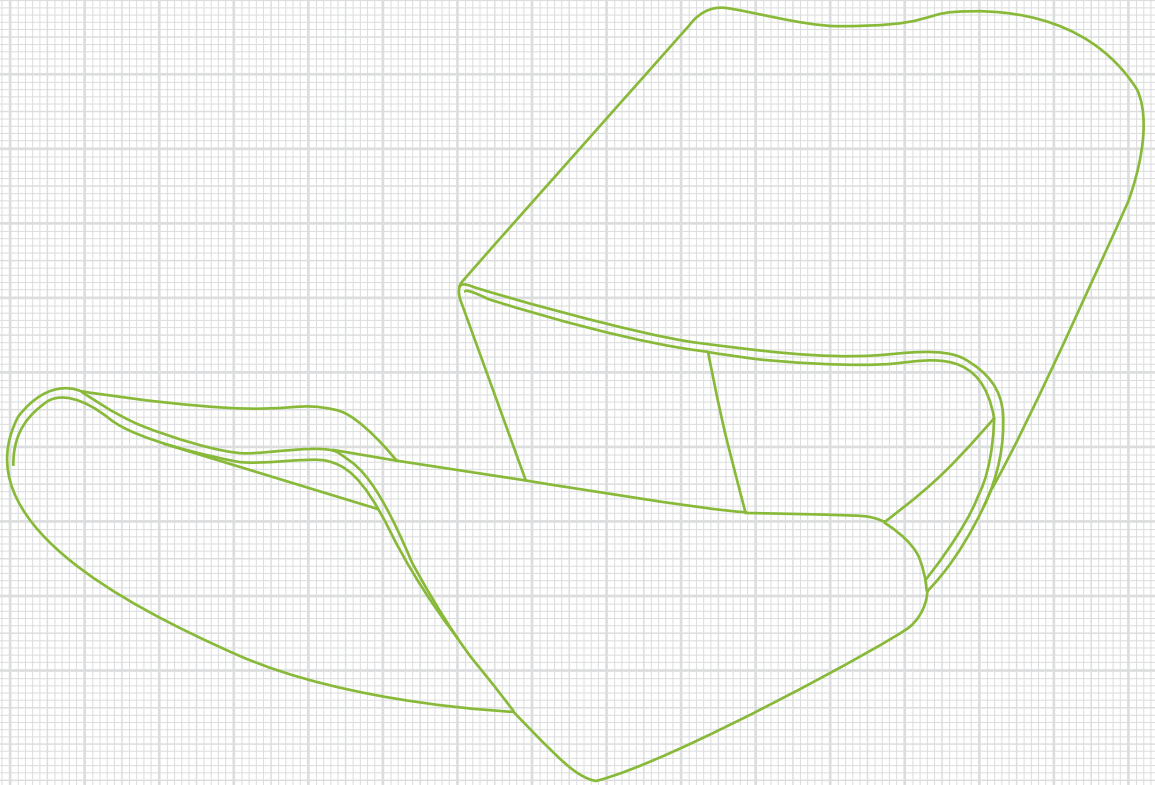


year  
in review



This has been a notable year for the Singapore furniture industry despite the downturn in the global economy as SFIC continues to lead and serve the industry, introducing new initiatives to aid furniture companies overcome the financial maelstrom.

Guided by six key thrusts for an integrated approach to create a sustainable strategic advantage for the Singapore furniture industry, SFIC has helped usher in growth with the strong support from government bodies of Singapore.

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

## Thrust 1

### Grow and Expand Business Globally

#### International Furniture Fair Singapore 2009/26th ASEAN Furniture Show (IFFS/AFS 2009)



The four-day trade show which ran from 9 to 12 March saw a healthy attendance of 15,606 trade visitors from 118 countries. Spanning across 6 halls with a gross area of 60,000 square metres, IFFS/AFS 2009 showcased 471 exhibitors from 33 countries. It is, definitely, a solid testimony of the liveliness of the furniture trade industry in Singapore and region, despite the economic downturn.

An estimated US\$245 million in spot orders was achieved at IFFS/AFS 2009, with an additional estimate of US\$2.2 billion in follow-on sales expected for the year ahead, thanks to the business leads secured at the fair. Adding to these commendable results, the event also garnered an estimated US\$41 million in economic spin-offs for Singapore's Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) and tourism sectors.



## Overseas Fairs/Business Missions & Business Matching Programme

Standing by the industry's positioning of 'Conceptualised and Designed in Singapore, Made in Asia, Sold to the World', SFIC led its members to acclaimed international trade fairs such as Index Dubai 2008, Orgatec 2008, imm cologne 2009 and the 48th Salone Internazionale del Mobile in Milan to gain more exposure on the global scene. SFIC also organised business missions to the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Russia.



Despite the grim economic situation, local companies rated their overall experiences at these events as positive. Most took the advantage of the lull to gear up for future growth by focusing on establishing their brand names and product design.

SFIC continued to aid members in expanding their reach through its business matching activities, both web-based and offline. Other than initiatives that are complemented by the SFIC online portal, the biennial Singapore Furniture Directory as well as trade contacts and leads from government agencies such as IE Singapore, SPRING Singapore and embassies helped connect companies to the global marketplace.

## **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, with Singapore as the headquarters for knowledge-driven activities such as marketing, design, branding and product development.

Today, Singapore furniture manufacturers have spread their wings and extended their commercial presence to more than 16 countries across the globe. SFIC also promoted the forming of industry clusters in key target markets. A good example is the Singapore Furniture Industry Park in Kunshan, China.

## **New Exporter Mentoring Programme**

Aligned with its key role of helping member companies grow and expand internationally, SFIC kick-started the New Exporter Program in June 2007 to provide export support, guidance and sharing through a series of workshops and mentoring sessions. These workshops have provided exporters the foundation and framework to formulate feasible strategic plans. With guidance from experienced furniture exporters through the mentoring sessions, young exporters are equipped with the know-how to aid companies venturing into new international markets. To date, the programme has mentored 189 participants from 62 companies.

## Thrust 2

SFIC has, over the years, spent an enormous amount of effort in cultivating design capabilities in students, young designers and enterprises. The recent launch of Design DNA, an initiative by SPRING Singapore that aims to develop design capability, nurture local design talents

and accelerate business growth, will further drive SFIC's design programmes to greater heights. More than 300 designers are expected to benefit through this three-year programme comprising design seminars and workshops, overseas immersion projects and study missions.

### Furniture Design Award (FDA) 2009

Furniture Design Award 2009, an annual competition well into its 16th year, has experienced commendable growth in the number of entries each year. FDA 2009 saw a 15 per cent increase in submissions compared to the previous year, amounting to a total of 637 participants across all three categories. The rise in the number of participants is an excellent testimony of the industry's recognition of FDA's effort in spotting new talent and nurturing young budding designers.

Unlike previous years, there was no given theme for FDA 2009. Participants were given free rein with their furniture creations and the winning creations were showcased at the IFFS/AFS 2009.



## 5th Furniture . Lifestyle . Innovations . Perspectives (FLIP) Challenge

A design initiative by SFIC, the FLIP Challenge was another successful design initiative organised by SFIC. Held for the fifth time, it attracted a total of 69 submissions from 12 design institutions, a 20 per cent increase over the previous year.

Based on the theme 'FLIP a Chair', students were tasked to transform the Erpo Dining Chair, sponsored by Star Furniture Pte Ltd, into furniture pieces that encompass



both design and functionality. The final entries were short-listed and assessed by a distinguished panel of design gurus including Mr Naoto Fukasawa, Founder of Naoto Fukasawa Design (Japan). All finalists' works were displayed at IFFS/AFS 2009, giving the designers invaluable exposure to the international furniture community who attended the trade show.

## PLATFORM

Into its third year, PLATFORM has proved to be a vital stepping stone for many young design entrepreneurs to reach out to the international market and kick-start their careers. These designers were also given the opportunity to form fruitful partnerships with international and locally-acclaimed industry players.

Held in conjunction with IFFS/AFS 2009, PLATFORM 2009 occupied 800 square metres of floor space, a 60 per cent increase in size from 2008 and the biggest to date.



It housed over 30 young furniture designers from 11 participating design companies and institutions during the four-day trade show. The “Best of Display” was a new addition to this year’s exhibition where the best products from past and present participants of PLATFORM and FDA were showcased. Scaled models of the creations by some of the young designers who had participated in a SFIC-organised workshop with international design laboratory, Magis from Italy, were also on display.

Apart from home ground exposure, some of PLATFORM’s past participants were also given the invaluable opportunity of having their designs showcased at internationally-acclaimed shows such as imm cologne 2009 and the 48th Salone Internazionale del Mobile in Milan.

Many of these young designers have benefited by gaining useful contacts and the chance to tie up with established companies to manufacture and market their works.



## Furniture Design Forum/Design Workshop

The 7th Furniture Design Forum was held concurrently with IFFS/AFS 2009 and organised by the SFIC in collaboration with Singapore Mozaic Brand Ambassador, Office Planner Pte Ltd.

Prolific designer Mr Karim Rashid of Karim Rashid Inc shared his views on the topic “Shaping the Globalandscape” with a whopping 439 participants in attendance, almost double the previous year’s headcount. The prominent international personality raised many provocative points and provided many examples and



anecdotes to illustrate his concepts and ideas, leaving the audience with much food for thought on the role and future of design.

The Furniture Design Forum and other design-related workshops organised by SFIC are meant to inspire designers and equip industry players with relevant information and updates on the latest design trends.

## Design Missions



As part of the Design DNA initiative to develop design capability, groom local design talents and accelerate business growth through design adoption, SFIC organised design study missions to countries that are well known for their strong focus on design. During these missions, participants would visit furniture retail outlets, design studios and design-centric furniture trade shows. These gave local designers and enterprises greater insight into the international design and furniture markets and allowed them to network with overseas designers and manufacturers to develop innovative ideas and establish relationships.

Working towards this, SFIC embarked on two missions - the first was a creative collaboration with renowned Italian furniture company, Magis, while the second was held this year in conjunction with the 48th Salone Internazionale del Mobile in Milan where Singapore furniture companies met with top Italian furniture designers and companies such as Moroso and Diade.



## **International Furniture Design Advisory Panel, Design Partnership and Support**

To help take 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 due 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 Museum of Singapore, IFFS Pte Ltd and many other sponsors have also played an important part in the Council's push for design excellence as a key driver of national competitiveness in Singapore.

## Thrust 3

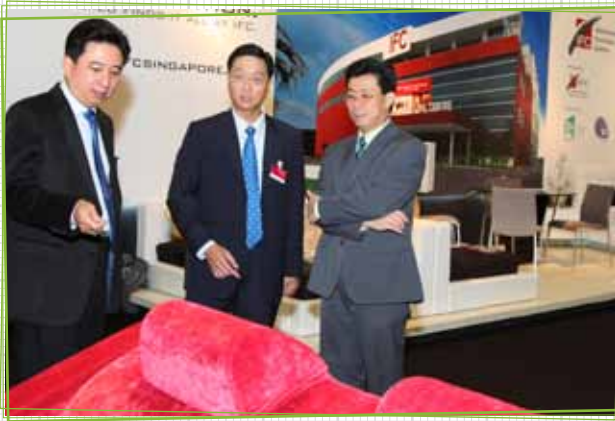
### Establish the Furniture Learning Institute

SFIC has continued to stress the importance of training to keep industry players and the workforce relevant, updated and in demand, and to enable the industry to undertake higher value-add activities. Launched in 2004, the Furniture Learning Institute (FLI) provides customised and certified training programmes with the aim of developing the human resource capabilities and competence of the Singapore Furniture Industry, as well as to raise the professionalism and productivity of the industry's workforce. To date, more than 120 courses have been conducted with over 1,800 participants benefiting from them.



## Thrust 4

### Establish the International Furniture Centre



The International Furniture Centre (IFC) was officially launched by the Minister for Trade and Industry, Mr Lim Hng Kiang, on 13 December 2007. IFC was a timely venture as it marked the first step in the master plan conceptualised by the JTC Corporation to develop Sungei Kadut into an International Furniture Park (IFP).

The IFP aims to bring together high value-add aspects of businesses such as management and procurement expertise and the setting up of corporate business headquarters (BHQs) in addition to design, quality control and prototyping services for the Singapore and global furniture industry. Designed to be the dedicated zone offering global exporters access to a range of quality international furniture brands, it is complemented by a concentration of related trade within the area. Located in

the heart of this trade, business, innovation and design district for furniture is the IFC, Singapore's first one-stop furniture sourcing centre.

In the past year, IFC has developed into an inspiring furniture platform with over 160,000 square feet of illustrious, award-winning furniture labels and furnishing concepts, bringing together the very best in design ideas and production capabilities under one roof.



The five-storey IFC complements the annual IFFS/AFS by giving international buyers the convenience of doing business all year round, thus playing an instrumental role in realising the industry's vision of making Singapore the furniture hub of the region. At IFFS/AFS 2009, the IFC booth attracted the keen attention of buyers from all over the world, further growing its business prospects and potential as IFC expands and improves its initiatives and offerings.

## Thrust 5

### Develop Immediate Measures to Help Industry Players

Together with relevant government and trade agencies, SFIC rolled out immediate measures to assist members in maintaining their competitiveness and realising their

potential. Through developing capabilities and adding value to their businesses, SFIC's helping hand has provided them with opportunities to grow their businesses.

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#### 3rd Member Assistance Scheme (MAS)

SFIC rolled out the Member Assistance Scheme (MAS) once again in late December 2008. First launched in 2003, this third-time scheme is part of the SFIC's proactive approach to assist members weather the current downturn and uncertain economic outlook.

Up to S\$1 million was handed out to eligible members to help lower business costs, strengthen business capabilities and explore new business opportunities to ensure sustainability and facilitate their market diversification efforts. The funding is valid from 1 January to 31 December 2009.

## Thrust 6

### Develop and Maintain Industry Growth Profile

#### Singapore Mozaic

A unique B2B industry furniture brand led by the SFIC and supported by IE Singapore and SPRING Singapore, Singapore Mozaic represents the finest in Singapore furniture, bringing together an array of successful Singapore furniture companies that offer a diverse portfolio of quality, well-designed products at reasonable prices.

As the saying goes, the crucial ingredient in the success of any brand is its claim to authenticity, one of the key attributes that embodies Singapore Mozaic. Continuous efforts to raise the visibility of the brand in the international marketplace have derived sizeable rewards for the industry. In addition to heightened awareness and recognition worldwide, Singapore's furniture industry is one step closer to hitting its target of a one per cent share of the world furniture output by the year 2015.

Since its debut in 2008 at the IFFS/AFS and follow-on showing at the prestigious Salone Internazionale del Mobile in Milan, Singapore Mozaic has achieved promising results at various internationally-acclaimed trade shows despite the economic turmoil. They include Index Dubai 2008, imm cologne 2009 and second-time participation in the 48th Salone Internazionale del Mobile and IFFS/AFS 2009. Participation in overseas shows have garnered the Singapore exhibitors a total of S\$10.1 million in spot orders and an estimated S\$109.2 million of follow-on sales in the 12 months after the shows.



The brand has indeed raised awareness and distinguished Singapore furniture players from other global brands, providing companies a medium to strengthen their relationships with existing customers and open new doors to prospective international customers. As a result, the Singapore furniture industry as a whole has enjoyed more effective B2B communication and higher revenue growth.

## 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 the industry's views are heard when new legislations are written and introduced.

SFIC is represented in the Association of Small & Medium Enterprises, Singapore Manufacturers' Federation, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Singapore Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers, Specialists Trade Alliance of Singapore, as well as Singapore Design Alliance. Regionally, SFIC represents Singapore in the ASEAN Furniture Industries Council (AFIC) and currently holds the Chair of AFIC.

## Other Industry Networking Activities



SFIC has continued its tradition of organising several networking sessions annually to create opportunities for industry players, designers, business associates as well as government and media representatives to establish positive relationships.



In 2009, four of such activities were organised - a Lunar New Year luncheon, the SFIC Golf Tournament, the SFIC Dinner & Dance and the Designers' Cocktail Networking Sessions. The response to all activities was overwhelming and participants rated their experiences at these events highly, with many already eager to attend next year's activities.