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SFIC signs MOU with ITE; SFIC Institute Unveils New Career Conversion Programme for Furniture Industry Talents as Appointed Programme Partner of Workforce Singapore - Focusing on Right-Skilling Manpower in the Furniture Industry

Right-Skilling for the Singapore Furniture Industry's Future

SINGAPORE, 3 FEB 2023 — Reskilling Manpower. This is a key focus of Singapore's furniture industry in 2023 amidst the uncertain economic outlook as the world recovers towards the new normal. The Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC), alongside its training and skills development arm, SFIC Institute, is encouraging businesses to continue investing in reskilling and upskilling their employees. From C-Suite leaders to operational staff to youths, the SFIC announced at its Industry Dialogue and Chinese New Year Luncheon its plans for 2023 to support the sector's efforts in building a sustainable workforce, in line with its 2025 roadmap of being the nexus of tomorrow's work-life integration for sustainable living.

SFIC Institute is the appointed programme partner for Workforce Singapore's (WSG) most recent Career Conversion Programme that focuses on applied learning through On-Job Training (OJT) opportunities.. The updated programme looks to upskill and reskill its members, making them future-ready for an ever-changing economic landscape.

The luncheon was graced by Guest-of-Honour Mr Desmond Tan, Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, and Deputy Secretary General of NTUC who engaged in an enriching dialogue titled "Security in Uncertainty: Right-Skill for the Future " with key industry leaders. The panel also included SFIC President Mr Phua Boon Huat, SFIC Institute Chairman and Executive Director of Sitra Global Pte Ltd, Mr Steven Chew, and Founder of Soundzipper LLP, Mr Adrian Lo, and was moderated by Ms Chew Mok Lee, an Enterprise Fellow with Enterprise Singapore (ESG) and Advisor to SFIC. The extensive dialogue outlined Singapore's steps towards innovative manpower solutions and SFIC and its Institute's role in creating a sustainable workforce for the furniture industry.

"As we switched gears out of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is crucial that Singapore shapes an adaptive workforce that pivots nimbly to rapidly changing labour market and industry needs, especially during such times of uncertainty. Thus, it is encouraging to see trade associations like SFIC and its Institute prioritising the right-skilling of its industry fellows. The Singapore government and the NTUC will continue to partner

with SFIC and other trade associations to prepare their respective industries and people to become adept and ready for the future,” says Mr Desmond Tan.

A Programme to Right-Skill for the Future

Managed by the SFIC Institute, the newest Career Conversion Programme for Furniture Industry Talents by WSG has been redesigned to be more flexible and cover more job roles, to cater to the industry’s needs. The programme will cover various job levels and sectors of the furniture industry, ranging from workers to executives, improving the skillsets of important business fronts such as renewing an approach to internationalisation, logistics, supply chain management, design and business innovation, as well as driving sustainability in every aspect of the furniture business.

“Sustainability does not only come in the form of taking care of the environment, but of our people too. The latest CCP creates numerous possibilities for upskilling and reskilling in job roles to support business transformation. A workforce that is well taken care of ultimately underpins the overall progress and success of our industry,” states Mr Phua Boon Huat.

The programme will also have more personalised and intentional coaching and mentoring whilst creating more applied learning opportunities as trainees learn on the job. This includes a structured three- to six-month On-the-Job Training (OJT) to facilitate their conversion into the furniture industry. Existing employees may also go through Job Redesign Reskilling to transform jobs and redesign responsibilities to increase job satisfaction, motivate employees and improve organisation’s output.

Mr Tan Choon Shian, Chief Executive of WSG, chimed in with his support for the initiative: “The furniture industry’s multi-faceted nature, from its manufacturing processes to the management of people, makes it necessary for continuous right-skilling. We are glad to support SFIC Institute in helping our local furniture companies redesign their work processes, tasks and responsibilities, enhancing the growth of the members and their people, especially for new staff and workers.”

SFIC Institute’s Role in Job Redesign under Productivity Solutions Grant (PSG-JR)

On top of supporting the right-skilling of individuals, the SFIC Institute is also a pre-approved Job Redesign (JR) consultant under SNEF’s PSG-JR, assisting companies keen on undergoing business transformation. As a JR consultant, the institute helps to redesign and re-allocate the work processes of firms to enhance overall productivity. It also helps businesses embark on their journey towards creating an even more

conducive working environment for their staff, enabling businesses to remain competitive with the hiring and retention of good employees.

Preparing the Next Generation: MOU Signing with SFIC and ITE

Beyond the CCP and PSG-JR, SFIC looks towards the future with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), taking another step towards training, developing and engaging the next generation of furniture industry leaders.

The MOU will open up a number of platforms where students are able to experience a smoother transition into the furniture industry. As students undergo experiential learning through internships and hands-on training, it prepares a new line of young workers and leaders that will keep the furniture industry fresh and relevant.

“In line with our renewed focus on manpower, this collaboration with ITE is timely and exciting. It not only creates meaningful opportunities for existing ITE students but also for our current members to have an exchange of ideas and learnings from our mentorship programmes. SFIC and its Institute is excited to welcome new and vibrant individuals into our industry as we tackle the demands of tomorrow,” said Mr Steven Chew, Vice President of SFIC and Chairman of SFIC Institute.

Ms Low Khah Gek, Chief Executive Officer of ITE, said, “As Singapore’s furniture industry continues to grow and transform, there is a strong demand for skilled manpower who are adept in areas such as e-commerce and retail business. This partnership supports the development of our students as future talents and leaders of the industry by opening internship and real-world learning opportunities for them. It also reinforces our efforts to equip our students with skills that are relevant to changing industry needs.”

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About SFIC

The Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) has been established since 1981 as the official representative body of Singapore's furniture and furnishings industry. It has a membership of over 360 companies, spanning five key industry clusters: furniture manufacturers, interior fit-out specialists, retailers, designers, as well as materials/components/services providers. Collectively, our industry players have a global footprint in over 80 countries to date.

Currently, the council represents 95 per cent of established furniture manufacturers in Singapore, of whom 65 per cent have subsidiary manufacturing plants in various countries across the region, including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam.

As an aggregator and multiplier in the furniture ecosystem, the SFIC's vision is to position the Singapore furniture industry as the nexus of tomorrow's work-life integration for sustainable urban living. In essence, the Council aims to pursue the three key pillars of market agility, urbanite-centricity and enterprise adeptness for its members in order to drive the industry further.

SFIC's priority initiatives include internationalisation, design development, business innovation, digitalisation and sustainability to enable members to stay future-ready and competitive while upgrading enterprise and human capital capabilities within the industry.

The SFIC also helms the ASEAN Furniture Industries Council (AFIC) as its Chairman, with the aim of further strengthening intra-ASEAN trade and its competitive advantage in the global market.

About SFIC Institute

SFIC Institute, a subsidiary of the Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC), was initially formed as a training and development initiative for the furniture industry in 2004. Privatised in October 2010, SFIC Institute offers a holistic range of offerings comprising product design and development, retail, digital marketing and analytics, human resources, sales and marketing, production technology logistics, sustainability, customised programmes and consultancy services.

Distinctive offerings such as its manpower training and placement programmes for interior fit-out specialists, digital operations talent, designers and matured workers prepare workers for the ever-changing socio-economic landscape and help employers redesign key roles. Through such initiatives, the Institute continues helping the industry attract, groom and grow a pool of local workforce.

SFIC Institute also brings valuable resources and exceptional service to each and every one of its clients in or beyond the furniture industry. Some of its clients include Benel, Catalyste, Cellini, Commune, Elmich, Facility Link, Falcon, First Sight International, Grafunkt, Grandwork, House of Teak, IDV Concepts, In-Expat, P5, Picket & Rail, Redwood Interior, Scene Shang, Sitra Global, Star Furniture, Sunjoy and Superstructure.

SFIC Institute also partners with various organisations such as NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), SkillsFutureSingapore (SSG), Enterprise Singapore, the Workforce Singapore (WSG), Council for Third Age, SNEF and Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) for funding support and to ensure that the Institute offers valuable, relevant programmes and initiatives to clients.

About Workforce Singapore

Workforce Singapore promotes the development, competitiveness, inclusiveness, and employability of all levels of the workforce. Its key mission is to enable Singaporeans to meet their career aspirations, take on quality jobs at different stages of life, and help enterprises be competitive and manpower lean. Workforce Singapore's focus is on strengthening the Singaporean core and ensuring that Singaporeans are able to have better jobs and careers. Workforce Singapore, in partnership with key stakeholders, also provides support to business owners and companies to enable them to transform and grow, while building a future-ready workforce.

About ITE

The Institute of Technical Education (ITE) was established as a post-secondary institution in 1992, under the Ministry of Education. ITE is a principal provider of career and technical education and a key developer of national skills certification and standards skilling Singapore for the future economy. It offers three key programmes - (1) Pre-Employment Training for youths after secondary education (2) Continuing Education and Training for adult learners and (3) Workplace Learning and Work-Study Programmes with employers. Under its 'One ITE System, Three Colleges' Governance Model, ITE has three Colleges - ITE College Central, ITE College East and ITE College West. For more information, please visit our website at <https://www.ite.edu.sg>

About Mr Desmond Tan



Mr Desmond Tan

Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office

Deputy Secretary-General of NTUC

Mr Desmond Tan is the Deputy Secretary-General of NTUC since 30 June 2022.

As Group Director of the NTUC Training and Transformation Group, Mr Desmond Tan oversees NTUC's Transformation Office and the NTUC Training & Placement ecosystem, which comprises the NTUC Industry Training & Transformation Department, NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), NTUC LearningHub and the Ong Teng Cheong Labour Leadership Institute (OTCi). He is also the Executive Secretary of the Singapore Industrial and Services Employees' Union (SISEU) and Advisor to the Supply Chain Employees' Union (SCEU).

Mr Desmond Tan is also Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office since 13 June 2022. He is the Member of Parliament for Pasir Ris-Punggol Group Representation Constituency (Pasir Ris Central) since July 2020.

Prior to joining NTUC, Mr Desmond Tan served as the Minister of State for Home Affairs, and Sustainability and the Environment. He was also the Chief Executive Director (CED) of the People's Association (PA) where he led the community support effort during the COVID-19 pandemic. He spent 28 years in the military and held various key appointments in the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and the Singapore Armed Forces. These included Chief of Staff (General Staff), Director of Joint Operations, Chief Guards Officer and Director Public Affairs.

Mr Desmond Tan graduated from the University of Manchester, U.K. with a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Aeronautical Engineering and holds a Masters in Business Administration from the Nanyang Business School. He enjoys sports and loves spending time with his family. He is married with 3 children.

About Mr Phua Boon Huat



Mr Phua Boon Huat

President, Singapore Furniture Industries Council

Director, SFIC Institute

Director, AlphaLeap Consulting Pte Ltd

Mr Phua Boon Huat has served in the SFIC Executive Committee since 2010 and has taken on several portfolios, including internationalisation, business innovation, human capital development and sustainability. He is also on the Board of Directors for the SFIC Institute.

By profession, Boon Huat is the Director of AlphaLeap Consulting Pte Ltd, a management consultancy focusing on partnering companies, especially within the furniture eco-system, to develop or improve their macro business strategies within the global context.

Prior to founding AlphaLeap Consulting, he had 13 years of experience within the furniture manufacturing sector.

Boon Huat is also currently managing the family's single-family office, where he actively seeks out venture start-up opportunities across different industries.

Boon Huat holds a Bachelor of Economics (Honours) Degree from the University of Newcastle, Australia and a Master of Business Administration Degree from the University of Adelaide, Australia.

About Mr Steven Chew



Mr Steven Chew

Vice President, SFIC

Chairman, SFIC Institute

Executive Director, Sitra Global Pte Ltd

An active player from the industry's second generation of leaders since 2002, Mr Steven Chew has been actively involved in the successful implementation of several key international marketing and local enterprise development programmes since 2002. Currently, he is the Vice President of the Singapore Furniture Industries Council as well as Chairman of SFIC Institute (SFIC's training and education arm to develop enterprise and human capital capabilities of the industry).

By profession, Steven is the Executive Director of Sitra Holdings (International) Limited, a leading brand-centric distributor of quality wood-based products and lifestyle outdoor furniture. He first joined the Sitra Group in 1999 and was in charge of overseeing the full spectrum of the sales, purchasing, distribution and marketing, operations, and finance functions of the Group. In 2009, he assumed his current designation and is responsible for the overall operations of Sitra Group in Singapore and globally.

About Mr Adrian Lo



Mr Adrian Lo

Precedent Partner, Soundzipper LLP

Adrian is responsible for leading the acoustical consulting team at Soundzipper LLP. He specializes in acoustics for musical spaces - recording studios, performance spaces and cinemas.

Adrian has successfully consulted for clients such as Far East Hospitality Group, Nobu Restaurant, SMRT Corporation, Singapore Institute of Management and the Singapore Air Force.

Most importantly, Adrian believes that acoustics should be accessible, easy and fuss-free. He provides clients with solutions that sound amazing and are deliverable within time and budget constraints.

In addition, Adrian has appeared on the TV show Apprentice One Championship Edition as an entrepreneur mentor.

Fact Sheet

SFIC

Website: www.singaporefurniture.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sgsfic

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/sfic

YouTube: www.youtube.com/sgsfic

Enquiries: sfic@singaporefurniture.com

SFIC Institute

Website: www.sficinstitute.edu.sg

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sficinstitute

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/sfic-institute

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sficinstitute

CCP Testimonials

Company Name: Soundzipper LLP

Staff Name: Shalynn Nicole Wee

CCP Program: CCP for Digital Operation Talent

My previous job roles are non-digital roles such as PR Manager/Sales related in the nightlife industry.

Currently, in Soundzipper, I am involved in the creation and regular posting of social media to market our company.

The CCP has benefitted me, particularly the Social Media Marketing and Social Media Management course. It helped me to identify the right social media marketing channels and learn how to develop a social media marketing plan. I learned how to plan and sustain social media content calendars and activities by developing a content calendar and deploying scheduling tools. In addition, learning how to manage day-to-day social media activities to grow our online communities, engage members, sustain relationships, and foster brand loyalty and advocacy. Most importantly, I learned how to create effective social media posts and how to create a strong brand to help my company build a social media presence.

Company Name: Studionorm

Staff Name: Khairul

CCP Program: CCP for Digital Operation Talent

My previous job scope mainly focused on product design in the hospitality industry. I was involved in projects from briefing stage to final fabrication of physical product.

Currently, I am in charge of spearheading new initiatives to launch new products through social media marketing and social media management. I have to be on the lookout for new and innovative ways to promote the company's service by utilising relevant emerging technology.

The CCP programme has given me a deeper insight on how to run a social media marketing campaign and understand why things are the way they are. It has exposed me to the different types of e-commerce platforms available in the market to suit different needs. It has provided me guidelines and tips on how to fully maximise a social media platform to fully reach my intended audience. General tips on the UI/UX side of things also helped in designing websites and interfaces from the available website creation services in the market.

Factsheet on Career Conversion Programme for Furniture Industry Talents

Major changes have taken place in the global economy over the past few years, many of which were accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. New trends have been created against this backdrop, including changing consumer preferences and buying habits and also a greater emphasis on sustainability. The furniture industry has also profoundly been impacted as more furniture retailers and manufacturers invest in e-commerce solutions to meet their customers' needs and to diversify risks. The industry has also moved towards more sustainable production and with a greater adoption of recyclable materials.

2 With a target to benefit 280 individuals for a start, Workforce Singapore (WSG) will be launching a new Career Conversion Programme (CCP) for Furniture Industry Talents in February 2023. Managed by Singapore Furniture Industries Council (SFIC) Institute, this CCP supports the SFIC's 2025 industry roadmap which aims to position the Singapore furniture industry as nexus for tomorrow's work-life integration for sustainable urban-living. To grow and transform the furniture industry, a new pipeline of talents will be needed to be groomed over the coming years. As such, the CCP will complement business transformation and job redesign efforts as furniture companies convert traditional roles into enhanced, digital, or new roles that require reskilling of employees whose jobs are impacted.

3 Employers in the furniture industry can also tap on this CCP to hire and train new candidates who may not be a perfect fit for the role, including those looking to make a mid-career switch, as they may possess valuable skills and transferable experience that would be useful for furniture retailers and manufacturers. Those without relevant prior experience can benefit from a six-month structured on-the-job training¹ to facilitate their conversion into the furniture industry, and be reskilled with emerging skills such as data analytics and digital marketing that are necessary for the furniture industry.

4 This CCP is open to the furniture industry and also other related industries (eg. Retail, Manufacturing and Material & Components Supply).

5 The CCP operates under the following modalities:

- **Place-and-Train [New Hires]:** Train new hires with no prior relevant experience in their new roles to support the business growth.
- **Job Redesign (JR) Reskilling [Existing Employees]:** Targeted at companies that are undergoing business transformation, and where their existing employees are in jobs that have evolved. These employees will be reskilled to take on new job roles or redesigned job roles within the same company. These include emerging roles such as Environmental Sustainability, and also in job areas such as Brand Development, E-Commerce, Digital Marketing, Retail Operations, and Supply Chain.

¹ May be 100 percent on-the-job training or be complemented with external training if company does not have in-house expertise to deliver on-the-job training

Funding Support

Participating employers will receive the following funding upon fulfilling the necessary requirements:

	Standard Rate	Enhanced Rate <i>(For Singapore Citizens aged 40 and above and/or have been unemployed for six months or more)</i>	Requirement
PMET	Up to 70% of monthly salary for CCP training duration [Capped at \$4,000 per month]	Up to 90% of monthly salary for CCP training duration [Capped at \$6,000 per month]	Minimum fixed monthly salary of \$2,500 onwards
RnF			Minimum fixed monthly salary of \$1,850 onwards

Eligibility Criteria

Individuals

Locals who meet the following criteria may apply for the programme:

- Singapore Citizen or Singapore Permanent Resident.
- Minimum 21 years old.
- **[For New Hires]**
 - Graduated or completed National Service at least 2 years² prior at the point of application.
 - New job role trained for under the CCP should be substantially different from the previous job role, hence require reskilling for a career switch.
 - Must be newly hired (i.e. not more than 3 months) and offered a full-time employment contract on permanent terms or on contract terms that are no less than 12-months.
 - Must obtain CCP approval and commence OJT within the first three months of employment
- **[For Existing Hires]**
 - Employee to be reskilled must have had at least 1 year of working experience with the company at the point of application.
 - Meet employer selection criteria, where applicable.
 - Must not be previously enrolled into similar programme

Beyond the general eligibility criteria for the CCP, applicants should also **not** be:

² This will be counted from the date of graduation from the latest qualification, or date of completion of national service, whichever is later.

- Shareholders³ of the participating company or its related entities.
- Immediate ex-employees of the participating company or its related entities.
- Related to the owners⁴ of the participating company.

Employers

All participating companies must fulfil the following criteria:

- Registered or incorporated in Singapore.
- Able to offer employment directly related to the job⁵ which the programme is for, with remuneration that commensurate with the market rate.
- Ensure changes to the employee's job role are for a long-term/permanent basis.
- Commit to the On-the-Job Training (OJT) arrangements for the individual whom they have selected.
- Committed to work with WSG or its appointed partner on the necessary administrative matters related to the programme
- Must be able to offer a fixed monthly salary⁶ of:
 - ≥\$1,850 for RnF
 - ≥\$2,500 for PMET

More information and registration for the CCP can be done through WSG's Programme Partner SFIC Institute.

³ Does not apply to publicly traded shares in listed companies.

⁴ For non-publicly listed companies, refer to individuals with shareholding per ACRA profile.

⁵ Job roles need to be permanent full-time or at least a 12-month renewable contract.

⁶ Fixed Monthly Salary = Basic Monthly Salary + Fixed Monthly Allowances