IN GOOD COMPANY
REDEFINING SERVICE EXCELLENCE

ROLE MODELS FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE
SIA cabin crew trainers lead the way

NO SMALL FEAT
Les Amis is big on service

SERVICE FROM THE HEART
Sentosa engages its people to deliver WOW!

CUSTOMER SERVICE: YOUR BRAND’S SECRET WEAPON
Drive ROI with good customer experiences

SERVICE EXCELLENCE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK
For exceptional service standards that last
A NOTE FROM THE SERVICE EXCELLENCE TEAM

Good company makes all the difference in any journey.

It is with great pleasure that our Service Excellence Team at the Singapore Workforce Development Agency has collected stories of companies in their journey towards service excellence. We hope that by sharing these stories, many more will join this good company and many more stories will be told of how companies have sought to make service excellence their key business strategy.

Welcome to “In Good Company”, our publication showcasing the esteemed company we have been keeping since we started our journey in the service excellence landscape, initially through our Service Excellence (SV) WSQ Framework, and now with the revamped Service Excellence Competency Framework (SV CF).

From our Service Excellence Skills and Training Council Members, to our iconic brand partners, our recognition award winners and our training partners, we would like to thank all for journeying alongside us through this time. We have been, and continue to be, very privileged to have them all with us.

Join us as we strive to make service excellence a key business differentiator across all industries and sectors in Singapore. In doing so, we are all, indeed, in very good company!

Thank you.

For the Service Excellence Team at Singapore Workforce Development Agency

Dr Hee Soo Yin
Director, Generic Skills Development Division

Forward-thinking business leaders like you know that customer demands will only get higher. To continue creating customer experiences that lead to customer loyalty and sustainable business growth, you need to build a service excellence culture – one that takes the lead from you and guides the mindset and actions of your people at all levels.

Find out how WDA can help you build a holistic, lasting shift in your company’s service mindset with the Service Excellence Competency Framework.

Call us at 6883 5885 or visit www.wda.gov.sg/serviceexcellence.
SERVICE EXCELLENCE IS MORE THAN A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

IT’S YOUR WINNING EDGE.

Good service can get your business far. But in a competitive landscape, it’s a service excellence culture that will differentiate your business. Win your customers’ loyalty. And get you ahead with sustainable business growth.

Give your business the winning edge: adopt the Service Excellence Competency Framework, raise your employees’ service standards through nationally accredited WSQ training programmes and strengthen your company’s service excellence culture.

Call us at 6883 5885 or visit www.wda.gov.sg/serviceexcellence.
Singapore’s services sector continues to evolve against the backdrop of a tightening labour market and rising consumer expectations. Companies will need to tackle a few key challenges at hand to position themselves well for the future.

For one, employers need to understand that they don’t necessarily need a sizable workforce in order to deliver excellent service. Rather, it’s the quality that counts – what they need are dynamic people with the right skills and attitudes. The challenge for companies, then, is to ensure that their staff are well trained, productive and innovative.

The second key challenge is transforming people’s perceptions of the services sector in order to attract the best talents. To do this, we need to start with service professionals themselves. If they are imbued with self-belief and self-respect, they will come to regard great service as an attainable and worthy goal and take pride in what they do. Only then will others look at the industry with respect and be drawn to it.

Whole-of-company approach
My fellow Service Excellence Skills and Training Council (SESTC) members and I believe that companies will be able to better meet their present as well as future challenges if they take a whole-of-company approach to service excellence and invest in quality training.

I’ll share our experience at the National Library Board (NLB). Our senior management works alongside staff across all levels to strive towards NLB’s service goals. We take great care to acknowledge our staff’s service efforts, both big and small. Knowing that we stand by them wholeheartedly, they have the confidence to continuously pursue service innovation. NLB also has a training roadmap for all staff, from frontline officers to senior management, that emphasises service excellence and service delivery.

I believe our whole-of-company approach has made all the difference. In 2011 NLB’s compliment-to-complaint ratio was 500 to 1, a clear indication that we have served our customers well. Perhaps more significantly, these numbers also reveal the goodwill NLB has built with Singaporeans, for they have taken the effort to share their well-meaning feedback with us. Many of them also come forward to lend us a helping hand for our programmes. All these efforts on the part of our customers go to show that they value our libraries and services.

Service Excellence Competency Framework
NLB’s approach to service excellence is not atypical of companies in Singapore. Our services sector has a collective desire to provide service that is on par with the best worldwide, and industry players, many of whom are on the SESTC, know what it takes and what we should do to be among the best.

In developing the Service Excellence Competency Framework, the SESTC focused on enabling the shift from a manpower-intensive service model to one emphasising service efforts led by productivity and innovation. Importantly, the framework also supports companies in driving a whole-of-company approach to service excellence and adopting a customer-centric view to achieve business goals. It raises the importance of professionalising service jobs, and recognising and rewarding service professionals with nationally recognised competencies and qualification pathways through the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system. New in the framework are the non-WSQ C-suite courses, aimed at enabling senior management to take the lead to promote service excellence and cascade a service culture across their companies.

At NLB, we are looking forward to adopting the framework into our training roadmap. I hope your company will do the same too. If we equip our service workforce with quality training that also builds their confidence and enthuses them about the industry, the future of our local services sector will be brighter than ever.
Leaders of successful Singapore companies known for their service excellence have come on board to support, endorse and adopt the Service Excellence Competency Framework. As members of the Service Excellence Skills and Training Council (SESTC), they guide the development and implementation of the framework, ensuring that it meets the needs of Singapore’s services sector.

Ms Candy Chua  
Vice-President, Customer Operations Singapore, SingTel

Mrs Chew Kwee Tiang  
Divisional Director, Guest Experience, Sentosa Leisure Management

Ms Choy Sauw Kook  
Managing Director, Home-Fix DIY

Ms Dey Teo  
Director, Through International

Ms Elaine Ng  
Chief Executive Officer, National Library Board

Mr Fso Sek Min  
Executive Vice-President, Customer Experience, Changi Airport Group

Mr Gilbert Tan  
Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Workforce Development Agency

Dr Hac Soo Yin  
Director, Change, Skills Development Division, Singapore Workforce Development Agency

Prof Jochen Wirtz  
Associate Professor of Marketing  
Academic Director, UCLA-NUS Executive MBA  
NUS Business School Graduate Studies (Executive MBA)

Ms Soh Say Lim  
Assistant Vice-President, Parkway Operating Systems, Parkway Hospitals Singapore

Ms Choy Sauw Kook  
Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Spring Singapore

Ms Elaine Ng  
Chief Executive Officer, National Library Board

Mr Kitson Chong  
Chief Operations Officer, McDonald’s Restaurants

Ms Lim Suu Kuan  
Chief Executive Officer, Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation Limited

Mr Low Cheong Kee  
Chief Innovation Officer, Employment and Employability Institute

Dr Marcus Lee  
Academic Director, Institute of Service Excellence @ SMU

Mr Matthew Nonis  
Group Training & Development Manager, DFS Ventures Singapore

Ms Patricia Hyndman  
Director, Talent Management, DFS Ventures Singapore

Ms Rosina Homoe-Tan  
Director, Customer Experience Management, Public Hospitals Singapore

Ms Sonali Verma  
Director, Guest Experience Management, Public Hospitals Singapore

Ms Soh Say Lim  
Assistant Vice-President, Products and Services, Singapore Airlines

Mr Tan Pee Teck  
Senior Vice-President, Employment and Employability Institute

Mrs Tang Soon Lang  
Executive Vice-President, Employment and Employability Institute

Mrs Chew Kwee Tiang  
Divisional Director, Guest Experience, Sentosa Leisure Management

Ms Choy Sauw Kook  
Managing Director, Home-Fix DIY

Ms Dey Teo  
Director, Through International

Ms Elaine Ng  
Chief Executive Officer, National Library Board

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Assistant Vice-President, Products and Services, Singapore Airlines

Mr Tan Pee Teck  
Senior Vice-President, Employment and Employability Institute

Mrs Tang Soon Lang  
Executive Vice-President, Employment and Employability Institute

Mr John Conciasio  
Executive Director, Employment and Employability Institute and Visitor Information & Feedback, Singapore Tourism Board
Ready to redefine your company’s service standards? Shift up your gears. It’s time to revolutionise your service delivery with the Service Excellence Competency Framework.

FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE STANDARDS THAT LAST

Set your company’s service excellence culture in motion. With the Service Excellence Competency Framework, a holistic skills and competency model for the services sector, you are geared for enhanced service standards and a truly enduring service culture across all levels in your company, from top management to operational staff.

Gear up for the service revolution
The Service Excellence Competency Framework is established based on three thrusts. Companies can develop their own service strategy through six competency categories.

**ADOPT THE THRUSTS**

**THRUST 1**

**WHOLE-OF-COMPANY ADOPTION**
Redefine the service experience by shifting from a manpower-focused service model to an innovation- and productivity-focused model.

**BENEFITS:**
- Improved business profitability, improved service productivity, enhanced customer satisfaction, enhanced employee engagement

**THRUST 2**

**PROFESSIONALISE SERVICE CAREERS**
Recognise and reward skills upgrading; re-evaluate company’s recruitment, remuneration, training and talent management strategy; revisit employer-employee relations.

**BENEFITS:**
- Improved staff engagement, reduced staff attrition, enhanced service experience, improved service productivity, progressive career and wage improvements

**THRUST 3**

**JOB REDESIGN FOR THE SERVICE WORKFORCE**
Redesign service jobs to optimise limited manpower without compromising service standards. This may include multi-skilling, job design for special workforce segments such as mature and disabled workers, and flexi-work arrangements.

**BENEFITS:**
- Enhanced job scopes, flexible job scopes, improved staff engagement, reduced staff attrition, enhanced service experience, improved service processes, enhanced service experiences, improved service productivity and efficiency

**SET THE STRATEGY**

A service excellence culture begins with clear strategic direction at the top. Senior leaders invest ample resources to develop service talents and support systems, constantly remind employees of the company’s service vision, and lead by demonstrating desired service behaviours. There are no shortcuts to service excellence – only a steadfast company-wide commitment to customer-centric practices.

**DEFINE THE NEEDS (COMPETENCY CATEGORIES)**

1. **LEADERSHIP**
   - Service vision, mission and values
   - Service direction and strategy
   - Building a culture of service excellence

2. **PLANNING AND PROCESS**
   - Service process and systems design and improvement
   - Deployment of planned service initiatives and resource management

3. **PEOPLE**
   - Staff performance and measurement
   - Rewards and recognition
   - Diversity management

4. **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**
   - Service delivery
   - Customer loyalty
   - Service recovery
   - Service branding

5. **INFORMATION AND RESULTS**
   - Service performance management
   - Benchmarking
   - Customer satisfaction measurement

6. **SERVICE INNOVATION**
   - Customer experience
   - Service innovation culture
ROLES MODELS FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

SIA’s cabin crew trainers make a difference by translating the airline’s service vision for new cabin crew recruits during training.

After 19 years as a Singapore Airlines (SIA) cabin crew member and inflight supervisor, Ms Foo Juat Fang joined the SIA School for Cabin Crew under the Cabin Crew Training Department. That was 17 years ago. Today, as a senior trainer in the faculty, she continues to use her inflight service experience and knowledge to help develop and transform cabin crew recruits into consummate service professionals.

Like Ms Foo, Mr Rajamohan is also a trainer and an inflight veteran – he has 34 years of experience. He flies two weeks of the month as an Inflight Supervisor and spends the other half of the month as a Line Instructor, sharing his wisdom and experience with new trainees.

They are both trainers for the 15-week Cabin Crew Readiness Programme (CCRP), an in-house introductory course for new SIA cabin crew members. SIA has aligned the CCRP to the Service Excellence Competency Framework, and trainees receive the nationally recognised WSQ Service Excellence Statements of Attainment after completing the course.

Conducted over four months, the CCRP is known to be one of the most extensive and rigorous of such programmes in the airline industry. The new recruits undergo training for everything from social etiquette and safety to meal service and communication. They also carry out community work and are exposed to different cultures to learn skills for serving customers of different nationalities and those with special needs.

Ms Foo says: “We believe in preparing and equipping our trainees well to serve our customers with competence and confidence. All CCRP components are carefully designed and chosen to prepare our crew for their roles on board.”

Mr Foo says: “We believe that the joy that comes from being genuine, I emphasise how simple and satisfying it is, and how successful one can be, when service is carried out from the heart.”

Training is a cornerstone of service excellence.

The rigour of the programme is anchored to SIA’s staunch belief in service excellence. Mr Tan Pee Teck, SIA’s Senior Vice-President, Products and Services, says: “Service excellence is an integral part of SIA’s mission to be a global premium airline providing service of the highest quality.”

“In an increasingly competitive business environment, our continued success will depend more than ever on a workforce that is skilled, dynamic and committed to customer service excellence. Staff training and development is a cornerstone of SIA’s service excellence.”

Ms Foo Juat Fang says: “We coach the trainees not only in product knowledge and content, but also in the right attitude and values, which in turn help them become true service professionals.”

Staff training offers the opportunity for new recruits to assimilate SIA’s service vision, which focuses on the pursuit of excellence to not only meet, but also exceed customers’ expectations, and retain customer loyalty.

SIA employees are inducted into the company’s service vision through channels such as the corporate e-portal, circulars and dialogue sessions. But none of these arguably make an impact as great as trainers who have personally experienced and lived the service vision.

Ms Foo says: “My role as a cabin crew trainer is to motivate, coach and mentor my trainees so that they are able to demonstrate SIA’s service vision.”

Her aim is to inculcate in the trainees a passion for service – to make a difference by creating extraordinary moments for SIA customers.

As an Inflight Supervisor and Line Instructor, Mr Rajamohan sees himself as a role model who can show new cabin crew members the way to do things right. He also feels that his many years of experience as a cabin crew member have definitely given him an added advantage as a trainer.

“I share with my trainees personal experiences and stories, which give them a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities,” he says. “I share with them the joy that comes from being genuine. I emphasise how simple and satisfying it is, and how successful one can be, when service is carried out from the heart.”

You can build your organisation’s service culture with the help of the Service Excellence Competency Framework.

The Service Excellence Competency Framework offers the following programmes for the competency category of Leadership:

- Enhance your Customer Strategy (C-Suite, Level 6)
- Build a Service Excellence Culture (C-Suite, Level 6)
- WSQ Champion a Service Excellence Ethos (Service Champion, Level 3)
- WSQ Drive Service Strategies for Market Entry Opportunities (Service Champion, Level 5)
- WSQ Lead with Service Vision (Service Leader, Level 4)
- WSQ Role Model the Service Vision (Service Professional, Level 1)
NO SMALL FEAT
Les Amis Group’s relatively small operation is not an obstacle in its pursuit of service excellence, as founder and owner Desmond Lim tells us.

What kind of service mindset do you want your staff to have?
We want our staff to create exceptional experiences and rewarding moments for our guests. We want every one of their meals to be memorable and the precursor of many more to come. Our staff should also always put themselves in our customers’ shoes. Empathy, humility and integrity are the values we try to imbue in our service culture.

Les Amis Group has remained a relatively small operation over the years. How does it uphold its service standards with a small team?

Being small enables us to concentrate our efforts. We adopt a strict promotes-from-within practice so that our culture doesn’t get diluted as we expand operations. This is true even for our C-Suite executives. We cross-promote the team members and leaders who are ready to take on new challenges and enable them to spearhead new concepts or outlets. This way, our culture and, more importantly, our values are brought over each and every time.

How has SV WSQ training helped Les Amis employees?
Our staff attend SV WSQ courses such as “Lead a Team”, “Offer Customised and Personalised Service” and “Participate in Service Innovation Processes”. WSQ provides an accessible, structured and systematic approach for us to develop our team’s foundational and occupational skills. WSQ also allows our staff to earn certifications based on industry-agreed benchmarks.

Mr Matthew Nonis, Group Training & Development Manager, Les Amis Group, Suntec City Mall

How does staff development benefit the company?
We believe that in order for our team members to be exemplary in serving people who want to love the food life there is no better way than to experience it for themselves. “That is why, for instance, we send our top talents on annual all-expenses-paid trips to the food and wine capitals of the world. This shows how much we value and respect our team members. At the same time, it allows us to develop their potential. Exposed to a myriad of practices and trends, they can then use what they have learnt to create new menus, implement new service processes and work more efficiently.

Like Les Amis, you can transform your customers’ experiences by focusing on your service operations.

The Service Excellence Competency Framework offers the following programmes for the competency category of Planning and Process:

- Translate Strategy into Service Operations (C-Suite, Level 6)
- WSQ Strategise Service Operations (Service Champion, Level 5)
- WSQ Develop Service Operations (Service Leader, Level 4)
- WSQ Manage Operations for Service Excellence (Service Coach, Level 3)
- WSQ Implement Operations for Service Excellence (Service Professional, Level 1)

Do you see talent investment as risk-taking?
We see it more as an investment for the future—we are building a talent pipeline. People are our core asset. We may invest millions of dollars into interior design and outfitting new concepts and outlets, but what use is this without the proper “software” to run the restaurants?

What has been Les Amis’s biggest challenge in its service excellence journey?
Even though managers acknowledge the need for training, when it comes to walking the talk, they tend to shy away, citing reasons such as a lack of manpower at their outlets. To overcome this, we are in talks with a local academic institution to explore structured on-the-job training with WSQ certification at the workplace.

What kind of service industry improvements?
As a customer, we know exactly what we want from service providers. If there’s a problem, we want it to be addressed painlessly and quickly. It’s fairly straightforward, isn’t it? Yet, service staff here often forget about empathy for their customers. They will say that something cannot be done because it is the company’s policy, or that things have always been done a certain way. We do need to remember that the service provider does not determine what good service is, the customer does.

Tell us an interesting customer service story about Les Amis.
A Scottish customer used to have lunch at Les Amis two or three times a week without fail. He would sit at the same table and order the same set lunch. The team became so close to him that they would invite him to our staff parties and football games, and he would join us!
The tables were set. The guests had arrived. All was ready for a joyous birthday party at Port Bolly restaurant – except for one thing: the birthday cake had split into two. Without missing a beat, Mark Alverez Lim, the Assistant Food Service Manager, assured the panic-stricken mother and called Sentosa’s Executive Chef, who got the kitchen crew to fix up the cake and make it look as good as new. The happy customers were able to carry on with their celebrations without further ado.

This heartwarming episode is just one of Sentosa’s many service stories distinguished by staff who have taken ownership of customers’ predicaments and gone the extra mile to resolve them.

“Exceptional service is about being sincere and compassionate to our guests. It’s about being proactive in creating a great experience,” says Ms Lim Sue Kuan, Divisional Director, Guest Experience Division, Sentosa Leisure Management. “A great Sentosa experience begins with our employees. We encourage them to deliver outstanding service from the heart.”

One of Singapore’s premier attractions known for its service culture, Sentosa believes in engaging its people to bring out their best in service delivery. Its staff engagement programme spans service initiatives, staff training, performance measurement as well as recognition and rewards.

Do the WAVE

Sentosa’s key service initiative WAVE (Welcomed, Assured, Valued, Energised), championed by its Chief Executive Officer Mr Mike Barclay who heads the WAVE Steering Committee, comprises a series of programmes aimed at instilling customer-centric values in all employees at Sentosa, including those of its partners.

One ongoing WAVE programme is “Show You Care”. Ms Lim explains: “Our staff are urged to demonstrate the ‘care’ behaviours of being proactive, looking at things from customers’ points of view, and exceeding guests’ expectations.”

The WAVE-O-Meter internal survey is another engagement programme, where team members rate their own performance and share their challenges with the senior management team.

SV WSQ competency training

As an Approved Training Organisation accredited by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency, Sentosa has customised its in-house training based on the Service Excellence WSQ framework. Staff attend in-house courses centred on service delivery, such as WAVE Service Leaders, where service leaders learn how to inspire their teams; and Handling Challenging Situations, where staff gain greater self-awareness, helpful for managing their interactions with others.

“Using the framework, we have been able to offer our team members guided learning opportunities,” says Ms Lim. “This has shown results in staff retention as well as building organisational competencies.”

Motivating through staff engagement Service initiatives and competency training aside, Sentosa also has other engagement measures to boost staff morale and motivation, such as performance measurement and recognition and rewards.

In terms of performance assessment, Sentosa benchmarks employees’ performance against its STAR core values (namely service, teamwork, acting with integrity, results-oriented) based on feedback from guests and partners, as well as findings from guest satisfaction surveys and mystery shopping.

To motivate employees further, Sentosa offers several internal recognition and reward initiatives. These include the CEO’s personalised notes to staff, quarterly service awards and the annual CEO STAR Awards.

“We also have a company game where additional bonus payout is made when predetermined guest satisfaction targets are met. This further motivates everyone to work towards delivering service excellence,” says Ms Lim.

Sentosa also actively participates in external awards that recognise service staff, such as EXSA (Excellent Service Award), Singapore Experience Award and Singapore Service Excellence Medalion.

SERVICE FROM THE HEART

Sentosa engages and invests in its people for the best guest experiences

That’s not all. Sentosa knows that recognition draws out the best in its people. That’s why it measures its staff’s performance and duly rewards great service delivery with awards and incentives.

All these and more to make its people the best ambassadors of Asia’s favourite playground.

Like Sentosa, you too can transform your customers’ experiences by focusing on your people.

The Service Excellence Competency Framework offers the following programmes for the competency category of People:

- Optimise the Service Performance of Your Workforce (C-Stage, Level 6)
- WSQ Strategise Workforce for Service Excellence (Service Champion, Level 5)
- WSQ Optimise Workforce for Service Excellence (Service Leader, Level 4)
- WSQ Coach for Service Performance (Service Coach, Level 3)
- WSQ Manage a Diverse Service Environment (Service Professional, Level 1)
- WSQ Work in a Diverse Service Environment (Service Professional, Level 1)
Every experience customers have with your company impacts what they think of your brand. Customer service is very often the frontline of this experience. According to Dimensional Research, customer service ranks as the No. 1 factor influencing how much a consumer trusts a company. When you consider your brand strategy and investment, customer service needs to be at the heart of it.

Social media has heightened the need to have with your company impacts every experience customers have with your company. As the no. 1 factor influencing customer service, which translates into a handful of medium-term goals for company leaders. This further translates into short-term key performance indicators (KPIs) for the rest of the employees. This system of interrelated KPIs is what defines organisational excellence for most businesses.

Collaboratively meeting our individual KPIs would, by definition, achieve organisational excellence, and the general belief is that achieving organisational excellence would ensure the long-term success of the companies we work for.

We all want to be successful in the areas that matter to us. Business owners strive for long-term profitability, which translates into a handful of medium-term goals for company leaders. This further translates into short-term key performance indicators (KPIs) for the rest of the employees. This system of interrelated KPIs is what defines organisational excellence for most businesses.

Collectively meeting our individual KPIs would, by definition, achieve organisational excellence, and the general belief is that achieving organisational excellence would ensure the long-term success of the companies we work for.

All these underscore the importance of setting meaningful KPIs for the different layers within an organisation.

Measuring service excellence

While the data required for reporting an organisation’s financial health may be relatively straightforward and unambiguous as a consequence of the host of regulatory standards surrounding the reporting of accounting metrics, the measurement and reporting of customer-related metrics is more often than not fraught with ambiguity and subjectivity as no regulatory standard exists in this realm.
Customer-Centric Initiative (CCI)

The Customer-Centric Initiative (CCI) is led by SPRING Singapore with support from the Go-the-Extra-Mile for Service (GEMS) Up agencies such as National Trades Union Congress, Singapore Workforce Development Agency, Singapore Tourism Board and Institute of Service Excellence at SMU. The CCI aims to encourage companies to commit to service excellence and take the lead in raising service standards in their industry and is part of the GEMS Up movement to transform Singapore’s service quality in the retail, food and beverage, hospitality, healthcare, transport and travel sectors.

Although challenging, it is possible to improve both service quality and productivity. The WDA Service Excellence Competency Framework can be used as an enabler to drive sustained superior performance, service excellence and cost-effective operations.

By Professor Jochen Wirtz, Director, UCLA – NUS EMBA, National University of Singapore Business School

Commissioned by SPRING Singapore, the CCI Impact Study conducted by NUS has indicated the relationships between service excellence, productivity and profitability.

The study found that companies that had embarked on customer-centric initiatives significantly outperformed their competitors on all key performance indicators, including total value added, value added per worker, total sales, sales per worker as well as profit growth. For the best-performing companies, a key success factor was their service excellence journeys. They did not solely execute a single customer-centric initiative, but worked on a continuous stream of initiatives.

The ability to pursue both differentiation through service excellence and cost leadership in services is particularly difficult because the characteristics of services – such as distributed operations, simultaneous production and consumption, and customisation – make economies of scale and productivity gains hard to achieve.

For the best-performing companies, a key success factor was their service excellence journeys. They did not solely execute a single customer-centric initiative, but worked on a continuous stream of initiatives.

Note: Industry benchmark data were taken from Department of Statistics (DOS) and matched to the respective CCI project period for each individual firm.
“As for resources, they are products and services that have potential value, but their value is realised only during value co-creation when used by actors.”

In a service-driven economy like Singapore’s, service innovation has become increasingly more important in shaping business growth than goods innovation.

Service innovation is carried out by reconfiguring resources and creating value in a service system for a business effect. In service innovation, customers adopt new roles as resource integrators or co-creators of value. Service innovation can also be based on new value propositions or new ways of capturing value and business models.

Take IKEA’s service innovation, for example. The Swedish furniture retailer has reconfigured its resources to focus on their value-in-use. Instead of displaying the same type of furniture or items in one room, it combines different pieces of furniture and items in “experience rooms”, where its customers can test-drive solutions such as a kitchen or living room before purchase. Immersed in the solutions, customers are able to co-create value with IKEA and assess the value according to their particular needs at home while reducing their purchase risk.

Institutions and institutional rules as well as values and forces in social systems, in turn, shape how actors integrate resources and co-create value with them. Institutions enable and constrain resource integration and value co-creation in service systems.

Many service innovations now are based on value co-creation through interactions on social networks such as Skype, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. These are examples of platforms, ecosystems and value networks within the contexts of institutionalised practices.

This article is based on “A conceptualisation of service innovation as reconfiguration of actors, resources and institutions”, a paper by Edwardsson, B., Tronvoll, B. and Witell, L., presented at the First International Workshop on Service Innovation Research, 18–20 September 2013, University of Magna Gracia of Catanzaro.
A ROADMAP TO SERVICE EXCELLENCE

The Service Excellence Competency Framework is designed to help companies create and define their desired service experiences through building organisational capabilities for innovation and productivity. It also aims to professionalise service careers through an embedded Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) pathway for progression.

Role of Service Leader
Responsible for operationalising service excellence
Eligible for WSQ Diploma in Service Leadership

Role of Service Coach
Responsible for nurturing and supervising staff for service excellence
Eligible for WSQ Advanced Certificate in Service Excellence

Role of Service Professional
Responsible for engaging customers for service excellence
Eligible for WSQ Certificate in Service Excellence

Role of Service Champion
Responsible for championing and driving company-wide service excellence
Eligible for WSQ Specialist Diploma in Service Leadership

Get on board with the Service Excellence Competency Framework and equip your employees with the holistic skills to thrive and excel in the services sector. From Service Excellence courses for frontline staff to a Service Leadership Specialist Diploma for a regional director, there is something that fits everyone.

Find out more at www.tdga.gov.sg/serviceexcellence or call 6883 5885
Enterprise Training Support (ETS)

The ETS scheme aims to help you achieve the following outcomes:

• Raise your employees’ productivity and skills levels
• Attract and retain valued employees by developing good Human Resource (HR) and management systems and practices tied to training
• Attract and retain valued employees by helping you benchmark compensation and benefits to market rates

You can receive the following funding support: Training Grant; Career Development Grant; Curriculum Contextualisation and Alignment Grant; HR Development Grant; and Compensation and Benefits System Review Grant.

Enhanced Training Support for SMEs

Enhanced Training Support for SMEs encourages greater training participation from Small and Medium Enterprises. You can enjoy up to 90% course fee funding and absentee payroll funding of 80% of basic hourly salary at a cap of $7.50 per hour. To qualify, SMEs must be registered or incorporated in Singapore, with not more than 200 employees.

WorkPro

WorkPro helps you expand and sustain your manpower pool through grants and incentives targeted at specific strategies such as job redesign, better age management and work-life harmony, and to hire and retain more back-to-work locals and mature workers. You can receive the following funding support: workplace improvement and job redesign grants, and recruitment and retention incentives.

For more details on the financial support schemes, log on to www.wda.gov.sg

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A leader is only as good as his team. Nurturing skilled workers with relevant expertise is the key to adding value to your company. WDA offers a myriad of financial schemes to support staff training so that you can build up your talent pool and improve your business performance.

About Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA)

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) enhances the competitiveness of our workforce by encouraging workers to learn for life and advance with skills. In today’s economy, most jobs require not just knowledge, but also skills. WDA collaborates with employers, industry associations, the Union and training organisations, to develop and strengthen the Continuing Education and Training system that is skills-based, open and accessible, as a mainstream pathway for all workers – young and older, from rank and file to professionals and executives – to upgrade and advance in their careers and lives.

For more information, please visit www.wda.gov.sg
Your service story starts here

All great service stories have great beginnings. You have been inspired by the stories below, some of the most distinguished names in the services sector. Now it’s your turn to bring your own signature story to life. Build your own services sector. Now it’s your turn to bring your service excellence on the solid foundation of the Service Excellence Competency Framework.


If we have got you thinking, call us at 6883 5885 or send an email to [services@wda.gov.sg](mailto:services@wda.gov.sg)!
Overview of Service Excellence Competency Framework