

Media Statement

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Post Covid-19 Era:

Enhancing Capabilities through Strategic Transformation and Digitalisation for Business Sustainability

Singapore, 11 August 2020 – Held in conjunction with the SkillsFuture Month 2020 and in partnership with Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), Workforce Advancement Federation's (WAF) first Webinar aims to provide an encompassing overview of key budget support measures provided to local enterprises that can help them to save jobs, retain workers and emerge stronger amidst this pandemic. Close to 400 participants attended the Webinar and engaged in a virtual dialogue segment with Minister for Manpower, Mrs Josephine Teo.

The dialogue provided a fruitful engagement between MOM and local businesses from across varying industries, and emphasised the importance of continued partnership between Government and businesses amid the present challenges. Participants also discussed areas of support for local hiring, managing business costs, uplifting vulnerable segments and caring for employees' health and wellness at the workplace.

Member company of WAF, Kodi Engineering Services' Managing Director, Mr John Ji quoted: "The dialogue session was very professionally driven and concise. It gave a clear on-the-ground look at how companies have dealt with the Covid-19 situation and went down to share in detail, the actual challenges and what fellow SMEs have done to counteract these challenges with the various assistance schemes from the government. This helped me realise that many of us face the same challenges and gave insights on how different strategies can be deployed to successfully overcome them. It also enables us to have greater confidence in deploying our workforce strategies and support gainful employment of staff. Minister's participation further strengthened these points and drove deeper on how our government will continue to support the SME community in charting out the various schemes and assistance that can tide us through these trying periods."

With the unprecedented crisis, many local enterprises have been looking at different ways of managing their businesses in order to ensure both business sustainability and employee retention. Guest speakers, Mr Dylan Ng, CEO & Co-Founder, SuperSteam Asia Pacific Pte Ltd & LionsBot International Pte Ltd and Mr Chua Koon Beng, CEO of Wonderscape Holdings Limited and Director of Spa Esprit Group, shared on how they made use of technologies and innovation to adapt to the changes in our business ecosystem, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first guest speaker, Mr Dylan Ng whose companies operate in the cleaning sector, took the opportunity to upskill his people and engage them during this pandemic. Employees from both SuperSteam and LionsBot took the Covid-19 work from home challenges as an opportunity to grow. Employees were grouped in cross-functional teams to develop and roll out products that will help support the business during this period. Dylan added: "Such operational changes allow employees to experience working and being untethered from their desks yet hone their skill sets in leading teams virtually. While it is still a work in progress, our team members are now able to see the whole picture and become even more agile."

The second guest speaker, Mr Chua Koon Beng gave insights to his businesses operating in Beauty Services and Food & Beverage industries. Some of the F&B outlets are common names known to many being, Tiong Bahru Bakery and Common Man Coffee Roasters. With the loss of foot traffic, Mr Chua transformed his business strategies, changing operational models from a primarily dine in concept with less than 10% take away business before to one that relies on take away and delivery business forming more than 30% of its sales today. In the beauty services businesses such as Strip and Browhaus under Wonderscape Holdings, the team expanded their

customer footprint by tapping on a dedicated e-commerce site that promotes its brands and service offerings along with a shift to digital marketing. Its beauty businesses have also adopted Salesforce solutions that enabled them to work on customised customer journeys to better communicate with and market to their customers. Mr Chua cited: “With the Covid-19 crisis, it becomes more pressing for us to have the right integrated backend data systems to allow us to better segment and understand our customers and their buying behaviors so we can work on stronger customer retention and win over new customers as well.”

Participant of the session Ms Yeah Lee Ching, Executive Director of ValueMax Group quoted: “With the strong support of the government for businesses through the various schemes and grants for SMEs, companies remain confident of surviving the economic contraction brought on by COVID-19 and to emerge stronger. SMEs can tap on well-designed and comprehensive schemes that support job redesigning and training of employees in their digitisation journey to meet the new economic requirement. As a result, companies, particularly those in the traditional businesses are encouraged to have a much greater degree of business reinvention, human capital development and new job creation to ensure resiliency and sustainability in the post pandemic economy.”

Mr Neo Kah Kiat, Chairman of WAF, advised, “Covid-19 is here to stay, and the reality will sink in hard as companies manage operating costs amidst today ever-changing economic impacts brought by the pandemic. Small and Medium Enterprises from hardest-hit industries will have to re-focus and adopt new business strategies as key to stay resilient. Government funding and support can be a supplementary support but should not be a lifeline to businesses on a long-term basis. Collaborations among competitors and transformation would be a key to business survival in the new ‘norm’.”

The Federation will continue to roll out relevant initiatives and regular webinars to propel SMEs to continuously transform and be resilient in extraordinary times.

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Enclosed:

ANNEX A – PROFILES OF EVENT ORGANISER AND PARTNERS

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- **Event Organiser:** [Workforce Advancement Federation](#)

Workforce Advancement Federation Ltd (WAF) is a non-profit organisation incorporated to provide assistance and support to the local business communities in building a sustainable workforce. Through its various initiatives and activities, WAF aims to provide sharing and learning platforms to facilitate the exchange of best practices in human resource and capability development for the local workforce. In tandem of fostering the spirit of tripartism within Singapore's dynamic business environment, the federation envision its core objective of shaping a productive and competitive workforce as key to the overall economic progress of the nation.

- **Co-Organiser:** [SkillsFuture Singapore](#)

SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) is a statutory board under the Ministry of Education (MOE). It drives and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promotes a culture and holistic system of lifelong learning through the pursuit of skills mastery, and strengthens the ecosystem of quality education and training in Singapore. SSG strengthens the adult training infrastructure by taking on all existing functions of the Committee for Private Education (CPE), as well as guiding the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) to enhance the capabilities and professionalism of adult educators. SSG plays a key role in the quality assurance for private education institutions and adult training centres. Together with educational institutions and training partners, SSG ensures that students and working adults have access to high quality, industry-relevant training throughout life. SSG also brings together synergies in continuing education and training (CET) and pre-employment training (PET), so skills requirements will continue to meet the demands of different sectors of the economy.

The profiles of the following partners are made available on their website.

Strategic Partners

[Ministry of Manpower](#)