

MEDIA RELEASE

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SERVICE PROFESSIONALS MEET EMPLOYERS' DEMAND FOR SKILLS AND SERVICE MINDSET

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) is equipping workers entering the tourism and service-related industry with a strong service mindset, through the Certified Service Professional (CSP) programme.

The roll-out of the programme follows the successful completion of two pilot runs, where about 40 participants went through a rigorous, five-day, boot-camp style service training to experience first-hand the challenges and rewards of being a service professional. Developed in consultation with key industry players like the integrated resorts and companies in the service sectors, the programme has also reaped some success at placing its pilot participants in jobs. At least seven of them are already working in tourism related service sectors like retail, F&B, travel & tour services. Another 15 are currently undergoing interviews. As of today, 27 companies have indicated interest to hire CSP participants.

Besides providing basic and general service skills training such as product knowledge, understanding customers, teamwork and service recovery techniques, the CSP programme seeks to develop a passion for service excellence among its participants. Going through scenarios based on real-life workplace practices, such as daily roll calls and dealing with demanding customers, provide a sense of realism to the participants that will shape their expectations of the service sector, and help them better apply the skills learned. Assessments are made throughout

the course based on trainers' observation of the participants' grooming, level of involvement in the "Service-In-Action" activities and behaviour. To further reinforce their personal commitment to service excellence, all CSP participants will be asked to take the CSP pledge at the end of the programme.

Young energetic Miss Sarah Christine Gorecki is an example of a CSP participant who underwent a transformation during the programme. During the course, she realised that she had been too negative in her attitude. The programme raised her level of confidence and enthusiasm in a service job. An F&B supervisor employed by Sakae Sushi, she eagerly applies the skills and knowledge she picked up from the CSP programme in her job.

Highlighting its industry-relevance is Mr Douglas Foo, Chairman and CEO of Apex-Pal, who is also Chairman of the F&B Industry Skills and Training Council. Like the other employers who are excited about the CSP programme, he said, "A service staff is one who knows his or her product well, understands the customers' needs and remains cheerful and positive when faced with challenging situations. CSP trained service crew will be able to exhibit these traits. And as employers, we value and reward those who perform well."

The CSP programme was first announced by then Minister for Manpower, Dr Ng Eng Hen, at the launch of the TOurism TALent (TOTAL) Plan in October 2007. Jointly developed by WDA and the Singapore Tourism Board, the Government is investing more than \$360 million to train 74,000 tourism workers and enhance the professionalism of the tourism industry in the next three years. The holistic three-pronged TOTAL Plan comprises Continuing Education & Training (CET) for adult workers, Pre-employment Training (PET) for students and industry development to attract more workers to join the industry. The CSP programme aims train 36,000 workers over the next three years.

Members of the public who are interested to find out more can visit the CSP website <http://csp.wda.gov.sg/>, call WDA at 68835885 or email wda_enquiry@wda.gov.sg.