

SkillsFuture Human Capital Conference Spotlights Importance of Upskilling and Adoption of Skills-First Practices for a Resilient Workforce

21 Aug 2024 – The SkillsFuture Human Capital Conference – organised by Singapore Business Federation (SBF), and supported by SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and the Lifelong Learning Institute – was held today at the Suntec City Convention Centre. The conference – themed “Discover, Be Inspired, Take Action” – targeted small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and brought together employers across various sectors to learn about the importance of investing in workforce upskilling, as well as the network of support available for enterprises seeking to develop their workforce. The conference, which marked the culmination of the 6-week SkillsFuture Festival that commenced on 9 July 2024, was graced by Minister of State for Education Ms Gan Siow Huang.

2 The conference also showcased how employers, intermediaries and the Human Resources (HR) community, are coming together to support the SkillsFuture movement.

New Skills Recognition Initiatives for Better Manpower Development

3 Following the launch of the Skills Pathway for Cybersecurity by the Singapore Computer Society at the SkillsFuture Forum on 9 July, two more Skills Development Partners – The Institution of Engineers, Singapore (IES) and Institute for Human Resource Professionals (IHRP) – announced their skills recognition initiatives at the conference. These initiatives allow employers to recognise the skills acquired by employees through training, which will provide further impetus and confidence to workers to upskill.

4 IES is establishing an Assessment Centre with Singapore Polytechnic to enable individuals to attain the Chartered Engineering Technologist certification in the Built Environment and Infrastructure sectors through workplace learning, in addition to the existing train-and-assessment mode. Existing practising technologists such as Resident Technical Officers will be able to undertake the competency assessments for the Chartership, and be recognised for skills that they have already learned, applied and demonstrated on the job.

5 With the Chartership, practising technologists such as Resident Technical Officers will be able to upskill and handle more complex projects using the latest technological tools. This will open up more opportunities for experienced individuals without academic qualifications to progress and potentially enjoy stronger employment

outcomes such as better remuneration and career opportunities. Employers will also benefit by being able to recognise them for their skills and expertise as Chartered Engineering Technologists, and have access to a larger engineering talent pool. This in turn addresses employers' manpower needs and contributes towards business growth.

6 IHRP is rolling out two role badges in workplace learning in collaboration with the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL), National Centre of Excellence for Adult Learning, and the National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning (NACE) Led by Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP). HR professionals and people managers can attain these role badges through both formal and workplace learning pathways. They can then use the skills acquired through these role badges to implement or improve workplace learning systems, strengthen career development processes and opportunities, as well as foster a stronger culture of learning within their organisations. They play a crucial role in strengthening the skills development of the workforce in the organisations.

7 This initiative reflects IHRP's commitment to supporting HR professionals and people managers in staying ahead of the curve in an ever-evolving business landscape. By equipping individuals with the skills to drive workplace learning, IHRP is helping to build a future-ready workforce for Singapore.

New SkillsFuture Queen Bee company for Wholesale Trade

8 At the conference, SSG announced the appointment of FoodXervices Inc, an industry leader in the wholesale trade sector serving the food services segment, as its newest SkillsFuture Queen Bee. FoodXervices Inc successfully implemented sustainability and digitalisation in their business processes, and upskilled its workforce in these areas. These efforts contributed to its business growth and its ability to rebound strongly from challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

9 As a SkillsFuture Queen Bee, FoodXervices Inc will share their experience and support their value-chain of more than 4,000 corporate customers, as well as other SMEs, in adopting sustainability and digitalisation initiatives. The company will also work closely with other industry champions such as SBF (who is the newly appointed Jobs-Skills Integrator for Wholesale Trade) on initiatives to uplift the sector. FoodXervices Inc's appointment brings the total number of appointed SkillsFuture Queen Bees to 36.

New Collaborations to Strengthen SMEs Human Capital Capabilities

10 During the conference, SBF signed three bilateral Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with IHRP, NYP and Republic Polytechnic (RP) to uplift the human capital capabilities of businesses.

11 SBF and IHRP will collaborate in manpower policy development and organise workshops to help SMEs adopt progressive employment practices.

12 SBF's partnership with NYP will focus on developing workforce capability for the Wholesale Trade (WST) sector through courses, work-study programmes and industry attachments in areas such as customer analytics, customer experience, digital media.

13 SBF and RP will jointly develop certification programmes and co-curate workshops for SMEs in areas such as sustainability, supply chains and internationalisation. SBF will partner RP's Centre of Innovation for Supply Chain Management (COI-SCM) under the Jobs Development Partners Programme (JDPP) to reskill employees to support business transformation.

14 Mr Kok Ping Soon, Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Business Federation (SBF) said, "Findings from SBF's Manpower and Wages Survey¹ found that while more than 70% of businesses recognise the importance of upskilling and reskilling their workforce for business competitiveness, 58% did not have sufficient resources to cover their staff undergoing training, and 32% were concerned that the training lacked practical business application. SBF has partnered IHRP, RP and NYP to help businesses address some of these concerns and transform their workforce which can in turn propel their business growth."

New SkillsFuture for Business Portal

15 SSG also introduced the new SkillsFuture for Business Portal (<https://skillsfuture.gobusiness.gov.sg/>). Similar to the MySkillsFuture Portal for individuals, the SkillsFuture for Business Portal provides curated information and resources for employers, especially SMEs, on SkillsFuture initiatives and courses. Employers can visit the portal to learn how they can master upskilling for their business.

Line-up of Speakers and Panellists

16 The SkillsFuture Human Capital Conference showcased thought leaders who have successfully implemented skills-first strategies. The keynote presentations covered research findings by the IAL on how having both a good business strategy

¹ The SBF Manpower and Wages Survey was conducted between June-July 2024 and polled close to 800 local businesses.

and people strategy will enhance business performance, as well as a sharing by FoodXervices Inc on its transformation journey in digitalisation and sustainability.

17 The presentations are followed by a panel discussion touching on the range of initiatives offered by SSG's ecosystem of partners and how these programmes could help generate positive outcomes for employers and their workforce. More details on the speakers and panellists can be found in the **Annex**.

18 In addition, the conference featured an exhibition and bite-sized masterclasses which showcased major workforce transformation initiatives offered by SBF and SSG's industry partners that SMEs could tap to support their adoption of skills-first practices.

SkillsFuture Festival 2024 reached out to over 244,000 participants

19 The SkillsFuture Human Capital Conference concluded the SkillsFuture Festival 2024, which kicked off on 9 July 2024. The annual festival attracted over 244,000 participants and 1,500 enterprises across more than 150 events.

20 Mr Tan Kok Yam, Chief Executive of SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) said "The SkillsFuture Festival 2024 demonstrates that SkillsFuture is truly a movement. Over the six-week festival, new companies have come on board as SkillsFuture Queen Bees. Professional bodies are introducing new training pathways. Our community partners are reaching out to residents and companies under the refreshed SkillsFuture@CDC initiative. Institutions and enterprises have showcased their innovations in learning and training, from micro-credentials to Work-Study Programmes. The SBF, working with our sister agencies, is advancing the Jobs-Skills Integrator initiative in the wholesale trade domain. Let's build on this momentum, elevate lifelong learning for society, and build resilient careers for individuals."

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About SkillsFuture Singapore

SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) drives and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promotes a culture of lifelong learning and strengthens the ecosystem of training and adult education in Singapore. Through a holistic suite of national SkillsFuture initiatives, SSG enables Singaporeans to take charge of their learning journey in their pursuit of skills mastery. SSG also works with key stakeholders to ensure that students and adults have access to high quality and industry-relevant training that meet the demands of different sectors of the economy for an innovative and productive workforce. For more information, visit <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/>.

About Singapore Business Federation

As the apex business chamber, the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) champions the interests of the business community in Singapore in trade, investment and industrial relations. Nationally, SBF acts as the bridge between the government and businesses in Singapore to create a conducive business environment. Internationally, SBF represents the business community in bilateral, regional and multilateral fora for the purpose of trade expansion and business networking. For more information, please visit: www.sbf.org.sg.

ANNEX A – Speakers and Panellists

Keynote speakers

- Associate Professor Renee Tan, Assistant Executive Director and Director of Research of the Institute for Adult Learning, highlighted fresh findings from the Business Performance and Skills Survey II (BPSS2) which showed that companies that ranked high in both business strategy and people strategy reported the best business performance. It was noted that such companies possessed broad skills development needs and high demand for training, thereby producing a highly-engaged and future-ready workforce.
- Ms Nichol Ng, CEO of FoodXervices Inc, shared the company's journey in implementing digitalisation and sustainability practices for business growth and the importance of equipping workers with such skills as part of its transformation effort. These investments helped FoodXervices prepare for and rebound strongly from challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Panel Session

The panel discussion touched on the range of initiatives offered by SSG's ecosystem of partners and how these programmes could help generate positive outcomes for employers and their workforce.

- Ms Claren Chang, Senior Vice President, Regional Midcap and SME Strategic Partnership & Sustainability, of DBS
- Mr Ang Yuit, President, of Association of Small & Medium Enterprises (ASME)
- Mr Thian Tai Chew, Executive Director, Human Capital Division, of Singapore Business Federation
- Mr Robin Ngan, Director of SITLEARN and NACE@SIT
- Ms Xu Wenshan, Director of the Enterprise Engagement Division of SSG, as the moderator

ANNEX B – MOUs between SBF and Partners

a) MOU between SBF and IHRP

Jointly increase the offerings of human capital solutions and shape the future of Singapore's human capital landscape, with strategic HRM as a key enabler for sustainable business growth. This will be done by: (i) combining strengths and capabilities to better shape manpower policy, (ii) aggregating existing and building new platforms to increase our collective reach and (iii) foster and level up human capital capabilities in businesses to help them Recruit better, Redesign, Reskill/UpSkill and Ready themselves for the future and to be better Recognised as progressive employers.

b) MOU between SBF and RP

Jointly support the development of human capital capabilities for businesses through: (i) joint certification programmes, (ii) co-curating and/or co-branding thematic (e.g. Career Health, Sustainability, Supply Chain, Internationalisation) workshops and learning trips. Work together to support the workforce capabilities development and job transformation for the Wholesale Trade sector through a variety of interventions, including course curation, job redesign and workplace learning. Collaborate on relevant industry projects and company engagements to help businesses in their transformation journey (e.g. digitalisation, sustainability), leveraging existing mechanisms such as SBF's Jobs Development Partners Programme (JDPP) and RP's Centre of Innovation for Supply Chain Management (COI-SCM).

c) MOU between SBF and NYP

Joint certification of workforce human capital capability development. Work together to support the workforce capabilities development for the Wholesale Trade (WST) sector by: (i) leveraging on NYP's series of relevant WST courses, (ii) co-developing new SkillsFuture WST series courses, (iii) rolling out contextualised WST work-study programmes and (iv) integrating job redesign and workplace learning with job transformation initiatives. Collaborate on industry attachments for NYP staff, thematic industry projects and company engagements to level up businesses' capabilities in: (i) customer analytics, (ii) customer experience, (iii) digital media, (iv) artificial intelligence, (v) human capital management.