

Contact
Singapore 

SYNERGY

JUL/AUG 2009



About Contact Singapore

Contact Singapore is an alliance of the Singapore Economic Development Board and Ministry of Manpower. It aims to attract global talent to work, invest and live in Singapore.

With offices in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America, Contact Singapore is the one-stop centre for those who wish to pursue a rewarding career in Singapore, as well as individuals and entrepreneurs who are keen to invest in or initiate new business activities here. Contact Singapore actively links Singapore-based employers with global talent and provides updates on career opportunities and industry developments in Singapore. We work with private sector partners to facilitate the interests of potential individual investors in Singapore.

For more information on working, investing and living in Singapore, please visit www.contactsingapore.sg

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Cover photo: Geoff Houlton and his family pose beside the Merlion, icon of Singapore, in the Shenton Way business district. An American, he has been living and working in Singapore for two years as managing consultant for oil & gas consulting company Purvin & Gertz, Inc.

Proud Day For The Hospitality Industry

Singapore celebrated a landmark in hospitality when the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) conferred Masters and Bachelors degrees on its first cohort at its international campus here.

The nine Masters and 34 Bachelor graduates received their degrees just as the demand for quality service increases with the imminent opening of the country's two integrated resorts. Milestone developments, they feature casino gaming together with a comprehensive range of amenities such as hotels, convention facilities, entertainment shows, theme attractions, luxury retail and fine dining.

Many of the undergraduate students have already graduated from polytechnics in this field. An exception to the rule was Andrea Kim, who was formerly an English teacher in her native Korea.

Set on a career change, she found out about the school from a UNLV graduate working in Korea. Now armed with a reputable qualification, she is eager to build up her professional experience as a conference and events coordinator. She said, "If you are a UNLV graduate, you will shine in the profession."

Recognised by the Ministry of Education and the Singapore Tourism Board as an Institute of Higher Learning and accredited in the US, UNLV Singapore also conducts diploma courses. It started in 2006 with 36 students and has a student population of more than 500 today.



At the commencement ceremony in June, Minister-of-State, Ministry of Trade and Industry & Ministry of Manpower, Lee Yi Shyan praised UNLV for its role in creating upgrading pathways for existing hospitality professionals as well as for new entrants from other industries.

He added, "Today, we not only welcome the inaugural batch of graduating students, we are also introducing new capabilities for the hospitality sector. Having a systematic approach to new capability building is so important to secure our future."

Saying that the long term prospects remain bright for the tourism industry, he pointed out that the two integrated resorts are expected to create 20,000 jobs when fully operational. In addition, a colourful and exciting event

calendar – the world's only Formula One night race, the Asia-Pacific Economic

Cooperation (APEC)

2009 Forum and the

inaugural Youth Olympic Games in 2010 – as well as new infrastructure such as the International Cruise Terminal will give the sector a lift.

"We will need skilled and passionate people in this sector to bring it to world-class level," he said.



One of them is Matthew Lim, who had chosen to transfer from the Las Vegas campus to Singapore. The Korean has already landed a job with the InterContinental Hotels Group. He said, "As long as I can work with great people who can teach me lots of things each day, I am happy." ●



Getting A Feel Of Singapore

Contact Singapore (CS) gave a warm welcome to a group of nearly 40 MBA students from Wharton University in the US when they passed through as part of an Asian tour. The networking session it organised for them was literally the students' first taste of Singapore as they came directly from the airport

to the CS office for snacks and coffee.

For many, it was their first time in Singapore and the contrast with Vietnam, from which they had come, made them realise how different Asia could be. Part of Wharton's Global Immersion

Programme, the purpose of the tour was simply to learn the different cultures and how business was done in each country explained its Programme Director, Serita Lewis.

The students had visited Thailand and Vietnam and were going to Indonesia after their stay in Singapore. Here, they were meeting a variety of companies from Temasek Holdings to Exxon Mobil. At the CS session, they were able to interact with several headhunters to get a feel of opportunities available here.

Mary McKay said she was on the tour "just to learn" but another student, Jenner Wu, was looking for opportunities "outside China but definitely in Asia." She had been impressed by the many different races living here in the short time since their arrival. ●

UPCOMING EVENTS

Contact Singapore will be holding a number of events as well as participating in career fairs around the world in the coming months. Do log on to our website to find out more if you're interested to attend the events, or if you want to chat with us about working and living in Singapore.

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION
Jun to Dec	e-Careers@Home: Engineering & Technology Event website: www.contactsingapore.sg/ecareers@home_eng&tech	Singapore
06 – 07 Jul	Work in Singapore at AIESEC Australia National Conference	Melbourne, Australia
18 – 19 Jul	e-Careers@Singapore*: Interactive & Digital Media Event website: www.careers-singapore.com	Beijing & Shanghai, China
20 – 21 Jul	Mapua Institute of Technology Career Expo	Manila, Philippines
27 – 31 Jul	Experience@Singapore+: Engineering & Technology For students from China and South Korea	Singapore
6 – 12 Aug	e-Careers@Home	Australia
28 Aug – 9 Sep	Work in Singapore for finance and accounting post/undergrads Event held in collaboration, with CPA Australia	Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, Canberra, Tasmania, Australia
7 Sep	Careers@Singapore* In partnership with Cambridge, Oxford, Imperial College & London School of Economics	Singapore
21 -25 Sep	Experience@Singapore+: Healthcare For medical students from South Korea	Singapore
22 – 25 Sep	Experience@Singapore+: Interactive & Digital Media	Australia & New Zealand

*Careers@Singapore is an industry-specific event for Singapore-based employers and global talent, both professionals and graduating students, to network and interact. Such events are held all over the world.

*Experience@Singapore gives selected undergraduate and graduate students exposure to Singapore as the ideal place to work, live and play. For more information: www.contactsingapore.sg/experience@singapore

Singapore's largest singular celebration of the performing arts, the annual Singapore Arts Festival has again focused on contemporary works that bridge disciplines, cultures, language and geographical boundaries.

In the words of its Director Goh Ching Lee, "Pervading the programme is a sense of dare and playfulness that is laced with poetry and elegance, offering our audiences different entry points of appreciation and participation. They bear the Festival's signature strengths of bringing new perspectives to cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary work that continues to secure the Festival's reputation for artistic innovation."

Organised by the National Arts Council, this year's Festival showcased 26 core productions and over 400 free outreach performances, exhibitions and special events over a four-week period. It leveraged the artistry of more than 2,000 performers from 22 countries and included seven new commissions in a broad and

A PLAYFUL



Jeremy Monteiro & T'ang Quartet

2019 Arts Festival

inclusive programme designed to enthrall, engage and uplift the spirits.

Setting the pace was a fiery opening performance by the French group, La Compagnie Malabar at the Marina Barrage on May 15. Their open air show, Helios II, featured an exhilarating display of acrobatics around a nine metre tall stick insect and a glittering shower of fireworks. A total of 20,000 people watched



La Compagnie Malabar



Joanna MacGregor

the show over the three nights.

Pride of place for blending East and West went to Sutra, a new dance work by acclaimed Flemish/Moroccan choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. The concept was created together with the monks who came to perform the work. As they climbed, jumped, backflipped, hid and meditated within and around life-sized wooden boxes, they brought the notion of cultural exchange to a new level.

Other cross-cultural works included a Chinese reworking of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov's classic, "The Cherry Orchard", and a French-

choreographed dance inspired by tangram, an ancient Chinese puzzle game, called "Les Sept Planches de la Ruse".

Crossing boundaries of a different sort was British group Rotozaza's Etiquette, where the audience performed and the stage was a public café amidst patrons oblivious to the performance taking place! Guided by taped instructions issued

and back again, involved walking performances in the city during the a.m. and p.m. rush hours.

Music fusion was represented by British pianist Joanna MacGregor, regarded as one of the world's most versatile and innovative musicians. In her debut solo recital here, she showcased music close to her heart: Bach, Shostakovich, popular Brazilian composers and her own

re-orchestrations and original compositions. In the visual arts, The Found & Lost exhibition featured the works of eight Singapore artists concerned with questions of representation in relation to the act of drawing.

While the funky and the exotic catered to art lovers and naturally hogged the limelight, the Singapore Arts Festival was also about

cultivating young audiences through special education programmes for primary, secondary and tertiary students. A broad range of outreach events also brought the arts to the wider community.

All in all, this year's Festival has continued the tradition



The Cherry Orchard



Sutra



Dream-Work / Dream-Home

through headphones, two members of the audience sat at a table and were led into micro-situations that exposed human communication at its rawest.

More unconventional theatre was Dream-Work / Dream-Home, co-commissioned by the Singapore Arts Festival and the Inbetween Time Festival of Live Art and Intrigue in England. The two-part work exploring our daily journey from the private – fresh from bed at home – to the public – at work –

transcriptions of Piazzolla tangos.

Local talent across the arts also did their bit to push the envelope. Singapore's foremost rock band The Observatory collaborated with filmmaker Ho Tzu Nyen and theatre director Kok Heng Leun to challenge the norms of a music concert. In their new work, Invisible Room, The Observatory played unseen while stark images of the human corporeal were projected to confront and hypnotise.

Other local music talent, Jeremy Monteiro & T'ang Quartet, crossed jazz and classical music with

of playing a symbiotic and catalytic role in the development of the artistic and cultural life of Singapore. Since it started 32 years ago, it has helped to transform the city's cultural landscape, spawning new cultural platforms, events, and movements that help underpin today's lively cultural scene.

Andreas Meletiou, for one, agrees. The Director, Wholesale Bank Strategy, Standard Chartered Bank said, "I enjoy watching theatre plays, attending musicals and other cultural events and this is one area that Singapore has vastly improved in since I first arrived here just less than four years ago." ●

Studying Abroad Made Easy

When Mesud Inan co-founded Industrial Networking & Academic Communications, or INAC, with his wife Zetti last October, it was with a goal to help further enhance experiential knowledge of German university students keen to sample life in a foreign land. Eight months down the road, INAC continues its path to growth by successfully placing students in renowned institutions in Singapore and other countries.

Prior to INAC, Mesud had organised events for incoming and outgoing international students at the Aachen University of Applied



institutions and systems found in these overseas markets. So what we at INAC have done, through our Study Abroad programme, is to provide an all-encompassing service for our students. This ranges from helping them pick and choose a suitable institution, and guiding them through the registration process, to providing preparatory workshops to equip

“Our partnership with CS was a natural follow on, given that Zetti is Singaporean and Singapore has great pull as a destination in the heart of Asia,” said Mesud.

As part of INAC’s partnership with CS through its inaugural Experience@Singapore: Research programme, INAC was instrumental in facilitating over 40 out of more than 100 applications received by CS. The first batch of eight applicants flew to Singapore last February on internship stints with A*STAR’s (Agency for Science, Technology and Research) various institutes. More applicants are scheduled to arrive over the next few months.

Aside from working with leading researchers in their particular fields of interest, interns also stand to gain a better understanding of the research and employment opportunities available in the local market.

Said Mesud, “Of course, this is just the beginning. INAC is already planning a variety of activities this coming year, both independently and in conjunction with CS. One highlight is a series of presentations showcasing Singapore’s strengths as a research destination for budding scientists in Aachen this November.

“With these and many more activities, INAC looks forward to strengthening its working relations with CS to achieve the joint goal of expanding horizons and promoting the exchange of ideas between professionals and students in both Germany and Singapore.” ●



Mesud Inan (fourth from left) and Zetti (extreme right) with their student team.

Sciences. Through this extensive interaction with students, coupled with his personal experience, he realised the untapped opportunities inherent in this area.

“We came to a conclusion that while students are generally keen to venture overseas, they often lack knowledge of the

students with key knowledge prior to going abroad,” said Mesud.

Initially focusing on Australian institutions due to local demand, INAC is steadily shifting its attention to the R&D and education powerhouse of Singapore, in tandem with its partnership with Contact Singapore (CS)

Marina Barrage – Green Jewel In Town

Between its iconic green roof and its environmentally friendly features, the Marina Barrage is not only a major addition to Singapore’s infrastructure but also a showcase for its green efforts. To top it off, it is a recreational facility.

Built across the mouth of the Marina Channel, the barrage creates Singapore’s 15th reservoir, and the first in the heart of the city. With a catchment area of 10,000 hectares, or one-sixth the size of Singapore, the Marina Reservoir behind the barrage will meet more than 10% of Singapore’s current water demand.

Currently, the reservoir still contains seawater but through natural flushing, it will turn into a body of freshwater in one to two years. The freshwater will then be treated using advanced membrane technology before consumption.

The 350-metre long barrage not only keeps seawater out but releases excess storm water to alleviate flooding in the low-lying parts of the city. One of the key elements of a comprehensive flood control scheme, the dam has nine crest gates that can

be activated to release water into the sea when the tide is low.

In the case of heavy rain coinciding with high tide, giant pumps, which are capable of pumping an Olympics-size swimming pool per minute, will drain excess storm water into the sea.

As the water in the reservoir is unaffected by tides, its water level will be kept constant all year round. At the same time, its location near the sea means it still enjoys strong breezes. As such, it is ideal for all kinds of watersports such as boating, windsurfing, kayaking and dragonboating.

Since its opening in 2008, Marina Barrage has drawn more than a quarter million visitors. Besides its recreational attractions, it has indoor and outdoor facilities for special events. Visitors can also view the Sustainable Singapore Gallery at the Marina Barrage to gain a deeper understanding of environmental and water issues through interactive multi-media displays, exhibits and games.

The Barrage itself is a lesson in environmentally-friendly and



sustainable practices. Besides green construction practices such as re-using excavated sand in the marine cofferdams, it has a large rooftop garden and double-glazed glass panels to reduce heat penetration. A veritable park of 405 solar panels generates about 50% of the daytime electricity needed at the barrage. A rainwater collection system harnesses rainwater to meet irrigation requirements.

Not surprisingly, Marina Barrage walked away with the first Green Mark Platinum Infrastructure Award from the Building and Construction Authority this year. ●

For more information:
www.pub.gov.sg/marina



Photo: PUB

Engineering Singapore's Manufacturing Sector

Imagine spotting a strand of white hair on the ground from a height of 600 metres – that's what wafer inspection tools do to identify nano-scale defects. And that is just one of the capabilities which Singapore's precision engineering industry has acquired in its efforts to support the diverse industries which have taken root here.

Besides a commendable track record of cutting-edge skills, the sector also stands out for mass production. Today, Singapore accounts for about 10% of global output for refrigeration compressors, 30% of global output for hearing aids, and about 70% of wire bonders and more than 10% of global output for backend equipment used in the semiconductor industry.

A sub-set of the manufacturing sector, the precision engineering industry's value added was S\$6.7 billion in 2008. It saw an output of S\$22.3 billion. While this accounted for about 10 per cent to the total manufacturing output, the industry employed a quarter of the total manufacturing workforce or 101,000 people.

They worked in some 2,700 companies, ranging from SMEs (small and medium enterprises) to large MNCs (multi national corporations). Some are contract manufacturers while others are full solution providers, that offer design, prototyping, production and supply chain management capabilities.

The industry can be divided into two main sub-sectors – the design and assembly of machinery & systems (M&S) and the production of precision modules & components (PMC).

The M&S sector includes key machine tools and semiconductor equipment makers the likes of Makino, Yamasaki Mazak, Applied Materials and KLA Tencor, while the PMC sector features companies involved in a wide range of manufacturing services (such as tool & die making, casting, plastic/metal/ceramic injection moulding, ultra-precision machining) and specialised components as diverse as bearings, motors, vacuum pumps and watch movements.

The local precision engineering industry has continued to evolve in tandem with the increasing sophistication of manufacturing projects from industries such as aerospace, medical devices, electronics, industrial and marine & offshore equipment. Indeed, as a core enabler for them, the precision engineering industry's unique strengths are key reasons for Singapore's global leadership position in these areas.

Electronics: Precision engineering suppliers have expanded from manufacturing mobile phone casings and plastic gears to fabricating higher-value components such as light guides and plastic camera lens modules. Some had even begun manufacturing in fully-automated, clean-room



environments. These companies include Chosen, Sunningdale-Tech, Singapore Dai-ichi, Unisteel and First Engineering.

Medical Technology: Key players in medical devices are increasing their outsourcing volume in Singapore. Already suppliers are manufacturing inhaler components, surgical lenses and special medical closures for leading names such as Schering Plough, Baxter and Becton Dickinson. Nypro, Meiban, Kato Spring, Univac and Sunningdale-Tech. are among the suppliers that have met stringent quality and process requirements to capture opportunities in this field.

Aerospace: UMS' US\$20 million announcement in 2007 to set up a facility in Singapore for machining aerospace parts and components signals the growing opportunities in aerospace for



precision engineering companies. Other suppliers are also gearing up by acquiring new capabilities in 5-axis machining and machining on composite materials, as well as the necessary qualifications and certifications.

Oil & Gas: Singapore produces 70% of the world's jack up oil rigs, and is the regional leader in oilfield & gasfield equipment manufacturing. A growing base of precision engineering suppliers are moving into large format, multi-axis machining and other value-added services. They will support the increasingly sophisticated needs of key players such as Schlumberger, Cameron and Halliburton.

Recent key investments in other sectors of precision engineering include a new facility for high-precision manufacturing by KLA-

Tencor, one of the world's largest wafer fabrication equipment manufacturers. The US company will also use its new premises to enlarge its extensive training, sales and corporate functions in Asia, where approximately 70% of its customers' operations are located.

Complementing the developments in the established key clusters, the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) is fostering new areas of growth such as clean energy, environment and water, and natural resources. It is also reaching out to investment sources in new geographies such as Oceania, China and India.

At the same time, the need to help existing precision engineering companies remain relevant to the changing demands of customers has not been forgotten. The EDB together with other agencies has introduced the Supplier Development Initiative (SDI) to enhance the capabilities of supplier companies and establish business linkages with larger precision engineering companies.

The initiative enables manufacturers in the semiconductor equipment, aerospace, medical technology and electronics sectors to establish strategic business relationships with contract manufacturers and suppliers in Singapore. It encourages OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) to work closely with their suppliers and take a leadership role in helping to build up the suppliers' capabilities. It also helps foreign suppliers establish a presence in Singapore. Overall, the suppliers here will be able to offer a more compelling value proposition to manufacturers.

Two companies – the Dutch VDL-Enabling Technologies Group and Singapore's AEM – have already embarked on the SDI, with more companies from various industries expressing keen interest in the

initiative. With each company working with five to 10 suppliers, the multiplier effect of the SDI is expected to be far-reaching.

On the R&D front, the latest development is the formation of two technology consortia to propel the precision engineering industry up the value chain. SIMTech (The Singapore Institute of Manufacturing Technology) will share technology, including prototype systems and software solutions, to help one group with high-mix, low-volume manufacturing and the other with precision measurements and characterisation.

On the manpower front, efforts have been made to ensure sufficient and quality personnel to meet the needs of the industry. Planning ahead to meet anticipated demand, a \$76 million precision engineering manpower initiative was launched in 2007 to attract a new generation of talent and to upgrade and deepen the capabilities of the precision engineering manpower base. Among other goals, the programme proposes to equip up to 2,000 students with the skills needed to capitalise on new opportunities in areas such as equipment manufacturing and ultra-precision machining.

Macro conditions are priming the Singapore precision engineering industry for further growth and the vision is for Singapore to be a centre of precision engineering excellence. When global companies think of precision engineering, Singapore should be seen as standing shoulder to shoulder with countries like Germany, Japan and Switzerland. ●





Excelling In Measurement

As one of the world's leading measurement companies, Agilent Technologies works in close collaboration with engineers, scientists, and researchers around the globe to meet the communications, electronics, life sciences, and chemical analysis challenges of today and tomorrow. The company operates two primary businesses – electronic and bio-analytical measurement.

In Singapore, Agilent develops a range of electronics and communications test products, from component level testers to complete systems that test communications services, communications networks, storage area networks and wireless network. It also provides technology and tools such as microDNA arrays and lab-on-a-chip analysis for life science research and recently opened a life sciences facility to manufacture liquid-handling and laboratory robotic instruments.

Agilent Singapore employs about 450 people in R&D, sales and business hub activities. Its R&D efforts include in-circuit testing for precision electronic measurement technology, advanced circuit technology, interconnect standards and test fixture, and advanced PCB (printed circuit board) manufacturing; and in-circuit test (ICT) system for production testing of high density complex circuit boards.



It is currently hiring experienced (3 to 5 years) engineers in the precision mechanical engineering domain as well as R&D engineers for telecommunications (4G and Next Generation Network).

"Agilent continues to recruit in this downturn because of business growth within the Asia Pacific region. The Singapore government's continued support in making the country an attractive place to invest also provides an opportunity for Agilent to expand its presence," explained

its HR Director Charles Chee.

"New staff joining us will be working with a company that values a diverse, inclusive work environment. We treat people with respect and offer challenging assignments, development opportunities, competitive salaries and an excellent benefits package. Employees will have the opportunity to be sent overseas on assignment, training and to learn new technologies," he added.

Agilent is an equal opportunity employer with a diverse work force on whom it leverages. "The company benefits from the innovation that results when people who have differing experiences, perspectives and cultures work together. In this way, a well-managed, diverse work force expands the company's base of knowledge, skills and understanding. It also enables Agilent to be more responsive to the needs of its customers," said Mr Chee.

With regard to the employment of global talent, it offers a relocation package and has retention policies that will help relocated employees to be integrated into their new community with ease. At work, the corporate culture is dedicated to the values of creativity, trust, respect, accountability, teamwork, and uncompromising integrity. ●

Building Machines That Power Industries Across Asia

Makino Milling Machine Company manufactures a comprehensive range of machine tools for parts machining to die/mould machining to EDM (electrical discharge machining). Its advanced manufacturing technology is the platform for state-of-the-art applications used by leading companies in the automotive, aerospace and die/mold industries.

To meet the machining demand of the fast growing Asia market, the Japanese company chose Singapore as its Asia headquarters and set up Makino Asia Pte Ltd to cover the major markets in Asia, including China, India, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore.

Makino Asia has grown from a subcontract manufacturer to become a fully integrated manufacturing company with its own R&D facility for machine tool, related sub-components and control systems. Advanced processing and highly trained technicians in a controlled environment ensure consistent high quality on the production floor. It is able to produce tools of less than 5-micron accuracy.

It also offers integration services. Its turnkey solutions include responsibility for the complete integration of machining technologies, third-party equipment, application engineering, fixtures, on-time delivery, on-site installation, successful test runs, training and post-production support.

It employs close to 400 staff in Singapore and another 650 employees in different parts of Asia. Jobs available range from machinist and technician to R&D engineer in electrical, mechanical or software engineering. Other jobs for engineers are in applications and field services.



Makino prides itself on the fact people don't get jobs at Makino: they have careers. It works with its employees to help them find their place in the company. It believes that the interests of the company and the staff are inseparable and is committed to developing a diverse team of creative and independent professionals.

Makino's corporate culture cares for its employees. In the first place, it provides continuous training and lifelong learning from the start – all new engineers and technicians receive structured training programmes to build up their competencies to perform their job effectively.

It also provides conducive surroundings on its premises with the environment, health and safety of its employees in mind. Efforts are made to reduce pollution, conserve energy and create a restful ambience. To facilitate work-life balance for its staff, its headquarters is equipped with a clubhouse with gym and other facilities. Employees are encouraged to unwind during non-official working hours.

As a global company, the Makino group has employees from a rich diversity of races and languages in many countries. Joining Makino Asia opens up opportunities in many other parts of the world. ●

Ganesh Prasad

Principal Engineer, R&D.
Makino Asia Pte Ltd.

“

I had just graduated and stood fifth in mechanical engineering in Bangalore University. Although I got several openings in India and overseas in all, Makino was the first company to offer me a job.

Both the job and the location were right. Knowing that Makino was one of the leading machine tool companies, I wanted to work in this organization as there would be lots of opportunities to learn and contribute. The fact that I would be working in Singapore was all the more welcome because I had heard during my university days that Singapore is one of the cleanest countries. I also knew it has a multi-cultural population living in harmony and I am interested in knowing people from different cultural backgrounds.

That was 10 years ago and things could not have worked out better. Workwise, I have had and continue to have lots of scope to learn new things, be it technical skills or soft skills. I was attached to our parent company in Japan for more than three years. This exposure enhanced my technical skills to a great extent. In addition, I learnt about Japanese working culture, social life and the language. While working, I also managed to pick up a Masters degree in manufacturing management through distance learning.

Currently, as Principal Engineer, R&D, I am responsible for the mechanical engineering group involved in wire EDM (electrical discharge machining) machine tool design and production. I lead some projects, supervise other engineers and train the young ones in machine tool design.

We are a good team at Makino. However we still need some assistance from our parent company staff to develop and manufacture machines. I am passionate about reaching the stage where we can develop and manufacture world class machines independently.

I have been married for the past four years and my wife and I were blessed with a baby boy this year. My wife is a musician and a vocalist, specialising in Indian classical music. This helps me to keep up my interest in music.

As for living in Singapore, I like the way the country embraces foreigners. I take advantage of its nearness to India to visit my family, especially when I was a bachelor. At the same time, with its very large Indian community, I do not feel that I am residing in a foreign country.

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Still Enjoying My First Job



Financial Services In Perspective

Singapore's financial centre offers a broad range of financial services including banking, insurance, investment banking and treasury services. As the only Asian country with a "AAA" rating, Singapore has a well-regulated international financial sector.

A key aspect of Singapore's financial centre is its deep and liquid capital markets. With one of the more well-established capital markets in Asia-Pacific, the Singapore Exchange is the preferred listing location for more than 200 global companies. Today, Singapore has grown to be the largest Real Estate Investment Trust market in Asia excluding Japan and also provides an extensive offering of investments in business trusts of shipping, aviation and infrastructure assets.

Singapore's bond market has also grown significantly. With an extensive range of both Singapore government securities and foreign corporate bonds available, Singapore offers fixed income investors a wide range of investment opportunities. As one of the top five most active foreign exchange trading centres in the world, Singapore is also the second largest over-the-counter derivatives trading centre in Asia, and a leading commodities derivatives trading hub.

With total assets under management of around S\$1 trillion, and which continues to see steady growth, Singapore is also recognised as one of the premier asset management locations in Asia. These activities are generated by over 600 financial institutions which operate in Singapore. Among them are six local and 108 foreign banks such as Standard Chartered Bank, Bank of America, BNP Paribas, HongKong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

To meet the demand for office space by these and new financial institutions in the medium term, the Marina Bay area is being developed as a seamless extension of the existing business and financial district at Raffles Place, Shenton Way and Tanjong Pagar. Over the next 15 years or more, nearly 3 million square metres of office space will be added to ensure that there is literally room for all who want to do business in Singapore.

At the same time, financial institutions can leverage Singapore's strategic location at the heart of Southeast Asia to serve the fast-growing markets of the Asia-Pacific region. They can trade around-the-clock with Asia-Pacific centres, which are only a short flight away should a face to face meeting be required. Excellent infocomm connections to the rest of the world make Singapore a significant hub for 24-hour trading in foreign exchange and securities.

As the world picks itself up from the financial crisis, Singapore's financial centre is ready to service trade and industry to get business booming again. ●

Financial Sector



Annie Yap, Managing Director,
AYP Associates

The depth and breath of Singapore's financial services have helped it withstand the financial tsunami that swept through world markets at the end of last year. In spite of the difficulties still facing the sector, financial institutions are hiring, say search firms that specialise in scouting for talent for this area.

"The general sentiment at this moment is that the economy has bottomed and consumers have gained confidence. If the current rate of growth of this industry persists, we foresee that the industry will be in full swing by the end of the year. We are already seeing a slow increase in demand for front office people to sell products and services," said veteran headhunter Annie Yap who set up her own company, AYP Associates, in March this year.

Her views were echoed by Mr James Rushworth, Managing Director of Profile Search & Selection, a boutique search firm which was voted the Asiamoney No. 1 Middle/Back Office Headhunting Firm, 2009 for Asia excluding Japan.



James Rushworth, Managing Director,
Profile Search & Selection

He said, "The first half of the year has been very challenging, especially so in the financial services sector. However whilst too early to be a trend, there does seem to be a rise in recruitment enquiries from clients and activity overall.

"In the front office key areas of demand would be in areas like private wealth management – Relationship Managers/Advisory with AUM (assets under management) – and origination – bankers with experience of sourcing deals in the region, whether that be in real estate, distressed debt, principal finance; sales and trading, specialists in debt markets in Singapore and in the commodities space.

"In the back office key areas of demand remain areas like Product Control, Business Finance – CFO/Controllers – Compliance, Audit and, to some extent, Project/Change Management."

Robert Walters, a British consultancy with 38 offices in 17 countries and winner of the Asian Banker Supporting Industry Award (Executive Search to the Commercial Banking Industry) in 2008, focused on the specifics that lead to demand. The Managing Director of its Singapore office, Andrea Ross, said, "Ramifications from the sub prime crisis led to an increased focus on controls and risk during the second half of 2008. This has further led to 2009 seeing a healthy demand for credit risk management, compliance and audit professionals within the financial services industries.

"Credit professionals with exposure to emerging markets and cross functional skill sets (for example across credit analysis, documentation and risk monitoring) are particularly sought. Credit functions are also expected to become more sophisticated in time to come, requiring individuals with strong scenario modelling and evaluation skills.

"Audit and tax roles continue to be an area in demand across all industries, irrespective of current market conditions. This is because of an inherent talent shortage in the Singapore market. Hirers also tend to look for individuals with local Singaporean or regional experience.

"There continues to be a demand for qualified chartered accountants with at least two to three years' experience within product control, MIS (management information systems) and financial control,

Shows Resilience

particularly if they have commodities exposure which can be a challenge particularly when generally accountants are CPA qualified in Singapore.

"It is also interesting to note that the public sector has taken advantage of current economic conditions to upskill its workforce."

To this, Leonard Yeow, Chief Executive of The Eximius Group, the local office of US recruitment firm, MRINetwork Inc, added, "IT is another area of demand. For example, Barclays has set up a technology centre and BNP Paribas is expanding its IT arm."

All the headhunters interviewed agreed that those with experience have an edge in the current hirers' market. In the words of Ms Ross, "Current market conditions have led to a pool of experienced and available candidates. This is the fundamental shift between hiring in 2009 and in the first three quarters of 2008 when there was a talent crunch due to candidate shortage.

"Hirers are therefore more inclined to hire experienced professionals able to hit the ground running without much mentorship. Fresh graduates thus come into the job market disadvantaged."

However, they can improve their chances with this tip from Ms Yap, who said, "If the person doesn't have experience, it's easier to enter the banking industry via the back office. For front office personnel, the bank will typically look at the clientele that you can bring on board."

In the last analysis, it is all about having the right skills, experience and track record. Said Ms Ross, "Clients are currently hiring for niche opportunities. It is therefore important that a candidate is very focused on what he/she wants to do." ●



Andrea Ross, Managing Director,
Robert Walters



Leonard Yeow, Chief Executive,
The Eximius Group

Some search firms in the financial sector

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A Patent For Success

Namyong Kim

Chief Executive Officer
Curiox Biosystems Pte Ltd

With a PhD in Chemistry from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), more than 10 patents/patent applications to his name, a successful start-up and a happy marriage, 36-year-old Dr Namyong Kim is pretty settled both professionally and personally.

The fact the Korean chose Singapore as the setting was due to an A*STAR (Agency for Science, Technology and Research) ad for researchers with a strong interest in commercialising their technology. He came here five years ago and after finalising his research in bio-instrumentation at the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology, he duly spun off Curiox Biosystems. One and a half years later, his company is well on its way to breaking even, selling a technology for miniaturising assays.

As a technopreneur in high gear, he says, "It is very simple to describe my current job – very busy. As the CEO of Curiox, I have to wear as many hats as I can. I am the HR manager, sales person, applications scientist, instrument engineer, production supervisor, strategy planner, website designer, investor relations manager, public relations manager, and so on.

"On a typical day, I spend 20% of my time on sales, 20% on HR and admin issues, 30% in business development

activities including marketing and 30% in the technical area.

"With a never-ending list of things to do and the unlimited boundary of my job scope and potential, I simply love my job. The downside is that I end up sacrificing my personal time with family for work. And, the sad part is that the aging process is accelerating with ever increasing wrinkles and white hair."

He leads a full and fulfilling life outside of work too. A family man, he loves to sit on a picnic blanket on the grass at East Coast Park, eat freshly roasted chicken wings, play card games and chat with his wife and two children, now 10 and 11.

As an individual, he chills out with friends in Clarke Quay and around City Hall. He also takes exercise seriously, jogging about 5 km and weight-lifting three times a week and playing tennis twice a week, if he can fit them in.

"Without my family and my exercise, I would not have been able to cope with my crazy work schedule and stress," he says.



The pluses of being located in Singapore include capable professionals, fantastic food and the convenience of a compact city. The minuses are the heat and the humidity.

He says, "Singapore has been an excellent place. I have met great people and received so much support. I am glad I have started repaying all the goodwill by creating jobs and selling Singapore-made products overseas." ●

Folks At Contact Singapore

Interview with Area Director Terence Ong, who heads the China office



You lived in Shanghai in 2004. How has China changed and how have Chinese talent developed since then?

China is changing at a tremendous pace. Old buildings are demolished to make way for skyscrapers at lightning speed. The skylines in major cities are always changing.

Many Chinese universities now have exchange programmes and study trips to various countries, including Singapore. With a better understanding and more links with other countries, Chinese talent are now more international in their outlook and their career choices. Many Chinese talent are now also effectively bilingual and Singapore can be a great place for them to embark on their international careers.

In which fields can Chinese talent contribute to Singapore? Why should Chinese talent consider Singapore?

The Chinese are renowned for their good foundations in science and technology, and their expertise in research and in IDM (interactive digital media). These are the talent we want to bring to Singapore, from fresh graduates to mid- and high-level professionals.

For a Chinese professional looking to enrich his career and life, Singapore is truly the place to be. This city is a unique blend of Asian cultures and Western influences, unlike any other! A Chinese talent will find it easy to settle in Singapore because of the proximity in terms of language and culture; yet, he can savour new experiences due to be the vibrant diversity that permeates every aspect of life in Singapore – from culture, to language to food!

Singapore's economy also remains strong, with exciting growth industries that offer rewarding careers, especially in the IDM, biomedical sciences, electronics and clean

technology sectors. With the anticipated recovery from the recession, talent who choose to come to Singapore will thrive as part of Singapore's and Asia's growth story.

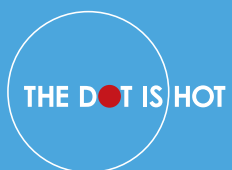
How well-known is Singapore? What are some misperceptions that Chinese talent have of Singapore?

I would say that many Chinese know about Singapore and they know what Singapore represents – cleanliness, safety and security. But a lot of Chinese also think that Singapore is boring and too small.

But the reality is that Singapore has undergone a phenomenal transformation. There will be two integrated resorts opening, the only Formula 1 night race is held here every September, the famous shopping street, Orchard Road, has just completed a multi-million overhaul – I could go on and on!

Besides an increasing array of entertainment options, Singapore is building a home for the future, spending S\$4.4 billion on developing first class infrastructure for the island and on expanded provisions for education and healthcare. Residents will enjoy an extremely liveable city in all its facets, even as our economy grows.

As for Singapore being too small, this is actually a strength. Being small, we are nimble and respond quickly to global trends – change is constant and progress is speedy. Many Chinese talent are unaware that we have over 7,000 MNCs (multinational corporations) here, of which 60% have regional functions. Working here is a chance to be part of a pan-Asian operation, with a cosmopolitan workforce and culture. Since Singapore serves international markets, the experience garnered here is unparalleled. ●



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