

Contact  
Singapore 

# SYNERGY

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## 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](http://www.contactsingapore.sg)

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# Careers@Singapore Rides On The Economic Upturn

Singapore's economic recovery led Contact Singapore (CS) to arrange a series of Careers@Singapore events in Singapore over a two-week period at the end of January.

The six industry-specific events focused on Singapore's financial & accounting, healthcare, legal, public service and tourism & hospitality industries, with dedicated sessions for doctors and allied healthcare professionals. "We chose the growth

industries with lots of opportunities," explained CS Deputy Director (Industry Workforce) Kee Ee Wah.

Lasting not more than half a day each, the sessions kicked off with an introduction to working and living in Singapore, followed by an overview of the industry and the career opportunities available.

Where applicable, such as in the case of the hospitals, a tour of the facilities was included. In all sessions, students were able to question speakers about their particular concerns or ask for clarifications in the Q&A after the talks or while networking over tea break.

More than 1,500 students attended the six sessions, which drew bigger or smaller crowds depending on how specific the qualifications required by the industry were. Some 25 employers also participated in the different sessions.

The comment of Singaporean Twang MeiShan, who attended the legal services event, bears out the success of the CS effort. She said, "The session was pretty good. I was undecided whether to come back to work in Singapore before the session. Now I'm more motivated because I have heard positive remarks from the professionals working here."

Added Ms Wendy Huang, an Australian law graduate, representing legal firm Drew & Napier at the event, "It was very beneficial for the students. It was not like that in my time."

The majority, such as Lynn Tan, a Psychology undergraduate who attended the session for allied healthcare professionals,

## HEALTHCARE SERVICES (for medical professionals)



**DATE:** 13 January  
**VENUE:** Changi General Hospital  
**NO OF STUDENTS:** 20  
**HIGHLIGHTS:** In addition to a presentation on Singapore's medical industry, there was a talk and tour of Changi General Hospital.

## HEALTHCARE SERVICES (for allied healthcare professionals)



**DATE:** 14 January  
**VENUE:** Alexandra Hospital  
**NO OF PARTICIPANTS:** 20  
**HIGHLIGHTS:** A talk on opportunities in Singapore's healthcare industry was followed by in depth presentations of Singapore's two new public hospitals, Khoo Teck Puat and Jurong Hospitals. A tour of Alexandra Hospital was included.

did not need persuasion. "I really like Singapore," she said.

Maisy Chu, a Malaysian who has just graduated from Melbourne University, shared the same sentiments. She said, "I'm very keen to work in Singapore. It's close to

home and there is security as well as more opportunities."

Prospective employers were also impressed. For example, Mr Nathaniel Khng, a Supreme Court Assistant Registrar who spoke at the legal services event, said, "This

event, which focuses on law students studying in Australia, is timely as there are not many such graduates practising law in Singapore at the moment. They can contribute to the development of the profession and Singapore law by bringing different views and perspectives." ●

**PUBLIC SERVICE**  
(organised in conjunction with the Public Service Division)



**DATE:** 19 January  
**VENUE:** NTUC Centre  
**NO OF STUDENTS:** 200  
**HIGHLIGHTS:** About 20 ministries and statutory boards, such as the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore and the National Environment Agency, were present to talk to students about what they do and the openings they had. Informal stand-up chats over coffee and snacks was the order of the day.

**LEGAL SERVICES**



**DATE:** 23 January  
**VENUE:** Maxwell Chambers  
**NO OF STUDENTS:** 25  
**HIGHLIGHTS:** An update of recent changes in admittance to the Singapore Bar was followed by the experiences of a panel of lawyers from the public and private sectors. Representatives of more firms were at hand to mingle with the students who also toured the newly opened arbitration centre.

**TOURISM & HOSPITALITY**



**DATE:** 23 January  
**VENUE:** Singapore Tourism Board  
**NO OF STUDENTS:** 60  
**HIGHLIGHTS:** Four speakers from different sectors of the tourism and hospitality industries made presentations and then took part in a panel discussion to discuss prospects for 2010 and beyond. A networking tea followed.

**FINANCIAL & ACCOUNTING SERVICES**  
(organised in conjunction with CPA Australia)



**DATE:** 30 January  
**VENUE:** Marriott Hotel  
**NO OF STUDENTS:** 1,200  
**HIGHLIGHTS:** A career exhibition was held alongside two interactive discussion forums Career Plus and Career Paths, where practising professionals shared their views and insights on critical skills and attributes in demand.

# An “Interactive” Experience@Singapore



**Christine Liu from Texas A&M University participated in the January Experience@Singapore programme which gave interactive and digital media students from US, UK and Australia exposure to Singapore as the ideal place to work, live and play. Excerpts from her blog give a lively account of her visit while another student, Richard Chan, shares his views of Singapore as captured by his camera.**

## 03 January 2010

24 hours (after leaving Houston) we arrive in Singapore 14 hours in the future. The programme starts tomorrow and I'm foreseeing a long and exciting day.

## 04 January 2010

At the beginning of the day we were all informed of the great eating culture here. Today I got a good glimpse of what they mean. The lunch set up was at this porridge buffet. In addition to the bowl of porridge there is a giant array of sides and condiments to accompany the meal. I have had porridge before, but have never seen it set up in this way.

The evening ended with an elaborate eight-course seafood meal featuring chili crab.

At the Media Development Authority (MDA) and Fusionopolis, we got to learn about the development of Mediapolis in a room full of touch screen tables (like Microsoft Surface). Fusionopolis showed an array of things too including a demo of their augmented reality set up.

## 05 January 2010

Our first industry visit was the last thing on the agenda. We checked out Sunwoo, which is a major Korean studio. We kind of caught them in the process of moving to a new office, but we were able to get a glimpse of work in action.

## 06 January 2010

This morning we started with a visit to ST Electronics. ST Electronics creates some simulation work for the Singaporean military so they confiscated our phones and cameras before entry. I could say more, but I'd have to kill you. (just kidding)

(The day ended at Zouk.) The Singaporeans have this cool way of hand signing to music ... retro and even the recent hits. I had so much fun dancing, singing, and signing. I can definitely say that if I didn't have to be up on the bus at 9 am then I would still be there now! Bedtime at 2:45 am. Good night.

## 07 January 2010

In the morning we visited 3Dsense Media School. There was a number

of good works coming out of such a small school and short programme. The students' work was really impressive. The people we spoke with were also really great because they were so passionate about their school and producing quality graduates.

In the afternoon we visited Tiny Island Productions and Scrawl Studio. Both had an array of interesting visuals. I'm really interested in looking up more of what Scrawl has done. Their toons are appealing to me. I loved that their offices are decorated with so many toys and fun. It's always great inspiration.

It's too bad that tomorrow is the last day. I have met some really great people that I hope to see in the future.

## 08 January 2010

Without a doubt, everyone was excited about visiting Lucasfilm Animation this morning. They presented some really nice stuff. It was too bad that we couldn't tour the office or take any pictures.

Last stop ... National University of Singapore. We got to see a lot of interesting projects going on at the Interactive & Digital Media Institute. We also got a chance to mingle with some startup representatives and learned how a couple of the students here started their business.

The bus ride back to the hotel signaled the end of the programme. We ended the night with Singapore Slings at the bar right next to our hotel! ●

# Australasian IDM Professionals Experience Singapore

For the first time, Contact Singapore (CS) invited multipliers – lecturers and industry professionals who could promote opportunities in Singapore back in their home countries – to Experience@Singapore. Until the first group came for a five-day visit last September, it had always focused on students.

The group consisted of eight professionals from the Interactive and Digital Media (IDM) community in Australia and New Zealand. Under the programme specially arranged for them, they toured big-name studios like Lucasfilm, Ubisoft and Koei Entertainment to get a first-hand feel of the growing opportunities for collaboration, partnership and career development for students and working professionals in the fast-growing industry.

The professional track also included tours to training institutes like the US-based DigiPen Institute of Technology and the School of Design at Singapore Polytechnic. At the same time, they had the opportunity to experience Singapore's lifestyle.



as well as published stories in affiliated newsletters and social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

"We hope to gain access to larger talent pools through the learning and observations of these multipliers," said CS Deputy Director (Industry Workforce) Kee Ee Wah.

The IDM talent in Australia and New Zealand that Singapore hopes to reach includes creative and conceptual developers (specifically, concept artists, directors and writers) as well as technical specialists (like animators, VFX artists and programmers) and educators. ●

"The best thing about the programme was the inside look into the culture of Singapore and its people and burgeoning digital and interactive media industries," said Mr Peter Giles, the Director of the Digital Media division at the Australian Film, TV and Radio School. "It was very informative to tour the city and see some of its major attractions, taste the food and experience the ambience of the city."

He and the other participants shared their experiences with their own professional and student networks,



# Singapore's Attorney-General Woos Lawyers From UK



Recruitment for the legal profession received a helping hand from Singapore's Attorney-General, Professor Walter Woon, when he visited the UK last November. He was the keynote speaker at Contact Singapore events for law students in Cambridge, Oxford and London.

The biggest gathering was in London. In spite of a heavy downpour, 81 participants from more than 20 nationalities – France, Germany, Brazil and Korea among others – attended the event.

In all three groups, the students showed keen interest in his overview of recent developments in the legal profession, particularly his thoughts about legal career opportunities in the private sector, public sector and academia.

They bombarded him with questions, such as the differences between the public and private sectors and career

progression in the public service. Prof Woon was unreserved in giving insights and advice in his replies.

As the events were organised in partnership with Singapore Legal Services Commission, its officers were present to meet and network with the students. The private sector was represented by 10 private law firms which posted training contract, internship and job positions in the microsite linked to the electronic direct mailer inviting them to meet Prof Woon. ●



## 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
1 – 5 Feb	Experience@Singapore+: Electronics (For students from Korean universities)	Singapore
3 Feb	Work-In-Singapore Presentation & Networking Session (University of Nottingham)	Malaysia
10 Feb	Insights@Singapore: Earth Science Research (A webinar in collaboration with the Earth Science Observatory of Singapore)	Singapore
10 – 11 Feb	Experience@Singapore+: Research (For students from German universities)	Singapore
26 Feb	Harvard "Career Trek Around Asia: China, India, Singapore and Vietnam"	United States
27 Feb – 12 Mar	Careers@Home: Public sector event in San Francisco, New York and London	United States, United Kingdom
10 Mar	CVUT v Praze Career Fair	Czech Republic
10 – 21 Mar	Careers@Singapore*: Allied Health Professionals	United Kingdom, Ireland
11 – 13 Mar	Games Developers Conference 2010 (Career Pavillion)	United States
19 – 21 Mar	Universitas Indonesia Career Expo IX	Indonesia
24 Mar	Zapadoceska univerzita v Plzni Career Fair	Czech Republic
29 Mar	Insights@Singapore: The Future of Asset and Wealth Management in Singapore (A webinar in collaboration with Singapore Management University)	Singapore

\*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](http://www.contactsingapore.sg/experience@singapore)

# Green Singapore

Contrary to conventional wisdom, Singapore has become greener as its population grew. A study by the Centre for Remote Imaging, Sensing and Processing at the National University of Singapore, shows that Singapore's green cover (or the area covered by greenery) grew from 35.7% to 46.5% of the land area between 1986 and 2007. During the same period, the population grew by 68% from 2.7 million to 4.6 million.

This increase in greenery has happened through years of careful planning and constant effort. Every endeavour counts and many micro projects together can make a significant contribution.



Photo: NParks



Photo: NParks

Take the case of park connectors – strips of green that link up parks and nature sites which are dedicated to recreational walking, jogging and cycling activities. By the year 2015, the park connectors will span 300 kilometres, making them a major contributor to recreational green space throughout the city.

Then there is the effort to green roofs. A green roof for a HDB (Housing & Development Board) multi-storey carpark may not be much in itself. But the concerted effort to build or convert the roofs of many such carparks into greenery is making for more pleasant views as well as cooler temperatures and reduced glare from the sun.

At the same time, pragmatism rules, for these roofs are covered with low maintenance plants which are easy to upkeep.

Today, a definite trend in green architectural features has taken off. "Skyrise greenery" – a term coined in Singapore to refer to sky terraces (landscaped spaces at the mid-levels), sky gardens, green balconies, roof gardens and vertical green walls – is proliferating in government buildings, malls and condos. Apart from their intrinsic selling points, their adoption is supported by government incentives.

Such success has made the National Parks Board raise its sights from making Singapore a garden city to making it a city in a garden.

For more information on Singapore's green efforts, sign up for the National Parks' newsletter at [www.nparks.gov.sg/maillinglist](http://www.nparks.gov.sg/maillinglist). ●



# Singapore's Sports Options Grow

## Skating

Such is the popularity of skateboarding, inline skating and BMX biking that Singapore now boasts a skatepark built to international competition standards at East Coast Park. This new public facility was opened by no less than the Prime Minister last September.

The Xtreme SkatePark, the size of two and a half football fields, has three international standard courses suitable for all enthusiasts from beginners to professionals, set against a backdrop of lush greenery, beach and sea views:

- A street course with street obstacles such as stairs, handrails and ledges
- A combo bowl with varying depths
- A 3.6m-deep vertical bowl for advanced-level skaters and bikers.

Prior to Xtreme SkatePark, enthusiasts congregated at Bishan Skate Park I & II, Somerset Skate Park and Bedok Adventure Park. Today, they can also choose to skate at a commercial indoor facility at Turf City in Bukit Timah.

## Jogging and biking

In the good old days, walking and cycling were more utilitarian than a sport. But with motorised transport as the norm today, jogging and biking have become popular forms of exercise.

To give people the option of long jogs and rides, the National Parks Board (NParks) has completed the Western Adventure Park Connector Network, which links regional parks in northwestern Singapore such as Choa Chu Kang Park, Zhenghua Park and the newly completed Dairy Farm Nature Park. This 20-km long park connector combines history and heritage, adventure and nature elements in a seamless route, which caters to all types of users.

This loop follows the completion of the Eastern Coastal Park Connector Network which joins up parks in eastern Singapore such as East Coast, Pasir Ris and Changi Beach Parks. A total of seven such loops are planned throughout Singapore, leading eventually to the possibility of walking, biking or in-line skating along a 300km route round the island.

Besides park connectors, there is a park for everyone. Love the sun, sea and sand? Visit the coastal parks

Gone are the days when sports meant badminton, swimming, football, table tennis and little else. Today, not only has the variety of mainstream sports expanded but new exercise choices that contribute to a healthy lifestyle have multiplied.

In some cases, they provide adrenalin-pumping adventure in addition to exercise. Others are exotic niche sports or new, trendy pursuits. A summary of some of the latest facilities and activities in Singapore gives an idea of what's available on land and sea.



Photo: NParks



Photo: NParks



Photo: NParks



Photo: NParks

such as East Coast Park and Pasir Ris Park. Enjoy panoramic views? Go on the highest pedestrian bridge in Singapore – Henderson Waves along the Southern Ridges. Or if you enjoy flora and fauna, visit the nature reserves and experience the rich biodiversity that Singapore has to offer. All these recreational areas are easily accessible from the city.

### **Treetop courses**

The latest endurance cum adventure course among the trees is Sentosa's MegaZip Adventure Park, with one of the longest and steepest zip wires in Asia, a 12-metre high ropes course, a free-fall parachute simulator or descender and a challenging climbing wall.

Another course 5 to 8m above ground is available at Bedok Reservoir Park. The tree-top obstacle course features ladders, swings, trapezes and nets.

Appropriate safety precautions such as a brief initiation course and safety harnesses ensure thrills without the spills.

### **Horse riding**

Pony rides and horse riding lessons, targeted mainly at children, are available at a number of places such as the Bukit Timah Saddle Club, Singapore Polo Club (one does not have to be a member at either club), Gallop Stable at Pasir Ris Park or Horsecity at Turf City.

### **Water sports**

The latest novelty on water is at Wave House on Sentosa island. It has two artificially generated waves for board sports. The more basic Double

FlowRider® creates a safe, non-curling, endless wave that moves as fast as 32 kmph. Riders can slide down and ride up the wave surface or carve turns.

The FlowBarrel® produces a perfect, endlessly tubing six-foot wave curl that has the power and challenge of many real waves. It flows as fast as 48 kmph. Riders use flowboards for flowboarding, which is an alchemy of many different board sports such as surfing, snowboarding, skateboarding and skimboarding.

Another water sports is cable skiing at East Coast Park. The first of its kind in Singapore, it is waterskiing or wakeboarding but pulled by an overhead cable instead of a boat. It is also possible to slalom, trick ski, kneeboard, or even surf without the wave and perform mid-air stunts on floating ramps at speeds between 24 and 58kmh.

Those who are satisfied with tamer pleasures may prefer to frequent some of Singapore's reservoirs which have been opened up for water sports such as canoeing, kayaking and sailing. They include the popular MacRitchie Reservoir and Singapore's new reservoir, Marina Barrage, in the heart of the city.

### **Indoor sports**

A sample of the range of possibilities includes Muay Thai kick boxing at Cairnhill and Tanglin Community Clubs plus various commercial gyms; fencing at studios and clubs from Yio Chu Kang to Novena; and Brazilian martial arts in Orchard Road and Turf City. ●



# Calling Healthcare Professionals

The Singapore government is enhancing its healthcare infrastructure by building new hospitals and redeveloping its specialty centres. Doctors, allied health professionals and nurses who are interested in a healthcare career in Singapore are thus needed to staff the new facilities and maintain the international standards and efficiency of healthcare delivery in Singapore.

Opportunities are available in all the public healthcare institutions although recruitment efforts are being intensified at two new acute care hospitals: Khoo Teck Puat Hospital which will open in phases beginning March 2010, and the Jurong General Hospital which will start in temporary facilities at the same time.

The former, which is under the Alexandra Health Group, is the

continuation of the existing Alexandra Hospital in a brand new building in the north of Singapore. It needs an additional 500 staff across the board to run a 550 bed hospital. It has 400 beds at its current premises.

The latter had already recruited 600 staff as at January, but is on the lookout to fill another 900 positions by the end of this year. When it moves into its permanent home with 700 beds in five years' time, it expects its staffing level to reach 3,000.

In the pipeline are also two new 200 bed community hospitals – one by 2013, and the other by 2016. They represent only the first phase of the government plan to add 60% more community hospital beds over the next 10 years.

These hospitals for patients in need of long-term care is how

the country will deal with the "silver tsunami", as the changing demographics of an aging population with an increasing percentage of the elderly has been called. The government target is to have one community hospital bed for every five



acute hospital beds by year 2020 (up from the current 1:8 ratio).

Meanwhile, there is always ongoing recruitment for established public healthcare institutions, which provide 80% of Singapore's tertiary care across the entire spectrum of healthcare services from primary healthcare to secondary and tertiary care.

To facilitate recruitment for the public healthcare sector, MOH Holdings, the holding company for Singapore's public healthcare assets, has been partnering Contact Singapore to attract foreign

Director, Healthcare Manpower Facilitation, MOH Holdings.

Singapore has seven public hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI) – a recognised world leader in health care quality and patient safety. Then, there is an extensive network of polyclinics offering over a hundred clinical specialties and sub-specialties.

As referral and training centres with proven clinical outcomes, our institutions are also a hotbed for many of the breakthroughs that put Singapore at the forefront of the medical world.

to name a few. The hospitals and medical schools also have scope for research.

Singapore is an attractive hub for clinical trials and trial management due to its strong foundation in basic biomedical sciences research and translational clinical research. This, plus the fact that Singapore is a microcosm of Asia, makes it an ideal base to design, develop, test-bed, and launch new healthcare solutions and systems for the regional and global markets.

The vibrant research scene



healthcare professionals to take up career opportunities here.

### Why work in Singapore

Working in Singapore's healthcare sector means working with cutting edge medical and IT technology and following international best practices for the most part. The World Competitiveness Yearbook 2007 ranked the country third in healthcare infrastructure.

"The public healthcare sector in Singapore is vibrant with growing opportunities. It is expanding its capacity and capabilities in healthcare delivery, education and biomedical research so as to deliver cutting edge and world class treatment" said Ms Kelly Hee,

### The X factor

World-class healthcare service providers from Johns Hopkins to the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research and Duke University have set up collaborative centres in Singapore, thereby enriching the medical landscape and opening up unique professional developmental prospects.

Opportunities in clinical research are increasingly available and varied. This is due, in part, to the presence of a growing number of drug discovery companies with research and, in some cases, pharmaceutical and biomedical manufacturing facilities. Among the big names in Singapore are Novartis, Lilly and GlaxoSmithKline,

provides a stimulating environment for healthcare professionals even if they are not actively involved in research. This complements the buzz of the city-state as a place to live.

Despite the thriving biomedical industry, for Singapore to remain at the forefront of excellent healthcare delivery and stay as a medical hub of Asia, a combination of outstanding healthcare infrastructure coupled with the availability of skilled medical professionals is a must. ●

*To find out more about Singapore's public healthcare institutions and career opportunities for healthcare professionals, visit [www.mohh.com.sg](http://www.mohh.com.sg)*

# New Hospital With A Strong Tradition Of Quality Care



stand out rather than its state-of-the-art facilities. It will offer all the major disciplines while continuing to harness technology. Its old premises were in a garden setting and this will also continue with its new location next to a lake and its rooftop garden.

The new hospital, which will have 150 more beds than AH, will require an additional 500 to 600 staff across all disciplines. It is currently hiring local as well as global talent. "We

The Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, part of the Alexandra Health cluster, will kick off its operations in March this year in new premises but it will begin with a corporate culture that already delivers quality care to its patients.

This is due to the fact that it is the continuation of the existing Alexandra Hospital (AH) at a different location. Alexandra, which started off as a British military hospital, has topped the Ministry of Health customer satisfaction survey carried out in all Singapore's restructured (privatised government) hospitals for the last five years, as its staff aim to give a level of care and service good enough for their own mothers, in the words of its Quality Statement.

"This will not change when we move," emphasised Deputy Director of Human Resource, M.K. Fatimah, who also proudly pointed to the innovative spirit and public spiritedness of the hospital over and above the basic tenets of a good hospital.



For example, it pioneered the practice of reconciling a patient's existing medication with new prescriptions to ensure patient safety and at the same time help to reduce the patient's bill. The ministry has now asked all hospitals to incorporate medication reconciliation in their system.

As for public service, the hospital stationed 12 staff on a 14-day rotation in Bandar Aceh in Indonesia for 2 months after it was hit by the tsunami in 2004.

It is values such as these that will make the new 550-bed hospital

welcome talent from around the world and presently have working with us professionals from UK, US, Canada, France India, China and other countries," said Ms Fatimah.

She listed a series of qualities that the ideal candidate should possess, in this order – be caring, competent, comfortable dealing with people, inspire confidence, show mutual respect and be ready for continuous learning.

"Our goal is to be a patient-centric, hassle-free hospital. To a large extent, it depends on our staff," she said. ●

# Changing Patients' Lives

## Zhou Liyan

Nurse Manager,  
Alexandra Hospital



The head of human resources at Alexandra Hospital is very proud of and happy for newly-promoted Nurse Manager Zhou Liyan. "She gets many compliments from our patients who love her," said Deputy Director M.K. Fatimah. But for Liyan, doing her best is all in a day's work.

She says, in her very matter-of-fact way, that nursing in Singapore is a tough job. Yet, she has been content to soldier on for 14 years in the same hospital, taking all the highs and lows in her stride.

She had been working for four years in Shanghai after completing her training as a nurse when Singapore's Ministry of Health (MOH) came calling. "A friend told me about the opportunity and we both signed up. She too is still nursing in Singapore but in a private hospital.

"I came because I was curious and wanted the exposure. At the same time, Singapore is still an Asian country and therefore not so different. This was an important factor because I was very young at the time – I was 23, the youngest of the 16 nurses who took up MOH's offer," she explained.

Today, Liyan, a Chinese national, is a Singapore permanent resident who sponsored her husband to come to work in Singapore. They have one child.

What she likes about nursing in Singapore is that it is systematic and focused on training from the staff perspective, and on patient safety as far as work is concerned. As for working in the new Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, she is looking forward to its high-tech features.

For herself, she has benefited from a year-long, full-time diploma course on gerontology, in addition to on-the-job training and internal courses. She could have applied to do a degree in nursing but chose to do it on her own. She took two years to complete a part-time distance learning programme with an Australian university.

She has not had a problem adjusting to the many languages her patients speak. "So long as we can understand each other, it's OK. I just *rojak* everything," she said, referring to the mix in the local salad of fresh fruit and vegetables in a savoury sauce.

Food, of which *rojak* is her favourite, is one of the attractions of Singapore. She loves the multi-cultural variety that is available everywhere. Another is the weather. "People complain that it is hot here but I love it!" she said. ●

# Leveraging Information Technology For Smart Government

The public has an easy time transacting with the Singapore government due to its enthusiastic embrace of infocomm to provide services electronically. Today, more than 1,600 public services are available online, for the convenience of all who work and live in Singapore.

That is the result of two e-Government Action Plans that built on the foundations laid 25 years ago when the government started automating work functions to reduce paperwork in the civil service.

## Towards integrated government

Currently, Singapore's vision is to go beyond e-government (e-gov) and work towards i-gov or integrated government. While e-gov has scaled the maturity ladder and progressed from simple information publication to interactive, fully transactional e-services and even 3P (public-private-people) services, i-gov promises a public service that works seamlessly behind the scenes to

serve its customers better. The idea is to advance from integrating services to integrating government.

The result of these measures is efficient government while reducing the cost to the public. An example is the recent abolition of factory registration for some 14,000 lower-risk factories. Instead, they need only make an online declaration that they have proper risk controls in their factories before commencing work. Safety is still taken care of through existing inspection regimes while industry saves close to S\$3.5 million in annual fees.

For individuals, cost savings come in the form of time and expenses avoided. Regarding immigration formalities, for example, visitors wishing to extend their stay in Singapore can now apply for this and check the outcome online. Endorsements are no longer required on the passport and applicants no longer need to have local sponsors present at the Visitor Services Centre to support their applications.

It is estimated that savings in terms of transportation and other ancillary costs involved in making the trips to the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, add up to over S\$1 million for the public while saving





the agency another S\$1 million in terms of security expenses, energy consumption and the deployment of officers to handle the applications.

### From the customer's perspective

Further gains have come from integrating public services and seeing things from the customer's perspective. Through the efforts of many agencies coming together to review, simplify and consolidate their many processes and documents, it now takes only 15 minutes to incorporate a company. Previously, a businessman had to visit numerous agencies, fill up multiple forms from a dizzying array of some 94 different types and submit them separately to different agencies.

The equivalent for the individual is the eCitizen portal, which calls itself your gateway to all government services. From the same site, you can book a BBQ pit at a public park, pay for season parking, obtain tourist information and more.

The next step up after the unifying of public services in a portal is for the government to provide an open IT platform that nurtures an ecosystem

of IT services where the private sector can freely innovate and create value-added services side by side or on top of public services.

### The next stage

The shape of such 3P services to come can be seen in the TradeXchange system. An integrated trade and logistics platform, it facilitates the exchange of commercial and regulatory information throughout the entire trade and logistics value chain. It integrates public services, like customs declarations and the application for permits, with private sector offerings such as financial services and insurance to further simplify the nationwide trade permit declaration system and provide the trade and logistics community with a total customer service experience.

To ensure that the public service comes up with more initiatives for integration, the government has adopted the Singapore Government Enterprise Architecture (SGEA), a blueprint to identify potential business areas for inter-agency collaboration. It will also set data and application standards to facilitate sharing of information and systems across agencies, such as the upcoming consolidation of common Finance and Human Resource services to public agencies.

To reap greater efficiencies, infocomm will also be exploited to transform the way public officers work. By 2010, a service-wide Standard ICT Operating Environment

(SOE) will be implemented to make it easier to maintain and roll out new applications to all desktops, and establish a stronger corporate identity.

Besides leveraging infocomm for leaps in productivity as well as to reduce red tape, Singapore aims to use it to engage the public, particularly its citizens. Already, accessing public information, participating in public policy consultations and providing feedback to government can all be done online with ease.

Next on the agenda is separate consultation spaces for Businesses, Youths and Overseas Singaporeans. These spaces will focus on the dialogues, themes and consultations which are of concern and interest to the respective groups. For example, a business does not have to comb through the entire slew of consultation papers to determine if they are relevant to the business. Correspondingly, it will also be easier for public agencies to hear views coming from the different segments.

It would seem that i-gov has won the approval of its customers, the public. According to the latest e-government customer perception survey conducted in early 2006, 85 out of the 86% of customers who had transacted electronically with the government at least once in the past year, were satisfied with the overall quality of e-services delivered. ●



# No Place Like Home

**Chia Wee Boon**  
Chief Operating Officer  
NCS

After spending two years in Silicon Valley, Chia Wee Boon has nothing but praise for his US lifestyle. But he missed the sense of belonging that Singapore gave.

Calling his experience “wonderful for me professionally and for my family”, he explained that his first, and till then, only employer, Hewlett-Packard (HP), had stationed him

politics or business. Above all, he yearned for his three Fs: friends, family and food.

Among friends, he has a soft spot for the informal running group he had been with for the last 10 years. A marathon runner by hobby, he revels in the camaraderie – completely at home with its own insider jokes.

As for family, he owes it to his mother, who is in her 80s, and his wife’s desire to be close to her parents, to return. Then, there is the support of the extended family, all within a 20-minute radius of his home, as opposed to the threesome they were in the States.



in California’s Bay area to work with some of the biggest IT services providers, such as Accenture and Cap Gemini.

Apprehensive to begin with, he found that doing business in the global arena to be not much different from the regional work in Asia Pacific he had been doing. He gained confidence and perspective from the exposure.

He had brought his wife and only child with him. The family had a lifestyle revolution, without a maid but with a lot more time and, with it, a lot more places to explore. “I wouldn’t have exchanged it for anything,” he said flatly.

But he found that he was clamouring for local news, be it

When it comes to food, the foodie who possesses almost every issue of Makansutra, a popular guide to local cuisine, says, “Singapore food is quite unique. You can find good coffee in gourmet coffeeshops in the States, but nothing beats the 80-cent kopitiam coffee. Maybe it’s because I grew up with it.”

So, when he received an offer from NCS to become its Chief Operating Officer six months ago, the personal pull factors combined with the professional to make him leave the States and HP after 26 years’ service. “I have observed there are very few barriers to entry for a Singapore IT services company. I felt it would be a privilege to help NCS make it,” he said. ●

# Folks At Contact Singapore

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## Interview with Tracy Won, Head Marketing Communications



### **What does your job cover?**

I head a dynamic marketing communications team. Our key responsibility is to tell global talent about Singapore and the opportunities available here in our growth industries.

### **How does Contact Singapore (CS) leverage new media?**

In the past year, the team has built up several talent engagement tools so that talent can approach us on different platforms to find out more about working and living in Singapore.

Some of these include CS's Facebook pages for the various geographies such as Singapore, Southeast Asia, US and UK; our group on Kaixin001 for our Chinese friends; and Orkut for our Indian friends. We have also set up an active group on Linked-In where members get updates on industry news and job opportunities in Singapore.

I encourage interested talent to join these communities – they are a good way to get feelers

on what it's like working and living in Singapore

### **What else can we look forward to?**

The year ahead is going to be an exciting one for us. Besides the new developments in Singapore – opening of Universal Studios, the Asian Youth Games, the third Formula One Night Race to name a few – CS is also launching new platforms to stay in touch with global talent easily.

One of these would be the new Contact Singapore website which has been thoroughly revamped to suit your information needs whether you are a graduating student, newly minted working professional or an experienced working professional.

Another new platform coming up by early March would be the revamped job portal. For talent who are keen to work in Singapore, this would be a great resource for you to seek employers and jobs which are urgently seeking talented individuals. Do log on then to seek for your dream job! ●



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