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Creating an innovation mindset: Open innovation

1. Introduction

When organisations launch innovation initiatives, they often devote and focus most of their time, energy and attention on hunting for the breakthrough idea. However, the real innovation challenge lies beyond the idea. Organisations need to let go of the belief that innovation is about being first, instead, they should first look into creating the “right climate” for their employees to cultivate the innovation mindset.

2. What is an innovation mindset?

A mindset is “a belief in one’s self, one’s own abilities and capabilities”. An innovation mindset starts with a growth mindset – “a belief that their abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work”; but at the same time it is also consumer centric and oriented towards creating value. Innovators want to grow, provide value by creating solutions for things consumers need and creating new value by providing useful things consumers did not even know they wanted. The creative and innovative mindset is enhanced through four behaviours: changing one’s perspectives, taking risks, finding one’s passion, and challenging assumptions and embracing ambiguity.

3. How to create an innovation mindset?

Cultivating an innovation mindset involves thinking differently, acting differently and achieving extraordinary success. Here are some specific actions that organisations can undertake to help them develop the mind set, skill set and tool set for innovation leadership.

- Create a mandate for change, backed by a strategy that embraces innovation.
- Model what it will take individually and collectively for the organisation to become more innovative. It is particularly important for senior leaders to “walk the talk”. Make managing the

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tension between business thinking and innovative thinking a priority.

- Communicate challenging strategic issues throughout the organisation. Use them as vehicles for promoting collaboration and seeking creative ideas.
- Create highly diverse teams to address strategic issues. Help them overcome differences so that diversity becomes a source of novel ideas.
- Give people access to creative methods and experiences. Even those with creative potential get stuck. Readily available tools, methods and experiences help them reframe and think differently about challenges and opportunities.
- Design and build systems to nurture innovation. Look for low-cost ways to test and prototype new solutions.
- Champion ideas that do not quite fit and network with your peers to find a home for them. Actively break down barriers to innovation, including internal politics, and destructive criticism, as well as hurdles, gates and other unnecessary systems.

A deliberate focus on innovation on the part of leaders is critical for organisational growth and development. It helps to drive the quantifiable gain and qualitative value that are vital to keeping an organisation's stakeholders happy. To truly lead innovation, pay special attention to the following items:

- **Catalytic mechanisms**
Look for ways to create simple and effective ways to reinforce the message that innovation is important. Speak in compelling and simple ways that motivate people.
- **Culture that supports innovation**
Culture can kill strategy, so pay constant attention to ways you can build and maintain a culture of innovation. It is vital if you want to ensure that your strategy has a chance of survival
- **People with the right mindset**
Having the right tools and developing the right skills without the right mindset is like having a high-performance automobile without gasoline.

Leaders must be role models and encourage people to develop their ability to defer judgment, tolerate ambiguity and be genuinely curious. Otherwise, everything else on the innovation agenda will sputter to a stop on the side of the road.

- **Enabling processes and systems**
To break down the organisational barriers to innovation, ensure that people have appropriate governance, funding, resources, support and access to decision-makers.
- **Room to run with ideas**
Innovation rarely works according to plan. It flourishes only in a culture where it's possible for people to try, make mistakes and learn from what happens.
- **A culture of telling "what," rather than "how"**
Finally, remember that the leader's job is not to tell people how to do things, nor is it to have all the great ideas. Nothing kills innovation more than the "know-it-all leader." Ensure that you model appropriate humility, offer up your best challenge and then get out of the way to let people amaze you with novel, useful and potentially valuable solutions.

4. What is open innovation?

Open innovation (OI) is defined by [Henry Chesbrough](#) as "the use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation, and expand the markets for external use of innovation, respectively. This paradigm assumes that organisations can and should use external ideas as well as internal ideas, and internal and external paths to market as they look to advance their technology."

The essence of open innovation is "innovating with partners by sharing the risks and the rewards". Organisations go beyond their internal boundaries when designing and developing some of their R&D and innovation projects. Through combining internal and external knowledge and skills appropriately, these organisations are open to share ideas with a number of collaborating stakeholders such as the consumers, users, employees, other organisations, research institutions, etc. Co-operation built in such a collaborative manner will improve the results of shared projects, as well as enable a better distribution of risks among those participating.

5. The benefits of open innovation

Open innovation is a strategy by which organisations allow a flow of knowledge across their boundaries as they look for ways to enhance their innovation capability. Organisation boundaries become 'permeable', enabling the matching and integration of resources between the company and external collaborators.

In a closed approach to innovation, organisations rely on internal resources only. However, open innovation enables the matching and integration of resources between the company and external collaborators. It allows many people from different disciplines to tackle the same problem simultaneously and not just sequentially. Anyone can participate with collaborative technology and OI training. When many minds are working on the same problem, it will take less time to solve it and, besides, the solutions found are better.

Some of the other benefits of open innovation are:

- Reduced cost of conducting R&D.
- Potential for improvement in development productivity.
- Incorporation of customers early in the development process.
- Increase in accuracy for market research and customer targeting.
- Potential for viral marketing.
- Ability to share the wealth and efficiency in resource allocation.
- Ability to extend potential for growth via alliances and/or attraction of funding.

6. Implementing open innovation

There are four main issues that organisations have to tackle when implementing OI: OI culture, OI procedures, OI skills and OI motivation.

- OI culture
Cultural change is a major issue in the implementation of OI. Adopting OI "may well

mean doing things differently, sometimes in direct contradiction to behaviour that was allowed and endorsed in the past”.

It is important for organisations to note that the shift towards an open approach to innovation requires the direct involvement of top management. This often translates into “a shift of culture, whereby working with other companies become accepted and endorsed throughout the organisation”.

- OI procedures

What procedures enable OI? Many have been observed. For example, moving people about within an organisation strengthens internal networks and increases cross-functional working. This is an extremely important factor for complex organisations where it is difficult for individuals to understand and contribute to the different aspects of the business. Increasing cross-functional connections also gives people access to the contacts and networks of their colleagues.

Independent OI teams working within the traditional company configuration are a very popular choice for OI implementation. These teams typically include people from R&D, marketing, supply chain management (procurement) and the legal department. Choosing the appropriate structure is another important step towards an open approach to innovation. Additionally, establishing some infrastructure and tools to support OI is also important.

- OI skills

There is no ‘perfect’ blend of skills to enable OI. However the lack of an appropriate skills blend is seen as an obstacle to its implementation. This suggests that training is essential, rather than merely desirable, when preparing the company for open innovation.

- OI motivation

As culture is an important element for supporting change, it is interesting to consider what incentives can be put in place to encourage people to adopt open practices.

6.1. How to build an innovation culture

Nobody knows if it is possible to plan cultural change since it is difficult, if not impossible, to demonstrate the effectiveness of such change. Culture also “exists at different levels, and changing the deepest levels (the basic underlying assumptions) is very hard and takes a long time”.

Identify and highlight those cultural features, at the shallowest level of company culture, that encourage interaction with the external environment for the purposes of innovation. Changing these shallow features is easier than changing the deeper cultural levels. It is worth noting that changes can be directed from the top only when a single culture already exists and cultural norms can be changed. Top-down approaches are generally short-lived because they tend to produce over-compliance rather than acceptance.

Cultural archetypes

There are four main archetypes or organisational culture, as summarised in the following table. These four kinds of cultures “have different characteristics” and are “typified by certain organisational structures”. Groups of companies with a predominant achievement and support culture might be expected to be more suited to the adoption of OI.

Culture type	Description	Organisational structure	Internal control	Reaction to external contingencies	Most effective control methods
Role	Based on regulation, bureaucracy and logic. Characterised by job descriptions, rules, procedures. Emphasis on conformity to expectation.	'Greek temple' or hierarchy where each function (e.g. Finance) is a pillar, controlled by a small group of senior executives (the temple roof)	Hierarchical control via impersonal regulations	Closure Separation	Regulative methods
Power	Regulated by a central power radiating throughout the organisation. Culture is dependent on politics, trust, empathy, and personal magnetism.	Web or pyramid	Hierarchical control via direction and supervision	Conquest Confrontation	
Achievement	Flexibility, adaptability and dynamism characterise this culture. Power resides with expertise. People are interested in the work itself and want to see it completed.	Organisations that focus on specific projects or tasks Matrix or market structure	Self-control, personal accountability for delegated achievements	Problem-solving Compromise	Appreciative methods
Support	Individuals feel they have a personal stake in the organisation. Assumes that people contribute out of a sense of commitment and belonging. Satisfaction comes from relationships, mutuality, belonging and connection.	Cluster or clan, with no dominant individual or group	Collaborative control with mutual accountability	Dynamic connectedness Transformation	

Source: How to implement open innovation: Lessons from studying large multinational companies. (2009). *University of Cambridge Institute for Manufacturing*. Retrieved December 3, 2013, from http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Resources/Reports/OI_Report.pdf

6.2 How to set up open innovation procedures

The OI implementation team

The dedicated OI implementation team is usually formed from R&D managers, "who have a strong technical background and business mind set, coupled with a deep understanding of the company". They are enthusiastic about embracing OI and provide support for the organisation's interactions with the outside world. They also "provide links between company groups and facilitate access to tools, skills and resources". In most organisations, the principal role of the implementation team is to help R&D units to "become more open". They also generally design the OI implementation rollout.

The role of the OI team varies according to the culture and perspective of the company group they are dealing with. In general, the OI team provides

links between functions, internal knowledge sharing platforms and relevant pool of skills.

6.3 How to acquire open innovation skills

Skills for OI

It is rare for one person to possess all the ideal skills for OI. Instead, relevant skills can be pulled together by creating cross-functional teams to which different members contribute all the required attributes. One skill that is possible and advantageous for all team members to have is knowing where to go for the skills required. Team members need to be aware of who possesses which skills, and how to outsource them. The OI unit should be responsible for bringing different skills together and for providing training to fill gaps or improve certain skills.

Skills fall into four categories:

- **Introspective skills**
Enable organisations to assess internal gaps and opportunities.
- **Extrospective skills**
Allow companies to review external capabilities and opportunities and to understand the viewpoint of other organisations.
- **Interactive skills**
Communication skills that convey the value of any relationship with the external world to both internal and external participants.
- **Technical skills**
Include all technological, marketing, financial, commercial, management and business skills and tools needed to support the three categories mentioned above.

A framework for training and skills

Delivery of training and skills is often made easier by a clear framework that clarifies what OI is and what it implies. One of the most popular choices is the [Want-Find-Get-Manage \(WFGM\)](#) process. Although not the only possible solution, this simple process clarifies communication and enables differentiation of the stages through which each project passes.

Want = Define what we want and how we can innovate

Find = Find technologies and partners and understand them

Get = Negotiate the agreement with the external partner

Manage = Manage the relationship throughout the collaboration

Training is made easier and confusion is avoided by relating specific examples to the phases. The following table relates different skills and training to the WFGM framework. Each set of questions could be used to guide the creation of teaching materials and learning objectives for a tailored training course.

Knowledge of the company is also a valuable asset. Moving employees around to acquire experience of different functions can also improve the intensity of internal networks and increases cross-functional working.

	Want	Find	Get	Manage
Introspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would my organisation innovate in? What wouldn't fit the innovation processes? What are the current innovation processes? Who are the people involved in innovation in my organisation? Where can I find information? Are there tools in my company to support innovation? Are there people in other functions who could support us? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who could have already acquired information on external ideas? Where can I find internal repositories and tools for discovering new options in technology and the market? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would this deal mean for our organisation? What does the proposed partnership mean for our organisation in strategic and financial terms? Are there legal implications for us? Are there people/tools to help in negotiating deals? What are the 'preferred ways' for our organisation to deal with external partners (e.g. licensing in, co-operating in long term research projects)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the problems for our party in respecting the agreement?
Extrospective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for external trends in market and technology (tools and techniques to review the state of the art) What ideas seem to work in current and future scenarios? Are there gaps that could offer an opportunity for our company? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to scan for new opportunities in technology and marketing How do I learn more about interesting developments? How can I evaluate who will be a 'good partner'? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would this deal mean for the other organisation? What does the proposed partnership mean in strategic and financial terms? How to understand the other people's motivation and drivers from their behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the problems for our side in respecting the agreements? Who is responsible in that centre?
Interactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to contribute to other colleagues' innovation processes How to develop creative ideas with others in your organisation, bringing together market and technological aspects How to communicate our ideas to the rest of the organisation (e.g. writing a proposal, business idea) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to acquire the necessary information during social activity (e.g. at a conference, meeting) How to communicate the value of the scouting findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to negotiate How to communicate with the other party How to communicate the value of the deal to the rest of our organisation and gain support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and relationship management
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing business cases for new ideas Strategic insight Market insight Technical Insight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scouting briefs preparation Scouting for identified needs Preparing scouting reports to highlight the value of the scouting finding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What legal knowledge is required for each type of deal? How to manage IP Financial valuation tools Business models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio and project management Public relations Problem solving

Source: How to implement open innovation: Lessons from studying large multinational companies. (2009). University of Cambridge Institute for Manufacturing. Retrieved December 3, 2013, from http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Resources/Reports/OI_Report.pdf

6.4 How to motivate employees

Overcoming the NIH syndrome

The [not-invented-here](#) (NIH) syndrome is found to generate strong resistance to open innovation. NIH is defined as “over-emphasis on internal technologies, ideas or knowledge”, i.e., people who do not value ideas or technologies that are not generated from within their own organisation.

People can be suspicious of anything coming from external sources due to previous negative experiences, lack of experience or motivation, or an incentive system that focuses on and strongly rewards internal technological development. NIH can also be the result of people seeking greater security or wanting a more positive individual or organisational identity. NIH syndrome often results in poor evaluations and neglect of external opportunities and exaggeration of the potential of internally developed ideas.

The distrust of external assistance can be reversed by setting a good example and demonstrating that other people’s technologies, opportunities and ideas have real potential and practical benefit. Involving people in the decision-making process and informing and integrating them early are some of the effective ways of fighting NIH syndrome.

There are two main methods of motivating employees, regulative and appreciative. The first is based on rules and the second on appreciating certain behaviours. The following table examines the pros and cons of each.

Regulative methods	Appreciative methods
<p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance is measured. Measures must be 'people-proof' and targets difficult, with rewards tied to them 	<p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High sense of total accountability that precludes game playing. Large flow of information
<p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no such thing as 'people-proof' measures. People use numbers to cover their back; loss of valid information and unwillingness to take risks 	<p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little control over subordinates; goals are difficult to access; low-growth-need employees will not respond; risk of losing track
<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predetermined plan – management seeks to impose it • Management is seen to be focused on goals • Narrow, specialised purpose is emphasised • Management relies on techniques and extrinsic motivation • Development is seen to require more sophisticated techniques and greater rationality 	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situations are met as they arise. Management is a mutual adjustment between organisation and situation • Management is seen as a process focused on maintaining balance in a field of relationships • General values or norms inform behaviour • The source of control is seen to be within people; intrinsic motivation • Development is seen as a process of increasing understanding of the context, extent and depth of the situation

Source: How to implement open innovation: Lessons from studying large multinational companies. (2009). *University of Cambridge Institute for Manufacturing*. Retrieved December 3, 2013, from http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Resources/Reports/OI_Report.pdf

Reward systems and career paths

In general, an organisation's approach to rewarding, promoting and motivating is "based on closed innovation practices". For example, people are usually judged (and promoted) on the basis of how many patents they file. In the same 'closed' mind set, going round establishing networks and collaboration leads can be seen as having a 'jolly good time' while others are 'working hard'.

Generally, making employees feel part of a group is a positive motivator towards accepting OI approaches. Try to present OI as a 'cool' and positive development, not threatening or likely to complicate people's working lives. The OI team's role should be seen to improve people's work and performance rather than making things more difficult.

Organisations can introduce examples of success stories that help to answer the question, 'What's in it for me?' At the same time, they should also be aware that there may be conflict between OI-adopters and non-adopters.

Case Study

Quilts of Denmark

Quilts of Denmark is a small international Danish company. Founded in 2000 and operating in more than 30 countries, Quilts of Denmark produces high quality, functional bedding.

The company has engaged in open innovation from the start, to help it come up with new concepts at low cost that bring far reaching benefits to consumers and to itself. The company's quilts are based on "deep research and extensive knowledge provided by sleep researchers". Typically, their studies are focussed on comfort and this feeds back into their concept and design stages.

In their search for new ideas, Quilts of Denmark wanted to produce functional down quilts that would "actively help people with insomnia to get a good night's sleep". The company knew that comfort is only one of the important issues, and there are other factors such as temperature regulation during the middle of the night. Its employees got down to work to develop a technology that could regulate the temperature in quilts. However, their attempts were unsuccessful. Due to the inability to come up with the solutions themselves, they looked outside the company headquarters for expertise.

One of the employees had read in a few scientific magazines that the space agency, NASA, had solved the problem of temperature regulation with a pioneering technology called TempraKon® that was developed for spacesuits. The company successfully managed to touch base with NASA to see if they would be willing to share their knowledge. However, they later found that the technology invented by NASA could not be directly applied to their bedding products as it was too stiff and the requirement was for something softer. Nevertheless, after a lengthy development process with a company that bought the rights to use TempraKon® on home insulation material, the technology was successfully refined and modified for use in quilts. The result was temperature regulating pillows and quilts that have revolutionised the market. The TempraKON® quilt is filled with a soft down, that in the company's own words, "breathes moisture and sweat away," and therefore absorbs and releases heat while people are sleeping. The material consists of microscopic spheres filled with wax that are able to absorb heat as temperatures rise, store it and then release it when the temperature falls.

Finding answers from external sources through open innovation has proven to be extremely advantageous for Quilts of Denmark on a number of counts:

- Open innovation has greatly reduced the company's development costs as it is able to share these with external partners.
- Working with open innovation has drastically reduced development time as employees are able to work in more projects at the same time.
- Open innovation has helped the company to introduce new product ideas to the market.
- Open innovation has given a small company like Quilts of Denmark a much bigger global presence, enabling it to enjoy many of the advantages of a big company.
- Open innovation has engaged employees to work with external sources to create more innovative products.

For its forward thinking approach, Quilts of Denmark was hailed as the country's most innovative company in 2007 and awarded The Innovation Cup in the small company category (fewer than 100 employees).

Recommended Readings

Articles can be retrieved from
NLB's e-Resources –
<http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg>

Books are available at the Lee
Kong Chian Reference Library.

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Date	Module	Time
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Friday, 10 January 2014	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 13 January 2014	Module 2	9-5 pm
Thursday, 16 January 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 21 January 2014	Module 3	9-5 pm
Friday, 24 January 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 28 January 2014		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 29 January 2014	Module 4	9-5 pm

February 2014		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 5 February 2014	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 7 February 2014	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 10 February 2014	Module 2	9-5 pm
Thursday, 13 February 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 18 February 2014	Module 3	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 19 February 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 25 February 2014		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 26 February 2014	Module 4	9-5 pm

March 2014		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 5 March 2014	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 7 March 2014	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 10 March 2014	Module 2	9-5 pm
Thursday, 14 March 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 18 March 2014	Module 3	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 19 March 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 25 March 2014		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 26 March 2014	Module 4	9-5 pm

Retail:

January 2014		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 8 January 2014	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 10 January 2014	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 13 January 2014	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 15 January 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 21 January 2014	Module 3	9-5 pm
Thursday, 23 January 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 28 January 2014		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 29 January 2014	Module 4	9-5 pm

February 2014		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 5 February 2014	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 7 February 2014	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 10 February 2014	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 12 February 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 18 February 2014	Module 3	9-5 pm
Thursday, 20 February 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 25 February 2014		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 26 February 2014	Module 4	9-5 pm

March 2014		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 5 March 2014	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 7 March 2014	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 10 March 2014	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 12 March 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 18 March 2014	Module 3	9-5 pm
Thursday, 20 March 2014		9-5 pm
Tuesday, 25 March 2014		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 26 March 2014	Module 4	9-5 pm

Generic:

January 2014		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 8 January 2014	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 10 January 2014	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 13 January 2014	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 15 January 2014		9-5 pm
Monday, 20 January 2014	Module 2 & 3	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 22 January 2014	Module 3	9-5 pm
Monday, 27 January 2014		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 29 January 2014	Module 4	9-5 pm

February 2014		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 5 February 2014	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 7 February 2014	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 10 February 2014	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 12 February 2014		9-5 pm
Monday, 17 February 2014	Module 2 & 3	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 19 February 2014	Module 3	9-5 pm
Monday, 24 February 2014		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 26 February 2014	Module 4	9-5 pm

March 2014		
Date	Module	Time
Wednesday, 5 March 2014	Module 1	9-5 pm
Friday, 7 March 2014	Module 1 & 2	9-5 pm
Monday, 10 March 2014	Module 2	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 12 March 2014		9-5 pm
Monday, 17 March 2014	Module 2 & 3	9-5 pm
Wednesday, 19 March 2014	Module 3	9-5 pm
Monday, 24 March 2014		9-5 pm
Wednesday, 26 March 2014	Module 4	9-5 pm

Core Faculty Members

MR. LAM CHUN SEE

B. ENG IN INDUSTRIAL & SYSTEMS ENGINEERING (UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE)

Chun see manages his own consultancy practice, Hoshin Consulting and is also an associate consultant/trainer to the PSB Corporation and Singapore Productivity Association. Prior to running his own practice, he has had years of experience as an industrial engineer with Philips, and trainer and consultant with the then National Productivity Board, APG Consulting and Teian Consulting. He was conferred the Triple-A Award in 1989 for helping to transfer Japanese know-how, particularly in the area of 5S, into local programmes and packages. Throughout his years of consultancy experience, Chun See has assisted many businesses in analyzing their productivity and quality objectives and performance; primarily through the application of the PDCA technique and basic QC tools.

MR. LEE KOK SEONG

M.SC. IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING (IMPERIAL COLLEGE, LONDON UNIVERSITY), B.SC. IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING (NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY)

Kok Seong has accumulated vast experience in the areas of productivity training and management consultancy throughout his 30 years of experience with the Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING). He has provided consultancy assistance and training for numerous organisations both within and outside of Singapore in the areas of Productivity Management, Operation and Production Management, total Quality Management, Total Productive Maintenance, Shopfloor Management, Occupational Safety Management, Industrial Engineering Applications and Supervisory Management. He has also been greatly involved in the pinnacle Singapore Quality Award (SQA) initiative since its inception in 1993. His track records include the assessments and site visits of award recipients like Micron Semiconductor (formerly Texas Instruments), Motorola, Baxter Healthcare, Philips Tuner Factory and Teck Wah Industrial Corporation Ltd. Mr. Lee is currently a certified SQA Senior Assessor, as well as a resource person for Basic and

Advanced Training Courses for Productivity Practitioners, a position he has taken on since 2007.

MR. LOW CHOO TUCK

M.SC. IN INDUSTRIAL ADMINISTRATION (UNIVERSITY OF ASTON, UK); B.SC. IN PHYSICS (NUS); DIP IN QUALITY CONTROL INSTRUCTORS (INTERNATIONAL QUALITY CENTRE, NETHERLANDS); CERTIFICATE IN PRODUCTIVITY DEVELOPMENT (JAPAN PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE); CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT (INSEASD)

Choo Tuck currently provides training and advisory services in productivity and quality management to businesses and government in the Asean region and Middle East. He was previously the Executive Director of the Restaurant Association of Singapore as well as the Singapore Productivity Association, and was also the Director for Strategic Planning in SPRING Singapore. During his many years of service with SPRING Singapore, he gained wide experience in productivity training, management consultancy and productivity promotion, and has helped more than a 100 businesses in improving productivity, quality control and business excellence, including organisations such as Cycle & Carriage, Motorola, PUB and DBS. On top of that, he has also served as an Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) expert on Productivity for several APO member countries, and was part of a team of experts engaged by the Singapore cooperation Enterprise to provide productivity expertise to the Government of Bahrain in 2007 and 2008.

MR. QUEK AIK TENG

B.ENG (HON.) IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING (UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD); DIP. IN BUSINESS EFFICIENCY (INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING_ (PSB-ACADEMY); CERTIFIED MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT (CMC); PRACTISING MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT (PMC); MEMBER, INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS (IMC) SINGAPORE

Aik Teng currently manages his own consultancy, AT Consulting Services. One of his most recent projects includes being the LEAD Project Manager for the Singapore Logistics Association. Prior to running his own consultancy, he has been with SPRING Singapore for 20 years, and was the Head of the Organisation Excellence Department from 2004-05. He was also

SQA Lead Assessor and Team Leader up till 2008 and has been involved in the SQA initiative since its inception in 1993. tasked to start up the consultancy unit within the then Productivity & Standards Board (PSB) to provide training and consultancy services to organisations, his consulting team assisted close to 30 organisations during that period. He was also involved in a project coordinated by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) to assist the Bahrain Labour Fund in their Labour Reform strategy, which included helping the Bahrain government to initiate a Productivity Movement as well as develop the productivity of the local enterprises. In addition, he was appointed as Project Manager to assist the Government of Botswana to implement a national Productivity Movement, from 1994 to 2003. Botswana is currently held as a model of Productivity in the Pan-Africa region.

MR. WONG KAI HONG

MBA IN STRATEGIC MARKETING (HULL), BSC (NUS)

Kai Hong is a business consultant, management trainer and company director. He has spent almost 2 decades in the consumer products industry, having worked with retailers like Isetan, Metro, Royal Sporting House, The Athlete's Foot and Sunglass Hut; brands like Reebok and Doc Martens; and technology group Wearnes Technology. He has been involved with various functions including operations, business development, project management, human resource, training, marketing, logistics, budgeting and general management. He has developed businesses in Singapore and many Asian cities such as Seoul and Beijing.

For registration or more information, write to us at

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Alternatively, you could also contact our secretariat:

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