

Training And Technology In A Cheaper Better Faster Economy



CIEU

The Chemical Industries Employees' Union was formed 1981, after the restructuring of the Singapore Industrial Labour Organisation and the Pioneer Industries Employees' Union. It now has 15,000 members in over 90 companies dealing with plastic, glass, paint, gas pharmaceuticals and biomedical.



By **Muneerah Bee Mohamed Iqbal**

The road to being Cheaper Better Faster requires resources in order to succeed. The Chemical Industries Employees' Union knows this and it is reaching out to managements to aid them on this journey.

Working with NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), the union has been approaching its branches to consider ways they can be Cheaper Better Faster. The Industrial Relations Officers will explain the funding mechanisms available for them to seize the opportunity to start projects which had been held back due to cost.

Perstorp Singapore was the first company that was given funding approval from e2i for their re-organisation project, where the Meta-Xylene and Purified Isophthalic Acid processes are merged into one seamless process.

CIEU President Rajendran s/o Govindarajoo explained: "Previously they were running two processes. Workers also went through cross training to build capacities to operate both processes. This is aimed to get a faster response time to meet demand at a lower cost and increase productivity by 4.4 per cent by 2010."

Forty-one production technicians and



three managers who went through the cross operational and leadership training also received one-off bonus when they complete the cross training.

The effort has improved the efficiency of plant operation and flexibility of manpower sharing and empower workers with greater area of responsibility, making Perstorp a cheaper, leaner and more flexible organisation. CIEU is currently engaging 15 other companies to explore possible ways for them to be Cheaper Better Faster.

Looking back during the downturn, the chemical industry experienced a drop in production due to a decreased sales demand. Some companies utilised the time available and the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR) funding to send their workers

for training such as Nitec in Chemical Process Technology.

As the economy improves, companies are rushing for production and there is less time for training. Mr Rajendran said: "We've been encouraging the workers to go for training on their free time now but it's been rather unsuccessful. Some workers prefer to do more overtime work. We will still push to have more time for training. For example, this year we are trying to work with paint companies to see if we can tailor make courses they want."

With such training and technological initiatives, the union hopes more of its branches will come on board the Cheaper Better Faster wagon to propel the productivity and competitiveness of the chemical sectors.

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Information is correct as of 1 February 2010.

