

# OTC Institute Helps Unions Go Cheaper Better Faster



By **Roy Ng**

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**A**fter avoiding record retrenchment and record unemployment last year when the world was deeply seated in a global economic downturn, the Labour Movement is going on the offensive this year. From upturning the downturn, we are going Cheaper Better Faster. This transformation is critical to ensure continuous growth and prosperity for Singapore in an even more competitive global business environment. In support of this key Labour Movement initiative, the Ong Teng Cheong Labour Leadership Institute, in collaboration with NTUC Union Centric Secretariat and Industrial Relations Department, has introduced a one-day “Cheaper Better Faster Workshop For Union Leaders”. This workshop teaches union leaders how to gear up towards a CBF economy.

Incorporating the cheese metaphor from the bestseller, “Who Moved My Cheese”, as important aspects of change management throughout the workshop, the overall concept of Cheaper Better Faster to boost productivity is taught to the participants. Additionally, the workshop also delves into the importance of Cheaper Better Faster for Singapore economy’s competitiveness in the future, examples of good Cheaper Better Faster practices, availability



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of tools to support Cheaper Better Faster initiatives at the company level and role of the union leaders in working with the management and workers to drive a Cheaper Better Faster economy.

The Singapore Bank Employees’ Union is the first union to embark on this series with 54 branch officials participating on 5 February 2010. SBEU President Michael Lim, who attended the workshop, said: “The workshop provides all union leaders with an insight into the CBF economy. The content of the seminar is well-covered. It is an eye opener for union leaders to have a better grasp of what Cheaper Better Faster is about – its definition, how it impacts on Singapore, employers, workers and companies, etc. It was a very useful lesson and learning experience for everyone!”

SBEU Deputy General Secretary Susie Foo added; “In our industry, banks are under constant

pressure to be more efficient in meeting customers’ needs. The existing workforce needs to be more productive, flexible and better skilled to cope with this demand to remain employable. This Cheaper Better Faster workshop equips our leaders with the essential understanding and appreciation to rally the ground to embrace the change, acquire new skills and be prepared to do more with the same.”

So far, eight unions will be participating in 16 customised workshops in months ahead – Building Construction and Timber Industries Employees’ Union; Chemical Industries Employees’ Union; Food, Drinks and Allied Workers’ Union; National Transport Workers’ Union; Singapore Industrial & Services Employees’ Union; Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Employees’ Union; The Singapore Manual & Mercantile Workers’ Union and Union of Power and Gas Employees.

Unions without a sufficient number to form their own classes can send their leaders for the public runs. As the Labour Movement creates growth our Cheaper Better Faster way through Total Productivity, Pervasive Innovation and Inclusive Workforce, OTC Institute welcomes all unions to come onboard this discovery journey with us.

## New Spice For A New Season



By

**Muneerah Bee Mohamed Iqbal**

**G**uests at the Cheaper Better Faster seminar by the Metal Industries Workers’ Union on 4 February 2010 received a pair of salt and pepper shakers at the door, signifying the theme of the event. Titled “Cheaper Better Faster... The New Spice”, the seminar was an exchange session for MIWU branches to have a better understanding of the CBF drive.

Leaving the downturn behind, the union was eager to look towards the upturn and the seminar was a kick-start to a series of events

that the union had planned to help companies be Cheaper Better Faster. For example, a CBF Committee will be established within the union and its branches. MIWU Executive Secretary Jessie Yeo said: “We are suggesting having joint union-management committees to discuss any productivity improvements that needs to be launched. If possible, we want to reach out to every branch to set up a CBF Committee.”

Three MIWU branches, Makino Asia Pte Ltd, Seiko Instruments Singapore and Diethelm Keller Aviation, shared their CBF efforts at the seminar. By sharing their quality culture with the participants, they showed that although productivity is not an entirely new concept to

most companies, it needs to be looked at in a new light in order to yield new results -just like getting more flavour by adding spice to a dish.

The union also extended an appreciation dinner to thank its guests and tripartite partners for their strong support during the recession. MIWU’s Council Advisor Masagos Zulkifli Masagos Mohamad graced the dinner as the guest-of-honour.

### Sustainable Support

“**By sharing the initiatives taken by various branches today, we want our management partners to know that we are here to support the company for them to be sustainable.**”

Toh Hock Poh, Metal Industries Workers’ Union President

### A Step Ahead Of New Competitors

“**Today we are competing with India and China, which are flooded with multi-national companies. From almost zero knowledge over a 10-year period, they now have all kinds of technology that is capable of doing whatever we can do. So we have to be one step ahead to be able to compete with them by being Cheaper Better Faster.**”

Dr Moh Chong Tau, Makino Asia President and Chief Executive Officer



Chin Boon Lian

Metal Industries Workers’ Union Executive Secretary Jessie Yeo, addressing tripartite partners at the Cheaper Better Faster Seminar.