



The On-Site Bite-Size Team... (From Left) Angeline Wee, Safrah M Eusoof, Hong Yue Ying, Hannah Guok and Josephine Ng.

A Toast To Innovation

training programme brought training, packaged in concise modules, right to retail sites like shopping malls.

Since the pilot project was rolled out in 2008, about 350 workers have been trained from a span of 91 companies in 13 malls.

Singapore Industrial and Services Employees' Union had also played a role by extending its efforts to secure management partners' commitment on this project.

By
Naseema Banu Maideen

They dared to think out of the box. They toyed with new ideas and improved on conventional training models. And with all these, they succeeded in bringing about change for workers – through the On-Site-Bite-Size training programme.

These were the efforts that had the team made up of NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and Singapore Workforce Development Agency clinching the Best PS21 Project Bronze Award at the PS21 ExCEL Convention 2009.

The PS21 ExCEL Convention is an annual event that marks and celebrates public agencies' achievements and progress in improvement, learning, creativity and innovation. This year's convention held on 2 November

2009, was themed, "Be The Agent Of Change."

Indeed, the OSBS training programme had in many ways, brought change to both businesses and workers.

This brainchild of NTUC's e2i broke the barrier of long hours that are tied to conventional training sessions which largely hampered workers in retail sectors from attending them.

For front-line workers in retail sectors, staying away from the counters for hours will translate into a loss of business, especially when employers are short of manpower. Does that then mean these workers remain deprived of training?

NTUC's e2i's collaboration with WDA tore down these barriers.

The unique delivery model of the OSBS

A Promising Model

“When NTUC's e2i first mooted the idea to us, we felt it would work well on the ground. These workers at the malls are largely left out from training. Internally, we then brainstormed on the possible Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification certification programmes that are relevant for these front-line staff. We decided on the Provide GEMS Service programme and also modified the delivery model. We had to tweak the curriculum to make it bite-size. Another unique part in this delivery method is that trainers move around to the malls to access trainees directly while at work. We also worked with management to provide the highest amount of funding for this project. The Singapore Workforce Development Agency is now also looking into expanding this delivery model to workers in manufacturing sectors and in the heartlands.”

Safrah M Eusoof, Singapore Workforce Development Agency (Generic Skills Development Division) Assistant Director

Demand For Creative Solutions

“This training delivery model was based on feedback from retail employers and employees. Our pilot project was met with good response and we wasted no time in approaching the Singapore Workforce Development Agency for Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification certification on this programme. The OSBS training programme comes under the Provide GEMS Service which qualifies for SPUR (Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience) funding, and companies can benefit from absentee payroll. Working together with SISEU, our efforts involved bringing together shopping mall operators and training providers. With our success stories, e2i is working to bring the OSBS training delivery model to other courses such as the Employability Skills System.”

Hannah Guok, NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) Deputy Director