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BSI Gets \$3 Million Boost



BSI Learning Journey to PAP Holland-Bukit Panjang Town Council to learn their best practices.

National Trades Union Congress wants every worker in Singapore to become more productive, more capable and more adaptable, and Singapore Workforce Development Agency's injection of an additional \$3 million funding to the Best Sourcing Initiative Early Adopters Scheme will further enhance the Labour Movement's pursuit.

At the Best Sourcing Initiative Symposium on 5 November 2009, NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say said in achieving this target, the Labour Movement also wants to do it in a more inclusive way.

"The BSI is our response for workers in low-productivity sectors. They have suffered with low job worth, low productivity, low skills and as a result, low wages. We are determined to embrace them into a 'Cheaper Better Faster' sector of the future and BSI is the way to go as it is pro-business, enabling companies and industry players to compete based on better capabilities and not on low cost;

pro-worker because it will enable workers to enhance their productivity, upgrade their skills, have better motivation and in the process, be rewarded better. It is also pro-customer as it provides quality service as compared to cheap sourcing," said SG Lim.

The BSI Symposium saw some 500 participants brought together by NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), NTUC's Unit for Contract and Casual Workers and WDA.

The Best Sourcing Initiative Early Adopters Scheme was established to encourage service buyers from public and private sectors to adopt best sourcing practices and help defray their costs incurred on the

adoption. Since the Labour Movement and WDA's launch of this scheme on 29 July 2009, 64 contracts with a total value of \$125 million have been evaluated for the scheme's incentive grant. So far, \$900,000, nearly half of the \$2 million scheme, has been awarded to 11 companies.

Said Mr Chan Heng Kee, WDA's Chief Executive Officer: "We have increased the funding to \$5 million to encourage more organisations to adopt best sourcing. This will be a win-win for all parties, with buyers benefiting from more professional service standards; workers enjoying better training, job prospect and rewards; and service providers being able to also compete by quality and performance."

Wing Tai Holdings Limited, a company unionised by the Singapore Industrial & Services Employees' Union, is one such early adopter which has reaped the benefits of best sourcing for its security contracts.

"We have a framework to evaluate and access tenders and performance. Through this, we have improved our standards of service to the tenants and our employees have also benefited. Now, because of training, they have flexible work arrangements, performance incentives, recognition awards, as well as higher morale," said Madam Karine Lim, Wing Tai Holding's General Manager (Group Human Resource).

With the Best Sourcing Initiative Early Adopters Scheme, buyers are incentivised to award contracts based on performance and quality, also known as a "beauty contest evaluation" method, instead of solely on price. By doing so, the cost of contracts may go up in the short term but in the longer term, buyers will receive better value for money as the higher service quality will more than offset the increase in cost. Henceforth, a key consideration in awarding the Best Sourcing Initiative Early Adopters Scheme grant will be based on whether the contract contains features that will drive sustainable performance and productivity.

“Singapore cannot compete just on cost alone because we are not a cheap country. We must have the capability to produce and deliver high quality products and services in a smart and cost-efficient way. This is what the Labour Movement means when we called for everyone to be 'Cheaper Better Faster', and the Best Sourcing Initiative is one small step towards achieving this.”

Ong Ye Kung, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and Chairman of NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute)



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