

# Simply Exemplary

## At The May Day Model Partnership Awards

It was called the Model Worker Award last year, but it has been renamed the May Day Model Partnership Awards this year the awards to take on a new meaning. Focus has now shifted from individual accolades to the collaborative achievements of unions, organisations, workers and government agencies to weather the storm of this downturn. With two award categories this year - Institutional and Individual, NTUC is honouring institutional tripartite partnerships that save jobs as well as the proactive efforts individual workers have made to enhance their employability. **Timothy Fernandez and Vanessa Teo** highlight some of the more prominent awardees who put their heart and heads together in celebration of their successful achievements.

### Striving To Save Jobs

#### Tesa Tape Asia Pacific Pte Ltd

And that's the guiding principle that Tesa Tape lives by with its unfailing desire to not just cut costs, but ensure that those cuts affect everything but their workers. With the company's business portfolio of self-adhesive products and system solutions facing anything but good news since September last year, there had to be drastic measures taken for them to remain in business. This is a dilemma faced by many companies today but Tesa Tape decided to take a calculated approach and sat down for a chat with the Chemical Industries Employees' Union to decide on the best ways to reduce costs.

One of the earliest measures that Tesa Tape took on its mission to save jobs includes being honest with its staff, an important step towards promoting a spirit of understanding about the difficulties faced by the company in the downturn. Thanks to this honesty, their staff was more receptive to decisions made by the company to change shift patterns, encourage the clearing of more leave. Festive periods also saw workers getting extra days off as efforts were stepped up to cope with declining business though plant shutdowns.

Not content to just reducing costs and keeping their employees, Tesa Tape sought to improve their workforce as well by tapping on the government's Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR) to further improve the company's growth potential. The company also invested in new machines for their production line, which should give them an edge when the upturn comes and business is booming again.

**“Since our very first meeting, the union was able to establish a commitment from the management that retrenchment would be the last resort. As a result, both the union and management worked hand-in-hand to manage operating costs and minimise pay cuts.”**

Charlotte Lee, CIEU Senior Industrial Relations Officer

### Making A Little Go A Long Way

#### CapitaLand Group

The global recession has brought the many different cost reduction approaches taken by companies into the limelight. One of Asia's largest real estate company CapitaLand Group and its Chief Executive Officer Mr Liew Mun Leong made the list for the right reasons, such as a top-down approach to cutting costs.

Add a good working relationship with the Singapore Industrial & Services Employees' Union and active communication channels with their staff, and the company became a shining example to the nation, as management took the lead with necessary wage cuts to help their employees keep their jobs, all the while ensuring that the cuts never involved non-executives.

CapitaLand has also shown their dedication to lifelong learning by making training desirable and accessible to workers. Utilising the On-Site-Bite-Sized (OSBS) mode of delivering training to service personnel

in their malls islandwide, the organisation was able to increase service standards without any disruption to their employees work performance or personal lives.

Working with SISEU, the Singapore Workforce Development Agency and e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), CapitaLand has helped utilise the government's Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR) to fund training initiatives. The company has also made an effort to spread the SPUR goodwill around by informing tenants of the ways in which training can lead to improved service standards, resulting in a win-win situations for employees and customers.

**“We appreciate the recognition given by our union, SISEU, and nominated CapitaLand to receive this award. It reflects the close collaboration between management and the union to maintain a constructive relationship for mutual benefit. Clearly this helps to build trust especially during the downturn.”**

Tan Seng Chai, CapitaLand Senior Vice President (Human Resources)

### Turning Adversity Into Opportunity

#### The Ex-employees Of Chin Heng Garments

Retrenchment may mean the end of an old job, but it can also spell the beginning of new opportunities. For the 478 former workers at Chin Heng Garments who were let go after the company closed down its production lines, these opportunities led to newfound confidence and increased employability after meeting with representatives from the Singapore Industrial and Services Employees' Union, e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and NTUC Learning Hub.

With almost all these workers having been used to a factory setting for most of their lives, they needed someone to take them by the hand and pave a new road to fulfilling employment. Taking the tough first step towards employability were 40 ex-employees who signed up for a 6-day Employability Camp Plus (EC+) course designed especially for them by their IRO Kelly Koh, e2i Senior Employability Coach Jenny Siew and NTUC LearningHub Trainer Francis Ho. Together, the trio managed to help the workers achieve a higher level of self confidence and acquire new jobs in fields they would never have tried on their own.

“Their lack of self-confidence and skepticism about the training were obstacles that we, as their employability coaches, had to overcome. Through the many chats we had and the briefings we held as a team, we tried to serve as a beacon of encouragement to these



workers to allow them to work towards their fullest potential,” said Jenny.

Among the 40 trainees who attended the EC+ course, 16 found jobs within a week. One of the workers, Madam Sng Huay Lian, 57, who was worried that her qualifications were insufficient to land her a new job, commented that the course helped her gain a new perspective of herself.

“I was surer of myself after the course and no longer felt that I wasn't capable of doing jobs outside the factory line,” Madam Sng shared. With her positive attitude, she now works at a bakery shop and does her best to serve customers with the newfound confidence imparted to her by her IRO and trainers.

