

# challenge

May/June 2016

*Approaching the Public Service Differently*



**INSIGHTS INTO SINGAPORE'S  
EFFORTS TO LOOK AHEAD**

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Clockwise from top left: Shaun, Adeline, Hui Min, Charlene, Kaira and Charlotte

Go to Challenge Online to see the rest of the team's faces.

## The future is in your hands

The Singapore Public Service is often labelled as “efficient” and “forward-planning”; it never has just one plan, but many contingency plans. It’s not surprising, then, that we have officers from across the Service coming together every few years to envision the trends that would affect Singapore, going forward. At the same time, many of us may feel uncertainty, perhaps even slight dread that we might one day be displaced in this fast-changing environment.

But there is always hope, if we look at opportunities that could surface because of these trends. Special thanks to Melissa from Strategy Group, and Wai Keong and Pamela from the Committee of the Future Economy secretariat, for helping us take a closer look behind some of the ongoing efforts to think about the future of Singapore, and how the Public Service can be better prepared for it.

I hope you will find understanding these trends useful as a backdrop for your daily work, so that we can continue to stay relevant to better serve citizens.

The *Challenge* editorial team also took time to “look” into the future with our various oculars. I’m extremely blessed with this wonderful team that is open and supportive of new (and some really crazy) ideas, so we can create and bring you good content each issue, together with the team at Tuber Productions.

This Public Service Week, we celebrate the diversity of the Public Service family. In this edition, read about true inter-agency collaboration at work (see “Getting The ‘Elephants’ Out Of The Room”), a whole new way of creating a Public Service workspace (see “This Hive’s Got IT”), and going the extra mile to make a difference (see “Up Close With The Service Stars”).

Thank you for serving the nation, and happy reading!

# kaira

Editor  
Kaira Peh



Please share  
this magazine :)

# challenge

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# INBOX



I find the range of topics that *Challenge* covers to be excellent – I can identify with them. **The writing is interesting yet digestible, and the accompanying pictures and graphics are fun and sometimes funny, adding value.** I even like the paper quality of your hard copy magazine. Thank you and please continue the good job!

– Lim Lay Phing, MPA

## EXCLUSIVE



iPad app now available

**Correction:** On page 23 in the March/April 2016 Pullout (“The Climate Change Issue”), Singapore’s pledge to reduce carbon emissions was wrongly stated. The 2020 and 2030 pledges are not based on the same scale of measurement, so the text should have read: “Singapore has pledged to reduce our emissions intensity by 36% from 2005 levels by 2030, and to stabilise our emissions with the aim of peaking around 2030.”

I came across **“The Perks of Feeling Inadequate” and “Beating Biases Through Behavioural Insights” (March/April 2016), and was heartened to learn that Public Service Division engages a team of behavioural insight psychologists to help public officers be more effective in their work and life.** I have a deep interest in behavioural science and I believe that with sufficient knowledge about what drives human behaviours, we can live a more fulfilling life, be more effective in our work and collaborate with each other meaningfully.

– Pham Hai Yen, MOE

**I am delighted by the vibrant look of the terrarium featured on the cover of Challenge (March/April 2016),** with the combined theme of rainforest and urban structures of Singapore. It gives me some new ideas for a terrarium of my own.

– Lee Wai Yee, MOE

## Got your Challenge organiser?

In celebration of Public Service Week in May, *Challenge* is giving away specially designed organisers for all of us on “gahmen service”. Use it to fit in your stationery, charging cables, note pads and, most importantly, the latest copy of *Challenge* as you go to meetings or to a PSW event. Enjoy!

Designed and produced by  
**Tuber Productions**

### Editor’s note:

The terrarium on the March/April 2016 cover was designed by Tuber Productions, with special thanks to Adrian Chew for his expertise and FARM Store for the Neighbourhood building blocks.

## Jargon Watch

### Public Service Jargon

**Con Ops** = Short for “concept of operations”, a document describing a system in plain language and from the perspective of its user.

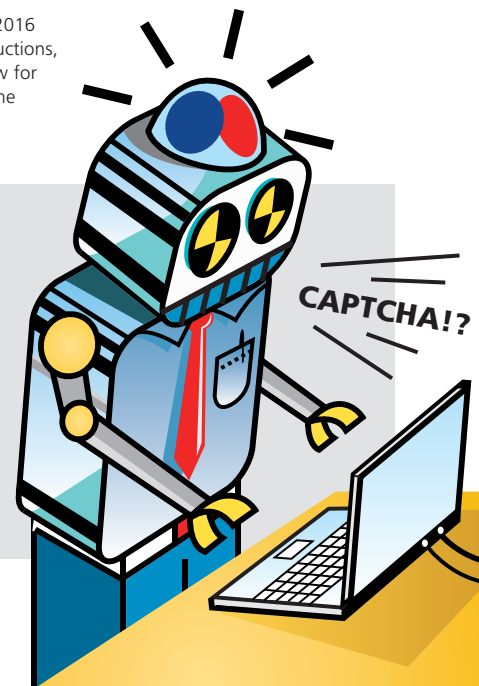
**AWS** = Annual Wage Supplement, also known as the “13<sup>th</sup> month payment” or the one-off annual payment on top of your total annual wage.

*If you know of any new jargon or acronym, email us at [psd\\_challenge@psd.gov.sg](mailto:psd_challenge@psd.gov.sg)*

### Tech Jargon

**Disemvoweling** = The removal of vowels from words for faster SMS or text typing, or bypassing moderation on forum sites.

**CAPTCHA** = Short for “Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart”, the mix of letters and numbers you have to type when logging in to certain sites.



# Bots you want to have with you at work

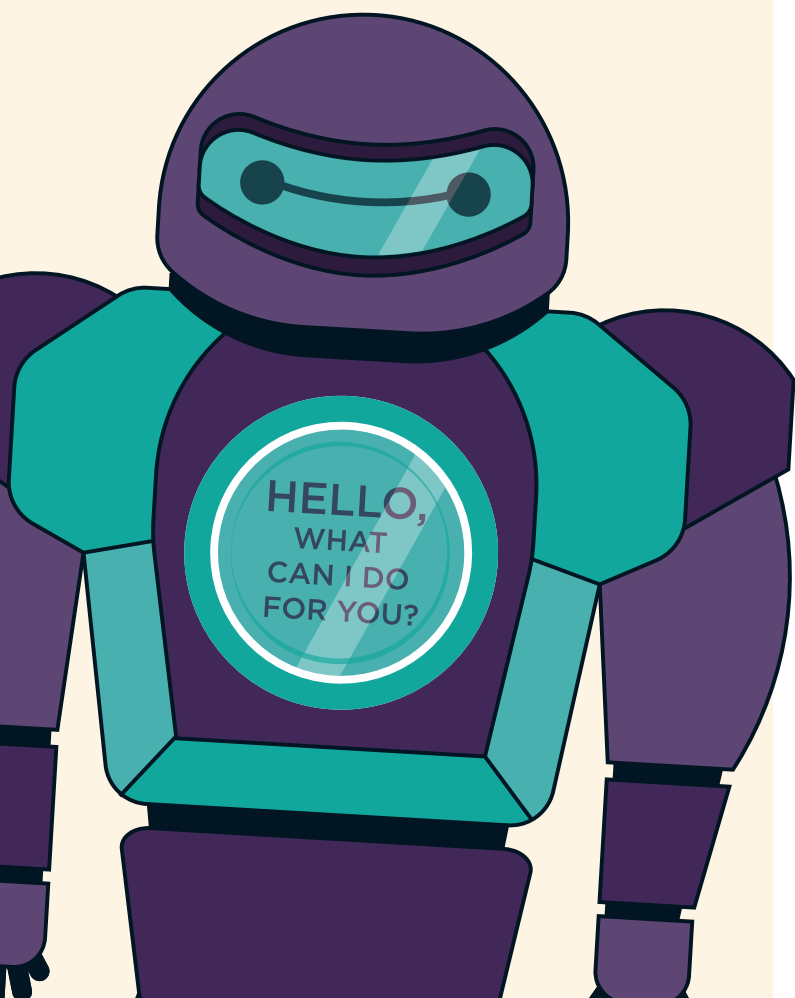


I would like a resource management bot that can quickly call or email the right officer to provide the right information/assistance for me within 10 minutes. That would enable me to answer queries and provide help to enquirers in the shortest possible

time. At times, it could even save lives. I think this is especially important in this fast-paced, ever-changing environment where information overload and overwhelming changes make it harder to catch up.

– **Larentia Toh, PA**

**Congratulations, Larentia! You win vouchers to the Future World exhibition at the ArtScience Museum. Tip: Go on a weekday to avoid the crowds!**



I would like a bot that can organise my thoughts based on the verbal commands I give. For instance, when I say, “Save the following item in my to-do list for English lesson planning,” it will automatically open up that list and save the item in it. When I say, “Organise this information into a KWL (Know, Want to know, Learned) table,” it will organise and put the information I have into columns based on my specifications. When I say, “Download XXX reports from the system,” the reports I need are downloaded and saved automatically. Automatic typing from my verbal commands could help me work more efficiently too!

– **Low Hui Ling, MOE**

I would like to have robots assisting my Forensic Response Team to do crime scene investigations. The robots will be known as Robotic CSI, or RCSI, assisting forensic teams to manage, identify, collect and pack evidence at a drug scene. They can also do 3-D laser scanning of the drug scene, looking for evidence and documenting all evidence at the exact location, and record the condition of the scene quickly. In addition, it will be able to capture detailed measurements and images of complex environments – boosting productivity by reducing the time spent drawing sketch plans, which can take up to a day, to a few minutes.

– **Richard Soh, CNB**

I would love a bot that can work with me to sift data and help with analytics. It can also assist with doing the more mundane tasks like filing and sorting of files (keeping my folders tidy), so that more time can be spent analysing data. There is a huge chunk of data out there waiting for us to analyse in our drive to become a Smart Nation. Bots introduced does not mean that our jobs would be less important or obsolete; instead, we can work hand-in-hand with them to raise productivity and increase accuracy. I’m looking forward to that because it is going to be exciting when technology advances in 10 to 20 years.

– **Trina Liu, MTI**

**The May/June 2016 cover story features trends to prepare us for the future. What is the most important change you think we can make in the next five years to improve the Public Service, and why?**



**Send your entry to [psd\\_challenge@psd.gov.sg](mailto:psd_challenge@psd.gov.sg)**

The winning entry will receive a prize worth up to \$100. All other published entries will win vouchers worth \$30 each. Please include your name, agency email address, agency and contact number.

All entries should reach us by **May 31, 2016**.

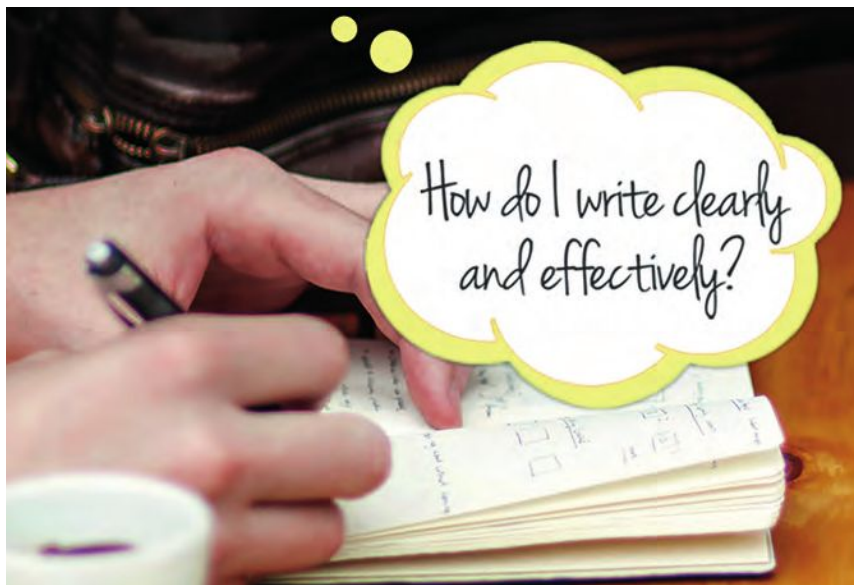
# The BRIEFING



## “I FEEL YOUNG IN MY SINGAPORE”

The Ministerial Committee on Ageing has released its Action Plan for Successful Ageing. Titled “I feel young in my Singapore”, it includes over 70 initiatives that will enable Singaporeans to grow old confidently and successfully. The aim is to build A Nation for All Ages, with initiatives focused on three areas: individual, community and city. These include providing more learning opportunities for seniors, encouraging senior volunteerism, helping seniors lead a healthy life, and plans to build an age-friendly city. The report follows a series of public consultations with more than 4,000 Singaporeans from various walks of life, and aims to address the issue of the nation’s rapidly ageing population.

For updates on ageing in Singapore, follow: [www.fb.com/successfulageing](http://www.fb.com/successfulageing)  
Download the full report: [www.successful-ageing.sg](http://www.successful-ageing.sg)



## WRITING TIPS FOR THE WORKPLACE

Find yourself struggling to write simply and clearly? Wish there were guidelines to help you do so? Check out this informative writing guide, developed by the British Council, which highlights five tips of simple and clear writing. Download a copy now! [bit.ly/getitright\\_Cube](http://bit.ly/getitright_Cube)

## Coming Up



### The return of Shakespeare

The Singapore Philatelic Museum is holding an exhibition to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of William Shakespeare. Experience the Bard’s world through a collection of stamps, interactive exhibits and more. Craft and storytelling sessions for the entire family will be available too. May 14 to Jan 31, 2017, 10am–7pm daily. Free admission for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents.

[bit.ly/spmshake](http://bit.ly/spmshake)



### Introducing The O.P.E.N

Are you set to be mesmerised by the arts? Mark your calendar for The O.P.E.N – a pre-festival of programmes leading up to the Singapore International Festival of Arts. Look forward to Asian premiere screenings by award-winning film-makers, rock concerts and fashion shows. From June 22 to July 9, at various venues. Tickets from \$10 onwards.

[bit.ly/theOPEN](http://bit.ly/theOPEN)



### Keeping it clean

Operation WE Clean Up is back for its second island-wide run. Join the nearest clean-up activity with your family and friends, and play your part in this ground-up initiative to make Singapore a cleaner and greener place. May 8, various locations island-wide.

[bit.ly/opWCU](http://bit.ly/opWCU)



# BEYOND SG50

A PEEK BEHIND THE SCENES AT  
HOW SINGAPORE IS PREPARING  
FOR 20 YEARS INTO THE FUTURE.



**While many of us work on the** urgent issues of today, a team of public officers have been setting their sights on Singapore's future.

Since mid-2015, they have been coming together for an exercise known as the National Scenarios 2035, or NS2035, to think about how a number of driving forces, or trends, might affect Singapore in 20 years. The project is expected to wrap by the end of this year.

The National Scenarios exercise is convened every three to five years to examine key trends and changes to Singapore's operating environment. It's something the Singapore Public Service has been doing for 30 years, starting in the 1980s with the Ministry of Defence.

In this sixth edition, led by the newly formed Strategy Group in the Prime Minister's Office, 80 public officers from various agencies studied six domains: social, economic, governance, environment and resources, technology, and geopolitics and security.

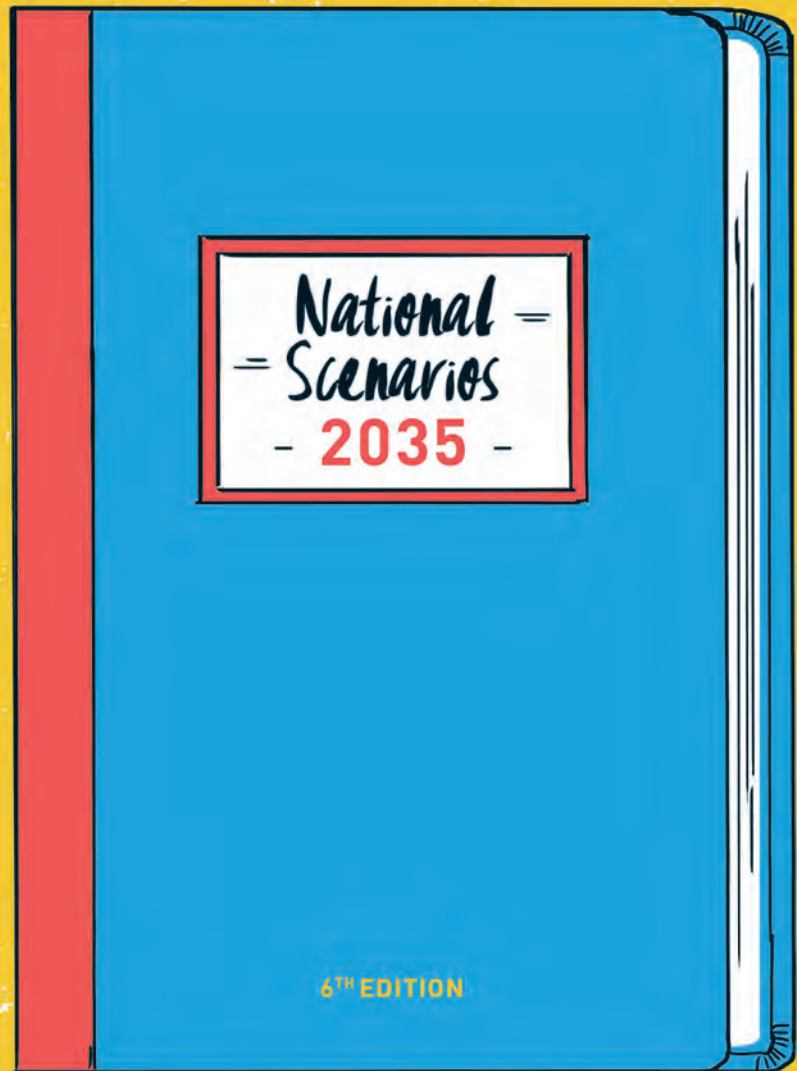
"The teams were formed with an appreciation that our colleagues brought with them diverse perspectives... [and] that the lenses they used were not confined to the perspective of their organisation," says Ms Melissa Khoo, Director, Strategic Planning and Futures, Strategy Group. The teams comprised officers from over 30 agencies, including all ministries and several statutory boards.

They also sought external perspectives from thought leaders such as senior corporate executives who came for the Singapore Summit 2015 (a forum on finance and economics with a Global-Asia focus), environmental experts who visited during Singapore International Water Week, and futurists and other idea-makers during Singapore Foresight Week.

### **Opportunities and challenges**

The diverse mix of public officers came together for a variety of workshops, including one to draw links across the driving forces and brainstorm possible trajectories, such as opportunities and threats for Singapore.

Certain trends such as demography are "perennial", says Ms Khoo. "Given our ageing population, how might we turn our limitations into sources of strength, the same way we have done in the past with our water constraints? And what sources of competitive advantage can we seek out, in a digital age?"



**Scenarios aren't predictive – they are meant to lay out plausible stories, and the main objective is to have people respond to those stories. They act as prompters about what we need to do today to prepare for 2035.**

Newer trends include developments in technology: artificial intelligence, virtual reality and innovative digital platforms that match service providers and clients. There is also the rise of digital conglomerates, such as Google or Alibaba, which have access to vast amounts of consumer data to construct real-time snapshots of the economy and society, e.g., urban transport flows, consumer and business credit ratings and a more detailed pulse of the economy.

"The human and social dimensions of technological change also matter – what happens if there are new divides, between those who 'can' and who 'cannot', or the 'haves' versus the 'have-nots'?" adds Ms Khoo.

The NS2035 exercise is also looking at the trends' impact on Singapore's economy, as it matures and begins to follow the trajectory of other advanced economies.

Besides working in their teams, the NS2035 officers are coordinating with



ministries, statutory boards and other groups to look into the opportunities and challenges these trends could bring for Singapore.

The future trends have also been shared with the 30-member Committee on the Future Economy (CFE). Its five sub-committees will look into corporate capabilities and innovation, future growth industries and markets, Singapore's connectivity, urban development and infrastructure, and the jobs and skills needed for the future.

Ms Khoo sees the National Scenarios as a broader effort to think systematically about the future with the community. Several planning officers involved in an earlier National Scenarios exercise went on to design and facilitate the Our Singapore Conversation and other public conversations on the future, such as Institute of Policy Studies' Prism Scenarios on governance.

### Talking about the future

In the past, the scenario planners would weave the 20 or so driving forces into three to four scenarios, which are then shared with different ministries to use in their planning for the next five years, or further ahead.

"Scenarios aren't predictive – they are meant to lay out plausible stories, and the main objective is to have people respond to those stories. They act as prompters about what we need to do today to prepare for 2035," says Ms Tan Gee Keow, Deputy Secretary of the Strategy Group (read more about her on page 30).

This time, in addition to the scenarios, the full set of driving forces is being shared with agencies too, to preserve their richness and serve as a resource for planning. "Stories are an easy way for people to relate, which is why the scenarios are useful tools... but this time round the driving

forces are really looking interesting because of the way technology is developing," adds Ms Tan.

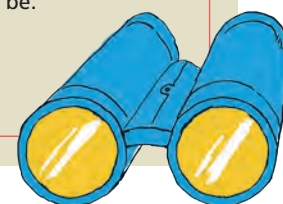
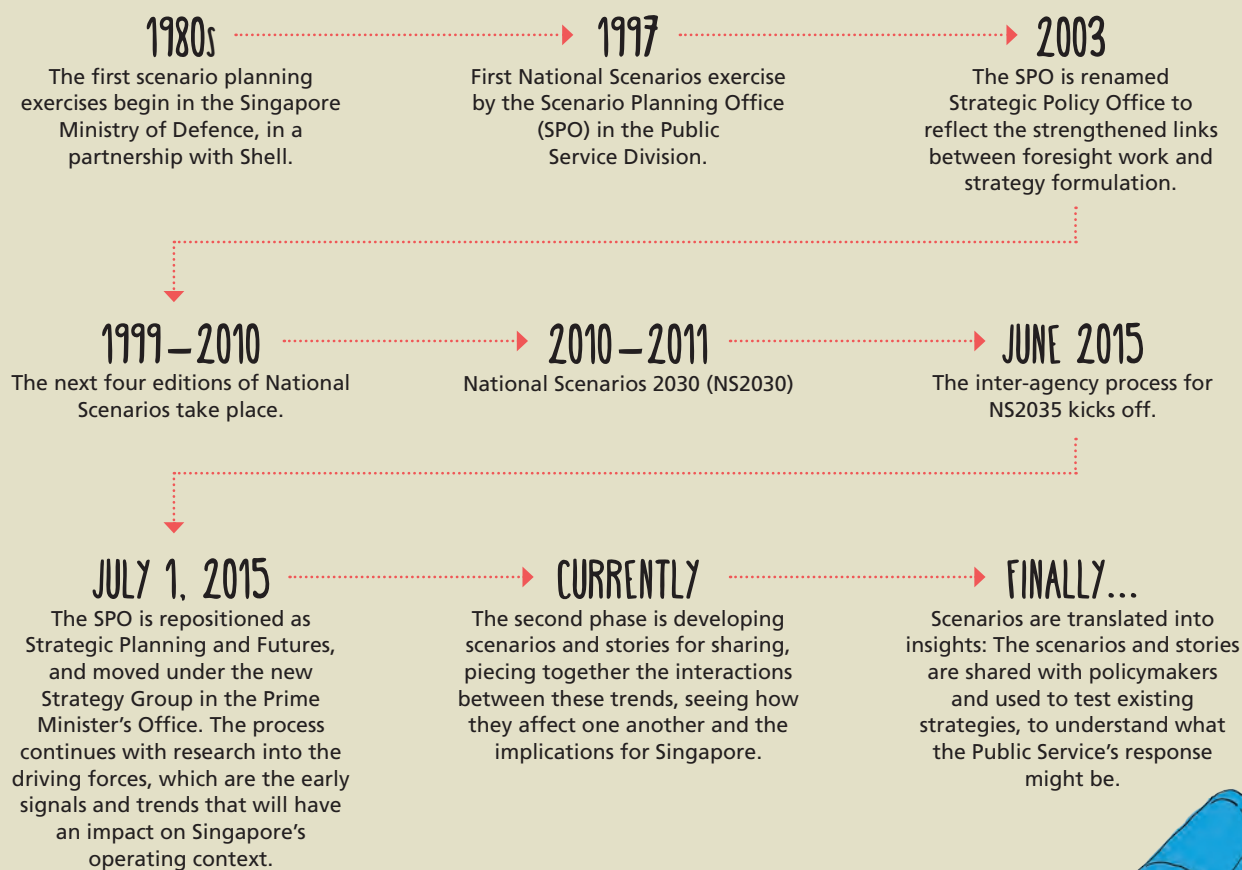
"These driving forces lead down different paths according to how people, companies and the Public Service respond – and what we want is for these driving forces to create conversations within the Public Service."

As part of Public Service Week, public officers can take part in PSFuture conversations hosted by their agencies, with thematic inter-agency dialogues hosted by various public service leaders.

Over the next several pages, *Challenge* explores the interaction of several trends that the NS2035 teams have come up with. 📍

Find out more about the PSFuture sessions at [psfuture.gov.sg](http://psfuture.gov.sg)

## TIMELINE OF NATIONAL SCENARIOS



Text by  
CLARA LOCK



# Rise of the Freelancer

*People operating as individual businesses are on the rise, as more workers seeking freedom and independence enter the freelance pool to build their personal brand.*

*Challenge explores what this means for Singapore's overall workforce.*

**When Mr Zakaria Zainal left his** first job as a trade officer at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, a freelance career was not top on his mind.

He had wanted to pursue a personal photography project on the Singapore Gurkhas. But along the way, the freelance photography assignments he took up became so numerous, they turned into a full-time job – one that he has enjoyed for five years now.

Mr Zakaria is among a growing pool

of freelance professionals who enjoy the freedom of working for themselves. The perks include being able to dictate their own schedules and choose assignments that they are enthusiastic about.

Freelance workers provide a variety of services: writing, design, photography, financial planning, social media consulting, even house cleaning or personal shopping.

While freelancers' varied work arrangements make it tricky to track their numbers officially, websites connecting

them to businesses have seen a rise in users. Freelancer.sg, for example, had 100,000 users in 2015, up from 15,000 users in 2012, with 74% of their users in the millennial age group.

Changing demographics, lifestyle choices and needs all contribute to the shift towards this mode of work, which appeals not just to millennials, with their evolving value systems and different aspirations for what they want out of life, but also to a maturing workforce who may be

seeking a different pace of work and life, says Ms Chong Ee Rong, Managing Director at Ogilvy Public Relations and a member of the CFE sub-committee for Future Jobs and Skills.

Freelancing is also boosted by the availability of digital platforms that help match service providers with clients, from aggregator sites like UpWork to more specialised ones such as Bolt Media for content creators, Vanitee for beauty professionals and Uber for drivers. Moreover, with mobile connectivity to the Internet, it is now possible to work from anywhere – cafes, co-working spaces, even the beach.

### The advantages for businesses

Organisations also stand to gain from freelancers' work ethic and a wider range of expertise. For companies that can unpack work into tasks for different people to do, the hiring pool then expands to include a wider range of talent, including those who are not based locally.

Because freelancers often rely on word-of-mouth referrals and their portfolios, they have to be excellent at what they do, says Ms Chong. "If the job isn't done well, they're not going to get their next job. So you have a workforce of people who are self-motivated and a lot more focused."

A possible challenge is building a particular culture or team environment at work.

Ms Elaine Yew, who is on the Global Executive Committee of Egon Zehnder, a global organisational advisory firm, and also a CFE Jobs and Skills subcommittee member says: "Companies will need to ensure that they support the freelancers not just administratively, but also in the 'soft tissue' aspects of what makes an organisation work well – creating a common purpose and sense of common identity and affiliation with a team."

To tap the potential of freelancers, Singapore businesses will need to be open-minded and broaden their networks to find the best talent, she adds, and think afresh about how to design roles, with clearly expressed desired outcomes rather than focusing on input, such as hours spent on a project.

### Challenges for freelancers

But it can be a challenging landscape for

freelancers, who do not have access to the social safety nets provided for in a full-time job, such as medical benefits, sick leave and the employer's Central Provident Fund contribution.

For Mr Zakaria, a portion of his income goes towards a retirement fund. Meanwhile, freelance yoga instructor Peggy Chan has found a niche serving mature clients. But like many freelancers, she worries about timely payments and has a fluctuating monthly income, she told *The Straits Times*.

Freelance workers will also need business management skills as they are managing their own businesses, says Ms Yew. "They would need to be really good at project management, and also be better marketers of themselves since they would not have an organisational brand to rely on."

**If the job isn't done well, they're not going to get their next job. So you have a workforce of people who are self-motivated and a lot more focused.**

### Protecting the "people as businesses"

As risks are transferred from businesses to individuals, calls are growing for better support for freelance workers.

In January 2016, Member of Parliament Ang Hin Kee, who is Assistant Secretary-General of the NTUC, called for policies on freelancing to be updated, saying "some of the rules appear unclear". He said it was timely for the labour movement to recognise freelancing as a viable career option, and to tailor policies to help the self-employed.

In an interview with *The Straits Times*, he said: "Whether it be getting more assignments, more timely payments or more respect, it has to be clearly conveyed to the buyers of their services that not only are these the right things to do, they are also the only way to ensure the quality of this pool of resources gets better."

Ms Chong says that both the govern-

## RETHINKING WHAT WORK IS

Technology has changed the nature of work so much that new jobs we could never imagine have sprung up. New payment and advertising models such as brand sponsorship and Google's pay-per-click AdWords make what used to be pastimes such as blogging viable as fulltime self-employment. Children may aspire to be next YouTube video star, inspired by internationally known gaming YouTube reviewer PewDiePie, and other self-made entertainers who thrive on their personalities and social media marketing.

ment and industry should take a top-down and bottom-up approach towards working with freelancers. As for freelancers' skills and contributions, she suggests "an accreditation or ranking system, similar to how [TripAdvisor and Grab] rank the quality of the service provided".

She adds: "Freelancers must be paid when they've done a job. Whether one considers it well done or not can be arbitrary – but there must be some sort of mechanism to protect both freelancers and employers."

Ms Yew adds that the employment regulatory and tax environments could be more balanced, so there is fairness for both "conventional" employees and freelancers.

As more turn to freelancing, how can the Public Service remain an attractive employer for full-time work? Ms Low Peck Kem, Chief Human Resource Officer, Public Service Division, says tried-and-tested people practices should be reconsidered.

"[We need to] have a deeper understanding of why young people want to work independently, build on the reason behind the motivation and see if we can better develop innovative people practices, which will meet both the officer's needs as well as organisational needs." ©

Text by  
RICHARD HARTUNG



# Super-workers in their sixties

*An ageing population and advances in technology will change the way both young and older people work. Challenge looks at how technology can help older workers in particular to continue contributing to the economy.*

**The number of elderly citizens in Singapore will triple in 15 years.** This will affect every one of us in different ways – there will be a greater need for caretakers, policies for integrating the elderly in the workplace, and practices that tap the wisdom of senior citizens, to begin with.

For the elderly themselves, continuing to work and generate income will be increasingly important. Already the percentage of older workers is growing faster than any other age group: more than 40% of people aged 65 to 69 are now working, compared with 24% in 2006, for instance, and the numbers continue to rise.

The growth in older workers, Civil Service College researcher Cindy Tan found, is happening not just because more companies are allowing employees to work past the statutory retirement age. Older people are also motivated to work because of financial reasons and the desire to stay active.

In labour-short Singapore, having more older workers available benefits both the public sector and private companies, and their income can reduce the financial burden on younger people as the proportion of those aged 65 and above compared to working-age citizens goes from about one in five now to almost half by 2030.

### Changing practices

At the same time, hiring older workers requires changes. Older workers may not be as strong as their younger counterparts and may work differently, so managers will need to assign them tasks appropriate for their capabilities or develop ways for them to perform their tasks more easily.

That challenge is compounded by the types of work older workers actually do. Data from the Ministry of Manpower shows that about half of them have physically demanding jobs as cleaners, labourers, machine operators, or service and sales workers.

These older workers face myriad societal challenges as well, not the least of which are perceptions of limited capabilities and a preference by many employers for younger workers. Older workers are typically perceived as slower, less productive and more resistant to change, as Ms Yvonne Arivalagan, a research assistant at the National University of Singapore, described in *TODAY*.

The reality is radically different. Research by Wharton School Professor Peter Cappelli, for example, showed that older workers both in the US and elsewhere have less absenteeism, less turnover, superior interpersonal skills, deal better with customers and use fewer sick days than their younger counterparts.

### A boost for all with tech

To take advantage of the benefits that elderly workers bring to the workplace, private companies as well as the Public Service can leverage technology that benefits both older and younger employees.

Change is already happening in the National University Hospital, which has installed an automated trolley system in its pharmaceutical department so that medicine can be transported in bulk, resulting in higher productivity and jobs that are less strenuous. Another example is the robotic cleaners from Intellibot Robotics that can scrub and vacuum, covering three times the area cleaned by a typical worker every hour.

Technology advancements also provide opportunities for job redesign. For instance, instead of having older workers do the grunt work, they can now be in charge of the robots.

Companies and individuals may also begin to use human augmentation, which integrates with the human body and can restore impaired functions or enhance human capabilities.

As technologies evolve, the journalist Chris Farrell writes in *Forbes*, solutions such as exoskeletons that support the body and related robotic technologies can overcome the disabilities that prevent many older people from working.

Lightweight exoskeletons – already being tested by Lockheed Martin – allow operators of heavy tools to handle them as if they were weightless, boosting worker productivity and reducing the risk of injury.

Augmentation can also include bionic implants that can improve sensory perception and functional foods or drugs that can enhance cognitive capabilities.

The developments would also require workers of all ages to continue to upgrade their skills, so that they can take advantage of such technologies and stay ahead of how jobs might change in the future.

Whereas the total number of workers grew

30%

from 2005 to 2015, Department of Statistics data shows that the number of workers aged 65 and above grew

276%

### The elderly in the community

Along with having an impact on human resource practices at companies, the ageing population will have an impact on the community.

One element that the NS2035 will explore is how an ageing population may shape the national mood and communities' way of life, notes Ms Melissa Khoo, Director, Strategic Planning and Futures, Strategy Group.

Some considerations, she says, include: "Would the elderly of the future prefer Singapore to remain unchanged so they can age in place, and in a familiar environment? Might they become a source of wisdom and new economic demand with new technologies and platforms that enable new forms of work?"

As for the public sector, which hires mainly Singaporeans and Permanent Residents, its workforce will closely mirror Singapore's ageing population, says Chief Human Resources Officer Low Peck Kem.

"We have to view work aspirations from different demographic segments. Gen X is keeping an eye on SkillsFuture to ensure that they remain relevant... while some baby boomers may be prepared to wind down and others would like to contribute at an advisory level."

### Untapped potential

To leverage the skills and resources of seniors, the Public Service can take steps such as redoubling efforts to educate people about the capabilities of older workers, supporting implementation of technologies that make working easier, and setting policies that reduce discrimination against older workers. ☺

Text by  
CHIA SOONG MING

# Who has the data?

*Everyday, tech giants amass vast amounts of personal data for commercial gains. Some, however, have introduced innovative public services that people are finding valuable. What's needed for the public sector to do the same with the data it has?*



**In the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami,** Ms Toshiko Ayano in Tokyo struggled to contact her relatives in badly hit Ofunato City. Relief came a day later from an unlikely source: Google Person Finder, an information-crowdsourcing platform, which showed that her extended family members were safe, as recounted in a Google case study.

More recently, during the March 2016 terrorist attacks in Brussels, people turned to Facebook's "Safety Check" feature to check in on loved ones or mark themselves as safe. The platform can leverage its access to users' recent locations to alert those in or near affected areas to update their safety status, which is then shared with their Facebook network within hours, even minutes, of news breaking.

Private corporations stepping up as alternative providers of public services is a growing trend as meaningful user data increasingly goes into their caches.

In emergencies, for example, people may turn to such online services first rather than to traditional sources of information and aid, such as local embassies. Soon it would not be surprising for Facebook to be the first to inform you that your relative is safe – before a public agency does.

In transport, ridesharing services such as Uber may overtake citizens' use of public transport. As for education, massive open online courses or free education sites like Khan Academy are already plugging the gaps, especially for citizens of countries where access to quality education is lacking.

To be sure, governments' access to citizen data remains significant. After all, governments know when one is born, the number of vaccination shots one has, one's housing type, tax contributions and more – as citizens interact with their governments at major milestones in their lives, says Mr Jason Bay, Director of Economic Regulation Division at the Ministry of Communications and Information.

But tech corporations with massive reach such as Amazon, Google and Facebook will continue to grow their data collection capabilities with features such as universal sign-in, which allows users to log in to various Internet services using a single user ID and password.

Furthermore, the data collected can be surprisingly accurate. Belgian research organisation CIM studied the traffic of a website with more than 1.5 mil-

lion monthly visitors. The data (gender, language and even personal interests) obtained from polling the users directly was nearly identical to the demographic information that Google offered to the website owners and their potential advertisers. This means that Google was able to paint a picture of more than 1.5 million with just their login data and browsing patterns.

### Privacy paradox

Does it perturb you that Google knows a lot more about you than you realise?

Professor Simon Chesterman, Dean of Faculty of Law at the National University of Singapore and a data protection policy specialist, notes that though many people express concern about threats to privacy, "their daily behaviour is often completely inconsistent". An MIT Sloan School of Management study found that 90% of users shopped at e-commerce sites despite stating that they did not trust those sites to keep their personal data private.

Yet, measures by governments to re-gather, grow or share citizen data will likely be met with more "calls for the public sector to have transparent rules about the collection, use and disclosure of personal data", Professor Chesterman adds.

Mr Liu Feng Yuan, Director, Data Science Division, at the Government Digital Services, believes Singaporeans can accept the use of their data if there is value to them or for the wider public good, as long as the government and corporations take serious measures to address privacy when doing so.

"There are levels of data 'depth' that we can be mindful of when extracting useful information," says Mr Liu. As an example within the healthcare sector, aggregate data, which excludes personally identifying information (e.g., medical history or NRIC numbers) "remains very useful in analysing how the clinic could reduce waiting time, while minimising any compromise to privacy", he explains.

### Using data well

To tap the value of big data in order to improve public service delivery, there needs to be a "stronger technical voice" in governments, says Mr Liu.

"There's a need for deep technical expertise at all levels of the Public Service,

## HOW MUCH IS DATA WORTH?

Some estimates peg an individual's total online data to be worth US\$1,200 to advertisers. This dollar value is just the tip of the iceberg; for governments, the extrapolations that can be made on the citizenry's preferences and behaviour could be extremely useful. But as tech giants amass huge amounts of user data, there's the concern that governments could be disadvantaged as they lose access to information that could help them, for instance, create more customised communication to citizens. And when it comes to personal data that could impact national security, there have been some tensions between government authorities and private firms with caches of potentially useful data. The latter may choose to protect their users' trust and reject governments' requests for access to that data. Recently, Apple refused to help the US Federal Bureau of Investigation to unlock an iPhone in order to access the data.

not just junior or entry positions," he says. For example, someone in the role of a chief technology officer, who is familiar with the latest technology, could have a greater say in decision-making and crafting policies.

Agreeing, Mr Bay points out that, sometimes, policy directions are decided first, before technical teams are asked to implement the policy "within pre-defined parameters", which he feels should not be the case.

In February, the government announced its plans to hire 1,000 engineers and programmers by the end of 2016, increasing the pool by more than 13%. As technical skills broaden, it may be that chief officers overseeing the areas of data and cybersecurity will also be needed.

Some 100 engineers and data scientists are already designing apps and other digital ways of delivering public services, based on data collected by various public agencies. Read more about them on page 33. 📄

# The world is their office

*With more work opportunities growing overseas, what would contributing to Singapore and keeping rooted to home look like in the future?*

**This September, some 3,000** overseas Singaporeans will gather in San Francisco for Singapore Day 2016. Singaporean artistes will work the crowd with Singlish accents, and hawkers will dish up familiar flavours such as *laksa* and *nasi lemak*.

It will be an event with a clear objective: to “engage overseas Singaporeans and keep them emotionally connected to Singapore”, according to the organisers, the Overseas Singaporean Unit (OSU).

This emotional connection – the pride and sense of belonging to Singapore – is one reason why Singaporeans would want to return home to work, said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in February, after a visit to San Francisco and its Silicon Valley. But he also recognised that Singapore needs to offer meaningful opportunities for these returning citizens.

Roughly 212,000 Singaporeans live overseas, or about 6% of the citizen population, according to 2015 figures from the National Population and Talent Division.

Of this group, many seek work opportunities in “talent superhubs”, places where digital corporations and talent gravitate, nurturing and feeding off each other. A famous example is Silicon Valley, home to technology giants such as Google, Facebook and Apple, and where some 100 Singaporean engineers work. These superhubs offer dynamic working environments and the chance to work alongside the best in their fields.

## Circulating talent

There has been a global trend of more and more citizens leaving their home countries for better opportunities and stimulation elsewhere. In Singapore too, there is the spectre of citizens going overseas being perceived as “brain drain”. And in the fluxes of outgoing citizens coupled with inflows of new workers, there arises a question of dilution of national identity.

But experts point out that globalisation is a trend that cannot be reversed: as corporations capitalise on intangible assets such as ideas, talent and business models, it is easy – and a growing part of their strategy – to expand their operations around the world, even beyond the major cities.

With this in mind, Ms Mariam Jaafar, Managing Director at Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and a member of the CFE, points out that in order to ensure a vibrant and growing economy, Singapore must remain open, since diversity of talent draws more talent.

“With talent and ideas being increasingly mobile, it is critical that Singapore remains a magnet for talent, and just as importantly, retains highly skilled people,” she says.

Within the region, Singapore is well placed to capitalise on being a talent hub. Singapore’s entrepreneurship scene is thriving at JTC’s LaunchPad@one-north, where start-ups, incubators and venture capitalists converge at a hub formed by



Blocks 71, 73 and 79. That success led to Block 71 San Francisco, a co-working space bridging the US and Singapore start-up networks to help both Singapore start-ups enter the US market and US start-ups expand into Asia.

Companies such as Facebook, Airbnb, Google and Netflix have set up offices in Singapore and hired both foreigners and locals. Singaporeans at these companies will likely be posted overseas for short to medium-term stints, with these assignments regarded as plum postings for global citizens to broaden their scope, perspectives and experience.





## Getting some international experience is now really important. Many companies cite the lack of regional or global exposure as a large constraint.

“Getting some international experience is now really important. Many companies cite the lack of regional or global exposure as a large constraint as they attempt to fill managerial and leadership positions,” says Ms Mariam.

To gain the necessary exposure and be well-positioned in this evolving flow of tal-

ent, individuals should be open to spending part of their careers outside Singapore, or risk being displaced, Ms Mariam adds.

According to Ms Karen Leo, Deputy Director of Engagement Strategies and Programmes at the OSU, Singaporeans are venturing beyond the traditional destinations – Australia, the UK and the US.

In China, for instance, more Singaporeans are in the second- and third-tier cities, such as Tianjin and Chengdu.

But Ms Mariam points out that opportunities in the region are still overlooked by many Singaporeans, for whom regional markets are seen as “hardship postings”. This is despite massive opportunities in neighbouring countries like Indonesia, which has big ambitions but a shortage of technical skills – and a gap of up to 60% between the demand for middle managers and supply by 2020, a BCG study found.

### A sense of rootedness

A greater diversity in Singapore’s population due to the global circulation of talent, coupled with considerable physical transformation over the last decade, can pose a challenge to the construct of a robust Singapore identity and the sense of rootedness, especially for returning citizens.

“With the pace of change in Singapore, some returning Singaporeans do feel a sense of displacement, especially if they have been away for several years,” says Ms Leo.

Familial ties and social networks are important to help Singaporeans settle back quickly, she says. While certain markers of our identity – hawker food, Singlish, unique behaviours such as *chope* (to “reserve”) – remain, “there is also a need to build a sense of belonging on something more constant, and perhaps visceral, such as shared values and a shared vision of Singapore’s future.”

These are valid concerns for every country (the BBC ran a month-long discussion on the issue of identity and global citizenry in April), and in our hyper-connected world, could we rethink how Singaporeans can contribute to the country, and continue to have a strong Singaporean identity, wherever they are?

Ultimately, with the circulation of talent being inevitable, both employers and employees will need to have a global mindset and be open to going abroad as well as working with a diverse range of talent wherever they are based. ©

# The tug of war

*Singapore faces the inevitable rise of China and response from the US, as well as competition from other growing Asian economies. How might such developments affect Singapore?*

**China is expected to become the world's largest economy by 2035.** While its ascendance won't be a smooth trajectory, China is still bound to become more assertive in pursuing its political and economic interests. The US and China thus have to make strategic adjustments, as both powers find ways to reach a new accommodation with each other. This naturally provokes a range of reactions, both in the Asia-Pacific region and on the global stage.

Singapore has always welcomed the involvement of powers in the region. Its first foreign minister, Mr S Rajaratnam, described this in a speech to the Asia Society in New York in 1973: "Like the sun, the great powers will, by their very existence, radiate gravitational power. But if there are many suns then the smaller planets can, by judicious balancing of pulls and counter-pulls, enjoy a greater freedom of movement."

Singapore's judicious balancing has meant balancing its interests between China and the US. Although informal relations between Singapore and China have long been in place, for years Singapore kept China at arm's length, formalising diplomatic relations only in 1990, the last of the original five ASEAN countries to do so.

Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh, among others, has explained that this was to preserve Singapore's commitment to a multi-ethnic, multi-religious identity, and to avoid being viewed as a Chinese satellite state. Singapore has similarly eschewed the notion that it is a US outpost, and instead emphasised its role as a bridge between the US and China.

Today, Singapore has close economic

ties with both countries. Singapore is China's biggest foreign investor and one of its biggest trading partners. On the other hand, the US is Singapore's biggest foreign investor. But ties between the US and China are also growing in number and complexity, reducing the need for third-party interlocutors.

Singapore's position as a key economic hub could also change as China moves up the "value-added ladder" in global supply chains, says Ms Mariam Jaafar, Managing Director of Boston Consulting Group (Singapore) and a member of the CFE.

Singapore's increasing dependence on China as an engine of growth has brought about economic opportunities, but also made it vulnerable to shocks from the Chinese economy.

Not only has China's central place in the global production network grown significantly, it has also shifted from being a supplier of components to become a core

**Like the sun, the great powers will, by their very existence, radiate gravitational power. But if there are many suns then the smaller planets can, by judicious balancing of pulls and counter-pulls, enjoy a greater freedom of movement.**

production hub, making its own mobile phones and laptops, for example.

As the Chinese no longer buy such goods from overseas – and even compete to export them – business for other manufacturing centres in the region, including Singapore, has slowed down.

"Singapore will have to learn to live with this new reality and continue to identify niche areas where we can value-add," says IE Singapore Chief Executive Lee Ark Boon.

An advantage is that Singapore still has more familiarity than other countries on how to access the Chinese market, says Mr Lee. But this familiarity needs to be sharpened even more.

This can be achieved by immersing more Singaporean public officers in Chinese culture over the course of their careers, says Mr Ervin Yeo, a former public officer in the manpower and foreign affairs ministries who participated in the NS2035 exercise. "Future public service leaders should seek opportunities to spend meaningful time in China, whether it's for study, postings or other work experience."

## **Rising Asia, more competition**

The ASEAN region is also on the rise, as its share of the Asia Pacific gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to grow to 7.4% by 2030, from 5.5% in 2010, according to the Euromonitor. With its GDP projected to grow at 6.5% year-on-year, ASEAN is the third largest growth engine in the Asia Pacific region after China and India.

"The region is on its way to becoming one of the largest markets in the world... and continues to show steady growth amid a global economic slowdown," says Mr Lee.



The region comprising Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand is taking up a growing share of Singapore's exports to the world, compared with China's share that has remained stable in the past few years.

Indonesia presents another "compelling opportunity", says Mr Lee, as it has the world's fourth-largest population (approximately 248 million people), and a high GDP growth of 4.7% for 2015, with forecasts for higher growth in the coming years. It also aims to become Southeast Asia's largest digital economy by 2020 – a huge opportunity for Singapore companies looking to capture value in e-commerce.

For Singapore to stay relevant as a gateway for companies venturing to do

business in Southeast Asia, having regional expertise and networks in ASEAN are crucial, he adds.

More broadly, Singapore, as a key hub, must participate in their growth and facilitate flows of goods and services to and from these new markets, says Ms Mariam.

As the region develops economically, it will likely see improvements in stability, as well as higher trade and investment. But ASEAN's development brings with it challenges as well as opportunities. Singapore's neighbours will also attempt to become hubs for investment and trade, and encourage multinationals and highly educated international business leaders, including Singaporeans, to relocate.

With these opportunities and chal-

lenges in mind, the CFE is looking to develop economic strategies to ensure a vibrant and resilient economy over the long term. The committee is focusing on issues such as connectivity, and growth industries and markets to future-proof Singapore's economy.

Public officers will need to better know the region to effectively put these strategies into action. Mr Yeo encourages public officers to travel to and work in Southeast Asia. Not only would this develop their personal understanding of these countries' cultures and governance systems, but it would also enable them to identify opportunities for cooperation, prospects for increased trade and investment, and threats to Singapore's competitiveness. ☉

Text by  
TAY QIAO WEI

# An imagined city

What could our city look like in 2035, in light of the challenges and opportunities we have? Experts in climate change and urban planning share their thoughts.

Based on the views of:

**Ng Lang**

Chief Executive of the  
Urban Redevelopment  
Authority (URA)

**Benedict Chia**

Director (Strategic Issues)  
of the National Climate  
Change Secretariat

**Cheng Hsing Yao**

Managing Director of  
GuocoLand Singapore,  
who has held leadership  
positions at the Centre  
for Liveable Cities and  
the URA



1

## PRODUCING OUR OWN FOOD AND ENERGY

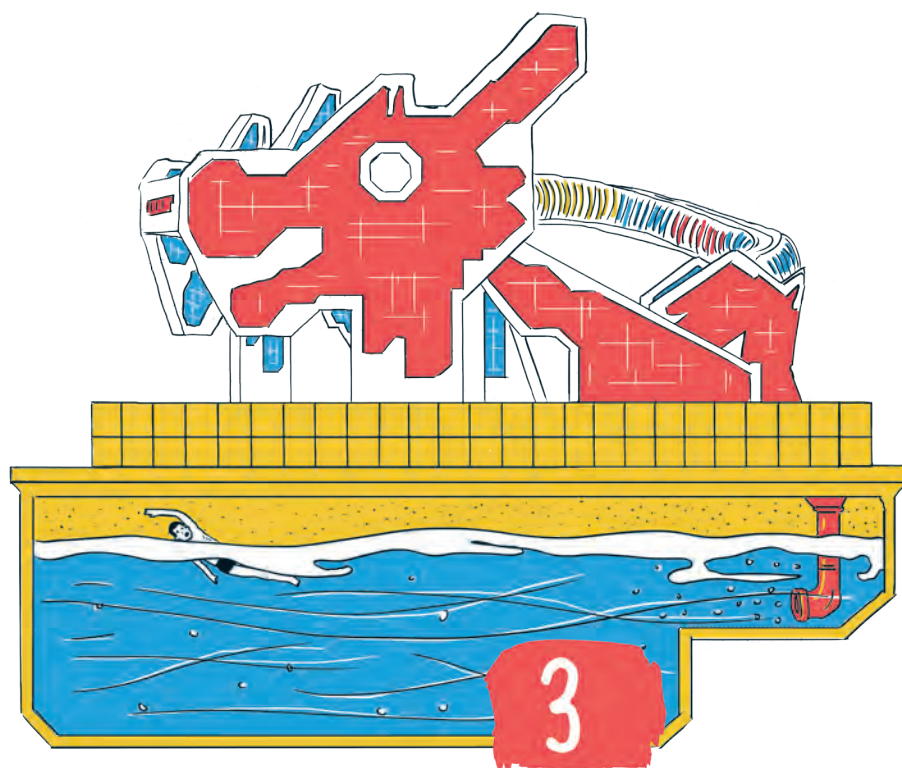
**No matter how sophisticated we get, we remain highly vulnerable if we cannot address the security of our water, food and energy. What can we do to be more resilient and self-sufficient?**

### **Adopt more food and energy farming technology?**

Mr Cheng says: "I think we have almost given up on the idea that we can produce much food ourselves. But if we had done that with water, we would not have made all the investments we had in water technology. We now have an exportable water industry and knowledge hub. As we harvest every single raindrop, can we harvest every opportunity to produce food or energy on our island?" Vertical farming, hydroponics or underground farming could boost our local food supply. Solar cells can go beyond roofs to be integrated with building facades.

### **Create more spaces for urban farming?**

Open spaces such as parks, and also rooftops, could be re-organised as places to grow crops for our consumption, suggests Mr Cheng. To make this commercially and socially successful, technologies and supply distribution networks need to be developed. And could residential areas be planned such that residents have more opportunities to grow food? Mr Chia says: "If each block gets a patch in the common area for planting, it could reduce food demand and build community spirit."



2

## USING SPACE INNOVATIVELY

As our population continues to grow, we will need new ways to optimise space. And as new ways of working catch on, the spaces where we live, work or play could overlap even further. The urban environment will need to evolve to meet Singaporeans' desire to better balance their material requirements with their social and aspirational needs, says Mr Ng.

### Mixed-use areas become hubs where residents live, learn, work and play?

This is already happening: "The most important change we have made so far is to decentralise our economic activities. Between now and 2030, for every job we create in the city centre, we hope to create more than three in the regional growth centres," says Mr Ng. These regional centres include Jurong West, Jurong Lake District, Woodlands, Sembawang and Punggol.

### Live underground?

Potential pitfalls include spatial inequality – say, if the rich get sky-rise apartments while the rest are left with underground dwellings. The experts suggest keeping underground spaces for utilities, such as generating power, or storing resources (similar to the Jurong Rock Caverns for oil). "If more underground space could be used for infrastructure, this would free up more space above ground for civic and community purposes," says Mr Chia.

## ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The effects of climate change – flooding, heatwave and other extreme weather – could become even more pronounced. With Singapore's pledge to cut at least 36% of our greenhouse gases emissions by 2030 (for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change), a shift towards cleaner energy sources and lifestyles is needed.

### Novel ways to manage spikes in rainfall?

Leisure spaces such as playgrounds could double up as water storage areas in periods of sudden heavy rain to prevent surrounding areas from flooding.

### Adopt solar energy?

With advancements in technology, solar panels could one day become solar "paint" that is thinner than paper. With reduced costs, could the sides of buildings, car roofs, or even our clothes tap solar energy?

### Generate energy from food waste?

"Using enzymes to break down food waste and generate energy, and moving away from burning our waste, could reduce carbon emissions. This could also free up the limited space in our landfills," says Mr Chia.

### Work more closely with our ASEAN neighbours for energy sources?

With a shared energy grid that makes it easier for different countries to buy and sell energy, we could tap renewable energy such as solar, hydro, geothermal and wind energy sources that are more abundant in our neighbouring countries.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

While the government can set the strategic direction for city planning, Mr Cheng says, it could "delegate as much of the solution-making and implementation to the private and people sectors when possible." This will create more expertise in the private and people sectors, as well as a greater diversity of ideas. "We might even be able to develop a number of exportable economic growth sectors, and become a knowledge hub for urban solutions," he adds.

In planning concepts for new growth areas, like the Southern Waterfront, Mr Cheng feels there is potential for the public sector to involve the private and people sectors at the earlier stages of the work. Meanwhile, urban planners will also need to be mindful of building flexibility into urban infrastructure, to cater to tech-enabled disruption, such as the rise in e-commerce reducing the need for physical retail space, says Mr Ng.

4

## TRANSFORMING TRANSPORT

Changing work arrangements (such as more people working from home) and continued space constraints require more efficient ways to get around.

### Self-driving pods for commutes?

Using smart sensors to connect with other vehicles and infrastructure such as traffic lights, these pods could navigate efficiently through the streets. If early studies of self-driving vehicles are anything to go by, we can look forward to more energy-efficient vehicles that also reduce congestion and the need for parking spaces. 🚗



## 3 myths that get in the way of collaboration

*ETHAN MCCARTY, Global Head of Employee Communications at Bloomberg Business, on how his organisation promotes collaboration.*

Many companies invest in collaborative software or hardware, and expect collaboration magic to happen. But collaboration requires hiring the right talent and thinkers, then putting best practices in place to enable them to work together efficiently.

Understanding the ecosystem and forces needed to make collaboration possible is crucial for business success. What's needed is a culture that not just allows for collaboration, but demands it. To create that, leaders have to dispel certain myths.

### Myth 1: Collaboration is for staff, not bosses

Collaboration needs to be infused at every level of a company's structure, from the bottom to the top. Collaboration works when those at the top set the example and are collaborative themselves.

One thing I have seen at Bloomberg and other organisations where I've worked is the adoption of Agile, or "Scrum", method of working. Typically, teams use this method to develop software, but some

organisations adopt it (at least in part) for other corporate functions as well. The method demands total transparency, particularly from the leader in a group.

For the most part, the group is self-organising when it comes to what work gets done. But for how work gets prioritised and when individuals seek help, the "Scrum master" takes on the role of a servant leader. He or she demonstrates leadership by removing blockers for the team, not by applying pressure. It's still true that great managers know how to delegate well, but in this case, the leader as a practitioner is critical – whether you pitch in to write code, do user-testing or any tasks.

### Myth 2: Collaboration is one person's responsibility

Collaboration isn't a solitary task, but many businesses let the responsibility fall on one person who is supposed to make collaboration happen between disparate teams and people with little support. Sometimes, companies will name this

person the Community Manager or Knowledge Manager.

While I applaud the effort of those cast in such roles, I think there is something dystopian about such an assignment. For one thing, this allows others to abdicate their own responsibility to take collaboration seriously. Moreover, it is incredibly difficult for an appointed collaboration manager to be viewed as anything other than an interloper by the team.

### Myth 3: Collaboration self-organises

Just as collaboration isn't a solitary task, it also does not organise itself. Handing a piece of collaboration software (even a really great one) over to your teams and expecting them to organise themselves is a set-up for failure.

There needs to be structure – a team of people who understands the company's collaborative model and philosophy, and can facilitate the process across all departments and levels. This team must communicate collaborative goals and organise everyone around them.

Most importantly, it must be understood that everyone collaborates in every job role. Responsibility for collaboration and accountability for it has to be baked into job roles. The successful firm will: 1) teach people how to collaborate, 2) make collaboration part of people's jobs, and 3) publicly recognise collaboration when it is happening well.

Besides having open offices, adopting Agile and an unrelenting focus on transparency, we ensure this through our employee communications. We regularly highlight those who have done an outstanding job collaborating – especially efforts that satisfy a customer or win a new one. Recently, we had a very hard sale to an enterprise customer that required us to build a significant piece of new infrastructure to meet their needs. We told this story in detail with a video – putting the project teams in the spotlight – and shared it with all our employees globally.

So, watch out for those myths. Confront them with an open willingness to work together and you will be on your way to creating a collaborative organisation. 🍌



•MAY/JUN 2016•

## THE CHALLENGE PULLOUT

### *The R-rated Issue*

22

#### FUN THINGS TO DO DURING LUNCH

No matter how long or short your break is.

24

#### WELCOME TO THE FOLD

Origami books are the next big thing.

27

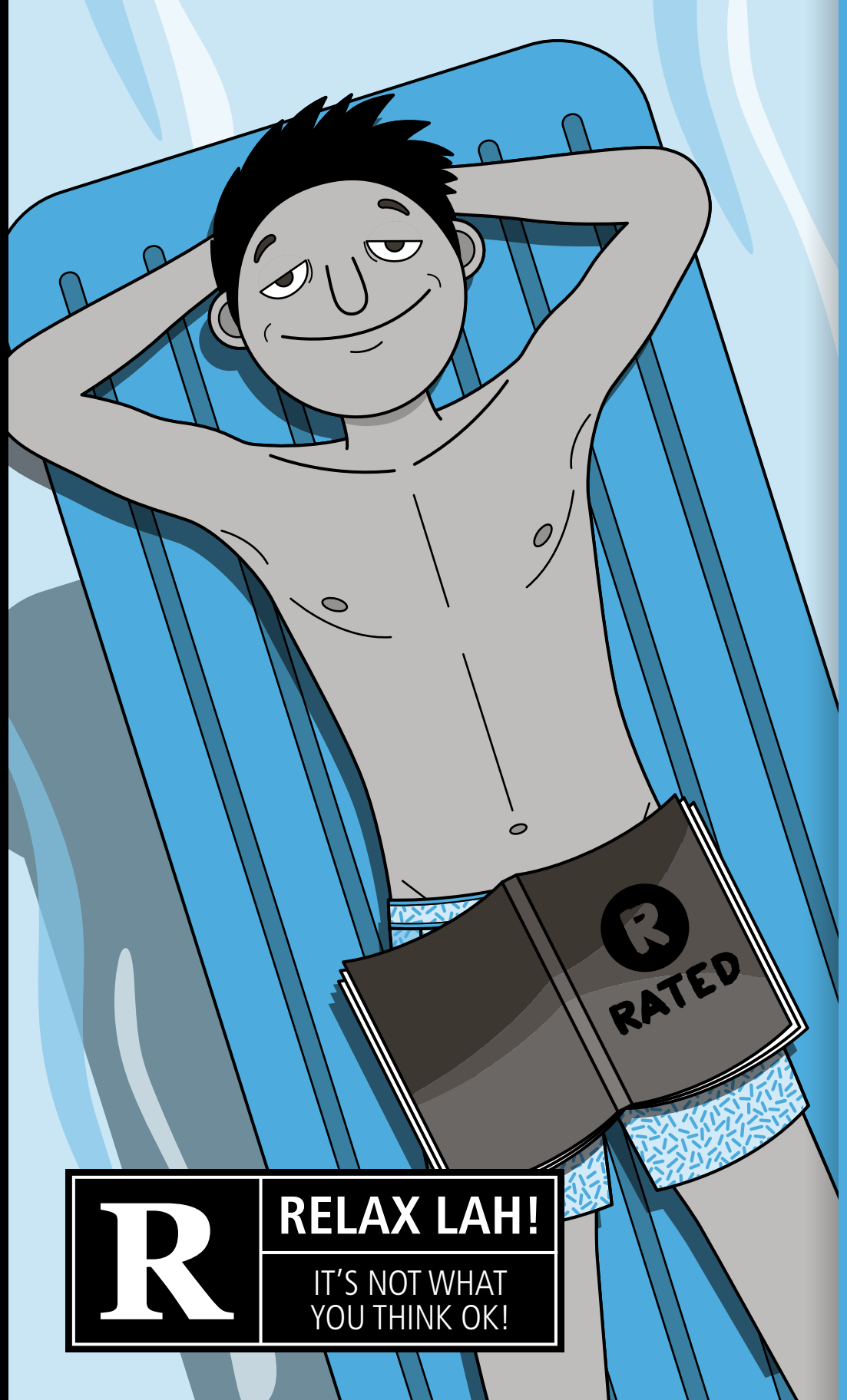
#### HOW GREAT MINDS SLEEP

Hint: Not a lot (apparently).

28

#### HOW TO SLEEP IN UNCOMFORTABLE PLACES

Say goodbye to stiff necks or backs with these tips.



# R

## RELAX LAH!

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK OK!

Research & writing by Dai J.Y.  
Edited by Siti Maziah Masramli  
Design & illustration by Ryan Ong

8 PAGES TO HELP YOU  
RELAX & RECHARGE!

That is, Rest, Relax and Recharge. What were you thinking?! It's true, though, that some R&R activities, like #netflixandchill, can be rather naughty (if you don't get it, go to page 26)... So while the kids have it good with their June holidays, it doesn't mean you can't carve out time to pamper yourself. Read on for ideas!





# TURN YOUR BATHROOM INTO K-BOX

For serious shower singers.



## IF YOU WANT TO SPLASH OUT

(pun completely intended)

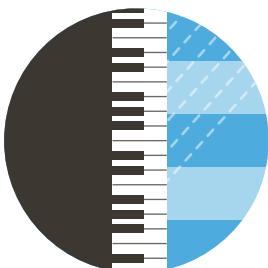
Get waterproof bluetooth shower speakers, and link 'em to your phone or iPad. Some even have suction cups that you can attach to your shower wall.

[bit.ly/showermusic](http://bit.ly/showermusic)



## IF YOU'RE CHEAP

Hate jabbing at wonky touchscreen consoles in karaoke bars? Now imagine doing that with soapy fingers. Slip your phone into a thin waterproof pouch (or ziplock bag), punch a hole at the top, and hang it on a 3M hook in your shower cube. Solved.



## IF YOU'RE ABOUT KEEPING IT REAL

Tacky chandeliers and velvet sofas – karaoke bars are temples of kitsch. Uphold this fine tradition with “musical notes” or “piano key” shower curtains. This one by ShowerTunes even comes with an in-built waterproof speaker system.

[bit.ly/curtainmusic](http://bit.ly/curtainmusic)

# FUN THINGS TO DO DURING LUNCH BREAK

Besides eating, obviously.

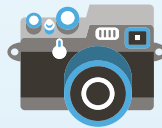
IF YOU HAVE...



## 20 min

Take a power nap. If you're not afraid to look bonkers, try the Ostrich Pillow, a padded wraparound for your head which looks like the love child of E.T. and a balaclava.

[bit.ly/octopillow](http://bit.ly/octopillow)



## 40 min

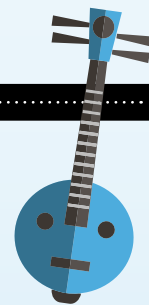
Do a photo tour of a nearby neighbourhood (you'll meet your daily step requirement too). Mobile app EyeEm has weekly photo challenges where you can submit phone snaps based on a theme (e.g., “Orange”).



## 60 min

Work out. The Health Promotion Board's popular Sunrise in the City programme also now includes some lunch-hour classes. Registration is crucial – it's fastest fingers first once the month's schedule is up.

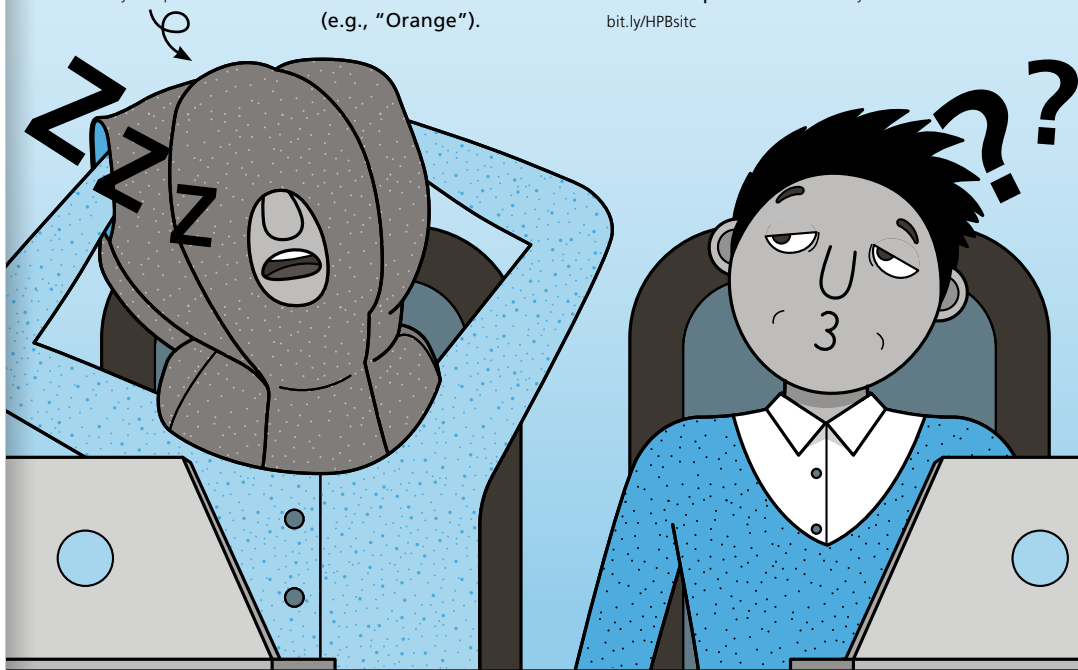
[bit.ly/HPBsitc](http://bit.ly/HPBsitc)



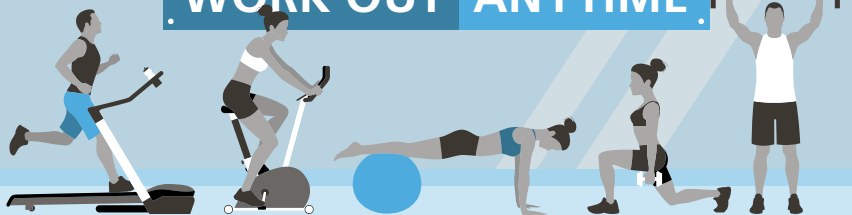
## 80 min

Catch a free performance. The Asian Civilisations Museum's lunchtime concert series occur a couple of times a year. Check out the museum's website for updated programmes.

[bit.ly/ACMLunchtime](http://bit.ly/ACMLunchtime)



## WORK OUT ANYTIME



If midnight bicep curls scream “good time” to you, then Anytime Fitness gym could be your new hangout. It's a global chain of 24-hour gyms that landed in Singapore in 2014. It now has over 20 outlets here with many in heartland areas, such as Bedok and Jurong. The gyms are unmanned from 10pm to 10am, but members can gain access with a security token that can, apparently, be used at all other branches, including those overseas. Anytime, anywhere.

[www.anytimefitness.sg](http://www.anytimefitness.sg)



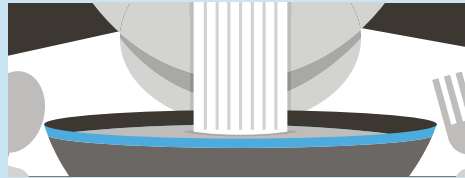
# QUIZ: ARE YOU RELAXING, OR ARE YOU PLAIN LAZY?

Know the difference between taking a well-deserved breather and being a full-time skiver.



## You're reading this Pullout...

- a) Early in the morning, before you dive into work.
- b) During your 2pm discussion, pretending it's that report you were supposed to review – yesterday.



## How long was lunchtime today?

- a) About an hour?
- b) Wait, this doesn't include the morning stroll to Starbucks, and tea-time prata break right?



## You're feeling overworked. You...

- a) Listen to music, or offload on your colleague.
- b) Complain to your boss – seriously, how can you complete that submission when Thursday is your desk-cleaning day?



## It's 5pm on a Friday. You are...

- a) Winding up for the day.
- b) Already driving up to Johor Bahru to eat seafood. Need to beat the jams, man.



## If your boss calls you a "Tai Chi master". Your first thought is:

- a) "Huh, but I know nothing about Qi / Chinese martial arts."
- b) "D\*\*\*, how did he know I *siam*-ed that presentation to Jonathan."



## Unless absolutely necessary, you don't check your work emails...

- a) On weekends and public holidays.
- b) ... Wait, I need to finish this sentence?

**MOSTLY A'S:** You balance work with the occasional downtime pretty well. Keep it up!

**MOSTLY B'S:** You're either lazy or deluded. Probably the former.

## MINDFULNESS GURUS IN YOUR EARS

*Two apps that help you keep your zen on the go.*



Meditation gamified. Created by a Buddhist monk, this app gives you get 10 days of free access to 10 ten-minute meditation practices, after which there's the option to pay. You can download sessions to use offline.



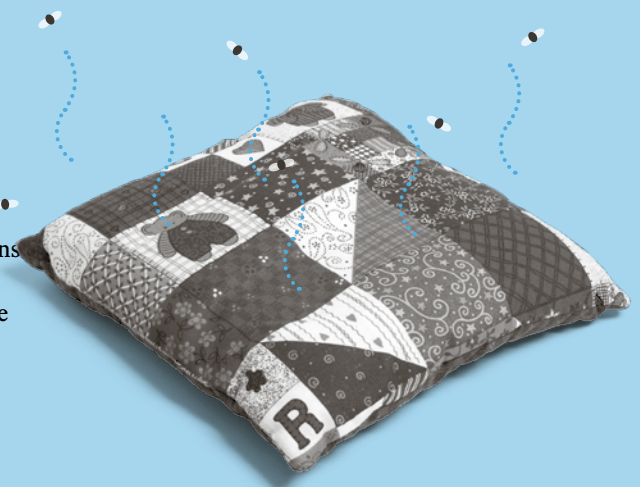
This app provides "guided meditation" for different situations, including ones when you're not necessarily in a quiet corner nursing a cup of ocha – when you're exercising, eating, walking in the city or feeling stressed, for instance. Just don't bump into a wall or someone else.

## IN DEFENSE OF "CHOU-CHOUS" (aka The Smelly Pillow)

*You're 35. So why do you still sleep with your childhood pillow?*

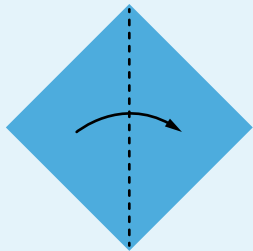
Doctors say that some adults continue to invest childhood items with emotional significance – yes, even those crusted with years of drool and blanketed in an odour that no washing machine can get rid of. It's likely that this item also remains a source of "psychological comfort at bedtime" – a security blanket, if you will. Though most people outgrow their stinky pillow/bolster/stuffed toy once they're independent, it is fine to hold on to it for longer, as long as it's not interfering in your life or relationships.

Source: [bit.ly/stinkycomfort](http://bit.ly/stinkycomfort)

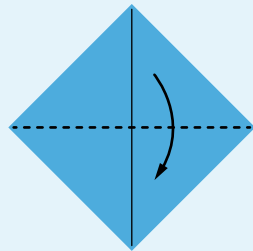


## FOR BEGINNERS

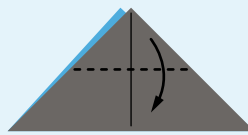
Fold a useful corner page bookmark out of a square piece of paper. Once done, use a marker to decorate the bookmark, to make cute animal faces.



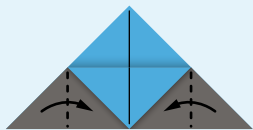
Fold in half and unfold.



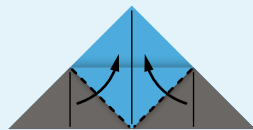
Fold in half.



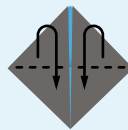
Fold top layer in half.



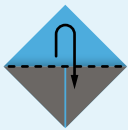
Fold both corners in and unfold.



Fold corners to meet the top of the triangle.



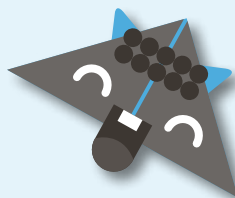
Fold and tuck both flaps into the pocket.



Fold and tuck remaining flap into the pocket



Corner page bookmark done!



For more inspiration, go to: [bit.ly/cutebkmk](http://bit.ly/cutebkmk) or [bit.ly/monstabkmk](http://bit.ly/monstabkmk)

## FOR THE ADVENTUROUS

Try making the similar page corner bookmarks in the shape of a

CAT



[bit.ly/nekobkmk](http://bit.ly/nekobkmk)

BULLDOG



[bit.ly/bulldogbkmk](http://bit.ly/bulldogbkmk)

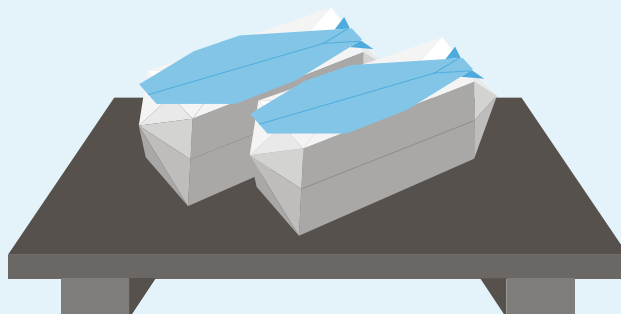
CRANE



[bit.ly/cranebkmk](http://bit.ly/cranebkmk)

## FOR EXPERTS

Learn to make various types of "sushi", including this adorable shrimp nigiri piece, as well as a sushi plate at [bit.ly/foldsushirolls](http://bit.ly/foldsushirolls)



# WELCOME TO



First, it was adult coloring books, then origami. Now, origami is the big trend for 2018.

In January, UK newspapers reported that origami books are the top-selling books at busy professionals, books like *Zen and the Art of Origami* and *Colour and Fold Your Way to Calm and Mindfulness*. Marketing spiel or mindfulness? Find out for yourself? Grab these origami books.

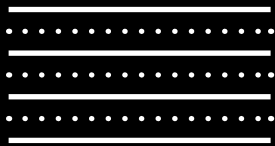
LAST PIECE...



Folding is not something you can do with your hands while my mind is in other places. It's something that captures my attention.

— Robert Lang, Author and well-known origami artist  
[www.langorigami.com](http://www.langorigami.com)

# COME THE



uring books. Now, the  
16 is... origami.

orted the unusual number of new  
first quarter of this year. Targeted  
n *Doodle Origami* and *Colour-Gami*:  
e being promoted as ways to reclaim  
legit zen-out method? Why not  
o some spare paper and try  
ami projects.



I WILL GET  
IT RIGHT...

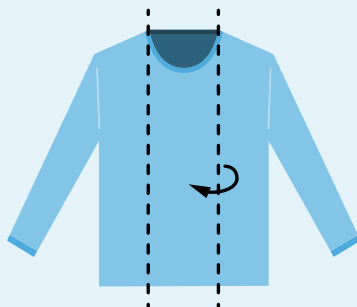
ning that occupies my  
nd wanders to other  
ng that absorbs all of  
and thinking.

merican physicist,  
own origami enthusiast  
(origami.com)

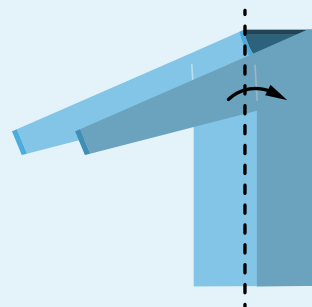
## BE A KONVERT

*Think folding paper is unproductive? Find your calm while organising your space.*

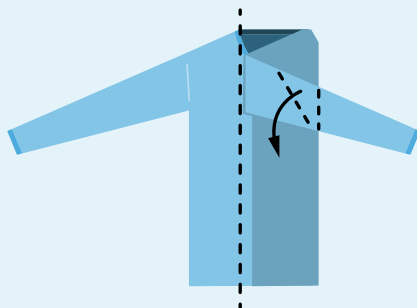
People all over the world have experienced the magic of doing the KonMari, a method of tidying named after “decluttering consultant” Marie Kondo. Her first book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, has sold five million copies worldwide. Her second title, *Spark Joy*, features cute illustrations of her methods for the right way to tidy, including how to fold clothes neatly so that they can stand upright, take up less space and be easily seen.



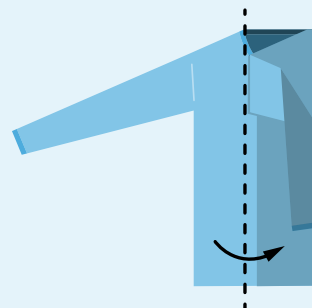
Fold one side towards the centre.



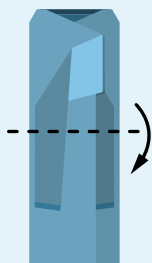
Fold the sleeve to fit within the top rectangle's width.



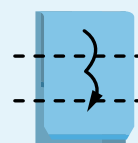
Fold the sleeve back and flush it with the right-side edge of the top fold.



Fold the other side the same way.



Fold into half but not quite to the edge.



Fold in thirds to fit the height of the storage space.



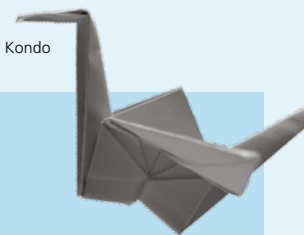
Stand it up!

Illustrations and instructions based on image from *Spark Joy* by Marie Kondo

## PERSONAL PROJECT: PAPER CRANES

To beat the “busy trap”, digital journalist Olsy Sorokina decided to fold one crane a day in February 2015. To her surprise, there were days when even this simple two-minute task slipped her mind, despite her determination and preparation (she stacked origami paper on her table next to a bowl to collect the paper cranes). “A lot of other, more important things slip our minds the same way: family birthdays, tax submission deadlines, promises we made to friends... the minutes it took me to fold a crane became an exercise in mindfulness, creating tangible proof of the passage of time.”

Read more of her reflection at [bit.ly/28dayscranes](http://bit.ly/28dayscranes)



## DECIPHER POSH HOTELS' PILLOW MENUS

Lucky enough to have a stay at a top-notch hotel? You may come across pillow menus that let you select your choice of plush head support. Some offer the most esoteric options, bound to satisfy even the fussiest sleeper (buckwheat hull pillows, anyone?)



### Memory foam

The pillow "moulds" to your head and neck, evenly distributing pressure.



### Hypoallergenic

Designed with materials meant to minimise allergic reactions.



## ADULT PLAYGROUNDS

The name sounds mildly sleazy, but adult playgrounds have come into vogue as a way for busy adults to have fun destressing. These recreational spaces are sometimes temporary structures and may include fitness stations like cross bars, or just be all-out zany – think a giant adult-only ball pit with a soundtrack of club or dance music, which happened in New York City and London! In Singapore, the first Adult Playground event took place in 2014, and the next one will happen in 2016. Sign up for updates at [adultplayground.sg](http://adultplayground.sg)

Read more: [regressionsessions.com](http://regressionsessions.com) & [bit.ly/pgforadults](http://bit.ly/pgforadults)

## #NETFLIXANDCHILL

It used to be a lazy Saturday night activity ("No energy to go out. I'll just stay home, Netflix and chill"). But around about 2014, #netflixandchill morphed into a millennial euphemism for casual sex, spawning tons of internet memes ("Hey bae, wanna come over tonight and Netflix and, hurhur, 'chill'?") Now make sure that invitation to watch *Daredevil* doesn't turn into hanky-panky.

Read more: [bit.ly/netflixandwhat](http://bit.ly/netflixandwhat)

## BEST TEAM-BONDING ACTIVITIES



### Hit The "Slopes"

No budget for an offsite at the Alps? No problem! Head to Urban Ski, where you can learn skiing and snowboarding on Singapore's first indoor ski slope (cheese fondue not included).



### Play Laser Tag

Organise a mobile laser tag session. This means the "battlefield" can be anywhere of your choosing including an open field or within your office (it's kind of a warzone anyway).

[www.combatlasersingapore.com](http://www.combatlasersingapore.com)



### Kick Bubble Soccer

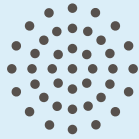
Nothing brings people together like sports – and this is the closest you'll get to violently tackling your boss to the ground. You don an inflatable zorb that lets you collide, smash into and pounce on rivals with no injury (or lawsuit).

[www.bubblebump.sg](http://www.bubblebump.sg)



### Orthopaedic

Best if you have neck stiffness or pain.



### Buckwheat hull

These pillows won't "collapse" under the weight of your head, and feel cooler against the skin.



### Body or U-Shaped

An oversized pillow big enough for you to cuddle. Great for side sleepers to fit between the legs for support.



### Down / Feather

Soft, light and supple, these pillows also conserve body heat (and hence feel "warmer").

# HOW GREAT MINDS SLEEP



*Not doctor-approved: very few of these successful people clock the recommended eight hours of snooze time.*

#### DO YOU KNOW?

#### 6 Hours & 32 Minutes

That's the average amount of sleep Singaporeans get in a day – or at least, those who use the digital wristband Jawbone, which released 2014 data of users' movements and sleep. Does six and a half hours sound like a dream? Singapore is in fact one of the world's most sleep-deprived cities.

[bit.ly/sleeplessSg](http://bit.ly/sleeplessSg)

## LEONARDO DA VINCI

2 hours



Though it is hard to verify, the Renaissance man is said to have taken only 20 minute naps roughly every four hours, claiming it helped him stay productive.

## NIKOLA TESLA

2 hours



The inventor famously slept just two to three hours a day, and once worked for 84 hours straight in his laboratory.

## MARGARET THATCHER

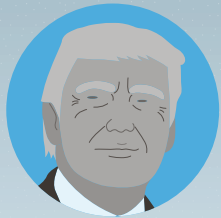
4 hours



The Iron Lady famously worked 20 hours a day, leading her husband to reportedly snap at her once, "Woman – bed!"

## DONALD TRUMP

4 hours



The presidential hopeful has said before: "How does somebody that's sleeping 12 to 14 hours a day compete with someone that's sleeping three or four?"

## BARACK OBAMA

6 hours



Bedtime for the hardworking US president is around 1am or 2am – he also wakes up at 7am to hit the gym.

## LEE HSIEN LOONG

6 hours



It looks like the PM gets more rest than his late father, a famous night owl who went to bed only at 3.30am.

## MARISSA MAYER

6 hours (and says she can get by on 4)



The Yahoo CEO famously worked 130 hours a week – a feat she says anyone can do if you're "strategic about when you shower, and sleeping under your desk".

## KARL LAGERFELD

7 hours



The eccentric fashion designer insists on sleeping seven hours, regardless of what time he goes to bed.

## SATYA NADELLA

8 hours



The Microsoft CEO is one of the rare tech leaders who clocks a solid eight hours of sleep.

# HOW TO SLEEP IN UNCOMFORTABLE PLACES



## ON AN AIRPLANE (ECONOMY, OBVIOUSLY)

Who cares about looking crazy when you need beauty sleep? If you agree, you're probably game to try an inflatable travel pillow that turns into a giant cube, which you can rest on the inflight table. Or get one by Travelrest – it resembles a heavily padded seatbelt that you "wear" across your body, to support your neck and prevent your head from jerking forward.

[www.skyrest.com](http://www.skyrest.com) & [bit.ly/travelrest](http://bit.ly/travelrest)



## ON THE JOB

Because doing it at the work desk is too obvious, junior bankers and Japanese salary men have been known to retire to toilet cubicles (desperate times call for...). Put the lid down and position your bum, so you're close to the edge – just in case it breaks and you have a rude (and wet) awakening. Must-have sleep aids: air freshener or face mask, ear plugs and hand sanitiser.



## IN AN OVERNIGHT QUEUE

Queuing for the latest gadget or tickets to a concert? Snoozing in a line requires skill and savvy. The best option is to pitch a small camping tent. Not only does it provide privacy, a tent is a great way of (ahem) staking your place in the queue. Don't have a tent? Grab a clean yoga mat - it's more comfortable to sleep on, compared to a thin picnic mat. Bring along an eye mask, wet wipes, and sleeping bag (or blanket), and you're set.



## IN A BAD HOTEL ROOM

Does the room have paper-thin walls? Use a white noise app to drown out your next-door neighbour's Marilyn Manson playlist. Pillows too flat? Ask the hotel for more and stack 'em up. Or place your thick winter sweaters and cable knits underneath.



## ON A LONG-DISTANCE TRAIN OR COACH

A sturdy backpack is your friend. Place it on your lap, rest your chin/head on the top and wrap your arms around the shoulder straps. Bonus: you're making it harder for thieves to nick your stuff! If your backpack is too soft, it'll collapse under your weight, so stuff it with rolled up clothes or pack your laptop in it.



## OUT IN THE OPEN

Get hold of a BauBax, billed as the "world's best travel jacket". Like something from a James Bond movie, it's fitted with a portable charger, drink holder, eye mask, hand warmers in the front pockets, and an inflatable neck pillow.

[baubax.com](http://baubax.com)

**A letter from**

DR GLORIA LIM

*Commission Member, Public Service Commission (1982 – 1996)**Founding Director, National Institute of Education (1991 – 1994)**Dean, Faculty of Science, National University of Singapore (1973 – 1977, 1979 – 1980)*

# *Don't lose the* **OPPORTUNITY** *to* **MENTOR**



DEAR YOUNG OFFICER,

As a senior, I have been asked about the generation gap. To me, it is not so much a generation gap as it is a “thinking gap”. Things change, and each generation goes through different times and differing experiences. I believe that if older people can remember what it was like to be young once, and put ourselves in their shoes, we can all perhaps bridge this “thinking gap”.

I remember a student protest in the '70s, when I was Dean of Science at the National University of Singapore. As the protest went on, several deans and I were getting restless – we were practically marooned in the upper floor meeting room we were in. A few of the deans considered confronting the students, but I suggested that we just be patient.

All of us have been young once and know how young people tend to be fired up about the things they are passionate about. I felt there was no point confronting agitated students, because they might not be thinking clearly and their feelings would eventually cool down.

Later we could tell them, “Yes, we hear you, but we also have other considerations.” Unlike us, young students may not yet have the experience of having to balance different needs: what they want versus how it impacts other people, for example.

An older person would have more experience, and with some empathy and the ability to tap into the feelings of youth, we should not lose the opportunity to mentor and give the right kind of advice. Whether that advice is heeded or not by the younger person, sometimes you have to leave it and not push too much.

**Any sensible young person will take good advice; even if they may not immediately act on it, the advice is in their minds.**

If you have something to say, just put it out there in bare facts. Any sensible young person will take good advice; even if they may not immediately act on it, the advice is in their minds. They might give it some thought later and realise that something makes sense.

**Act with kindness**

Any decision you make will always have an impact: some will be good, and some will fall on others who will feel bad about it. Whatever decision you take, when you act with integrity and some kindness, which can be noticeable by the other person, it lessens any hurt that they might feel and makes them more receptive to what you have to say.

In my career, if I had to correct someone, I would point it out using gentler words. Also always provide an opportunity to discuss, so that the other person can see your point of view, and not be disciplined so harshly that they feel like they never have a chance to recover or do better.

I tried to do that with all my students, many of whom became my friends, even

those from my days of teacher training at Victoria School. The Secondary 2 boys could be very rough. I would tell them, “I have to discipline you, but if you don't feel happy about it, come and see me later. I can talk to you about why I took certain actions.”

To this day, they respect that, and they still visit me to tell me they enjoyed that time. Some of my students over the years at NUS graduated and also became my colleagues.

For the younger ones among you, I encourage you to find a good older friend you can trust. If you are feeling frustrated or questioning why certain things are done, bring up your reasons for it and talk things out. In time, you will get to know who can be good mentors to you: they will show in their words and actions their integrity, self-discipline and care for your career. The standard of work they produce will also speak for them.

Soon it will be your turn to mentor. I hope that you can go far in your civil service career, but remember to please imbue any actions you take with kindness. ☺

**Text by**  
TAN HWEE HWEE  
**Photos by**  
ROY LIM



## “The relationships matter just as much as getting the job done”

*Collaboration is one of Ms Tan Gee Keow's key values, something which she applies readily to her work at Strategy Group.*

**Ms Tan Gee Keow is Deputy Secretary** of Strategy Group in the Prime Minister's Office. The 41-year-old, who tells *Challenge* she never thought she would be invited to *A Cuppa With...*, comes across as an intelligent, easy-going person, often sharing perceptive insights that she rounds off with a pleasant laugh.

Formed in July 2015, Strategy Group aims to strengthen whole-of-government policy development and action on national priorities, especially those that cut across multiple agencies.

And when it comes to initiating and managing collaboration between the nu-

merous agencies, having “a thick skin” helps, Ms Tan says. This means speaking her mind even when it could be risky doing so – when she has to gently prompt others to take a different, non-silo perspective to get a good discussion going, for example.

“My husband and I always joke that he should not take any risks in his job on the same day I have to go to an important meeting, where I might have to say something controversial, so I don't have to worry even if I'm sacked!” she writes in an email right after our interview, punctuated with a “\*smile\*”.

A thick skin has also made her una-

fraid to ask questions, even if they might make her look silly. That has helped her familiarise herself quickly with any new role or task, and navigate through a career spanning policy work and research in the education and defence ministries, as well as ground-level work at the Community Development Council.

Her time at the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources was one of her most challenging yet exciting undertakings: handling the 2013 haze crisis, Singapore's worst since 1997.

Her Permanent Secretary then, a former army general, had asked her to mobi-



lise a crisis team. But the army jargon he used – “Con ops”, “S1”, “S3” – stumped her. Ms Tan quickly approached her colleagues with military backgrounds to help “decrypt” his language, and jointly put together a crisis organisation structure.

Ms Tan also chaired daily media briefings for updates on the haze. With a background in Economics, she was the least technically trained member on the panel, which included weather experts and scientists. So she had to ask many questions to quickly pick up the knowledge needed, and is now proudly her family’s “Chief PM2.5 Scientific Advisor”.

But she is most proud of how the various ministries involved banded together quickly to “dust off contingency drawer plans” and put them into action.

“There were easily 8 to 10 agencies working together,” she recalls. “In all our conversations... it was always, ‘I’m going to try and do what I can to help you.’ That gave me confidence and comfort to know that the whole of government can work very well together given a common mission.”

### Coming together

The experience drove home for Ms Tan the power of collaboration, which is precisely at the heart of Strategy Group.

She defines its mission as bringing different parts of the government together to work on national priorities, “so we can get the best outcome for Singapore and Singaporeans”.

“Increasingly, it’s hard to do things by yourself,” she explains. “The policies that we do within an issue, more often than not have an impact on another agency’s policies and issues, so we have to come together more often to work out solutions together.”

At inter-agency meetings, she notes, people sit behind name tags that state their respective ministries – and almost immediately, they put on ministry-centric hats.

“Yes, we want them to bring their ministry’s expertise to the discussion, but what we want eventually is to develop solutions that are beyond individual ministry hats.

“Success is when it becomes second nature for a ministry to step forward and make a contribution that helps achieve another ministry’s mission,” Ms Tan says.



### What’s in your cuppa?

In the morning, usually a *kopi*; in the afternoon, *teh*. I have started adding *siu-dai* (“less sweet”) to my orders!

### Where do you take it?

I’m not picky. The *kopitiam* opposite MOM HQ or Funan’s Ya Kun works well for me.

## Success is when it becomes second nature for a ministry to step forward and make a contribution that helps achieve another ministry’s mission.

For example, if secure retirement is a goal for the Ministry of Manpower, then the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Development can also contribute towards this goal through their affordable healthcare and housing policies.

And although working out solutions together can be “very painful” – it is more time-consuming for everyone, and requires uniting people who have not teamed up before – she strongly believes that the outcome will be almost always be “superior” to a single unit’s effort.

### Building trust to lead

To achieve collaboration, one must first earn and build trust, Ms Tan points out. “We should start with a common mission, what we are trying to achieve together and get people’s minds out of the silo of vested interests.”

So during the first few months, she and her Strategy Group colleagues came together to develop a shared vision and mission. It was also important to her that everyone shared the same set of values.

“It’s not just about what we do, but how we do it. We have to do things like build trust, collaboration, understand people’s motivations and where they come from, make sure that the relationships matter just as much as getting the job done.”

Reciprocating trust is another principle she holds: she trusts that others will do the best job that they can. And if someone lets her down, her approach would be to first find out why, and talk things through.

“As a parent, being let down is something that happens all the time, right?” Ms Tan, who has three children, says good-humouredly.

She relaxes by spending time with family. “I joke with my kids a lot, they joke with me a lot... so I de-stress by going crazy with my kids.

“In August last year, we waved our National Day star-clappers wildly from our car at pedestrians and strangers in other cars. It was great to find that most of them would smile and wave back!” ☺

**Text by**  
NICOLETTE LORRAINE SELVARAJ  
**Photos by**  
CATSPACE

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# UP CLOSE WITH THE SERVICE STARS

*With determination and a drive to do more than required, these PS21 Star Service Award winners strive to make a difference in the lives of those they serve, be they job seekers or students, offenders on probation or ordinary residents.*





ART DIRECTION YIP SIEW FEI MAKEUP GINGER LYNETTE, USING RMK COSMETICS HAIR KENNETH ONG, USING BED HEAD BY TIGI



## MR ANDREW ER, 29

Career Coach, Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA)

Over the past five years, Mr Er has helped more than 1,000 Singaporeans improve their career prospects. The patient career coach takes time to interact with each of his clients to get to know them better and work together to map their career goals before coming up with suitable training or career advice.

One of his clients, a Mr Hamid, struggled to secure full-time employment while working as a part-time security guard. The sole breadwinner of his family believed that being a security operation executive would enable him to create a better future for his family, relates Mr Er.

After understanding Mr Hamid's work experience and career aspirations, Mr Er advised him to attend job preparatory workshops and undergo relevant training. Mr Hamid went on to take up some IT courses, customer service training and a Class 3 driving license required for the security operation executive job.

Beyond assisting Mr Hamid with course fee subsidies and an allowance, Mr Er checked back regularly with him throughout his intensive training period to encourage him and provide moral support.

Months later, Mr Hamid clinched his desired job and, with further skills upgrading, was soon promoted to manager. He now earns three times his previous salary.

Mr Er says: "As long as you are proactive and committed, I will be able to guide and support you with the relevant resources to make that career transition.

"We encounter all types of clients," he adds. "We hope to see more clients who are like Mr Hamid, resilient and motivated. What I find satisfying as a career coach is to be able to spur my clients on and partner them in their self-discovery and job search process."

**As long as you are proactive and committed, I will be able to guide and support you.**

## MR CHEN GUOWEI, 32

Allied Educator, Juying Secondary School, Ministry of Education (MOE)

Whenever Mr Chen enters the classroom, his students sit up straight and pay full attention. They like him for his jovial personality, and he is known for being understanding and supportive.

"Working with all kinds of students and their learning needs can be quite a challenge, but I like doing what I do," says Mr Chen, who has been teaching Chinese language and IT to Normal (Technical) students for the past six years.

He takes inspiration from his secondary school History teacher, Ms Carolyn Howe, who touched him with her kindness. He recalls how she once stopped the lesson to check if he was fine: "I was running a temperature and she specially went out of class to get me a bottle of mineral water."

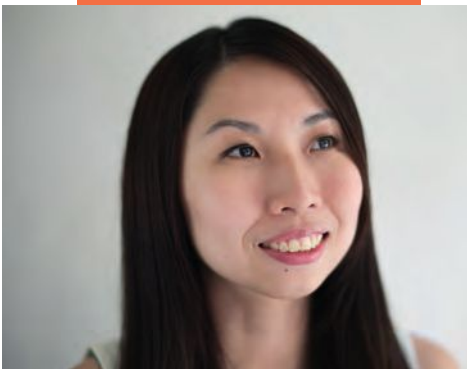
As a student, Mr Chen used to neglect his studies. But "I had a wake-up call when I found that in order to graduate, I had to do better." He now uses his experience to show students that everyone can succeed in school if they have the willpower and intent to change, as he did years ago.

But first, they should be able to focus on their learning. That is why he earnestly helps any student in need – even if their difficulties lie beyond the classroom.

When he found out that one of his students and her family were in dire financial straits, Mr Chen rallied his colleagues to raise funds for the student. He also checked constantly on her well-being, visited her family with his colleagues and made sure that she was coping well enough to take the exams.

Each time Mr Chen helps his students, he gets a sense of satisfaction as he is emulating his role model, Ms Howe. "I want to be that strong bright light just like her, to guide my students to the right path," he says.

**Working with all kinds of students and their learning needs can be quite a challenge, but I like doing what I do.**



**MDM ALICE PEH, 59**

**Operations Support Officer,  
Punggol View Primary School,  
Ministry of Education (MOE)**

At Punggol View Primary School, everyone calls Mdm Peh "Auntie Alice".

"I don't want to address myself as Mdm or Mrs... others might not be comfortable with approaching you or telling you more information," she says.

Asked about what she does in her role, she replies: "I'm just a printing lady, dear." In fact, she does more than that, taking care of students' injuries, walking nervous new students to the assembly hall and performing reception duties at the General Office.

Auntie Alice is devoted to the well-being of the staff and students, whom she regards as family. She starts work at 5.45am daily – more than an hour ahead of her official time – greeting parents and students who are early and making sure students have taken their breakfast, which has helped her build warm relations with them.

That was how she befriended Nadhirah, then a Primary 1 student who would be dropped off at the gates before they opened at 6am. Nadhirah was very quiet and did not know her own name in full, Auntie Alice recalls.

"I knew that I had to help this girl, so I gave her an exercise book and wrote down her full name and asked her to do it too," says Auntie Alice. She went on to guide Nadhirah with her unfinished schoolwork, and noticed the girl struggling to speak to her friends in English. So Auntie Alice, a Peranakan, used a mix of Malay and English to teach her simple words. Six months later, Nadhirah was able to speak the language more confidently and in full sentences.

What spurs Auntie Alice to do more than her job requirements is her desire to be someone the students can trust and rely on. "I love kids. I just give them a hug and it feels like they have given me their whole world!"

**I love kids. I just give them a hug and it feels like they have given me their whole world!**

**MDM ARTINI HAMZAH, 42**

**Senior Community Service  
Officer, Ministry of Social and  
Family Development (MSF)**

Mdm Artini supervises offenders who have to perform community service as part of their probation. In her 10 years in service, she has worked with probationers whose ages range from late teens to mid-40s, who have committed offences such as vandalism or theft.

One of her more memorable charges was someone with hearing disabilities. She recalls: "When I took up this case, I was quite nervous. How [do I] communicate with him?"

Initially, they would write what they wanted to say on a sheet of paper, which they passed back and forth between them. After a few sessions, Mdm Artini felt it was ineffective.

"It was difficult to express certain emotions and feelings, such as when you are surprised or angry," she says.

That was when she decided to learn sign language. Besides wanting to understand more about the deaf community, "I hoped that I could try and communicate better with him," she recounts.

Through their sessions together, Mdm Artini was able to identify her client's interests and decided that a stint at the ASEAN Para Games Singapore 2015 would suit him. So she got him a place as an assistant helper where he had to oversee the line-up of games.

She also took on the duty of a Nila Suite Ambassador alongside him to boost his morale. Encouraged, her client completed his required hours of service within two months instead of the usual six.

Providing such close supervision and support means Mdm Artini often works overtime. "You must really have passion in helping people and be prepared to make sacrifices."

Meanwhile, she has completed the first level of sign language course and hopes to progress to the next level.

**You must really have passion in helping people and be prepared to make sacrifices.**

**MS DELCINE SEE YIWEN, 29**

**Assistant Manager, Environmental  
Public Health Operations, National  
Environmental Agency (NEA)**

Ms See's job lies in bidding farewell – not to people, but to a deadly pest. At the NEA, she oversees the dengue prevention efforts at Choa Chu Kang.

Perhaps it was fate that drew Ms See to her job. Her given name, Yiwen, sounds like the Chinese word for the Aedes mosquito, which spreads dengue.

"Since I was a kid, my name has always been made fun of," she shares, good-humouredly.

While the ribbing used to bother her, Ms See, who sought a job that would benefit the environment, now takes it in her stride – taking pride in leading the fight against dengue.

During a serious outbreak of the disease at Choa Chu Kang in 2014, she and her team combed the area and quashed the number of dengue fever cases from 800 to zero within two months.

The urgency of stopping the outbreak had compelled her team to work quickly, going door to door to meet residents and sharing at public awareness events, even on weekends. During the 2014 outbreak, she and her team mobilised more than 200 grassroots members and residents within three days to raise dengue prevention awareness. Together they covered 44 affected blocks in a single morning.

For her good work, Ms See, who has been at her job for six years, won a National Day award. She remains modest about what she has achieved: "It's not my work entirely. My colleagues inspected the area while I was in charge of educating the residents."

On coordinating the outreach efforts with the community, including grassroots members, community club staff and residents, she says: "Things don't fall in place easily, be prepared. Teamwork is what reaps success." 🌀

**Things don't fall in place easily, be prepared. Teamwork is what reaps success.**

Text by  
FIONA LIAW



# Getting the “elephan

*A plucky team of People’s Association officers from Potong Pasir Community Club, who won the PS21 Star Service Team Award, soldiered past multiple rejections and moved mountains of junk to create a safer and more pleasant space for residents.*



**Imagine rubbish piled up to the ceiling, mysterious liquids oozing from plastic bags and cockroaches crawling and flying about, everywhere.**

Those were what the People’s Association (PA) team from Potong Pasir Community Club (CC) found – not at a rubbish dump, but inside a four-room flat at Toa Payoh in early 2015.

“We were literally running out of the house!” exclaimed Ms Zan Tan, the CC’s Deputy Constituency Director, recounting her first visit to the apartment.

Still, the PA team took it upon themselves to organise the clean-up of the flat. The junk had accumulated there over a period of 10 years.

It took them and other volunteers five full days to complete the task. At the end of their endeavour, they had removed about 10.5 tonnes of rubbish – enough to fill three large skid tanks, and almost the weight of two large elephants.

## **Early obstacle**

Clearing the junk was the simplest part. The real challenge was being able to enter the flat in the first place.

The PA team had first heard of the rubbish problem in late 2014 when neighbours complained about the constant stench emitting from the flat. But when the officers tried to visit the residence, they were barred by the homeowner, an elderly woman.

Neighbours described the flat’s occupants – the elderly woman’s daughter-in-law and her adult grandson – as prone to loud arguments in the middle of the night. The duo would shout at other residents if others so much as glanced at them.

The PA team faced the same hostility in their early attempts to make contact. They sought the help of the Town Council, but the Council too was rebuffed. Officers from the Housing & Development Board (HDB) and the National Environ-

ment Agency (NEA) were also roped in, as the PA team thought up different ways to gain access into the flat. For example, they asked NEA officers for support in checking the place for possible mosquito breeding. Alas, no one could get past the front door.

“We were at our wits’ end,” Potong Pasir CC’s Constituency Director Wilna Tan recalled. But she and her team persisted, motivated by the concern that the hoarded junk was a fire hazard and could endanger the community.

They tried many more avenues, including asking the Singapore Civil Defence Force to confirm the threat of the accumulated trash becoming tinder for fires. Finally, they turned to the Singapore Police Force. After nearly four months since their first knock on the door, the PA team finally gained access into the home.

A difficult task like this may not be part of the PA team’s usual work, but as Mr



# ts" out of the room



Gabriel Seow, also a Deputy Constituency Director at the CC, put it: "As long as it is something that helps the community, it is and will always be part of our job scope."

Whether it is supporting a recently retrenched resident, or pairing up with an elderly resident to go on a short trip organised by the CC so that the resident gets to travel abroad, the team does its best to help the community with the same determination as in its encounter with the Toa Payoh family.

To them, the community centre is more than a place for residents to sign up for courses and gather for activities. Rather, it is there where residents socialise and come together to help one another, a place of acceptance and support – something the PA team takes pride in going the extra mile to make happen.

## Strength in numbers

The team recognises that in many cases, their ability to successfully render help to residents also requires the cooperation of other agencies.

In the Toa Payoh hoarding case, they

needed different agencies to come together – not just to help them gain access into the flat, but also for the entire clean-up process. The Town Council officers offered expertise and contacts for cleaners, and also provided bulk bins.

NEA officers visited the flat and the common areas to check for mosquito breeding, while the HDB sent representatives to advise on the safety of the walls and windows.

The neighbours and the other children of the elderly lady expressed their thanks to the officers for providing a cleaner, safer living environment for the grandmother.

Describing how the team had rallied the officers from various agencies, Ms Wilna Tan said with a laugh: "I told them, 'All

**As long as it is something that helps the community, it is and will always be part of our job scope.**

must go. You all must go. HDB, it's your property. Corridor is under Town Council. NEA, maybe got mosquito breeding.'"

A strong rapport underlies the cooperation between the PA team and the other public agency representatives. The constituency director said this camaraderie was built up over years of simply being willing to help each other out. "If someone from the NEA calls me and says, 'Eh, I heard there's some high-rise littering, can you help me check?' I'd say, 'OK, I help you look.' Then I'll WhatsApp her pictures, tell her, 'This is what's happening. Go and get your guys down.'" she said.

The PA team, being closest to the residents, she added, are attuned to happenings on the ground. This allows them to bridge the gap between other public agencies and citizens.

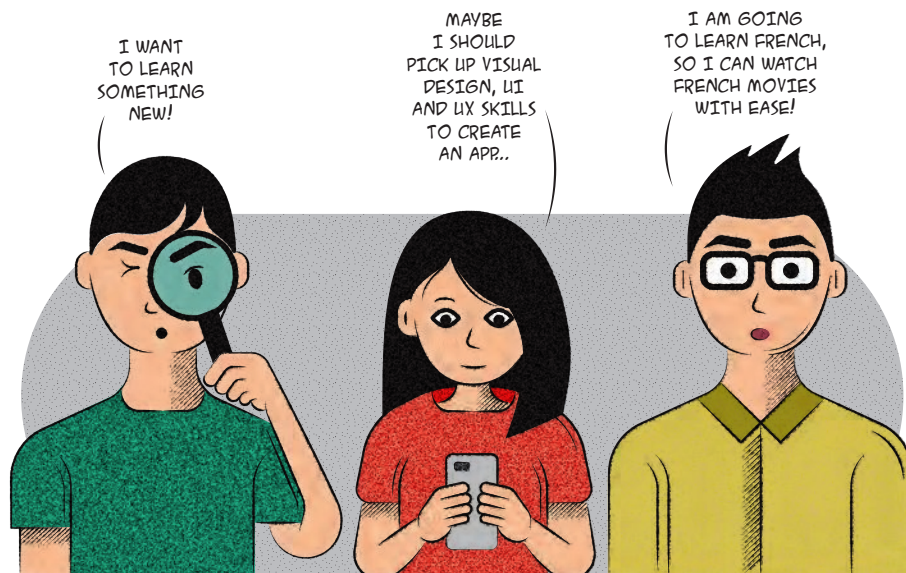
Her advice to public officers: "Do not be deterred by challenges along the way. Even though we are from different agencies, as long as we work together, we will be able to improve the lives of the community." 🗣️



# Learning to learn

TAY YU XUAN decided to pick up the basics of data analytics on his own. Now a junior data scientist at Government Digital Services, IDA, he shares tips you can use to teach yourself new skills.

Illustration by NG SHI WEI



“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” This famous quote from Alvin Toffler, an American futurist, is a principle I subscribe to. It is increasingly relevant in the current era, especially the fast-changing technology field that I am in. Learning is also important to prepare yourself for potential career-changing opportunities.

The tips below are more for learning a new programming language or software, but you can easily apply the principles for learning in other areas.

## Find the reason

This is the most important tip. While it is possible to learn purely for learning’s sake, most people will find it tough to stay the course without a purpose, or the source of motivation that will maintain your interest. It is key.

Want to learn HTML or Javascript? Build your own website to showcase your portfolio. Enjoy watching foreign TV shows? Learn the language so that you can watch them without subtitles. Do you use Microsoft Excel extensively? Then there is a good reason to pick up the programming language, Visual Basics for Applications, to automate the repetitive parts you have to do regularly.

Start with something small, so it becomes a healthy challenge instead of an intimidating project. A simple plan also gives you the benefit of being able to see the results of your fresh skills quickly, keeping you motivated to learn even

more. Build up the challenge level as you hone your new abilities.

## Find resources online

I like using online resources, so that I can go through them in the comfort of my home, and at my convenience. The easy access to resources helps me commit to the process. Of course, if you feel that signing up for a course at an educational institute keeps you disciplined to complete the learning, go for it.

Massive open online courses (MOOC) platforms such as Coursera, EdX and Udacity offer free courses from reputable universities worldwide. These sites contain many well-structured courses with recorded lectures and useful assignments. They cover anything from business skills to art, and design to psychology. They also offer paid verified certificates, which you can then add to your LinkedIn page after completion.

Focus on courses that end with an output, such as building a game. I also like courses that are part of a series so I can advance to a higher level. If you are unsure of your level of commitment, consider shorter courses that finish within four weeks.

## Stick to it

This is the most difficult commitment but a crucial one: set aside a few hours per week for your new endeavour. Two hours is probably sufficient to go through some materials, with a couple more for completing assignments and practising. Spread the hours out, in 30- to 60-minute

blocks, so that you can more easily find the time required, especially on weekday evenings. This has the added benefit of keeping the new knowledge constantly fresh in your mind. If you find yourself unable to maintain your committed time, try to at least finish reading the materials.

## Learn from others

The best way to learn is through guidance from experts. They can be your colleagues, or fellow learners you meet in an interest group. Question-and-answer sites such as Stack Exchange and Quora can help you with specific problems you may face. You can also learn from people around the world by subscribing to community-collated feeds and newsletters.

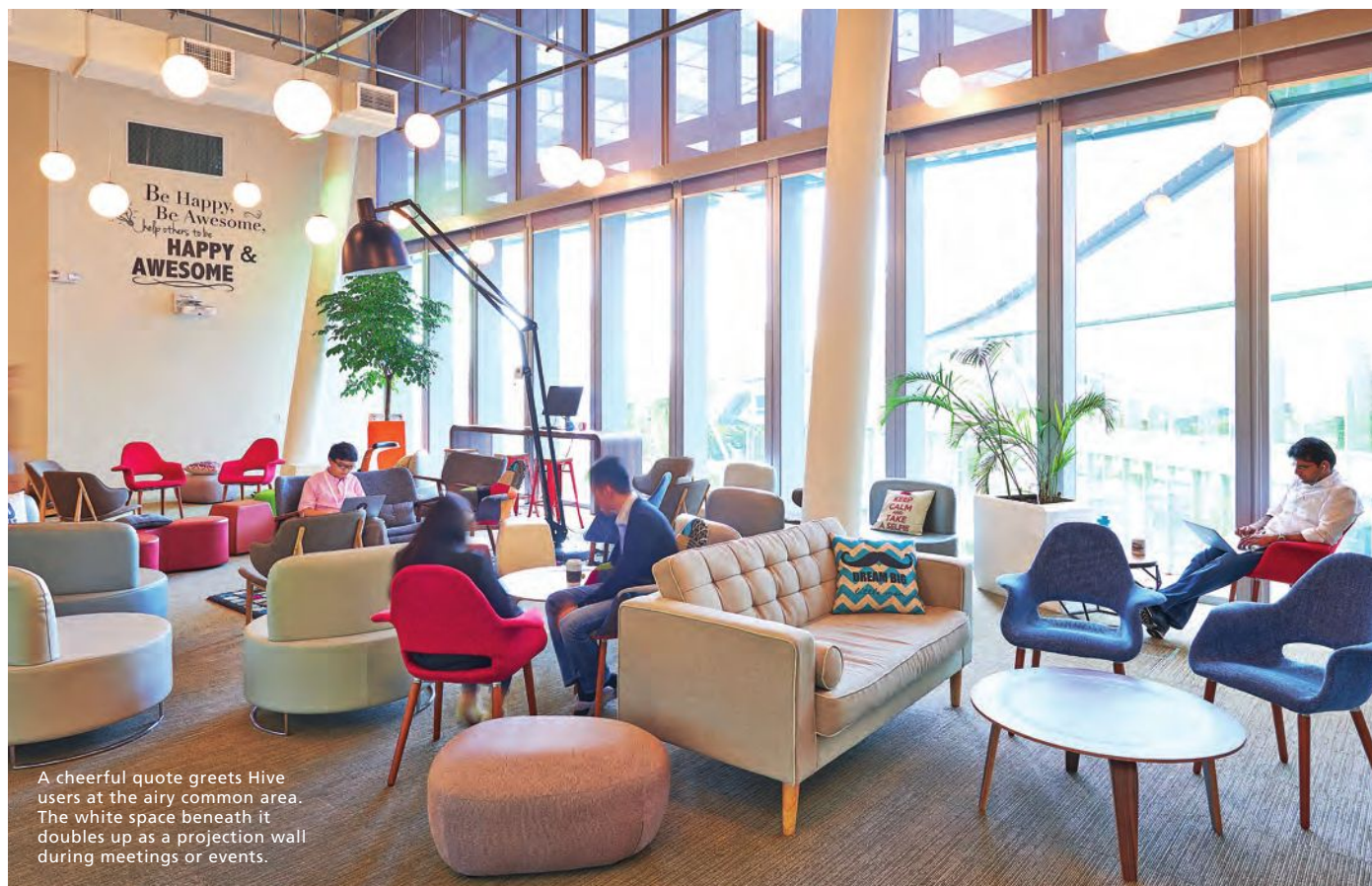
I find that reading through these sites helps to maintain my interest, exposes me to new approaches to old problems, and encourages me to try new techniques in my work. This way, I learn faster and continuously. It also keeps me up to date with developments in the fast-moving field I am in.

With so many resources on the Web, there has never been an easier time to pick up new skills. I hope these tips help you find the right ones and be driven to complete the learning. Enjoy the process! 🎯

Looking to learn something new? Use your Skills-Future Credit. A directory of approved courses can be found at [www.skillsfuture.sg/credit](http://www.skillsfuture.sg/credit)



**Text by**  
SITI MAZIAH MASRAMLI  
**Photos by**  
ROY LIM



A cheerful quote greets Hive users at the airy common area. The white space beneath it doubles up as a projection wall during meetings or events.



Mr Liu Feng Yuan (left) and Mr Mark Lim, Directors at the GDS.

## This Hive's got IT

*Frequent cafe-style conversations and rounds of product-testing with users – it's a different mode of working at the Government Digital Services.*

**At Hive, home to the Government Digital Services (GDS),** some 100 designers, software engineers and data scientists are working together, all to produce and refine government websites and apps for services that increase convenience for citizens.

The GDS is part of the Government Technology Agency (GovTech), a new statutory board that will be officially legislated in October. Spun off from the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA), GovTech will leverage data and technology to deliver better services for citizens and businesses.

Since starting out with about 20 staff in 2014, the GDS has produced apps such as OneService for the Municipal Services Office and Beeline with the Land Transport Authority. It also overhauled the government data portal (data.gov.sg) to include eye-catching data visualisations, and uses analytics to measure the success of public service campaigns.

To support the recruitment of talent with the necessary skills, the GDS employs an unusual method: coding competitions. The top three winners of the IDA's HackerTrail challenge, also "won" the opportunity to apply their tech skills to contributing to public good. All three joined the GDS in February 2015.

And having design, coding and analytics expertise under one roof speeds up project development, compared with outsourcing to vendors. Ms Chua Hui Hwa, Head of Projects, says: “With in-house specialists, we can perform much more efficiently as this helps to speed up communication, foster closer working relationships and creates opportunities for continuous collaboration.”

### Space and speed

Hive’s interior design is partly inspired by cafes and the creative conversations and ideas that often originate in them. The common space filled with cosy chairs is really a conference room – “just without walls” – says Mr Mark Lim, Director of Product Design and Development & Emerging Tech at the GDS.

Past that and the glass dividers (on which wild ideas and motivational quotes are scribbled), is a messier lived-in workspace. Staff sit or stand at their height-adjustable mobile desks and are grouped into cross-functional “project squads”. Charts of Post-its show the roles of members in each squad, ranging from “developer” to “digital strategist”.

To manage projects, they use Scrum, a method of Agile development that aims to develop products in small stages with quick feedback at every stage.

“We don’t try and build the most wonderful comprehensive app that has everything. We start with something small that serves as a journey, and work to improve it,” explains Mr Liu Feng Yuan, Director of Data Science Division at the GDS.

Project teams regularly meet with “stakeholders”, the public agencies they develop services for. Every two weeks or so, the teams have internal meet-ups called “sprints” to share updates and exchange feedback.

The fast-paced environment and open spaces at the GDS are conducive to software development, and common to start-up culture. It is also a way of drawing younger engineers, coders and designers who otherwise tend to perceive the public sector as bureaucratic.

User experience designer Chew Kia Hwee, who worked at a US tech start-up before joining the GDS, says: “The hier-



Staff sit or stand at their height-adjustable mobile desks and are grouped into cross-functional “project squads”. Charts of Post-its show the roles of members in each squad, ranging from “developer” to “digital strategist”.



Ms Chua Hui Hwa, Head of Projects.

Even in serious workspaces, there is fun and humour, as this cheeky sign shows.



Here, small groups of officers can hold planned or impromptu meetings, often with their laptops in tow.

archy is flat. Culture-wise, it's very much like working in San Francisco."

Around the office, there are large monitor screens or "dashboards" that display the progress of projects and even the photos of the persons in charge of specific tasks. At a glance, anyone can know the status of tasks within a project.

"It's a self-managed culture where you're given the freedom to manage your time and priorities," says software developer Lim Zui Young. "The trust from our supervisors propels us to be even more motivated to excel."

To spur creativity through interaction and perk up developers who often spend long, late hours at work, Hive has recreational amenities for staff to take a break and recuperate.

### Understanding user needs

Hive also has a Design Experience Lab

where product prototypes undergo user testing. The Lab, equipped with screens that have cameras and eye-tracking technology, allow GDS designers to observe users trying out versions of their products from behind a one-way mirror.

"We get to record their expressions and observe their pain points," says Mr Chew. "Most usability issues are found by observing user behaviours and how they interact with the products or prototypes, not from what they say they like."

The data from user experience testing and other verbal feedback is used to quickly refine e-citizen services. The information also helps to convince stakeholders who are uncertain about proposed changes to the service being developed.

To source users for testing, the GDS taps the stakeholder's pool of contacts. For the Singapore Civil Defence Force's myResponder app, for instance, the users

could be its volunteers who are trained in CPR. The idea is to tap users who are already invested to give feedback.

"When it comes to Smart Nation, it's all about the people," says Mr Mark Lim. "The technology alone can't do much. Technology is only useful for a purpose – to improve the experience of emergency medical services, or municipal services."

To that end, Hive is also a space for the wider tech community. Meet-ups have been held after office hours to explore the use of augmented and virtual reality. Who knows what the next tech-enabled public service might be? 📍

Have an idea for improving public service delivery with technology? Contact the GDS Directors to see how you can work together to make it happen.



# Going the last mile for **PIONEERS**

*How the Pioneer Generation Office and Ministry of Finance made the Pioneer Generation Package easy for Pioneers to understand – with the help of analytics in an integrated communications campaign.*



**Many citizens often get daunted** trying to understand government policies. So what more a wide-ranging benefits package designed for Singaporeans aged 65 and above (the “Pioneer Generation”), many of whom do not have much formal education and are unfamiliar with the Internet?

Enter the Pioneer Generation Office (PGO), set up in August 2014 to ensure that the Pioneers, and their family members, understand the Pioneer Generation Package and utilise its benefits.

With so many Pioneers to reach out to – about 450,000 of them – the PGO isn’t doing this alone. Several other government agencies are working in tandem, including the Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI) and the People’s Association.

Together, they adopted an integrated, data-driven approach to reach out to the Pioneers, in which they tested and measured the effectiveness of different communication channels used to publicise the Package.

“Using data, we designed and customised messages, complementing standard government letters and mass media advertising, to address local concerns and sentiments on the ground,” said Ms Geraldine Pang, Senior Associate (Data Analytics), Transformation Office at the MOF.

The communications campaign began with a public advertising drive in June 2014. The MOF and the MCI commissioned regular surveys to assess whether the communication and engagement efforts were effective, and identify areas where the messages were not getting through.

The surveys showed that the older Pioneers (above 75 years old) were less likely to be aware of the Package through mass media such as newspaper and television ads. Certain demographic groups knew of the Package benefits, but still felt unsure about healthcare affordability.

Having this information helped the PGO to prioritise their outreach for these groups and tweak their messages to address the Pioneers’ concerns.

While conducting their outreach, the PGO also collected feedback and data from the Pioneers, such as their healthcare

needs. The feedback and ground-sensing from the PGO’s effort to engage with the Pioneers at their homes likewise informed the mass communications via traditional and social media.

Overall, it has been a continuous cycle of exchange among the agencies to inform both the mass and personalised communications on the ground.

### Going the distance

The Pioneers’ limited mobility, varying levels of literacy and language ability, as well as a lower use of the Internet for information added to the need for a different engagement approach.

The “last mile” thus involved volunteers, or Pioneer Generation Ambassadors, going to Pioneers’ homes to explain the Package’s benefits and answer any questions that may arise. This kicked off in October 2014.

To customise the volunteers’ training, personalise the key messages to be conveyed, and better match Ambassadors to the Pioneers based on the language or dialect they speak, the PGO required demographic data such as where the Pioneers lived as well as their age, gender and ethnicity.

The MOF team analysed the critical information – including location geo-mapping to identify areas where more Pioneers live – and shared this with the PGO, which then enabled the PGO to come up with the appropriate outreach methods.

Ms Serene Peh, the PGO’s Deputy Director, Data Analytics, Planning and Operation, gave an example: “If the Pioneer is a Malay man who lives on his own, how many Ambassadors should then interview him, and should they be male or female? Taking into account cultural norms increases the receptivity of Pioneers and their families to the house visits.”

Having a better understanding of the Pioneers’ profiles also helped the Ambassadors prepare information about other relevant schemes, such as the Housing & Development Board’s Enhancement for Active Seniors programme that subsidises home improvements for elderly residents’ safety and mobility.

The aim is to assure the Pioneers and their family members that their needs

are being looked after holistically, Ms Peh said.

Since then, the Ambassadors have successfully visited more than 60% of the Pioneers. The PGO aims to engage “at least 75%” of Pioneers by the third quarter of 2016, added Ms Peh.

As Pioneers may be out at work or staying at another residence during weekdays, it is hard work for the Ambassadors, who often have to visit each home several times to successfully engage their assigned Pioneer.

### Additional roles

Another advantage of personalised outreach is that the Ambassadors also get important nuggets of feedback from the Pioneers.

Ms Peh explained: “In their conversations with the Pioneers, the Ambassadors discovered that several key medications for common geriatric conditions, such as high cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure, were not subsidised.”

Such findings were then passed on the Ministry of Health to inform their policy-making and, where needed, to refine the implementation of existing policies.

And since November 2015, when MediShield Life was introduced, the Ambassadors have also assumed the responsibility of explaining to the Pioneers and their caregivers how that works.

So far the public agencies are satisfied with how the Pioneers now know that healthcare in Singapore has been made more affordable for them.

Ms Pang said: “The data shows that at the beginning of the campaign, only about 70% of Pioneers knew about the Package benefits as compared to more than 90% today. We also found that the Ambassadors were effective in assuring Pioneers of healthcare affordability, especially for older Pioneers who are more likely to be illiterate or living alone.”

The MOF will next use data to identify vulnerable seniors who will benefit from various senior-related policies. In addition, the team is also sharing their methodology with other campaign teams such as the SkillsFuture Communications Workgroup. ©

**Text by**  
CLARA LOCK  
**Photos by**  
JOHN HENG

# A FEAST for ALL

*When it's time to celebrate a promotion in the office or a colleague's birthday, or simply to enjoy a team lunch treat (hint hint, boss), head to these eateries that meet all sorts of dietary needs – while offering unique flavours too.*



The juicy and succulent portobello mushroom burger is both stomach-filling and healthful.

## KEEPING IT REAL

**Real Food** calls itself “slow food”, as their meals are made from scratch and cooked to order. So be prepared to spend some quality time with one another during the wait (a snack beforehand is advised for those who get impatient when hungry). The cafe, which has three branches, serves up creative interpretations of vegetarian dishes, with vegan and gluten-free options. Meals can also be prepared sans onions or garlic. You'll find chickpea and sweet potato cakes, and capsicums stuffed with a veggie patty. If you're looking for more familiar comfort food, grab a vegetarian pizza or pasta. Even the brunch indulgences are quirkily healthful: the menu includes items such as wheat-free banana pancakes and quinoa coquette burger. Despite the wait, the warmly lit, wood-filled decor will make you feel right at home.

**Outlets at The Central Mall, Square 2, and Killiney Road:  
110 Killiney Road, Tai Wah Building, Singapore 239549  
Phone: 67379516**

**Hours: Monday to Saturday 10am–8.45pm; Sunday 10am–7.45pm**

**Capacity: 80 diners**

**Website: [realfoodgrocer.com](http://realfoodgrocer.com)**

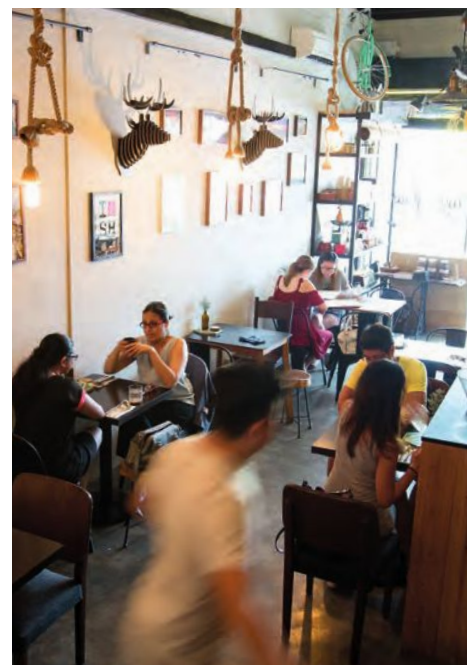




The high ceiling and cosy ambience is perfect for company celebratory lunches.



The "Drag-Pom" salad is a refreshing treat for those who like to eat fruits as main meals.



### TAKE A SHINE TO RAW

With its industrial chic decor and hip locale, **Afterglow** provides trendy raw food options for vegans, vegetarians and those with adventurous taste buds. The food here is not heated and has no preserved ingredients. One-of-a-kind items include the "Drag-Pom" salad, a bed of greens with chunks of dragonfruit, pomegranate and avocado topped with macadamia nuts. For mains, try a dish of raw zucchini shaved to form linguine, served with "meat"-balls shaped from walnuts, shiitake mushrooms and dates. Afterglow also makes a raw vegan nut cheese – spread it on the crunchy beetroot and rosemary crackers for an explosion of unusual flavours. The restaurant is housed in a cosy space, so call ahead to make arrangements if going in a bigger group.

**Address:** 24 Keong Saik Rd, Singapore 089131

**Phone:** 62248921

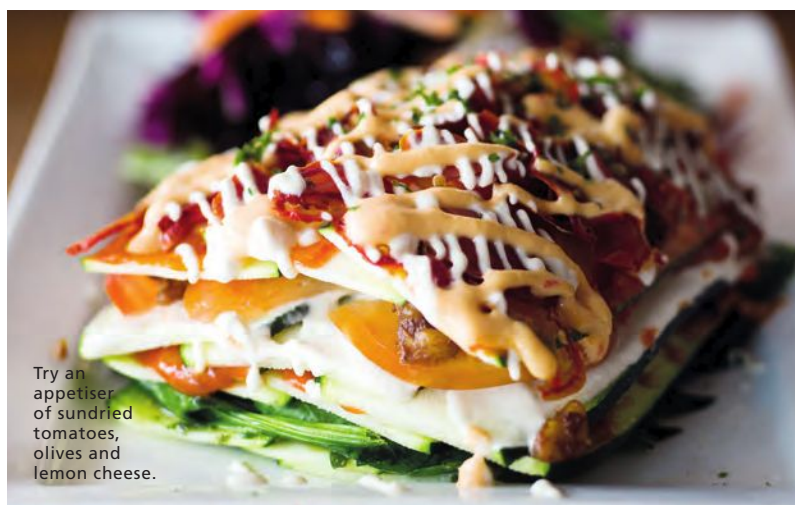
**Hours:** Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 12pm–11pm; Tuesday 5pm–11pm; Friday and Saturday 12pm–12am. Closed on Sunday.

**Capacity:** 30 diners, with arrangements to fit up to 16 diners indoors

**Website:** [afterglow.sg](http://afterglow.sg)



The signature gluten-free banana pancakes is fluffy and has just the right texture.



Try an appetiser of sundried tomatoes, olives and lemon cheese.

## SOFRA, SO GOOD

A Halal-certified eatery specialising in Turkish food, **Sofra** is a stalwart in the local dining scene. Start with the Salad Plate, from which you and your fellow diners can sample a variety of appetisers – eggplant salad, vine leaf rolls stuffed with spiced glutinous rice and hummus (mop up the creamy dip with some bread on the side). For the mains, the sumptuous platters are again a good way to share and sample multiple dishes. The Chef plate, for instance, features skewers and patties of beef, lamb and chicken. Vegetarians can opt for vegetable kebab and bread baked with walnuts, eggplant, tomato and cheese. The generous portions will leave you stuffed, so come in a big group, or with a big appetite.

**Address:** 100 Beach Rd, Singapore 189702

**Phone:** 62911433

**Hours:** Monday to Thursday 11.30am–2.30pm and 6.30am–9pm; Friday 11.30am–2.30pm and 6.30pm–10pm; Saturday 12pm–10pm; and Sunday 12pm–9.30pm

**Capacity:** 60 diners

**Website:** [bit.ly/sofragsg](http://bit.ly/sofragsg)



The sumptuous spread will leave you stuffed.



The braised broccoli with monkey head mushrooms is a pleasant surprise for meat eaters.

## FROM THE EARTH

Even the purest carnivores won't feel they're missing out at **Whole Earth**, an award-winning Thai-Peranakan vegetarian restaurant. Here, meat is replaced with robust natural ingredients, not flour-based mock meat. The Nyonya curry, for example, has shiitake mushrooms and potatoes in a mildly spicy gravy, slow-cooked for eight hours till thick. Meanwhile in a meatless version of classic cereal prawns, tofu cubes are fried with oats and curry leaves, keeping the unique mix of flavours from Thai, Malay and Chinese cuisines. Still not convinced? Try the braised broccoli with monkey head mushrooms, which has all the yummy umami of meat without the animal protein. This eatery's extensive menu of medium-sized portions is perfect for group meals, as you can share dishes and sample a bit of everything.

**Address:** 76 Peck Seah St, Singapore 079331

**Phone:** 63233308

**Hours:** 11.30am–2.30pm and 5.30pm–9.15pm daily

**Capacity:** 30 diners

**Website:** [bit.ly/wholeearthsg](http://bit.ly/wholeearthsg)







The spring rolls are crispy without being oily.



The golden sand bun is a must-try.

### FUN-SIZED FARE

Nibble your way to a full belly at **Tang Tea House**, a Halal-certified joint that serves up Chinese fare such as *dim sum* and *zi char* dishes. The menu includes favourites such as egg tarts, shrimp dumplings and *chee cheong fun*, as well as some special treats. Get the popular salted egg yolk buns and delight in the golden custard that spills out of the centres, or slurp soup with a straw out of massive soup shrimp balls. If you're hankering for more ample dishes to go along with all the bite-sized snacking, Tang Tea House does a special fried *bee hoon*, which is fried till crisp and served like a pancake. Both outlets are open late for those TGIF late-night suppers.

Two outlets at **Jalan Kayu and Simpang Bedok**:

242 Jalan Kayu, Singapore 799466

Hours: Sunday to Thursday 11am–12am;

Friday and weekend 12pm–2am

Capacity: Hawker centre-style tables can seat 6 to 8 diners each



The grilled lamb chop is tender and full of flavour.

### KOSHER AND MORE

One of the few kosher eateries in Singapore, **Awafi** serves not only traditionally Middle Eastern food but Indian, Western and Chinese cuisines as well to satisfy everyone's palate. Pair the chicken schnitzel (breaded chicken) with dips such as hummus (made from chickpeas) or tahini (made from sesame seeds). Other go-to dishes are the grilled lamb chop and Sichuan chicken. Or try something different like the lamb *sambousik* (minced meat in pastry puffs resembling *epok-epok*). And since you're in a group, spread the calories and share the desserts, which are all made in-house. To get to the restaurant on the sixth floor of the Jacob Balas Centre, you have to go through a security check, so make reservations and bring along a photo ID.

Address: 24 Waterloo St, Singapore 187950

Phone: 63365166 or 90880230

Hours: 8.30am–9.30am, 12.30pm–2.15pm, 6.30pm–9.15pm daily  
Closed on Saturday and Jewish holidays. Limited menu on days before Shabbat. Reservations are recommended.

Capacity: 40 diners, with other rooms available for large events  
Website: [bit.ly/awafisg](http://bit.ly/awafisg)



# HARD at WORK in the FUTURE

The Challenge Department of Interior imagines the public service workstation of the future, when we will all work in carbon-neutral and highly secured environments...

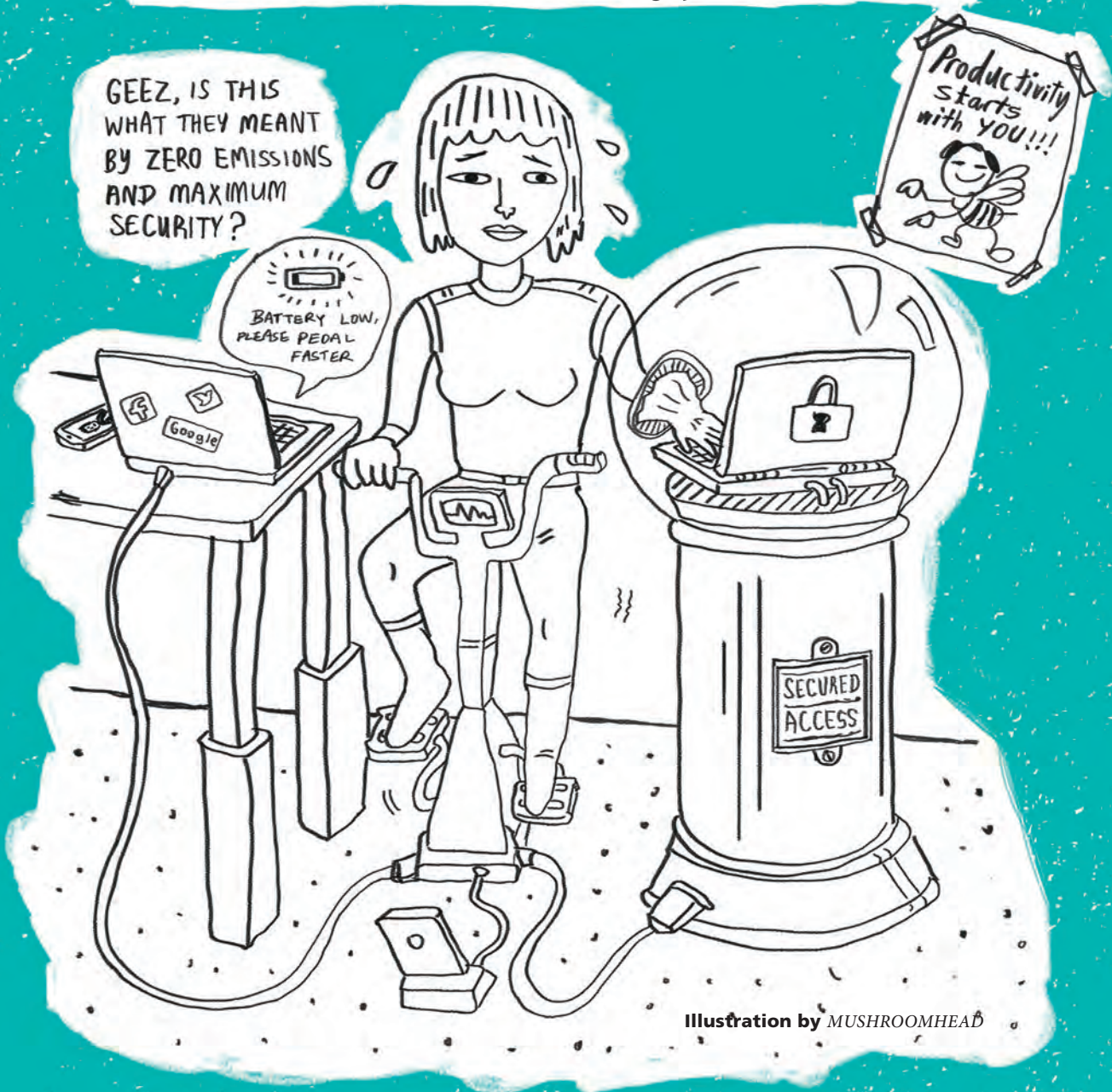


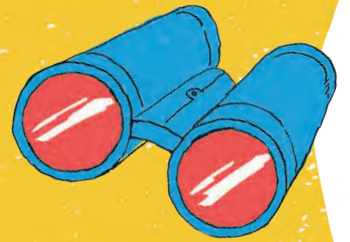
Illustration by MUSHROOMHEAD



## Need We Say More?

Here's where we let the humour loose, and learn to laugh at ourselves a little more. Have ideas or jokes about the Public Service?  
Email us: [psd\\_challenge@psd.gov.sg](mailto:psd_challenge@psd.gov.sg)

# Trivia Quiz



1 Approximately \_\_\_\_\_% of Singapore residents aged 60 and above are users of the Internet.

- a. 33
- b. 18
- c. 11
- d. 47

2 Mr Chen Guo Wei uses his experience to show students that everyone can succeed in school if they \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. have the willpower and intent to change
- b. sit up straight and pay full attention
- c. have a jovial personality
- d. balance work and play

3 Getting access into the Toa Payoh residents' flat required inter-agency collaboration involving:

- a. PA, Town Council, HDB, NEA, SCDF, SPF
- b. PA, HDB, NEA, SPF
- c. PA, HDB, BCA, SPF, NEA
- d. PA, Town Council, HDB, NEA, SPF, MHA

4 What is the most difficult but crucial commitment to make when learning something new?

- a. Starting small and with a simple plan
- b. Finding resources online
- c. Learning from others
- d. Setting aside time to do the learning weekly

5 \_\_\_\_\_ is a key value that Ms Tan Gee Keow readily applies to her work at Strategy Group.

- a. Collaboration
- b. Professionalism
- c. Determination
- d. Management Structure

# 5

PAIRS OF  
MOVIE VOUCHERS  
TO BE WON

Submit your answers by  
**May 31, 2016** at:

**Challenge Online**  
[www.challenge.gov.sg](http://www.challenge.gov.sg)

Please include your name,  
email address, agency  
and contact number.

All winners will be  
notified by email.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

to the winners of the  
Mar/Apr 2016 Trivia Quiz

**Daniel Ng Kian Boon** (MOE)

**Serene Chin** (HDB)

**Teng Swee Khim** (MEWR)

**Teo Yi Ning** (MND)

**Tan Pei Ru** (Singapore Customs)



# CREATING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

**PUBLIC SERVICE WEEK**

*Serving the nation and proud of it*

**16-22  
MAY '16**