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Gaining a **Service Edge** through Technology

Leveraging technology and redesigning processes to deliver customer-centric service can help businesses to stay ahead.

CHECKING OUT SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

SPRING's Customer-Centric Initiative supported the Amara Sanctuary Resort Sentosa's service excellence goal to exceed every guest's expectations.

SPORTS LINK: A CUSTOMER-CENTRIC STORE

To speed up its in-store processes and improve its service standards, Sports Link leverages technology and provides rigorous training for its staff.

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Mr Clinton Ang speaks to *SPRINGnews* in this fourth instalment of a seven-part Q&A series with the Action Community for Entrepreneurship

Building Networks, Growing Businesses



The Action Community for Entrepreneurship (ACE) set up its Networking Sub-Committee to help local companies gain a head-start in business by building up their networks. *SPRINGnews* speaks with **Mr Clinton Ang** (below), Managing Director of Hock Tong Bee Pte Ltd and Chairman of ACE's Networking Sub-Committee, to find out more about the keys to successful networking and what ACE is doing to help companies get the most out of networking opportunities.

***SPRINGnews:* Why is networking important in business? What can companies achieve through networking?**

Mr Ang: No man is an island. Similarly, in business, companies do not exist in isolation; instead, they are part of the broader business community. Networking provides opportunities to learn from others, both in terms of what to do and what not to do. It also serves as a catalyst for new ideas and new contacts – so much of business can be tied back to networking.

***SPRINGnews:* Does networking differ for SMEs or family-run companies compared to big corporations? What unique opportunities or challenges do SMEs and family-run companies face?**

Mr Ang: It is pretty similar except that the owner/family member is able to apply their contacts for a longer time – even generations. For professionals, it is up to them whether they wish to retain contacts from a prior position.

***SPRINGnews:* The aim of ACE's Networking Sub-Committee is to provide platforms for start-ups to network with entrepreneurs, potential investors, mentors and other relevant contacts. How does ACE achieve this?**

Mr Ang: We organise various networking events regularly – some are industry-specific, some focus on particular capabilities or market needs, and some are more general in nature. For example, we held an event in September on starting up in the ICT sector. In August we organised an event on fundraising basics, and in June we organised a bowling event offering a more casual environment for networking.

We do not limit our efforts to startups. It is in Singapore's, ACE's and everyone's interest to extend our reach to companies at different stages in their development. The key is to help them improve, grow from good to great, and put Singapore on the

world business map. At the same time, they can create jobs and help boost the economy.

***SPRINGnews:* Networking is more than walking around holding a glass of wine and distributing name cards. What are some of the strategies to get the most out of a networking event?**

Mr Ang: Be sincere and genuinely interested in the other person's thoughts and ideas and be willing to learn from them. You need to ask questions but make sure that you do so with humility.

***SPRINGnews:* What are some common mistakes that people make while networking? Do you have any networking pet peeves?**

Mr Ang: Trying too hard to impress is considered a big no-no. Be humble and sincere and let people discover who you really are. There is no secret to networking except to be brave, make yourself known and seek to learn. Just remember to keep eye contact and be sincere.

***SPRINGnews:* If you had to come up with three golden rules of good networking, what would they be?**

Mr Ang: First, be hospitable, even if you are not the host. This is the best, most sincere icebreaker. Second, listen and ask questions. Often, we don't realise how much we miss because we don't listen. Third, follow up. It is important to always follow up, to make a lasting impression on the previous evening's contacts. ■

The three golden rules of good networking:
First, be hospitable. Second, listen and ask questions. Third, follow up. It is important to always follow up, to make a lasting impression.

*Mr Clinton Ang
 Chairman of
 ACE's Networking
 Sub-Committee*

