SINGAPORE: Singapore will likely have a performance indicator to allow companies to determine where their level of service stands.

Such an index is believed to be the first here.

Christie Yeo, a department manager at Cold Storage believes good service is what keeps the customers coming back.

"They tell us that what we recommend them yesterday was really good, that their kids like it. That's how we know they are happy with our recommendations. And when they come back to tell us that, they greet us by our name, they come specially to look for us," said Christie Yeo.

And having a service index will help staff know what kinds of standards there are and how they can be more customer-oriented.

By March 2006, the Singapore Management University (SMU) hopes to develop a prototype service index focusing on the retail sector for the government's consideration.

"There's an index in the US - the US Customer Service Index. Korea has one and Hong Kong has come up with one too. Such an index is also common in Europe," said Prof Annie Koh, associate dean of the Lee Kong Chian School of Business at SMU.

"It'll be great if Singapore can show improvements in our service quality when benchmarked against some of these countries."

"We can tell ourselves, I'm here at this point now and my target is to reach towards higher levels. So what can I do to close the gap? If we know where we stand, then we'll be able to position and aim for where we want to be," said Prof Koh.

Lau Chuen Wei, executive director at the Singapore Retailers Association said: "Up until now, the only thing that's been used is the global competitiveness report. The report allows us to compare ourselves against somebody else, but it doesn't really tell us how good we are or bad we are."

"But if we have an indicator, it helps us track a trend if we are improving through the years or not. That's a little bit more useful because it lets us to compete with ourselves and help us to better ourselves," he said.

SPRING Singapore and the Workforce Development Agency will likely call a "request for proposals" towards year's end.