Institute for service excellence opens

By NISHA RAMCHANDANI

SINGAPORE is making strides in its bid to achieve service excellence and competitiveness, with the launch of the Institute of Service Excellence@SMU (ISES) yesterday.

The institute – a combined effort between the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and Singapore Management University (SMU) – aims to take the “Go the Extra Mile for Service” (Gems) movement to the next phase.

It will take a three-prong approach, focusing heavily on engaging business leaders to put service excellence on the corporate agenda as well as improving the service competitiveness of non-traditional sectors such as finance, logistics and health care.

A recent Gems survey revealed that only 52 per cent of business decision makers are motivated to raise service standards, in comparison with 74 per cent of the general population and 65 per cent of service staff.

ISES plans to organise annual conferences, roundtable forums and workshops to transform the mindsets of business leaders.

"Employers need to take the lead in making service competitiveness their business strategy," said Jennie Chua, co-chairman of the ISES governing council. "ISES therefore presents an opportunity for us to engage CEOs and help them realise the advantage they can create for themselves if they were to be able to raise their service standards."

Tan Suee Chieh, chief executive of NTUC Income, is also co-chairman of the 15-strong council.

The two other key areas high on the agenda are developing the Singapore Customer Satisfaction Index to measure and benchmark customer satisfaction levels, and using SMU’s capabilities to produce research in areas from brand leadership to service marketing.

About $5 million have been set aside for ISES initiatives over three years.