SINGAPORE: The Institute of Service Excellence (ISES) at the Singapore Management University (SMU) was launched on Wednesday to encourage more upper management business leaders to be service oriented.

This move is part of the Go-The-Extra-Mile for Service (GEMS) Movement that was first launched in 2005.

A recent survey by GEMS showed that only about 52 percent of business decision makers were motivated to raise service standards, while 65 percent of service staff and 74 percent of the general population had indicated that there was a need to raise service standards in Singapore.

Chairman of the GEMS Movement, Transport Minister Raymond Lim, said businessmen can make the biggest impact in improving service standards in Singapore.

He said: "Singapore companies tend to compete on price – which is cheaper – and in all fairness to them it is because the Singapore customer base also competes on price. They will go to one shop after another till they find one which is cheaper.

"We need to try and change this mindset. The value add in the business will come from a high quality of service. This is something that we have to keep at and that's the reason why we have now launched ISES."

The institute also intends to expand beyond the hospitality-related sectors to include the financial, healthcare and security industries.

New benchmarks to measure service levels for different industries will also be initiated.

- CNA/so