

# SMEs get boost from BE initiative

It is instrumental in helping small and medium-sized enterprises to professionalise their management practices and leads to higher profits

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THE 2014 Business Excellence (BE) impact study showed that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are certified to the BE standards derived high impact from being on the BE journey.

The BE framework was instrumental in driving change and helping SMEs to professionalise their management practices. The profits of SMEs that are certified to BE standards grew by 19.2 per cent, against the industry's average of 6.1 per cent.

SMEs that participated in the study shared first-hand experiences on how the BE initiative brought about increased awareness for a disciplined approach to run a business, through setting quantifiable targets as well as challenging staff to innovate, improve processes and efficiency.

It helped the leaders to realise that communication with staff was necessary to align staff towards a common mission and strategic direction. Some SMEs said that the BE certification provided greater assurance of the quality of their products and services to their customers, which led to an increase in business volume.

## GETTING STARTED

SMEs that are starting out on the excellence journey can engage a Principal Assessor from Spring Singapore for a one-on-one coaching session lasting two to three half days.

Alternatively, they can undergo the SME Management Action for Results (Smart) assessment that is available through the Innovation and Capability Voucher (ICV) scheme to develop an actionable road map to improve their management capabilities.

For additional assistance, they can apply for the Capability Development Grant - Business Excellence to evaluate and improve their management systems, processes and strategies and assistance to achieve the various business excellence certifications.

Two companies, Maha Chemicals (Asia) Pte Ltd and Prime Structures Engineering Pte Ltd, embarked on obtaining Singapore Quality Class certification using the Capability Development Grant - Business Excellence.

Prime Structures Engineering Pte Ltd (PSE) designs and constructs innovative building envelopes such as curtain wall and computer raised floors.

Sonny Bensily, the managing director, shared about PSE's BE journey. "In 2012, the PSE management knew that the business needed objective review and refinement to ready the company for the next phase of growth. We embarked on the BE programme and it helped to pave the roadmap to plan our next stage of intended growth to S\$100 million annual turnover."

As a new practitioner on the BE journey, the company found that BE was able to objectively challenge the "in-house wisdom" and forced everyone to relook at old "best practices".

BE also helped the company to "put a balanced view on long-term business sustainability versus our inclination to focus on short to mid-term daily operational needs".

Mr Bensily also shared that "the assessment process naturally rallied our staff to innovate and increased our capacity to manage change".

Tan Seow Hoon, managing director of Maha Chemicals (Asia) Pte Ltd, a company that distributes specialty chemicals to various industries, felt that "the journey of pursuing business excellence was a rewarding experience for the whole team in Maha Chemicals".

She said: "The BE framework enhanced our team's capabilities from one focusing on entrepreneurship and a relentless pursuit of opportunities to include building sustainability and growth through the seven BE categories of what makes a business shine going forward".

She added that through reviews and refinements, "we are able to segment our customers into more refined groups by decision making behavioural patterns". This enabled Maha Chemicals to design more effective and targeted marketing campaigns that shorten the sales conversion cycle.

In the area of talent management, employee engagement and retention have been fostered through looking at the basic drivers of human behaviour to "Acquire, Bond, Challenge and Defend".

Ms Tan is looking forward to reaping the long-term benefits of continuous adoption of the BE framework.

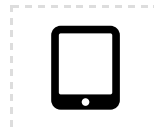
- This article is contributed by Spring Singapore. For further assistance on using the BE framework or applying for BE certifications and awards, contact Spring at tel: 6279 3811, e-mail: [be@spring.gov.sg](mailto:be@spring.gov.sg) or visit: [www.spring.gov.sg/be](http://www.spring.gov.sg/be)

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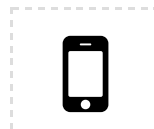
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