

REFINING INTERNAL PROCESSES TO ACHIEVE NEW HIGHS

Prime Structures Engineering (PSE)'s Managing Director, Mr Sonny Bensily, and Associate Director, Ms Julia Bensily, share how the Business Excellence (BE) framework has helped improve the local construction company's customer-driven approaches

Why did PSE decide to embark on the business excellence journey?

Julia (photo, right): We read about companies established decades ago that find it difficult to survive in today's business environment because they're stuck in their old norms and have not embraced new ways of doing things. We did not want to be one of those companies and were determined to ensure that PSE is sustainable in the long run.

In 2014, as we were preparing for our 20th anniversary in 2015, we thought that it would be a good time to also embark on a few changes to ensure that our company continues to grow in this new business environment. That same year, we decided to adopt SPRING Singapore's BE framework and applied for the Singapore Quality Class to improve and achieve excellence in our work processes, customer service quality and delivery, and strategy.

What were the challenges faced prior to adopting the BE framework?

Julia: As we grew and took on bigger projects, we needed more people to manage those projects. However, hiring more staff meant that we needed to have a proper system to manage people and performance, which we lacked. This resulted in some staff working in silos, a lack of coordination between departments, and missed project opportunities.

Another challenge we faced was with customers. Previously, we treated all our customers the same. We tended to use the



same marketing strategy for all customers, resulting in missed opportunities and the company losing tenders.

How did the framework help PSE overcome its human resource challenges?

Sonny (photo, left): Since applying the principles of the BE framework, we have implemented a new process called 'review and refine'. Every quarter, our senior leaders, managers and staff from every department gather to review and discuss ways that we can improve our current processes.

Julia: We also discuss and review new project opportunities, including how we should go about securing them. We've established a process to ensure that our staff communicate effectively with each other and work as a team to actively seek

and win new business opportunities.

When a new project opportunity arises now, the first step is to get staff from our sales and marketing departments to evaluate and determine the project's potential in terms of value and return on investment. They are then required to prepare a detailed report and present it to the rest of the company before a decision is made.

This has significantly increased our productivity as our staff now have a better understanding of the importance of project management and value, which in turn have increased their awareness of customer needs and expectations in relation to new projects. They are also more involved in key processes and contribute more to our bottom line in terms of maximising new business opportunities and results.

Have you also seen an increase in customers?

Julia: Most of our customers now are repeat customers and referrals. We achieved this by arranging our potential customers into segments based on their demand when it comes to, for instance, time, cost and level of quality. It's a way of ensuring that we maximise value and give every customer a unique quote and tailored experience.

What are PSE's future plans?

Sonny: We will continue to use the BE framework and apply its principles in areas like customer, processes, people and strategy, to further grow our business. By 2020, we aim to grow into a multinational corporation; and by 2026, we want to achieve a turnover of \$250 million. With the framework, we're confident of achieving these goals – and maybe even exceeding them. ■