

MEDIA ADVISORY:

SCCCI LEADS THE WAY TO FACILITATE BUSINESS-GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION

The effects of economic restructuring are still being felt in all areas of the economy; in particular local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are feeling the brunt as they continue to cope with increasing manpower and rental costs. On top of these major cost items, compliance costs arising from regulatory requirements add to the existing high business costs.

The SCCCI continues to monitor such compliance costs and recently organised briefing sessions for its trade association members and businesses affected by changes in government regulations in their respective sectors. On November 13, the Ministry of Health (MOH), with support from SCCCI, engaged SCCCI's trade association members and tobacco retailers on the proposed guidelines for implementing the Point of Sale Display ban for tobacco products, which will take effect at tobacco retail outlets by the end of 2016. The display ban is aimed at protecting non-smokers from the advertising and promotion effect of point-of-sale display. However, the display ban would incur additional compliance costs for SMEs, and give rise to practical implementation issues on the ground.

Minister for Health Gan Kim Yong who was present at the engagement session on tobacco products display ban, told participants that: "We all know that tobacco use is one of the leading causes of premature death and ill health in Singapore. We have to continue to find ways to tighten our tobacco control measures. We hope that the engagement session will help us get feedback from the tobacco retailers on the implementation guidelines for the point of sale display ban. We also want to assure businesses that sufficient grace period will be given to comply with the new requirements."

Separately, on November 21, SCCCI organised a session and invited Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) to give members a briefing on SCDF's decision to stop issuing Temporary Permits for the placement of freezer/storage containers at private, HDB and JTC factories with effect from November 1 2014, due to fire safety concerns. Businesses in the F&B sector expressed anxieties about this decision, as they typically require additional cold storage space during the festive period. At the session, SCDF shared the available options that affected businesses could adopt to meet their business needs, without compromising on fire safety. With a view to bring the related government stakeholder agencies together on the same platform, SCCCI also invited HDB, JTC and AVA to join SCDF at the session.

Thomas Chua, President of the SCCCI, said: "SCCCI can serve as an effective bridge between government and businesses to facilitate consultation and communication. We welcome the government consulting businesses ahead of introducing and implementing new government regulations that impact the business community, so that their views and suggestions can be incorporated. Working together with MOH and SCDF to engage the relevant trade associations are two good examples."

SCCCI's eight trade association members and their members participated in the two sessions.¹ At both sessions, Business Advisors from the SME Centre@SCCCI were also on-site to provide advisory services to companies interested to tap on available government schemes to improve productivity and transform their business.

1 Trade Associations involved in the MOH session were The Federation of Merchants' Associations, Singapore (新加坡全国商联总会); Singapore Foochow Coffee Restaurant & Bar Merchants Association (新加坡福州咖啡酒餐商公会); Kheng Keow Coffee Merchants Restaurant & Bar-Owners Association (新加坡琼侨咖啡酒餐商公会); Singapore Provision Shop Friendly Association (新加坡杂货店联谊会); and the Singapore Mini Mart Association (新加坡迷你市场公会). Trade associations involved in the SCDF session were the Singapore Food Manufacturers' Association (新加坡食品厂商联合会); Association of Catering Professionals Singapore (新加坡专业配餐协会); and Woodlands East Industrial & Commercial Association (新加坡兀兰东区厂商联合会).

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About Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Established in 1906, the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCCI) is an internationally renowned business organisation and the apex body of the Chinese business community in Singapore. It is the founder of the biennial World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention and the World Chinese Business Network (www.wcbs.com.sg), a global online business information portal. It plays a key and pro-active role in representing the interests of the local business community. In its continued drive for service excellence, the SCCCI has become the first business chamber in the region that has been awarded ISO 9001:2000 certification since 1995. In 2009, the Chamber successfully upgraded its ISO certification to ISO 9001:2008.

The SCCCI has a membership network comprising over 4,000 corporate members and 153 trade association members, representing over 40,000 companies including large financial and business organisations, multinational corporations, government-linked companies, and small and medium enterprises from a wide spectrum of trades and industries. Together, they provide the business community with vast resources and an influential global Chinese business network for business, culture and education.