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MEDIA RELEASE

OVER 3,000 PMEs SET TO BENEFIT FROM P-MAX - WDA'S ENHANCED PLACE-AND-TRAIN PROGRAMME

Up to 3,000 SMEs to also benefit from P-Max

SINGAPORE, 18 MARCH 2015 – At the 'Launch of P-Max and HR Learning Journey' event organised by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME) and Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), the Minister for Manpower, Mr Tan Chuan-Jin unveiled an enhanced Place-and-Train programme targeted at Professionals, Managers and Executives (PMEs).

Known as P-Max, the programme aims to place 3,000 PMEs in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) over a three-year period from 18 March 2015 to 31 December 2017. The programme will facilitate the entry of PMEs into suitable SME jobs. P-Max will also help some 3,000 SMEs better cope with the challenges of talent recruitment in an increasingly tight labour market.

P-Max builds on WDA's earlier Place-and-Train programme – Max Talent – which was offered from 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2014. P-Max will include a newly-designed one-day SME workshop which provides the toolkit for SMEs to adopt and incorporate progressive HR practices into their organisations, and trains SME supervisors to effectively communicate and work with their PME employees.

To be eligible for P-Max, PMEs will need to meet the following criteria, namely (i) be a Singapore Citizen or Permanent Resident who is interested to pursue a career in an SME (ii) hold at least a Diploma or have prior work experience in a PME position and (iii) have at least one year of full-time work experience.

Under P-Max, participating SMEs and PMEs will benefit in the following ways:

1. Job-seeking PMEs will be screened and matched into suitable positions in hiring SMEs, facilitated by WDA's five Career Centres and CaliberLink which provide a range of career and training advisory services.
2. Training of management staff, supervisors, HR representatives from the SMEs and their newly-hired PMEs.
3. Post-training follow-up with the newly-trained PME personnel and their SME representatives for a period of six months, and
4. One-time Assistance Grant of \$5,000 for SMEs who successfully retain their newly-hired PMEs for six months.

WDA has appointed the Association of Small & Medium Enterprises (ASME) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) as Programme Managers of P-Max. Tapping on their networks with businesses, employers and individuals, ASME and SNEF will support the objectives of P-Max to enhance the HR capabilities of SMEs and help PMEs adapt to and succeed in an SME setting.

Among the early adopters of P-Max are Brite Konzept Pte Ltd, 361 Degree Management Pte Ltd, Feng Ming Construction Pte Ltd, Goodrich Global Pte Ltd, Inknowision Pte Ltd, Nicae Trading & Industrial Supplies, Soon Chow Workshop (2001) Pte Ltd, Soverus Pte Ltd, Tempoly, The Adventus Consultants Pte Ltd, and Transpacific Certifications (Singapore) Pte Ltd. All these companies have pledged their commitment to strengthen their recruitment, development and retention of PMEs through P-Max.

Mr Ng Cher Pong, WDA's Chief Executive said: "To tap on the growth opportunities available, SMEs are strengthening their HR capabilities, including how they recruit and develop PMEs in their organisations. This is important now more than ever because of the tight labour market in Singapore. WDA is therefore pleased to work closely with ASME and SNEF as our programme partners to build up the capabilities of SMEs and provide PMEs with meaningful jobs and career opportunities. To this end, I strongly encourage PMEs and SMEs to come on board P-Max, and together, realise the SkillsFuture vision of developing skills and mastery, and staying relevant for the future."

Mr Kurt Wee, President of ASME, shares: "Many enhancements have been made to the new Place-and-Train programme under P-Max, making it more relevant to PMEs. It is also much stronger in its programme offerings for getting SMEs on board to adopt progressive HR practices and ensure that they benefit from the newly-introduced P-Max. I am hopeful

that the Place-and-Train programme will be able to place more local talents into SMEs, and help build a core strategic management team to grow local businesses.”

Dr Robert Yap, President of SNEF said: “The programme is also timely in helping businesses move up the value chain, by driving efforts in human capital and productivity. We are proud of this partnership with WDA and as the appointed Programme Manager, we will support the national agenda of fostering a positive mindset for both PMEs and SMEs in the workplace.”

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About Singapore Workforce Development Agency

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) enhances the competitiveness of our workforce by encouraging workers to learn for life and advance with skills. In today's economy, most jobs require not just knowledge, but also skills. WDA collaborates with employers, industry associations, unions and training organisations, to develop and strengthen the Continuing Education and Training system that is skills-based, open and accessible, as a mainstream pathway for all workers - young and older, from rank and file to professionals and executives - to upgrade and advance in their careers and lives. For more information, please visit www.wda.gov.sg.

About Association Of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME)

The Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1986 for entrepreneurs, by entrepreneurs. With wide-ranging services and programmes, ASME strives to equip member SMEs with the business knowledge and market opportunities to help them grow their businesses.

ASME, as the champion of a pro-enterprise Singapore, bridges the public and the private sectors to promote a more conducive business environment which facilitates the start-up, growth and development of a larger pool of SMEs. The two ASME flagship awards – The Entrepreneur of the Year Award and Singapore Prestige Brand Award are in recognition of SMEs' successes.

ASME will continue to roll out new SME-relevant programmes to enhance its position as the business association For Entrepreneurs, By Entrepreneurs. For more information, please visit www.asme.org.sg.

About Singapore National Employers Federation

The Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) is a trade union of employers. Our mission is to advance tripartism and responsible employment practices for sustainable business growth for the benefit of employers and their employees. SNEF has a membership of over 3,000 companies with a combined workforce of over 750,000. For more information, please visit www.snef.org.sg.