

# News from

Jan – Mar '09

**T**ripartite  
**A**lliance for  
**F**air  
**E**mployment  
**P**ractices

## Mining the Mature Workforce



copyright © McDonald's

At age 63, Madam Lee dishes out crisp, golden French fries at a McDonald's outlet.

As Singapore's population rapidly ages, Madam Lee is one of a growing number of mature and older workers who find themselves in new roles. They are holding jobs ranging from counter crew in quick service restaurants to sales executives for leading brands.

"I want to continue working as long as I'm physically fit. If I had chosen to stay at home, I would just be watching TV all day. Sure, I could take some lessons every day or chat with friends, but that would be boring. I would rather be working so that I can continue to support myself financially and contribute to society as I age," Madam Lee said.

The re-employment legislation, first announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in August 2007, is part of a series of measures to tackle the challenges of an aging population. In order to help older workers remain economically productive, the re-employment legislation, set to come into effect by 2012, will enable more Singaporeans to continue working beyond the current statutory retirement age of 62.

Rather than just raising the retirement age, implementing re-employment measures will allow employers and employees the flexibility to work out re-employment offers that best meet the needs of the organisation and that of older workers. Wages and benefits can also be adjusted to reflect the value of the contribution of these workers so that companies can ensure sustainability in the long run.

Some employers however, still view mature workers to be more expensive and less productive. The reality is that these inaccurate stereotypes will prevent employers from mining gems among mature workers. Apart from having work experience and valuable skills, mature workers are also generally more committed and less likely to job-hop, thus serving as a valuable resource of manpower.

When it comes to employing mature workers, McDonald's is considered a trailblazer. It started recruiting mature workers in the mid 1980's and today, mature workers form 50 per cent of its workforce.

In order to help mature workers integrate into the workplace, McDonald's uses a systematic and comprehensive training system which utilises aids such as pictures to communicate the training messages simply and effectively.

In addition, changes to the infrastructure of the restaurant, including larger visuals on their cashiering system as well as flexible hours have also helped the company attract mature workers.

Companies like McDonald's are leading the way in implementing re-employment practices, tapping on the contributions and expertise of their workers beyond 62 years. With the support from organisations, Singapore will be in a better position to address the challenges faced by an aging population.

“ The presence of mature workers is important as they help impart values such as punctuality, discipline and pride in their work to their younger colleagues in the restaurants. As part of McDonald's guiding principle to provide equal opportunities and treat all our staff with fairness, dignity and respect, mature workers, fondly called 'aunties' and 'uncles', are key to the family and supportive environment we strive to create in McDonald's. ”

**Ms Patricia Yong**  
Human Resource Manager

# Spotlight!

## Conference on Fair Employment Practices

### Managing Employment Issues in Challenging Times

The Conference on Fair Employment Practices is a first-of-its-kind event focusing on the adoption of fair employment practices in Singapore.

This one-day conference will focus on key fair employment issues including the implementation of fair employment practices and strategies to attract and retain employees with diverse backgrounds, and creating an engaging and inclusive workplace for all.

Participants will have the opportunity to discuss with key union and employer representatives on how organisations can take a more strategic approach towards managing pertinent employment issues during challenging times.

Through a combination of plenary and breakout sessions, participants will hear from industry thought leaders and learn from the experience of leading corporations. By the end of the conference, participants will arrive at effective solutions that allow them to adopt fair employment practices to achieve organisational excellence and business success.

Leading business and thought leaders speaking at the conference include Mr Simon Cooper, President and Chief Operating Officer of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company and Professor Louise Rolland, Executive Director at Ernst & Young Business Advisory Services.

For more information or to sign up for any of the sessions, please visit [www.feconference.sg](http://www.feconference.sg).

## Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Details
13 Jan 09 13 Feb 09	Recruitment and Selection Workshop	The one-day workshops will help employers understand the importance of having well-planned recruitment practices. Our experienced trainer will guide participants through the recruitment process and assist organisations in the implementation of fair employment interview and selection practices.
10 Feb 09	Conference on Fair Employment Practices	The conference brings together business leaders and HR practitioners for dialogue on harnessing the potential of a diverse workforce and manpower management challenges amid the current economic landscape. Featuring an international panel of speakers and experts, the conference also aims to inspire practical and sustainable strategies that enable organisations to create fair and inclusive workplaces.
11 Feb 09	Effective Strategies and Practices for Understanding and Managing Mature Talent	The Life Course Approach, which proposes that employees' behaviours are influenced by factors such as the individual's priorities at different life stages, enables organisations to develop win-win people strategies and policies for effective talent management and retention. Join Professor Louise Rolland, Executive Director of Ernst & Young Business Advisory Services, as she shares the Life Course Approach with participants at this interactive half-day workshop.
12 Feb 09	Achieving Full Engagement and Productivity of All Employees	At this one-day workshop, participants will discuss the concept of fair employment and develop Cultural Intelligence Quotient for their organisations so as to engage staff and increase employee effectiveness. In addition, Ms Peggy Hazard, Managing Director and Head of Global Services at Global Lead LLC, will also guide participants in removing obstacles in the creation of a dynamic and diverse workplace.

For more information on any of the above events, please visit [www.fairemployment.sg](http://www.fairemployment.sg) (under Events Calendar).



Mr Dharendra Shantilal, President, Singapore Staffing Association (SSA) and Senior Vice President, Asia Pacific, Kelly Services shares with us his thoughts on the association's recent pledge to be a fair employer.

"As ambassadors of the work world, we at the SSA recognise that the creation of a fair work environment is a concerted effort, and we decided that we should first walk the talk by signing the pledge. The association aims to increase the practice standards of recruitment agencies in Singapore, and the adoption of fair employment practices is the right thing to do and will benefit our clients as well. I am proud that all our members are supportive of this initiative. Diversity will help Singapore compete in a global economy and address talent shortages and improve organisational productivity."

## Food for Thought