

SECTION 4: MAKING THE MOST OF STAFF

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4.1 Ensuring non-discrimination in employment practices

Singapore is a multi-racial and multi-religious society. It believes firmly in the principle and practice of meritocracy, be it in the progression of students in schools or in selection of the best candidate for the jobs – no affirmative action, whether by race, religion, gender or any other basis. This is the best way to assure that due recognition is given to deserving people and that we deploy our limited resource in the best way possible for effective governance of the country.

The context for change

The Singapore population comprises 78% Chinese, 14% Malays, 7% Indians and 1% of other ethnic origins, each with their own languages, culture and religions. Although Mandarin and Tamil (an Indian language) are among the four official languages, Malay is the national language while English is the language of administration and the primary language of instruction in the schools. All ethnic or religious groups are treated equally. The Woman's Charter, promulgated 35 years ago, essentially an Act of Parliament, also recognises women's rights to equal treatment and their rights to equal pay, and these rights are entrenched in the Act.

Implementing change

The Singapore Constitution entrenches the fundamental principle of recruitment and promotion in the public sector on the basis of merit. Articles 12(1) and 12(2) of the Singapore Constitution state:

12(1) "All persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law"

12(2) "...there shall be no discrimination against citizens of Singapore on the ground only of religion, race, descent or place of birth in any law or in the appointment to any office or in employment under a public authority or in the administration of any law..."

Section 16(1) of the Constitution repeats the above intention, but with specific reference to the administration of any educational institution maintained by a public authority.

The national psyche ostracises discrimination on the basis of race and gender. The Singapore Constitution provides for group representation constituencies to ensure that minorities in Singapore are represented adequately in Parliament. Article 39A of the Singapore Constitution entrenches the concept by stipulating that group representation constituencies need to be represented by at least one person from a minority race.

The Singapore Constitution also contains clauses on a Council for Minority Rights, to ensure that no Acts of Parliament contain a discriminatory measure.

In the case of the disabled, the Civil Service recruits them whenever they satisfy the criterion of merit and can do the jobs they are appointed to do.

4.2 Enhancing staff training and development

Training and development is important for staff as it helps them to do their current job better and equips them with skills to ensure that they remain employable in the future.

Ministries and departments are responsible for the training of their staff and are provided with funds to train staff. Training and development programmes are either run by the ministries and departments themselves or they avail themselves of the services provided by the Civil Service College. They are also free to go to other institutions to meet their needs.

The context for change

The government has been promoting nationally the importance of training for the past 15 years and has recently re-emphasised training and development as a strategy for the upgrading of skills to help make Singapore more competitive.

The challenge for the public sector as it prepares itself for the 21st century is how well it can meet the increasing demands for higher standards of service while managing competition and technological change. As the government raises the retirement age to 67 years progressively, and as Singapore strives for economic progress, continuous learning and continuous upgrading also become essential to assure lifelong motivation and employability.

Implementing change

In view of the importance of training and development for the future of Singapore and for shaping the public service, the Civil Service has set as an overall training target of 100 hours per employee per year.

Under the PS21 Training Initiative, training and development beyond induction training is seen as having five levels:

<i>Induction</i>	This is to introduce the officer to the job and to his work environment upon joining the service.
<i>Basic</i>	This is training to enable the officer to perform his job adequately. It is given whenever an officer is recruited or given a new job.
<i>Advanced</i>	This is additional training to enable the officer to give superior performance on his current job.
<i>Extended</i>	This is further training to enable the officer to go beyond his current job to be able to handle related jobs on an incidental basis or higher level jobs in due course.
<i>Continuing</i>	This is training that is not immediately related to the officer's current job but enhances his employability over the long-term.

With the introduction of the five levels of training in the Civil Service, the officers will be able to attend different courses at different stages in their career.

Besides the Administrative Service and the Professional Services, the Civil Service introduced the Senior Officers Scheme in April 1996. This is the primary scheme for employing and managing people for a broad range of Division I jobs (graduate level). The scheme covers five broad functional areas: Line Operations (LineOps); Human Resource Management (HRM); Finance and Corporate Services (FCS); Public Affairs Management (PAM); and Research and Information Support (RIS).

The Civil Service also introduced modular training for the different core functional areas, e.g. in human resource management, in financial management and information management, from the last quarter of 1996. Ministries are expected to organise their own specialised functional training while the Civil Service College handles training in core functions and policy areas.

Departments are also required to develop a training road map for every employee, showing clearly the types of training needed by him at different points in his career. Employees will be given time off to attend such training. These road-maps are discussed and agreed upon between the supervisor and supervisee at the end of every year when they discussed the officer's work achievement for the following year.

4.3 Improving human resource management

This section touches on several aspects of human resource management where changes have been introduced. The newly-introduced system of personnel boards is discussed followed by other changes in personnel management practice.

The context for change

The public service personnel management system was a highly centralised system. Changes were made to the system from time to time but central control of the personnel function was the paradigm right from the start of Singapore's independence. The pressure for devolution however has been growing over the last few years – over-centralisation had lessened the public service responsiveness to changing circumstances, e.g. in its ability to recruit and promote officers fast enough to keep up with changing needs and demands. Centralisation had also lessened the public service organisations' commitment to personnel management and had resulted in a lack of ownership or commitment to proper personnel management approaches in public service ministries and departments. The consequence was an emphasis on the administration of rules instead of the management of people. It was thought, therefore, that greater empowerment of civil servants in the recruitment and promotion of civil service personnel would pave the way for ministries' greater ownership of the personnel management process and civil service development. At the same time, the terms and conditions of service (such as in the probation period, working hours and medical benefits) were changed to make the service more competitive, flexible and responsive.

Implementing change

Devolution of personnel management functions

The powers for recruitment, promotion, transfer and confirmation of most civil servants were devolved from the Public Service Commission (PSC), the Education Service Commission (ESC) and the Police and Civil Defence Services Commission (PCDSC)¹ to a system of personnel boards on 1 January, 1995. Permanent Secretaries and selected senior officers now make up membership (and chairmanship) of these boards.

¹ The Education Service Commission, and the Police and Civil Defence Services Commission were dissolved with effect from 1 April, 1998 and their responsibilities subsumed under the Public Service Commission.

Personnel boards

Powers and responsibilities for personnel management were devolved to ministries to enable Permanent Secretaries and line managers to recruit and promote deserving officers. The tenets which guide the exercise of devolved authority are:

- authority must be exercised fairly and consistently;
- selection of personnel board members must be rigorous;
- advancement in the Civil Service is based on merit;
- civil servants can appeal to the Appeals Board. If the appellant disagrees with the appeal, he can further appeal to the Public Service Commission.

Division of authority

The division of authority between the PSC and the personnel boards is:

Authority	Jurisdiction
PSC	Officers in Superscale D and above (e.g. Permanent Secretaries, heads of large divisions or departments)
Special Personnel Board	Superscale officers up to EI, and timescale officers in the Administrative Service (e.g. Senior Managers)
Senior Personnel Boards	Division I officers (graduate officers)
Personnel Boards	Division II, III & IV officers (non-graduate officers) (e.g. supervisory, technical, clerical and secretarial staff)

Special Personnel Board

The Special Personnel Board is responsible for all superscale officers up to Superscale E, and timescale officers in the Administrative Service. The board is chaired by the Head of Civil Service. Other members of the board are the Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office and three other appointed senior Permanent Secretaries. The President of Singapore appoints the Chairman and members on the advice of the Prime Minister. All members are appointed by name.

Senior Personnel Boards

Six such boards were set up, with each board taking care of Division I officers in a group of ministries. An appointed Permanent Secretary chairs each such board, with Permanent Secretaries of the ministries covered by each board being members of that board. The President of Singapore appoints the Chairmen and members of

the boards on the advice of the Prime Minister. All members are appointed by name.

Personnel Boards

Each ministry has a Personnel Board to take charge of the Divisions II, III, and IV officers in the schemes of service for which the Permanent Secretary of the ministry is the appointing authority. The Personnel Board is chaired by a superscale officer of the ministry. Members of the board are Division I Officers. The Chairman and members of the Personnel Boards are appointed by the Permanent Secretary (Prime Minister's Office). The bigger Ministries may have more than one Personnel Board. All members are appointed by name.

Promotions

Promotions are based on performance, potential, knowledge and experience and the existence of vacancies.

An officer with higher potential can expect to move faster and go further, but no officer is promoted simply on the basis of potential. The officer must perform well in his daily work to deserve the promotion.

A system of ranking officers on the basis of performance and potential was introduced to fine-tune assessments and fitness for promotion.

Ministries will form Recommending Panels to assess and rank officers and make recommendations for promotions. Line managers and supervisors are involved in the process. This is to ensure that promotions go to the most deserving.

Appeals

There is a check to ensure that personnel boards have been fair. An officer aggrieved by the decision of a personnel board can make an appeal to the Appeals Board. If the appellant disagrees with the appeal, he can further appeal to the PSC. The Chairman of the Appeals Board will send the appeal to the PSC for consideration. The decision of the PSC is final.

Recruitment

The authority for recruitment, previously with the PSC, now rests with the Personnel Boards except for recruitment into the Administrative Service. The Senior Personnel Board has assigned recruitment of graduate officers to Permanent Secretaries as members of the Senior Personnel Board up to upper timescale grades. The Personnel Board has assigned recruitment of non-graduate officers to the Chairman of the Personnel Board for first promotional grade and to the member, for recruitment grade.

The PSC is now in charge of:

- (i) recruitment for the Administrative Service and Administrative Service (Foreign Service Branch);
- (ii) promotions of all officers to Superscale D and above;
- (iii) the award of undergraduate scholarships;
- (iv) disciplinary cases;
- (v) appeals.

The system of personnel boards has been progressing well and the PSC can now concentrate on a focused core responsibility area which is primarily (i) to (v) above.

Other areas

Probationary period

To make the Civil Service more competitive in recruiting staff, the probationary period for all officers, except Administrative Service staff, was reduced from two years to one.

This was done for Division III officers in October 1994, including clerks, stenographers and junior police officers. (Probation for Division IV officers, such as office attendants, has always been one year.)

The reduction was extended to Division I and II officers in April 1995. It also applies to all new recruits regardless of whether they were appointed to basic grades or promotional grades. The change means more stringent assessment in the first year of work. It aims at ensuring that we absorb officers whom the ministry assesses to have the potential for a long-term career with the organisation and allows recruits to leave the service early if either they or their superiors find them unsuitable.

Senior Officer Scheme

To maximise the potential of officers through increasing their opportunities for advancement according to their ability, improving their deployability across a variety of job functions, and enhancing their long-term development and employability through continuous upgrading of skills and knowledge, several Division I (Graduate) Schemes of Service were amalgamated into a single Senior

Officer Scheme on 1 April, 1996. This is another step in improving human resource management in the Civil Service.

The first 13 schemes to be amalgamated into the Senior Officer Scheme are Commercial Affairs; Computer Service; Defence Auditing; Economic Research; Educational Broadcasting; Executive; Health Education; Labour; Land; Management Training; Medical Social Worker; Social Development Counselling; and Welfare Service. Other suitable Division I schemes will be brought into this scheme as and when ministries are ready. This scheme will eventually be the primary general scheme for employing graduates for a broad range of Division I jobs in ministries.

The Scheme covers five broad functional areas:

- (1) Line Operations (LineOps)
- (2) Human Resource Management (HRM)
- (3) Finance and Corporate Services (FCS)
- (4) Public Affairs Management (PAM)
- (5) Research and Information Support (RIS)

Future recruitment for Division I positions will be to jobs and not to schemes. While employees will be appointed to the Senior Officer Scheme for the purpose of establishing their salary scales and progression structure, their job titles will be descriptive of their jobs rather than their schemes.

Part-time employment

To provide greater flexibility and in line with the PS21 programme, the Civil Service has introduced new rules to encourage more women and retirees to work.

Under the new rules, all married female permanent officers with children in the permanent establishment and retirees can apply to work part-time. They can work either 21 hours or 28 hours per week, and their salaries and benefits will be pro-rated accordingly. Each application will be considered on its own merits. (In the earlier practice, retired officers were re-employed to work full-time, and only working mothers with children below six years of age were eligible for part-time work and only for up to three years.) From July 1996, there were no restrictions based on the age of the female officer's children, and the three-year, part-time work period became renewable.

The Civil Service also introduced the casual employment scheme in July 1996 to enable ministries and departments to hire casual workers short-term. Previously,

ministries and departments had to seek approval from the Public Service Division, Prime Minister's Office, to hire people for short-term work. The casual workers will be paid daily or hourly for *ad hoc* jobs, or fill vacancies on a temporary basis. The pay is based on the grade of these jobs on the permanent establishment, but those recruited do not qualify for service benefits. The new scheme applies to all levels in the Civil Service but is expected mainly to involve jobs in basic grades of existing service schemes.

These changes support national efforts to encourage more women and retirees to work, and the need for departments to be given flexibility to respond to their manpower needs.

Training

Under the PS21 Training Initiative, the Civil Service has targeted a training target of at least 100 hours per officer per year.

To give Permanent Secretaries of the various ministries more control over the management of their personnel, the training function was further decentralised with effect from 1 August, 1994. Permanent Secretaries have the authority to approve nominations for overseas training in accordance with guidelines set by the Public Service Division. Permanent Secretaries can further delegate the authority for approving overseas training to their Directors of Personnel or designated Superscale Officers.

Medical Benefits

To help civil servants take more responsibility for their health care, the Civil Service introduced a new medical benefits package that requires government employees to co-pay part of their outpatient expenses. The White Paper on Affordable Health Care recommended that employers make voluntary contributions into the Medisave accounts of their employees, over and above the statutory Medisave contributions, in lieu of hospitalisation benefits. The additional Medisave contribution can be used by employees to meet hospitalisation expenses and/or buy insurance cover.

In line with the White Paper, the Civil Service introduced a new medical benefits scheme to replace the existing scheme. From 1 April, 1994 recruits who enter the Civil Service are eligible for medical benefits under the new Medisave-cum-Subsidised Outpatient Scheme (MSO). Under this scheme, the government as employer pays one per cent of the total monthly salary of an employee into a fund called the Medisave. Employees can use this fund to buy medical insurance to meet hospitalisation expenses, for which the patient co-pays a fraction of the hospitalisation expenses while the insurers pay the rest. Previously free, outpatient expenses incurred by employees or their dependants at government dispensaries have now to be co-paid by employees.

Civil servants already in service were also encouraged to opt for the MSO scheme. They can also opt to:

- retain their existing benefits (co-payment on Ward Charges Scheme and free outpatient services); or
- accept an intermediate scheme – the Comprehensive Co-Payment Scheme (CCS).

Under the CCS, an officer and his dependants will co-pay on *all items* of medical services covered by the current scheme instead of on ward charges only.

To make the CCS and the MSO attractive, a salary revision was introduced with the introduction of the schemes for serving officers. Those who wished to remain on the existing scheme were not eligible for that salary revision but will be eligible for future salary reviews.

Vacation Leave

Under the Half-Day Leave Scheme, half-day leave could not be taken on a Saturday, or the eve of any Public Holiday which is a half-working day. In June 1993, the Saturday restriction was reviewed. Officers can now take up to six Saturdays as half-day leave against their vacation leave eligibility of each year, subject to the exigencies of service. Any leave taken on a Saturday in excess of the six days will continue to be treated as one day's leave. However, vacation leave taken on the eve of a selected public holiday which is a half-working day will continue to be recorded as one day's leave.

In 1991, the government introduced a scheme which allows an officer (under the 1979 Leave Scheme) to commute his unconsumed vacation leave into pay based on a set of criteria. This gives the officer the flexibility to take his leave or to convert his leave into money.

4.4 Performance incentives

Performance Incentives, usually monetary, are used in the Civil Service mainly to strengthen the link between pay and performance. Performance incentives serve as a form of recognition for staff who have done a good job and encourage them and others to continue to put in their best efforts.

The context for change

The flexi-wage policy is a very good example of how wages are adjusted upwards in times of economic growth or good corporate performance and downwards in less happy times.

Singapore faced a recession in 1985/1987. A high-level Economic Committee was tasked to study the causes of the recession and to make recommendations on how Singapore could be brought out of it and how Singapore could be more adaptive to global conditions.

The Economic Committee, among other measures, recommended that for Singapore to be competitive, it needs to build flexibility into its wage system so that Singapore can adapt to changing economic circumstances. The Civil Service set the lead in implementing the recommendations.

Another reason for change is the rising expectations of the public and civil servants that rewards should be commensurate with performance. Also, incentives are necessary to entrench new habits of service which do not come about automatically.

Implementing change

Changes implemented were in the wage structure, performance bonus and incentives. The public sector introduced the flexi-wage system on 1 July 1988. This system has four components:

Flexi-wage

- Basic wage
- Non-pensionable variable payment (NPVP)
- Monthly variable component (or MVC)

- Variable 13th month non-pensionable annual allowance
- Mid-year and year-end variable component

In times of poor economic performance, the last three components – the bonus, the MVC and the 13th month annual allowance – will be affected. The basic wage will be left untouched unless the economy performs extremely poorly. Annual adjustment to the basic wage will be conservative while one-off special bonuses can be expected during times of good economic performance. The move at wage reform is aimed at removing the rigidities inherent in the existing wage system. It makes the wage system more flexible and provides an adequate link between wages and economic growth and productivity gains. This ensures that wages will never out-run productivity.

The flexi-wage policy is a reflection of the public service response to future economic uncertainties. Review and changes in bonus payments every year establish a valuable principle of flexibility for the public service in that benefits given in good times are not permanent but may subsequently be taken away when times are bad.

A Performance Bonus Scheme

Performance bonuses for senior officers were introduced in 1989, affecting about one per cent of civil servants. Under this scheme, officers who perform well during the year can receive up to '3 months' additional salary. The rationale for this scheme is the need to strengthen the link between performance and pay for senior officers. It is also a form of recognition and reward for those who perform well beyond the requirements of their grade.

From 1 July 1996, Division I officers in the Civil Service will also be eligible for variable performance bonuses. The bonus scheme was extended after Civil Service salaries were reviewed and people in the upper and intermediate Division I timescale grades were found to earn less than their counterparts in the private sector. The government prefers to make performance-related annual payments rather than pay the revisions in monthly salaries so as to further strengthen the link between pay and performance. From 1 July 1996, all intermediate and upper timescale officers in Division I can get up to an extra 1 ½ month's pay (two months for higher CEP tier).

Performance-related payments will also be progressively extended to other services if there are significant gaps between their salaries and what those in similar jobs earn in the private sector.

Incentives For Service Excellence

Under the PS21 Quality Service Initiative, the Civil Service introduced a new system of assessing and rewarding staff that deal with the public directly – either face-to-face or through the telephone. This was effected to entrench excellence in service quality to meet the rising expectations for better service to the public.

In August 1996, a Counter Allowance Scheme was introduced to encourage and recognise quality counter service. Staff are encouraged to be courteous, helpful and efficient when serving the public. Based on a set of criteria, which include the amount of time staff are on counter-duty, public feedback and supervisors' assessment, counter staff qualify for a monthly allowance. In addition to the monthly allowance, outstanding performers are rewarded with quarterly bonuses. Those who gave poor service or receive substantiated complaints from the public are not awarded the allowance.

In June 1996, this scheme (without the quarterly bonus) was extended to officers who provide services over the telephone. No quarterly bonus was involved here because officers are not subjected to the same criteria as the counter staff who have to get feedback from the public. Staff who qualify for the allowance must be deployed specifically to provide service over the telephone, for example, accepting applications or registrations or handling enquiries on Government rules and procedures.

Performance incentives motivate staff to do a better job. It is therefore an important tool to use for better quality, better service, and better link to performance, be it individual or group.

4.5 Mission orientation

The Civil Service needs an overall mission and vision. Ministries and departments have also to clarify their missions and goals. A mission helps a public service department to take the first step towards being goal-oriented.

The context for change

Public service organisations face greater complexities and higher expectations. There is greater competition for resources and it becomes more important than ever that public service organisations should be goal-directed, not only to optimise the use of their resources but to provide goal-centred directions that can be communicated clearly to staff down the line. Teamwork is not possible without clearly-defined directions into the future.

Implementing change

The civil service as a whole has a Corporate Statement to orientate civil servants on its broader mission. Commissioned in 1995, the Corporate Statement is displayed prominently in all ministries to serve as a reminder both to civil servants, and to all their clients, of the ideals of the civil service. The Corporate Statement is not a new prescription of what we aspire to be but rather a gathering and documentation of the beliefs and principles that the Singapore civil service has always been guided by. It sets out clearly the broad performance standards which the civil service must meet. It reminds the civil service leadership of its mission, and provides them with a set of basic values and points of reference with which to rally the civil service towards meeting the challenges of the future; to shape the civil service for the future.

Singapore Civil Service

Our Mission

- We work with the elected government to shape Singapore's future, forge a common vision among Singaporeans and transform the vision into reality.
- We safeguard the independence, sovereignty, security and prosperity of Singapore.
- We uphold justice and equality, guided by the principles of incorruptibility, meritocracy and impartiality.

Our Goals

- We build a dynamic, successful and vibrant nation of excellence, with a safe, secure and stable environment.
- We create the best conditions for Singapore to succeed and for Singaporeans to attain high standards of living.
- We foster a cohesive and harmonious society, based on respect, care and concern for fellow citizens.

Our Customers

- We provide quality service – responsive, efficient and courteous.
- We treat our customers fairly and honestly, holding to high standards of professionalism, integrity and conduct.
- We do our best to help our customers and meet their needs.

Our Staff

- We value our staff. We maximise their potential through continuing training and development. We encourage them to continuously improve their knowledge, skills and capabilities.
- We offer our staff challenging and worthwhile responsibilities. We expect them to show commitment, resourcefulness and enterprise. We provide them the tools, resources and environment to do a good job.
- We require our staff to work well with others. We can develop sound plans and implement them effectively only when people at different levels with diverse abilities work closely together.

Our Beliefs

- Respect for individual staff members is the first prerequisite for outstanding service and wholehearted commitment.
- Change is essential for continuously maintaining and improving Singapore's international competitiveness in the global economy.
- Excellence drives us to be the best that we can be in all that we do.
- Learning from others, from feedback and from mistakes is the best way to benefit from experience.
- Leadership which is bold, discerning and open to new ideas and insights is crucial for steady progress and superior achievement.

*We work together for a first-class public service
----- capable, innovative and forward-looking -----
----- one of the best in the world -----
worthy of Singapore.*

Individual Ministry's Mission Orientation

Every year, each ministry submits its performance review for the old Financial Year (FY) and gives the new breakdown of its budget for the new FY to the Budget Division, Ministry of Finance. This is collated in a book known as The Budget For The Financial Year 19-. In this book, each ministry and organ of state has to state its mission.

Examples of Mission Statements given in the Budget book include:

Ministry of Finance

To allocate public funds and manpower to public sector programmes and projects which are in line with national priorities and undertaken prudently and efficiently; and to plan and formulate national tax and revenue policies and efficiently administer the machinery for the assessment and collection of taxes, licence fees and other duties.

Prime Minister's Office

To co-ordinate the activities of ministries and the general policies of the government and to provide overall policy direction; to maintain readiness for elections and eradicate corruption; to ensure the efficient and effective management of public service officers through sound personnel policies in service conditions, career development and staff training; to promote quality service and productivity; and to provide secretariat support to the Public Service Commission (PSC), Education Service Commission (ESC), Legal Service Commission (LSC) and Police and Civil Defence Services Commission (PCDSC) in the pursuit of their missions.

Ministry of Information and the Arts

To help inform, educate and entertain, as part of our national goal to make Singapore a hub city of the world and to build a society that is economically dynamic, socially cohesive and culturally vibrant.

Getting ministries and departments to spell out their mission statements in The Budget book helps the ministries and departments to set appropriate goals and objectives to achieve their mission.

The open declaration of the Civil Service Corporate Statement is also timely. As Singapore prepares for the 21st century, the civil service needs to be very clear about its mission, goals and beliefs. It also reflects the attitudes and values the civil service must continue to have. The Statement tells civil servants what is expected of them as they go about doing their jobs. It also reassures the public that they will be served with courtesy, efficiency and integrity.

To help Civil Service organisations anticipate an uncertain future, a Scenario Planning Office was set up. The scenario-based approach aims to help government organisations anticipate changes in the future.

4.6 Strengthening anti-corruption measures

The civil service leadership and the political leadership are aligned in their anti-corruption attitude. The civil service does not tolerate corruption at whatever level, and dismissal and legal action will result from a proven charge of corruption.

In Singapore the law against corruption is known as the Prevention of Corruption Act. It is an effective piece of legislation which has been reviewed regularly to update it and enhance its effectiveness. However, enforcement action against corruption by itself is not enough. In the long run, taking preventive action against corruption is a more effective way of solving the problem.

The context for change

Corruption is a disease that undermines the will to lead proactively, the will to see social justice, and represents a serious pollution of due process. Corruption causes resources to leak, resulting in inefficiencies and injustice, and weakens governance and honest government. Singapore is a small country with limited resources and if corruption is tolerated, it will be the end of Singapore. Right from Singapore's independence, Singapore's founding fathers and the civil service leadership put into place laws and a system that are totally unfriendly to corruption.

Implementing change

Corruption prevention is an on-going process in Singapore, particularly in public service management. There are various preventive measures in place aimed at strengthening anti-corruption, including:

- *Declaration of Non-indebtedness*

Every year, all public officers are required to declare whether they are free from financial embarrassment or otherwise. Except for hire purchases or mortgages or overdrafts for which sufficient securities have been pledged with the lenders, public officers are not permitted to be indebted or sign any promissory note. The rationale for the prohibition is that a public officer who is indebted places himself under obligation and can easily be manipulated. A public officer who is indebted is also more likely to succumb to corruption. A declaration which is false can render an officer liable to be dismissed from service.

- *Declaration of Assets/Investments*

No officer may directly or indirectly make use of any official information or his official position to further his private interest. To prevent any conflict of interest, all public officers are required to declare their assets and investments when they are first appointed and annually thereafter.

- *Business and Part-Time Employment*

Public officers are not allowed to engage in trade or business or undertake any part-time employment without approval.

- *Acceptance of Gifts/Entertainment*

Public officers are not permitted to receive from the public any present (other than the ordinary gifts of personal friends) whether in the form of money, goods, free passages or other personal benefits. They are also not permitted to accept any entertainment from members of the public which will place them under any real or apparent obligation. If someone with whom they have official dealings should present them with any gift etc., they should reject it outright. When it is not practical to reject a gift, the officer should immediately after accepting it, surrender it to his head of department, who will forward it to the Accountant-General for its value to be assessed. The officer can retain the gift only if he pays its assessed value to the government.

- *Improvement of Work Methods and Procedures*

Cumbersome work methods and procedures are continuously improved upon to avoid delays in the issuance of permits, licenses, etc. Procedures which facilitate corrupt practices are remedied to prevent such practices.

- *Surprise Checks on Revenue Officers*

Surprise checks are made on revenue collecting officers (e.g. Customs Officers) to prevent them from taking bribes. When a Customs Officer reports for duty, he is required to declare the amount of money on his person. At any time during his tour of duty, he can be subjected to a full body search. If he is found to have more money than he has declared during a surprise check, it is presumed that he got the extra money through corrupt means until he proves to the contrary.

- *Special Contract Clause*

A clause warning successful contractors not to be involved in any form of corruption or bribery is incorporated into all government contracts. If they are involved, their contracts will be terminated and the contractors will be liable to pay government liquidated damages for breaching the contracts and will also be debarred from participating in any government tenders for 5 years or more.

- *Lectures on Corruption*

Officers of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau often deliver talks on the pitfalls of corruption and how to avoid getting involved in corruption to fresh recruits in the public service, especially those recruited to work in law enforcement agencies and those whose work exposes them to temptations of bribery and corruption.

- *Transparency*

Transparency is emphasised in due process, procedures and appointments, and underlies the criterion of meritocracy in appointing civil servants.

- *Rotating Officers*

Officers are regularly and systematically posted from one operational unit to another so that corruption is not entrenched and can be exposed early.

- *Rigorous Investigation*

All allegations of corruption, including anonymous accusations, are investigated. Areas that were previously prone to corruption are regularly surveyed.

- *High Living Officers*

Officers whose lifestyles are not commensurate with their incomes are likely to be investigated.

In a recent circular on Rules on the Purchase of Property, the civil service spelt out new rules for civil servants buying private property. Civil servants are required to declare promptly all transactions as and when they take up options to purchase property, i.e. before their properties are registered in their names in the Registry of Titles and Deeds. More details are in Section 4.7.

4.7 Developing a public service code of conduct

The context for change

Recent changes to the code of conduct are discussed in Section 4.6 Change (for example, the need to inform the government of options signed for the purchase of property) arose because the public would continually expect a higher level of conduct from civil servants than the populace in general.

Implementing change

The main provisions in the Code of Conduct include:

Public Duties and Private Interests

An officer cannot make use of any official information or his official position to further his private interests.

Political Activities

An officer has the right to vote or be a member of a political party. However, he may not take part in political activities, such as holding office in any political organisation or publicly expressing his views on any political matter. He cannot wear a political emblem while in uniform, or on duty, or in government establishments.

Outside Employment

An officer is not allowed to engage in any trade or business or work for any other employer unless he has obtained prior approval. The rationale for the restriction is to avoid any conflict of interest and to ensure the officer's commitment to his job.

Quotations and Procurement of Goods and Services

Tenders are called to purchase goods and services. Systematic approval processes and documentation are followed. This is to ensure competition is fair, prices are competitive, and the entire process is transparent and open.

Presents and Entertainment

An officer cannot receive presents from subordinates or the public. He must declare the presents and surrender, or pay to keep, them.

Private Investments

An officer must declare annually:

- all interest or investments in shares and land, houses or other property;
- all interests or investments held by his spouse or any member of his family which are likely to lead to a conflict of interest.

Lending and Borrowing of Money

An officer cannot borrow money from a person who is in any way under his official authority or has official dealings with him. The rationale for the restriction is to prevent abuse of his official position and favouritism to staff who have loaned him money, and to ensure that officers do not live beyond their means and are not obligated to other parties.

Secrecy of Official Documents and Information

An officer must treat all official documents, papers and information received as confidential.

Broadcasts, Telecasts and Interviews

The permission of the officer's Permanent Secretary must be sought to make any broadcast/telecast, or to provide material for a broadcast or telecast. He/she cannot be interviewed on public policy or on matters affecting the defence or military resources of the country.

Publications

The permission of the Permanent Secretary must be sought before an officer can:

- act as editor of any newspaper, magazine, periodical or similar publication;
- publish anything which may be regarded as political or administrative in nature;
- publish any work using materials from official records and experience.

Prevention of Corruption

An officer cannot accept any gratification as reward for performing or not performing any official act or helping to get any contract from any person. Corruption is a criminal offence punishable under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Property Purchases

In a recent circular on Rules on Purchase of Property, the Civil Service spelt out new rules for civil servants buying private property.

Civil servants should not take up discounts or other concessions to buy property if:

- the offers arose on account of acquaintanceship in an official capacity, regardless of whether there were in fact official dealings; or
- there were or are official dealings between the developer or vendor and the officer or his department.

Civil servants will be required to declare promptly all transactions as and when they take up options to purchase property. The declaration should cover the circumstances and particulars of the transaction, the date of purchase, the price and any discount off the list price, whether the property was purchased from a developer, and if so whether at a soft or public launch. This requirement will deter both civil servants and would-be buyers of influence from corrupt or improper transactions.

They must also declare the property purchases of their spouses and financially dependent children.

This new ruling applies to all civil servants. This means that civil servants must declare their transactions to their Permanent Secretary. Permanent Secretaries will declare their transactions to the Head of Civil Service. The Head of the Civil Service will declare his transactions to the Prime Minister.

This new requirement is in addition to the annual declaration on shares and property.

Other Aspects

Other aspects of the code of conduct include punctuality, injunctions against bringing the public service into disrepute, and insubordination, and are implied from the Public Service Commission's Disciplinary Rules.

4.8 Using contractual employment

Generally, vacancies in the Singapore Civil Service are to be filled by permanent officers or by officers on contract.

The context for change

Traditionally, the Civil Service offers a life-long career. Many opt for the Civil Service because of the perceived job security and are even prepared to earn less than their private sector counterparts because of this.

But contractual employment has its advantages. Since contract terms are negotiable, the Civil Service may be able to attract better candidates if it pays market or international market rates for the jobs. A period of contract service can also provide an opportunity to assess an officer before he is placed on permanent service. Officers appointed on contract can have their services terminated on three months' notice, if they are found wanting in their work performance or conduct, without the need for lengthy disciplinary procedures. Alternatively, their contracts need not be renewed if they are merely average performers. The contract employment therefore offers the Civil Service flexibilities denied it when dealing with officers in the permanent establishment.

However, if contract appointments are used too extensively and become a general rule rather than an exception, it may create a deep sense of insecurity even among good performers when each contract-term is about to expire. Too great a reliance on contract service may compound recruitment and retention problems.

Implementing change

The Ministry of Education uses extensively overseas contracts to recruit expatriate teachers for colleges and secondary schools to teach the Humanities, Art, Foreign Languages and Music. Other Ministries and Departments also make use of these contracts to recruit expatriates from various countries.

4.9 Workforce size control

The Singapore Government introduced the Zero-Growth in Manpower Policy in 1988. Ministries were required to maintain their total staff strength as at 31 December, 1986. However, now that ministries have been converted to autonomous agencies, there is no longer a control on head-count; instead, each ministry is permitted to employ as many people as its budget can support in the long-term.

The context for change

The public sector aims to keep lean and trim to maintain efficiency and release manpower to the private sector.

Implementing change

The policy helps to moderate the rate of growth of expenditure on manpower. Ministries try to make available manpower for new functions or increases in workload through re-organisation, re-development, re-training, computerisation and increases in productivity. Within this framework, individual ministries are given the flexibility to regrade and transfer posts between programmes to meet their manpower needs.

4.10 Redundancy management

It is unavoidable that with time, certain jobs in the Civil Service will become redundant. When this happens, the Civil Service will have to try to find alternatives for the redundant employees, be it retirement, posting, redeployment or resignation under a special scheme.

The context for change

Singapore has enjoyed full employment, and the Civil Service has the vacancies to reabsorb most redundant personnel. The context therefore is that unless an employee is unemployable, he can always get another job.

Implementing change

If the employee becomes redundant because his/her job is no longer relevant (e.g. through farming-out of services or privatisation), he/she may be posted to another department or ministry if his/her services are still required and are relevant to that organisation, or if he/she has skills that can be used by another department.

In some cases, the officer cannot be posted to another ministry to do the same type of job, as his/her old job is unique to his previous department. In such instances, the officer can be redeployed to another ministry to do a different but suitable job.

Posting or redeployment to another job or another department for redundant employees due to privatisation, farming-out of services etc., is commonly practised.

If an employee is redundant and not redeployable, he/she can leave the Civil Service under the Special Resignation Scheme (SRS). This scheme was introduced by the Singapore Civil Service in April 1988 as part of the public sector's zero growth manpower policy.

Only a redundant employee who has three or more years' service and who cannot be found alternative jobs either in his own ministry or elsewhere in the Civil Service, may apply to leave under the SRS.

A summary of the SRS is:

1.	Mode of Leaving the Service	By voluntary resignation
2.	Qualifying Service	Three or more years' service
3.	Quantum of Special Resignation Benefits	For (i) non-pensionable employee – one month's salary for each year of service and proportionately thereof for any complete month (ii) pensionable employee – (i) above, and back-dated employer's Central Provident Fund contributions plus interest (difference between non-pensionable and pensionable rates) to put him/her on par with the non-pensionable employee

A redundant, unredeployable employee with less than 18 months' of service before attaining the compulsory retirement age of 55 or 60 years may also leave the Service under the SRS with either:

- one month's salary for each year of service and proportionately thereof for any completed months; or
- one month's salary for each remaining month of service before attaining the compulsory retirement age, whichever is the less.