

**ADDRESS BY MR LEE SEOW HIANG, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
CHANGI AIRPORT GROUP AT *OUR CHANGI EXPERIENCE*,
CHANGI AIRPORT'S CUSTOMER CENTRIC INITIATIVE ICON SHOWCASE,
AT CROWNE PLAZA CHANGI AIRPORT, 28 SEPTEMBER 2010, 2.30PM**

Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister, Prime Minister's Office,
Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Minister of State for Trade & Industry and Manpower,
My Airport Colleagues and Partners,
Friends from the media,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. A very warm welcome and thank you for joining us this afternoon for *Our Changi Experience*. Changi Airport Group and our partners here at Changi are honoured to have been identified as one of the Customer Centric Initiative, or CCI, Icons which have been given the task and challenge of raising our service standards and delivery, and bringing it to the next level.
2. On behalf of the airport community, I would first like to take the opportunity to thank SPRING Singapore for the very strong support given to us since we embarked on this journey late last year, and I look forward to the same partnership as we continue this journey ahead.

Delivering the Changi Experience

3. An airport exists to provide three core functions: Capacity, Connectivity and Services to our airlines and our passengers. Service is therefore at the core of who we are and what we do. Since 1981, when the first aircraft landed here, Changi Airport has

been an icon for many Singaporeans. And for travellers, it has become more than a gateway to become a symbol of our country. In fact, for some, the airport is all they see of Singapore when they travel through Changi.

4. Every day, close to 110,000 passengers pass through our terminals. In addition, Changi receives tens of thousands of visitors each week, especially families with children, who come here for dining, shopping and to enjoy a wide array of lifestyle entertainment and facilities. Each and every person, whether a traveller or member of the public, presents an opportunity for us to touch their lives and deliver an outstanding airport experience beyond their expectations. We call this the 'Changi Experience'.

Changi's Operating Context

5. Delivering this Changi Experience consistently is, however, not an easy task. There is something unique about operating here at Changi. This uniqueness manifests itself in three ways.
6. **Big & Intense.** First, we are big and intense. Changi Airport itself is a huge estate. The four terminal buildings cover more than a million square metres, or about the size of 140 football fields, or 8-10 times of VivoCity. Washrooms alone, there are already more than 500 airport-wide. Besides the sheer size of the airport, we also work in an operating environment with several intense peak periods in a day. A single A380 arrival, for instance, will see 400-500 passengers disembarking and heading for the nearest washrooms within a short window of 15-20 minutes. Multiply that by several folds and you get an idea of how a simple task of having clean toilets ready for every passenger, every minute of every day, throughout the year becomes a non-trivial task.

7. **Many Players.** The second unique aspect is what I call the phenomenon of Many Partners. Unlike establishments like a hotel, Changi is unique in that many of our airport services and facilities are provided through external partners and suppliers. Changi Airport Group today has about 1,300 employees, but to run this airport well, you need a community of about 28-30,000 people. Hence, we have to collaborate with over 200 companies and agencies, our partners, to deliver the Changi Experience. Many of the airport's frontline staff, the face of Changi, are not our direct employees. Hence, Many Partners and also Many Bosses!
8. **Many Missions.** Thirdly, there is a phenomenon I call Many Missions. Because Changi is also an important gateway to the country, there are multiple missions that we, and our partners, have to fulfil. For instance, as we serve arriving or departing passengers, we also have to ensure a wide array of safety and security considerations are met, and that the integrity of our immigration functions are preserved throughout the gateway system.
9. **Many Partners, Many Missions, One Changi.** Therefore, the challenge for us can be summarised by a single tagline: 'Many Partners, Many Missions, only One Changi Experience'. This CCI Icon journey has challenged us once again to ask afresh - How do we get a workforce of 28,000 to deliver a consistent Changi Experience to all our customers, all the time? We have distilled three core principles that have guided us as we embarked on this journey. I call this the LED principle – **L**eadership, **E**ngaged Employees, **D**ialogue with our Customers. Let me share a few thoughts on each of these guiding principles.

LED¹ – Changi’s Operating Principles

Collective Leadership

10. First, the emphasis on collective leadership. My Chairman made an important speech on improving service standards in Singapore earlier this year. The Straits Times reprinted his speech and the editors aptly chose the tagline “Fish rots from the head” as the headline. Leadership is key for any service transformation in an organisation. But leadership emphasis is even more crucial for us here at Changi because of the phenomenon of ‘Many Partners, Many Missions’. If leadership at CAG or any of our partners wavers or even hesitates, the impact downstream on our respective employees will be felt, and the chances of true service transformation greatly diminished.
11. On this note, I would like to say that we have been extremely fortunate and privileged to have the collective will and support of leadership across many of our partners, both government agencies and commercial entities, operating here at Changi.
12. For this CCI Icon journey, we have brought the power of collective leadership one level up. Early on the process, we formed “Eureka” teams and organised a steering committee of partners to kick start the initiatives. The fruits of many of the projects you see showcased today are the direct result of active sponsorship from the collective leadership displayed by many of our partners. I want to thank all the partners who have run the journey with us. Moving forward, we can do more. Perhaps, we can establish a Changi Strategic Leadership Group which will provide further oversight and sustain the momentum that we have generated so far. I look forward to your continued support in this.

¹ LED: Collective Leadership, Engaged Workforce, Dialogue with Customers

Engaging airport staff

13. **Engaged Employees.** Because Changi is such a huge real estate, exceptional service will not come simply because of a few committed leaders. We need an army of committed and **engaged employees**. This second core principle stems from a simple premise, that good service comes from the **hearts** of **engaged employees** who feel they have a real stake in Changi's success. In fact, we believe this mantra so much that when we formed our company last year, we articulated our core values by **putting customers second**, and **our people first**. This may appear counter-intuitive in a society that always puts the customer first, but we firmly believe that by putting our people first, making them absolutely engaged and in love with Changi, we will end up attracting and retaining superior employees, and over time increase the odds that our hospitality and service performance will see a quantum leap. In the end, engaged employees strive not just to satisfy our passengers but also to thoroughly delight and astonish them, so that the passengers will rave about the Changi Experience and encourage their family and friends to check us out.

14. **28,000 Engaged Hearts.** Of course, the concept of engaged employees cannot stop with CAG. I was reminded of this when Minister Lim shared with me two years ago that he noticed one of our toilet cleaners looking very glum. I must confess that my first reaction when I heard this feedback was "Wow! The standards have now increased." We not only need clean toilets, we need smiling cleaners too! But upon deeper reflection, I realised that Minister was spot on. If cleaners are glum, and they do not enjoy working here at Changi, there is less likelihood of good work performance and clean toilets. If a worker is not engaged, no amount of training or supervision is going to help. As a result, in this CCI Icon journey, we challenged ourselves to extend our concept of engaged employees to our partners, putting a special focus on the real driving force of the Changi Experience – the 28,000 people who work here.

15. **Cheap to Best to Deep Sourcing.** How do we move forward on this? Several years ago, Changi Airport moved beyond cheap sourcing to best sourcing, where expertise and quality of the service providers are placed above mere cost savings. In future, we hope to take the next leap, from best sourcing to **deep sourcing**. What do we mean? Over time, when we work with external partners, we will not only consider their price and the quality of their services, we will also assess the job satisfaction levels of their employees. After all, happy employees are one of the best guarantees that they will do a great job here at Changi.
16. We are very excited with this idea and have pioneered an initial survey among the employees of one of our cleaning service partners who shared our vision. The cleaning company is called Campaign Complete Solutions Pte Ltd, whose CEO, Mr Lieu Munn Loong, is with us today. With the cooperation of Campaign, CAG conducted an independent, and specially designed survey to find out the engagement levels of Campaign's workers here at Changi. To make the survey accessible, we did it in three languages. This first survey gave us an understanding of the workers' perceptions and their views about working at Changi which we never had before.
17. The results were impressive and insightful. The staff responded enthusiastically to this initiative and the response rate was over 95%. The results showed that an overwhelming number of them are very satisfied with their work environment and I am pleased to add that most feel that they have a direct contribution to Changi Airport's success even though they are not directly employed by us. What is also deeply encouraging is that even the foreign workers with the company have the same sense of engagement with Changi. For the first time, we have direct evidence that when workers, whether they are Singaporeans or foreigners, are well managed and well led by our service partners, and when they feel engaged and a part of the Changi community, we can indeed count on them to give off their best and more.

18. Through the survey, we also picked up areas for improvement. For instance, we learnt that it was not easy for staff on the ground to provide feedback, such as ideas on improving work processes. Some were also keen to go for more training and upgrade their skills. We shared these survey findings with Campaign and it has since introduced staff briefings by supervisors and other initiatives in response. Down the road, with such data, we see enormous potential for us to work together with our service partners, deepening our relationships, and perhaps also work closely with NTUC and WDA to fine-tune training programmes that will better our service partners' employees.

Dialogue with Customers

19. Finally, the third core principle begins with the premise that Service is **not a monologue but a dialogue** with our customers. Service and hospitality is not what we do **to** our customers, but what we do **for** them. A key consequence of this premise is the aggressive emphasis we place on feedback. Currently, our guests have various channels to provide feedback to us, through feedback kiosks in the terminals, hardcopy forms by fax or mail, or online through our website. However, feedback through these channels often reaches us only when the passenger has left the airport. Any corrective action we take may not benefit the person who actually provided the feedback or even fellow passengers on the same flight. For this CCI Icon journey, we therefore paid a lot of attention on shortening the feedback cycle with our customers.
20. I am very excited with the solutions we have come up with. When they are fully rolled out throughout the airport, I am confident we will usher in a mini-revolution in our service standards at Changi. Many of the solutions, some in prototype, will be demonstrated during the airport tour later and my colleague, Sek Min, will give you an overview of what we have achieved with these solutions. Without stealing the thunder, I will leave the experts to give you the juicy details.

Conclusion

21. To conclude, our participation in the CCI Icon journey has provided us with the perfect reason to take a step back and relook, rethink and re-strategise how we can continue to 'wow' passengers and guests at Changi. We are proud of the Changi Experience, but do not take it for granted. It is a continuing journey for all of us at Changi Airport. With collective leadership, an engaged workforce and constant dialogue with our customers, we can look ahead, with confidence and anticipation, to many more years of innovation, improvement and keeping our customers delighted.

22. I would like to extend my thanks to our many partners and my airport colleagues involved in conceptualising and putting into operation the various CCI Icon initiatives. Your leadership and enthusiasm have made today's showcase possible. I look forward to your continued contributions as we transform the Changi Experience together.

Thank you and *Enjoy Changi*.
