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NEW ROLES

New job redesign framework launched for retailers

It offers step-by-step guides for companies to tackle challenges such as e-commerce and rising consumer expectations

BY NATALIE CHOY | THE BUSINESS TIMES



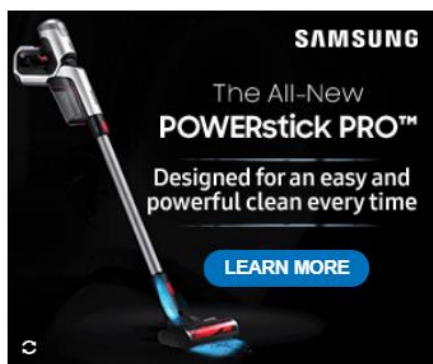
Minister for Manpower Josephine Teo launching the Retail Job Redesign Framework. Ms Teo said that firms must be bold in adopting new technologies, redesigning jobs to support shifts in business strategies and help workers adapt to the changing environment.

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Singapore

A NEW framework has been launched to help retailers tweak their operations and build a more productive workforce in today's digital age.

The Retail Job Redesign Framework offers step-by-step guides for companies to identify potential areas for job redesign, develop and deploy suitable solutions and measure the outcome.



It is a joint initiative by Enterprise Singapore (ESG) and Workforce Singapore (WSG), in partnership with the Singapore Retailers Association (SRA).

The framework is available on the SRA website which also houses downloadable job redesign templates, recommended pre-fitted solutions as well as information on financial assistance and related services.



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Companies seeking extra guidance can work with five pre-qualified job redesign consultants, and appointments can be made on the SRA website.

Those who require funding or manpower can tap the various business development grants and programmes by ESG and WSG.

The advent of e-commerce and rising consumer expectations herald the need for reinvention in the retail scene, said Minister for Manpower Josephine Teo at the framework's launch on Friday. Retailers, especially the brick-and-mortar stores, can no longer compete on cost as "e-commerce intensifies to grab the attention and wallets of consumers at home and abroad," she added.

Globally, e-commerce is expected to increase 20 per cent year-on-year.

Major online retailers also have the economies of scale that increases their cost competitiveness.

"Companies must be bold in adopting new technologies, redesign jobs to support shifts in business strategies and help workers adapt to the changing operating environment," Ms Teo urged.

Menswear retailer Benjamin Barker was one of seven pilot companies which recently embarked on its job redesign journey with ESG and WSG.

Through the process, the company enhanced its Point-of-Sales (POS) system so that employees have access to real-time product inventory across all stores islandwide, thereby enabling better efficiency and customer service.

Its employees were also equipped with data analytics skills in areas of sales target

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Its employees were also equipped with data analytics skills in areas of sales target management and product advisory.

Another retail company, Star International, developed an automated SMS system to push out delivery reminders, reducing time spent by 80 per cent. Previously, its employees spent four hours a day calling customers personally.

The household furniture firm also replaced manual forms with soft-copy versions and its employees have been trained to handle the new system.

Such examples affirm that job redesigning does not have to be complex, said Ms Teo.

She added: "If done correctly, it can increase productivity while bringing more value to customers, and ultimately, the business. There's also more room for wages to go up."

The framework can be found at <http://jobredesign.sra.org.sg>.

SINGAPORE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

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