

# *the***SME***magazine*

THE BUSINESS TIMES

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2014



“FROM DAY ONE,  
IT’S ALWAYS BEEN  
QUALITY FIRST  
AND THEN EVERYTHING  
ELSE LATER.  
I BELIEVE QUALITY  
BRINGS BACK CUSTOMERS  
AND NOT THE PRICE.”

HELENE RAUDASCHL,  
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF INDOGUNA

# RAMPING UP PRODUCTIVITY

**T**HIS year's National Productivity Month (NPM 2014) will be launched by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Oct 7. Co-organised by the Singapore Business Federation and Singapore National Employers' Federation, NPM 2014 will be followed by productivity-themed sector-level events in manufacturing, health care, retail, food services, hospitality and construction.

It is probably as timely a juncture as any to pause and take stock of how far along your own firm has come on the productivity journey.

In this issue of *The SME Magazine*, we speak to a wide range of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – whether in manufacturing, retail, or food and beverage – to find out what they have done to improve workflow processes.

Some, like Systematic Laundry, looked beyond technology and processes typically associated with the industry to radio frequency identification (RFID) systems. According to CEO Chan Tai Pang, the productivity gains have been tremendous. From needing about 30 to 40 employees to count and sort 20,000 individual garment pieces, now just one person is needed to roll the entire bundle of laundry past an RFID reader.

But productivity gains are not just about introducing automation. Focusing on a

niche area and becoming the best (or, second to best) in the industry in that one area is another way of increasing productivity, as you are able to focus your energy and resources.

The German concept of "Hidden Champions", first coined by author and business leader Hermann Simon, has been in the limelight in recent years. How do SMEs that few outside the industry know about, help prop up one of the largest economies in the world? We explore that in Top Story.

Elsewhere, in our Towkay spread, Indoguna's Helene Raudaschl stresses the importance of knowing one's industry well. After all, it is only by understanding the nuances of the industry that one is able to spot potential gaps and indeed, find suppliers to meet these needs. She shares her plans for the company's upcoming manufacturing plant in Dubai, and how that will help it better break into the halal food market.

Staying in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), IE Singapore shares what SMEs looking to enter Oman can expect as the sultanate strides towards "Oman Vision 2020". Indeed, Oman is actively seeking foreign investments, especially in the tourism, marine, infrastructure, information and communication technology, chemicals, alternative energy and pharmaceutical chemicals sectors. Might the country be a



Photography: Ching, Capsule Productions Styling: Dan Foo  
Hair & Makeup: Graneil Loh, using Clinique Wardrobe: Jacket stylist's own

good fit for your expansion plans?

Whether it is through productivity gains, innovation or expansion plans, companies are contemplating their next quantum leap. What will your strategy be?

**Mindy Tan**  
EDITOR



## ON THE COVER

Photography: Ching, Capsule Productions  
Stylist: Dolphin Yeo  
Hair: Ken Zhang, from Starlist by Monsoon  
Makeup: Keith Bryant Lee, using Chanel  
Wardrobe: Armani Collezione

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MANAGING EDITOR **Genevieve Cua** EDITOR **Mindy Tan** [tanmindy@sph.com.sg](mailto:tanmindy@sph.com.sg)  
COPY EDITOR **George Joseph** CREATIVE EDITOR **Adeline Woon**  
ART DIRECTOR **Gareth Chung** DESIGNER **Hyrie Rahmat**  
PHOTOGRAPHERS **Yen Meng Jiin, Arthur Lee**  
CONTRIBUTORS **Sheena Tan, Jacquelyn Cheok, Leonard Tay, Lester Wong, Chester Toh, Alroy Chan, Chiu Wu Hong, Geraldine Yeow, Ivy Tan, Chuang Peck Ming**  
GENERAL MANAGER (EDITORIAL PROJECTS) **Michael Chua** [chuamc@sph.com.sg](mailto:chuamc@sph.com.sg)  
SENIOR GROUP ACCOUNT MANAGERS **Lam Wy-Ning** [lamwn@sph.com.sg](mailto:lamwn@sph.com.sg) **Jaclyn Sim** [simahj@sph.com.sg](mailto:simahj@sph.com.sg)  
ACCOUNT CO-ORDINATOR **Vanessa Chan** [vanchan@sph.com.sg](mailto:vanchan@sph.com.sg)

Contributions/feedback should be sent in via email to [btnews@sph.com.sg](mailto:btnews@sph.com.sg)  
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