



Receiving awards on behalf of their organisations were (back row, from left) Dr Ong Teck Chin, principal and CEO of Anglo-Chinese School (Independent); Mr Andrew Lee, head of global consumer financial services, OCBC Bank; and Mr Liew Heng San, CEO of CPF Board; (middle row, from left) Mr Kenny Yap, managing director of Qian Hu; Mr David Loke, group managing director of Tru-Marine; Mr Raymond Yip, senior manager of group HR at Qian Hu; and Mr Eric Tan Chong Sian, commissioner, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority; (front row, from left) Mr Yam Ah Mee, chief executive, Land Transport Authority; Mr Chan Lee Mun, principal and CEO of Nanyang Polytechnic; Mr Jeff Shaw, regional director, Dairy Farm South Asia; and Dr N. Varaprasad, chief executive, National Library Board. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM

Meet the Excellent Eleven

Educators among winners of coveted quality awards

BY FRANCIS CHAN

AN ORNAMENTAL fish seller, a top local school, a marine equipment firm, the Land Transport Authority and the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority.

It is an eclectic bunch, but together they have bagged a record five prestigious Singapore Quality Awards (SQA). These accolades are given out as part of Spring Singapore's Business Excellence Awards (BEA).

This year's bumper crop includes Anglo-Chinese School (Independent), ornamental fish supplier Qian Hu and marine engineering firm Tru-Marine.

"The growing number of award winners shows the importance that organisations place on business excellence to drive their performance towards greater heights," said SQA governing council chairman Cham Tao Soon.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean, who presented the awards to the winners last night at the Shangri-La Hotel, agreed and even had the numbers to prove it.

He said: "A study done by the National University of Singapore this year found that averaged over a four-year period, the productivity of SQA winners...was 35 per cent higher than that of their industry counterparts."

Introduced 15 years ago to promote business excellence, the SQA recognises organisations that have shown outstanding management capabilities through their performance and results.

Aside from the SQA, three "niche" awards were given out to five organisations for excelling in specific areas of organisational management.

Nanyang Polytechnic, which has filed the second highest number of patents among educational institutes here, received the Innovation Excellence Award.

OCBC Bank, the Central Provident Fund Board and the National Library Board all received the Service Excellence Award. Two-time SQA winner Qian Hu,

which last won the award in 2004, received the People Excellence Award for its staff training initiatives.

Mr Kenny Yap, managing director of Qian Hu, said the firm's success was down to discipline. He said: "We're not just into winning awards but more about doing the right things, every time – be it in good times or bad."

To date, some 720 organisations employing more than 550,000 staff – about 20 per cent of the workforce – have been certified by Spring as meeting various business excellence standards. According to Spring, small and medium-sized enterprises comprise 17 per cent of those organisations.

Singapore's efforts in promoting business excellence have not gone unnoticed.

Yesterday, Mr Teo also announced that Spring has been appointed by the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) as a centre of excellence (COE) in business excellence.

"This is the first time that the APO has designated a COE in a member economy in a specific area. This recognition is testimony of Singapore's efforts and achievements in business excellence," he said.

Mr Teo added that with the COE status, organisations can benchmark their performance and learn international best practices through the centre's networks, platforms and resources.

"Award winners and certified organisations can also leverage on Singapore's branding in business excellence for overseas business ventures," said Mr Teo.

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Winners

■ Singapore Quality Award

1. Anglo-Chinese School (I)
2. Immigration and Checkpoints Authority
3. Land Transport Authority
4. Tru-Marine
5. Qian Hu Corp

■ People Excellence Award

1. Dairy Farm Singapore
2. Qian Hu Corp

■ Innovation Excellence Award

Nanyang Polytechnic

■ Service Excellence Awards

1. Central Provident Fund Board
2. National Library Board
3. OCBC Bank – Consumer Financial Services Division