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Profitable partnerships

Singapore Institute of Management Global Education graduates are career-ready and sought-after by industries

WHEN it comes to recruiting new blood to boost its ranks, Otis – a multinational firm whose name is synonymous with elevators and escalators all over the world – has found graduates from SIM Global Education (GE) to fit the bill.

Whether it is bringing in a new batch of interns to learn the ropes or grooming an existing employee for a leadership position, the top brass at Otis Singapore say that SIM GE is more than able to meet the company's talent development and management needs.

In the last few years, Otis Singapore has sponsored three employees for their Masters programme at SIM GE and one of them, Adreana Goh, was recently promoted to be a branch director.

'They tend to have a global mindset that makes them high-calibre candidates to be groomed for leadership roles in MNCs like ours'
– Tracy Cordes (right), Otis's Area Director for SEA and MD for the Singapore operations on the calibre of SIM GE graduates

In the past year alone, Otis took in five SIM GE interns, with Otis managers pleased with all their work on the various projects they were tasked with.

"I find that graduates from SIM GE are often well-equipped with qualities that are sought after by companies," says Tracy Cordes, Otis' Area Director for Southeast Asia and the Managing Director for the Singapore operations.

"They are professional, and bring a good balance of both the academic and practical skills required for success in business today. Importantly, they tend to have a global mindset that makes them high-calibre candidates to be groomed for leadership roles in MNCs like ours," she adds.

Otis Singapore is one of many well-known global companies that have partnered SIM GE of late.

Just last month, the two organisations inked a memorandum of understanding that will see Otis provide internships and job placements to SIM GE students. Otis will also have the opportunity to give career talks and participate in SIM GE Job Fairs and Networking Sessions.

The SIM GE Job Fair is an important platform for participating employers to meet with the private education institution's graduating cohorts. This year marked the tenth time that the event has been organised, with the number of participating companies being on the increase over the years. The Job Fair also allows companies to increase branding for their organisation and recruit effectively from the target audience.

The Networking Session, meanwhile, brings the top SIM GE graduating cohort and employers together through an exclusive and interactive setting.

SIM GE also has two other major initiatives for students – the All-Rounder Student (ARS) Development Programme to groom final-year students and give them the necessary skills to be career-ready and employable; and the Analysts Training Programme (ATP), a hands-on programme to prepare students for positions that require them to study and analyse industries and businesses.

Perfect fit: MD Henry Tan (above) of local firm Nexia TS Public Accounting Corporation, which has more than 20 SIM GE graduates on its payroll, finds them down-to-earth, eager to listen and keen to grow.

Multi-talented graduates: Ms Lim Yun Yi (above) joined HSBC as a personal wealth manager after completing her three-year Banking and Finance course with the University of London. She is also an accomplished liuqin player with the Singapore Youth Chinese Orchestra.

Recruiting effectively

Another major employer that has been actively hiring SIM GE graduates is HSBC, which has an ongoing three-year partnership with SIM GE called the HSBC-SIM Talent Development Programme. The exclusive deal aims to identify and groom talents in the area of retail banking and wealth management at HSBC.

One of the beneficiaries of the tie-up is Lim Yun Yi, a personal wealth manager who just joined the financial institution full-time two months ago, shortly after completing her three-year banking and finance course with the University of London.

It's a homecoming of sorts for the 23-year-old SIM GE scholar, who spent close to seven months as an intern at HSBC, first in retail banking and wealth management, and later in compliance management. She appreciates her internship experience at HSBC because it taught her how to strengthen and deepen relationships with customers, "which is outside of textbook learning".

"I was exposed to various learning opportunities as well as HSBC's culture and values. I feel that as a personal wealth manager today, I am better able to meet and provide customers with financial advice from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. From working at the frontline to liaising with back-end staff, this has given me a valuable insight into how the bank's retail banking and wealth management operates," Ms Lim adds.

Earlier this month, HSBC also sent a team to the SIM GE campus in Clementi Road to participate in a career talk for the students. The bank has also actively set up a booth at the annual SIM GE Job Fair where recruiters engage the students and explain more about the bank and what it has to offer.

It was at one such SIM GE Job Fair where 26-year-old Axel Tan first learnt about and became attracted to the SMRT Management Trainee Programme. After completing his Bachelor of Science in Management with the University of London, he joined SMRT Corporation last year and is now a management trainee with the public transport operator.

The SMRT Management Trainee Programme, says Mr Tan, is intrinsically designed to provide extensive learning and develop opportunities through its structured but rigorous rotations.

"I wanted to not only have a challenging and fulfilling career, but to also make a difference through what I do. Companies providing essential services like SMRT naturally came to mind because we are in the business that has a huge impact on the lives of many Singaporeans," he says.

Mr Tan is one of just 105,000 SIM GE alumni and counting – that are making their mark and moving up the corporate ladder at both MNCs and small and medium-sized enterprises.

One local company that currently has more than 20 SIM GE graduates on its payroll is Nexia TS Public Accounting Corporation, an established mid-tier accounting firm that was founded 20 years ago.

According to its managing director Henry Tan, these graduates are deployed in the various departments of assurance, internal audit, tax, insolvency and restructuring.

"We have very good experience with SIM GE graduates in the many years we have been recruiting them," says Mr Tan.

"We find them in general down-to-earth, eager to listen, they think and learn, and are keen to grow. This is very much in line with our mission of Listening, Thinking and Growing," he says.

Nexia TS also believes in giving opportunities to financially needy students in the form of scholarships to those enrolled in the SIM-Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) Bachelor of Business (Accountancy) programme.

The company has, to date, awarded two scholarships worth $5,000 to students with impressive academic and co-curricular activities records. The scholars are also offered employment on a part-time basis as well so that they can support their studies with their pay.

One of the two scholars, Andy Wong, went on to join Nexia TS in its Assurance department and was later transferred to the Internal Audit department to continue his professional career progression.

'We will continue to cast our net wide to reach out to and consider candidates from different backgrounds for our positions, and assess them fairly based on relevant skills and attributes'
– Tan Hoe Soon, Director of Career Development and Management at PSD, a statutory board under the Prime Minister's Office

Career-ready graduates

"As a public accounting firm, we also see this as a way to encourage growth of the accountancy profession and aid aspiring students to achieve their career goals. These scholarships also offer opportunities for internships at our firm and a career path with us upon graduation," says Mr Tan.

But it is not just in the private sector where SIM GE graduates are flourishing. Over the years, many have gone on to grow their careers in the public service too at various statutory boards and government ministries.

The 136,000-strong Public Service Division (PSD) does not discriminate in its recruitment process and believes in hiring based on merit to ensure that candidates with the best fit for the job will get the nod.

PSD says it looks beyond academic qualifications to focus on qualities such as suitablity for the job and whether the applicant has the passion for public service.

"We will continue to cast our net wide to reach out to and consider candidates from different backgrounds for our positions, and assess them fairly based on relevant skills and attributes," says Tan Hoe Soon, Director of Career Development and Management at PSD, a statutory board under the Prime Minister's Office.

"In this pursuit, we will keep in mind our fundamental aim of having a merit-based selection and appointment process – one that can help us find the most suitable people for the different jobs in the Public Service," he adds.

These success stories are but a mere snapshot of how SIM GE graduates have managed to spread their wings across different industries and done well for themselves so far. In Singapore today, there is a growing awareness and confidence in the quality of private and transnational education here, which is capable of producing graduates who are career-ready and more than capable of facing the challenges and demands of working life.