# Publication

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Should Singapore's foreign manpower curbs be relaxed for certain sectors? THIS WEEK'S TOPIC How might businesses raise the productivity of their staff?

# S'pore's manpower conundrum

Yeoh Oon Jin
Executive Chairman
PMC Singapore
WE believe the key to sustainable productivity enhancement is through embracing technology and going digital. The Impact and potential benefits of automation will vary across industry sectors, but many organisations have yet to take the necessary bold steps to fully digitise their business.
One aspect protentially holding back some is concern

digitise their business.

One aspect potentially holding back some is concern over whether they have the right talent to drive the necessary transformation and reap the full benefits of new technologies. With many companies accelerating their efforts, key digital falents are expected to be in short supply. In this context, an evolution of existing manpower policy to a more formal skills-based approach may be necessary to help attact the right talent—particularly those with specific digital, cyber and data analytics capability—to enable a more productive future for Singapore.

DEPOLY IN THE Labour will always be a sensitive subject among Singaporeans. But the reality is that some sectors will always face labour shortage due to Singaporeans for unstabled in, or not wanting, particular types of jobs. With a low birth rate and ageing population, the labour shortage may be a long-term problem affecting companies' viability, let alone productivity. On whole, we should adopt a balanced and targeted approach towards addressing our labour shortage with experiments of the properties of the pr

Silegapore, tustees of special states of the states of the

The ability to engage and motivate staff - to encour age ideation of new innovations and solutions - is an-other key determinant to lift productivity.

other key determinant to lift productivity.

John Bittleston
Founder & Chair
Ferrific Mentors international Pte Ltd
HIGH quality education, expectations of high earnings
and wealth accumulation have made some jobs less sin
eresting to Singaprenan who can now decide which
jobs they want to do and which they don't. Where there
is a clear shortage of people to fill vacant jobs freeign
workers should be allowed work permits to do them.
Froductivity is determined by motivation. Motivation in turn is mainly driven by need and personal satisfaction at a job well done. Life is easier pow than 50
years ago, The country has prospered and employees
are able to consider work-life balance and absence of
drudgery when contemplating a job. In the process
there has been some loss of pride in a job well done.
That will be restored by strong leadership and a clear
purpose for Singapone's future.

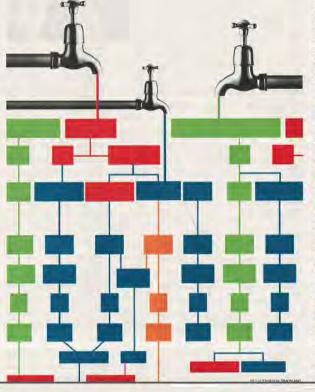
purpose for Singapore's future.

Lionel Lim
Vice-President and Managing Director,
Asia-Pacific and Japan
Pivotal
BNOVATION and technology are the twin forces driving
growth across the world and ensuring we have the right
people with the requisite digital skills is rucial to Singapore's success in the digital economy.
However, having the requisite skills is not enough:
businesses today need to innovate fester, and smarterin essence doing more with the same, Businesses with a
productivity mindset break down organisational siles
and empower their employees to focus their time on delivering for customers. Software and technology can
and empower their employees to focus their time on delivering for customers. Software and technology can
help create the right platform to monitor and achieve
success—streamline communication, track progress, or
suggest the need for additional resources to keep deadlines on track. Ultimately, productive teams have the
right tools to deliver at the speed of startups.

# Josh ziegler

CEO Sumatas Caumatas Caumatas

Regiofal President
Yasa
SiNCAFORE is a world city. Since 1965 it has achieved miraculous progress on all fronts buoyed and accelerated,
by foreign investment, foreign interest and yes, by for-



means that a single facility manager can manage a port-folio of buildings from a virtual centre, instead of rely-ing on many lower skilled workers. This model of build-ing management is in lice with the government's plan to roll out higher valued Jobs to stimulate the economy.

Andrew Chan
Founder & CEO
ACI HR Solutions Ltd
WHEN it comes to employment, there are definitely sectors that are more foreign labour dependent. The hospitally industry which our firm specialises in is one such sector that could benefit from relaxing of the current responses policy. The sense industry has traditionally sector that could benefit from relaxing of the current manpower policy. The service industry has traditionally been a great entry point for part-time work experience to young adults in other countries, but the culture and high focus on academia in Singapore means there's less takeup of such positions, to the detriment of local businesses, which now count manpower issues as more pressing than profits.

Roland Ng President Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry THE government should consider the manpower re-quirements of different industrial segments, taking into consideration the required skills so as to relax the for-

eign manpower curbs.
Reskilling and skills upgrading targeted at the needs of each industrial segment is the best way to raise the productivity level of our limited human resources.

Jessie Xia Managing Director, Singapore ThoughtWorks WTH many industries being impacted by disruptive technological advancements, the demand for skilled that ent has accelerated significantly in recent years as organ-lations across industries look to embrace and imple-

Isations across industries look to embrace and implement digital technology.

The Singapore government has been extremely procuried in the singapore government has been extremely procuried in setting up the infrastructure to encourage and support the development of the tech talent pool. This journey and focus are critical, but we believe that to upskill local talent rapidly, relaxing the curbs on foreign manpower will help, it will accelerate the transfer of knowledge and bring more expertise to the local market. One way we have done this at ThoughtWorks is to bring long-term assignees to Singapore from other offices to pair with younger Thoughtworkers here to build their skills quickly. We have found this strategy to be highly effective.

# eign workers. Instituting increased restrictions and regu-lations on the influx of foreign talent would be succumb-ing to the same geoprotectionals behaviours currently being echibited by some leading nations. Uti-mately these types of practices slow the economy leav-ing lewer jobs for Singaporeans while simultaneously putting a dent into the world's move towards globalisa-tion and the greater good. There are two principles Singapore needs to hold dear as they move forward on this: Continue to exhibit global leadership that helps to make the world a better place. Ya gotta dance with who brung yal

Edwin Khew Teck Fook
President
The institution of Engineers, Singapore
THE government's big push for businesses to raise productivity instead of relying on low-skilled labour has seen most companies taking steps to adapt and automate over the past 10 years.
Releazation of curbs for low-value jobs would set back such progress. However, for growing sectors in need of highly-skilled mampower, it is necessary to make strategic changes and introduce some flexibility in order to capture emerging opportunities. This would be vital in helping companies to survive and grow, and in strengthening. Singapore's economic competitiveness. The foundation to raising productivity is emphasis on harnessing of technology to drive innovation and continuous upskilling and reskilling of employees.

# Camilla de Villiers

Camilha de Villiers
Managing Director, Asla-Pacific
HierRight
NICHE Industries, especially if they are new and emerging in Singapore, could have a heavier reliance on foreign experience at the earlier stages of development.
International organisations, whist offering local employment opportunities, also require a mix of foreign talent to blend experience and culture. Considering these,
loosening labour curbs could help organisations find
the talent they need efficiently, and brings with it the benefits of a diverse workforce.
However, embracing these widened talent pools
causes challenges in understanding the global regulartory hiring landscapes, and ensuring that candidates are
as qualified as they say they are. Organisations hiring international candidates will need to increase their
cross-border due diligence by ensuring they have robust screening processes in place, to protect both the
business and its employees.

awanage. We have exemplified this in two ways: a move to-wards agile working and co-locating our offices across the Asia-Pacific. Flexible work spaces bring people to-gether and allow them to work efficiently, while co-locat-

ing our teams in the same buildings lead to increased collaboration opportunities to deliver positive business results. A culture of empowered innovation without internal barriers ultimately contributes to a happier, engaged and more productive workforce.

Ron Sim

Founder & CEO, Chairman
OSIM international Ltd
WE should be relaxing manpower curbs — we have
trained so many foreign talents over the last 10 years
and every five to seven years we seem to be letting them
go just like that, after so much time, effort and money
having been spent on grooming them.
This is not smart as they go to other countries after
being trained by uis, and we bring in new staff at lar
higher costs with lower service levels and productivity.
We must not become a training sector: It is every hard
to get Singaporeans to be in the sales and service sector.
We should consider misking these talented and drainer?
We should consider misking these talented and note.

We should consider making these talented and pro-ductive people PR and even citizens if they meet the cri-

Keri Hamann
Chief Executive Officer
QRE insurance (Singapore) Pto Ltd
SINGAPORES foreign manpower curbs should be adjusted based on the economy's specific needs.
One way of doing this could be to vary the number of foreign visas and the time taken to process visa applications according to where there are significant skills gaps. Under this system, specific labour needs are quickly supported by foreign manpower, minimising any talent shortages in sectors important to the economy. Singapore could consider a 'skills-based' system, but must ensure a dynamic review process so that it meets the changing needs of the economy.

Above ali, companies must also priorities the upskilling of their current staff to ensure foreign manpower is brought in to truly add value and share new knowledge.

CBRE Singapore and South East Asia

USINESSES impacted by foreign mianpower curbs have
been using technology to wean their reliance off foreign
annual workers for the past few years. In the face of a
labout crunch, retailers, property owners and property
managers are increasingly reliant on robots and automated processes to reduce the number of service shad at retail malis and eating establishments as well as the
number of site staff deployed at buildings.

With prop tech and increased automation, facilities
management service providers will be able to consolidate network operations to manage a portfolio of buildings remotely at a lower-cost location, relying instead
on automated sensors, prop tech and other digital software to predict possible maintenance issues, diagnose
and carry out appropriate preventive maintenance. This

and carry out appropriate preventive maintenance. This

WE should consider a more relaxed stance on foreign labour restrictions in certain sectors amid shifting economic realities. Fast-growing sectors such as data analyticand cyberscurity, and sectors which rely heavily on industry-specific skills, such as healthcare, can be obstered by relaxing the manpower curbs.

Skills transfer, innovation and internalisation are key ways to augment productivity. For instance, the newly launched Capibility Transfer Programme encourages a technology driven and lean workforce through training and subsidies, Even for SMEs, R&D can be engaged through collaboration and partnerships as a long-term venture. Expanding into regional markets can broaden business and revenue-generating opportunities that can sustain real productivity increases.

Helen Ng
Chief Executive Officer
General Storage Company Pte Ltd
General Storage Company Pte Ltd
FOREIGN manpower curbs should be relaxed for the service and construction sectors. These sectors have reduced their reliance on manpower with the adoption of
productivity-enhancing technologies such as the ubiquitous self-payment klosks, but some roles still need
to be performed by humans. Even as we relax the curbs
for these sectors, we should recognise and reward companies that demonstrate a commitment to improving
productivity through innovative automation.

Matthleu Imbert-Bouchard
Managing Director
Robert Half Singapore
CLOSING the skills gap is crucial for companies to grow.
And while the takent shortage, especially in IT, would benefit from relaxing the quotas on foreign employes
there is also ment in the current plans set in motion by
the government of upskilling and increasing the quality
of the local talent pool.

Workplace happiness, however, has a tangible impact on productivity. Happy employees tend to be more
engaged, loyal and productive which directly impacts
the bottom line. So creating a positive culture that engages and invests in staff is essential to raising productivity levels.

Olive Tal
Co-founder and Managing Director
Beautiful.me & Synagie.com
YES, of course, I think the government should relax the
foreign worker limits for certain sectors. We always
never have enough staff. Let's not forget employee
turnover is high so the search for replacement staff can
be very challenging at times. I think jobs like graphic designers, customer service and logistics, for example,
should be exempt from any foreign worker quotas. By
the way, what the government can also help businesses
with is making sure that foreign applicants are verted
with genuine documentation.

My worry always, when considering hirting foreign
staff, is that their education certificates for example or
their claims in, say, digital capabilities, may or may not
be valled. Lastly, with the way technology is increastingly
entering the work space, I feel the only way to raise productivity is to inwest in training and in the latest digital
transformation that is under way here. That Is the only
way for companies to cope with manpower issues.

Maren Schweizer Director Schweizer Wird Pet Ltd 
SINGAPORE has had an agile approach to Innovation, that thrives productivity, since gaining independence in 1965 and is hence well prepared to benefit from an acceleration and sophistication of digitisation.

Connected devices, self-learning machines driven by Al [artificial intelligence) and for dinternet of Things will be the source of major productivity gains. The power of maichine learning prompts minimal or no used for him an interventions, heavily impacting the traditional workforce. With digitisation, there will be a conspications with it is produced to the property of the pr

an increased need for sene talents to unlock productivity gains.

To cater to these needs, I believe that the foreign worker policy should be tailored to entice the best talents to shift to Singapore and contribute on a long-term towards the economy, Initially, the foreign talent pool may be perceived as a threat to the locals. But on the contary, in the long run, the presence of this baiert pool can prove advantageout as these talents can bring in new ideas and technologies, encouraging locals to gain the required skills and knowledge to keep Singapore economy connectifies. nomy competitive

nomy competitive.

Albert Phuay Yong Hen
Chairman and CEO
Excelpoint Technology tid
WITH increasing interests and opportunities in the
fast-growing technology sector in Singapore, there is a
burgeoning need for the knowledge and expertise of
highly-skilled manpower – both local and foreign – to
complement and collaborate with one another, and
come up with innovative solutions to benefit people and
to economy. If foreign manpower is restricted, then we
would not have a dynamic and competitive edge over
other countries, and any economic growth and technological breakthroughs will be hampered.

Excelpoint believes that hampy, engaged employees,
work harder, smarier, and better. There are many ways
or engage staff and boost their morale and job autifaction, such as practising clear and opien communication
and pastitive reinforcements, and providing up skilling
programmes, career growth opportunities, and flexible
wedge schedules. If a nutrishell, employees need to be
kept happy for maximum productivity and efficiency,
and this will, in turn, impact businesses austainably.

Pileon Naile.

# Dileep Nair

Dileap Nair independent Director Koppel DC Reit Management Ple Ltd SBING a city, Singapore has to grow annually at 2.5 to 3.5 per cent to sustain our competitiveness and hence, the standard of living of its people. With lttle foreseeable growth in its resident population, this requires both a controlled influx of foreign manapower as well as a sustained increase in productivity. Quotas for foreign manuower should be skewed to about hose with hisher skills and for those needed by industries that add many value and age in emerging technologies. Sectors requires

same and to those necessor by industries far atten quar-value and are in emerging technologies. Sectors requir-ing low-skilled labour must become more productive and innovate. Besides rengineering and automation, these companies need to invest in their people—in train-ing, empowerment and building trust. Above all, an en-repreneurial spirit must be there, with a willingness to experiment and take calculated risks.

Wong Heng Chew
Country President
Fujitsu Singapore
REFLECTING a global trend, businesses in Singapore recognise the urgency of digital transformation, but
struggle to balance the elements needed to deliver on it. struggle to balance the elements needed to deliver on it. One key aspect is People (our mappower), Based on a rujitsu survey, more than two thirds of the respondents see a digital skills shortage, and see it vitat to find an nutrue ralent, as well as up-skill existing staff in the next three years. As the local talent pool will take time to acquire the digital skillsets and experience required, businesses and our local workforce can benefit from the expertise and mentorship of a global talent pool to gear up for digital success.

Cisco
SINGAPORE faces a shortage of cybersecurity talent, especially in areas such as behavioural analytics and digital forensics. Loosening turbs to allow for greater talent mobility could belp address this in the short tesm.

ent mobility could help address this in the short term. However, the talent gap is a universal fassur. There is going to be a global shortage of two million cybersequity professionals by 2019. Fujbring for the same interna-tional candidates won't solve the problem in the long nn. Instead, we need to faces on implementing caps-city building initiatives to develop more homegrown tal-ent.

ent. Singapore already has comprehensive strategies in place to achieve this, including proposals to set up a new cyber defence vocation. The corporate sector also needs to play its part, At Cisco, we have introduced courses in cybersecurity in our Networking Academy to help students and mid-carer professionals learn specific skill sets to meet the growing demand.

# Vipin Kaira Chief Executive Officer

Chief Executive Officer
BankBazaar international
WITH the recovery of the economy and greater push for
digital transformation, we are seeing a shortage of
skilled labour, particularly in high-growth sectors such
as technology. Although measures are being taken to
reskill the local workforce, it will take time. As such, I
feel it is important to have a more flexible foreign mar-power policy. to fill the gaps in the labour market and help sustain economic growth as we grapple with an age-ing population and shrinking workforce.

In addition to bolstering manpower, businesses can increase productivity by automating operations, allow-ing employees to focus on more value adding tasks.

# Reuter Chua

ACCA Singapore

ACLA singapore
HEALTHY and prosperous economies are those that
build equitable and thriving societies. Rising inequality
and more people feeling left behind impact us all, and
focus on improving social mobility is more important
than ever. Equal and open access to opportunities must

## Victor Mills

Chief Executive Singapore International Chamber of Commerce

OUR manpower policy needs to respond to Singapore's very serious demographic and economic challenges.

We are not reproducing ourselves and, therefore, will always need talent top-ups to complement our own. We should be the Silicon Valley of South-east Asia and welcome more talent which, working together with our own, will build more businesses. These businesses will provide more jobs, help increase economic growth rates and expand the taxpayer pool. Productivity uplift is a function of leader-

ship driving continual improvement or transformation of their business. Lead-ership needs to continually communicate openly with their teams to keep them informed and engaged.

remain a core tenet of government policy and business priority – a more diverse worldorce makes better decisions for itself and in scustomers in today's intercoin-nected and complex global economy.

We must find more ways to help people acquire globally recognised skills, change how people are hired and pornoted, and eliminate unconsclous blases, to enable talent to floutish. ACA was founded in 1904 for the very reason of opening up access to professional accountancy. We remain committed to open access today and are determined to play our part in improving social mobility and contributing to building a more equitable future for all.

LIM Soon Hock
Managing Director
PLAN-B ICAG Fite Ltd
I AM for the relaxing of Singapore's foreign manpower
curbs for certain sectors. A blanket policy is not only impractical but foolish. For SMEs, it is not just about increased costs, which remain a key issue, but wishing
that the government closes the gap between saying that
it wants to help SMEs and taking positive and timely action fod as o. Where the gap has remained, it is always in
the name of policy. In other words, no exceptions can be
made in the interim while the policy is under review.
Meanwhile, businesses suffer, as deals cannot be closed
or delivered.

made to the interm while the pointy is under review. Meanwhile, businesses suffer, as deals cannot be closed or delivered.

Till today, a very promising marine SME, which I consult for, has to apply for work permits for workers through our shipyands. This is outdated policy. There is no value sidd, other than an administrative step. The company has over the years invested in new technologies and has also started to embark on digital transforms assum found timese traversor moves our immagy of Manpower to grant any exception to the loutdated rule. The company has had to walk away from service outriacts because of a lack of manpower.

If Singapore wants its SMEs to grow to become large local companies, the government must be more business-minded on mission-critical matters such as manpower and productivity.

President Henkel Singapore

Henkel Singapore
IN Singapore, with our team compitising more than 16 nationalities, diversity and inclusion is a key factor that enables our business success and makes us an employer of choice. A strategic priority is to increase the agility of our organisation, which contributes to greater productivity. At Fiende, we leverage a Smart simplicity approach to enable flexible business models and lean structures that are adaptable to last-moving markets.

A lean structure is characterised by role clarity, fewer organisational layers, optimised workflows and processes and optimised geographical footprint. The resulting benefits are faster decision-making, shorter innovation lead time and faster time-to-market.

lan Lee Regional Head, Asia-Pacific

lan Lee
Regional Head, Asia-Pacific
The Adecto Group
WorkPROCE growth and productivity measures need to
take macroeconomic as well as industry-specific needs
and challenges into account and need not be mutually

and challenges into account and need not be mutually exclusive.

Attracting, growing and retaining the right talent in strategic areas such as finitech, data analytics and cyber-security and creating an enabling ecosystem around them can increase productivity. Furthermore, if we look closely at Singapore data, we see that the productivity gains in 2017 were largely driven by the manufacturing acctor while the services lagged behind. The latter is traditionally more people intensive and have been slower in innovating, So a trageted approach is needed for the services. Leveraging training, embracing flexible staffing and implementing technology-driven workforce solutions can help to upskill, widen the talent pool, better match workforce availability to work, and thus raise productivity.

Lee Quane
Regional Director – Asia
ECA International
AS Singapore pushes forward to boost productivity, the
power lies with businesses here to bring in the best taitit, be it local or foreign, while also briting wisely and responsably. It's important to recognise that Singapore's
strength is built on its cosmopolitan nature, encouraged
by a relatively free flow of goods and services, as well as
invenment of people.

by a relatively free flow of goods and services, as well as movement of people.

After all, Singapore is also an exporter of talent, local companies looking to assign their staff overseas for training or engployment likewise benefit when these countries have immigration policies conductive to the In-flow of talent.

# **CEO** and Founder

Ecosystm MANAGING foreign workforce numbers is a fine balancing act - Singapore birth rates are decreasing, so we need to plug gaps. That said, our home-bred talent is well-trained and top-notch. Singapore continues to be re-

cognised as one of the most innovative countries in the world, so we shouldn't rush to open the flood gates. Before considering a change in our manpower policy, we should carefully review our strengths and finitiations. Can we leverage our technological prowess to advess some of the shortfall? Are there certain areas of production and operations that we could be off-shoring to up into manpower abroad? Singapore offers a multi-tude of opportunities for personal and professional fulfillment. We can afford to be selective and bring in only best-in-class talent.

best in class talent.

Chris J Reed
Global CEO and Founder
The Dark Art of Marketing and Black Marketing.
The Dark Art of Marketing and Black Marketing.
TS, if Singaporeans and the Singapore government wish to have a growing economy, especially among the bedrock of the economy, entrepreneurs and SMEs like wayelf. Why can IMNCs seemingly employ whoever they want and SMEs constantly get penalised?

I have to make an average three job offers to Singaporeans to get one to accept and actually show up. I have had Singaporeans accept and then later decline for a better offer or use my offer to get other offers. This in turn slows the growth of my company in Singapore.

No amount of tech and productivity devices can replace a Swiss account director speaking Swiss/German/French clients who understands it he Swiss/French/Cerman culture. Yet we recently had this person's renewal for her's pass rejected and I am supposed to find a Singaporean who happens to know Swiss/German/Trench and understands the culture of each?

I have head another potential hire rejected for an em-

I have had another potential hire rejected for an em-

Thave had another potential hire rejected for an em-iscensing pass, when was goes assessment of an access to MNC. How is this fair to local entrepreneurs trying to cap-lailse on the growing exconomies of the world and in need of good account directors with good relationship skills in Singapore? I can show how my recruitment adverts ask for local-PR/DP applicants, and how many locals 1 have inter-viewed, who have enough choices to decline offers or renege once accepted. It is now time to let SMIs hire more forcigners. This should especially be the case if they can, like me, show that they have tried everything to employ locals.

# gional Director (Singapore & Europe)

Regional Director (Singapore & Europe)

Ql Group of Companies

Th would be difficult to envisage that fast-growing sectors like cybersecurity and data analytics should be etippled due to a tightening of the tap on foreign labour. Still, it is not about opening up inflows of foreign labour. Still, it is not about opening up inflows of foreign labour; it is highly-skilled talent that will raise productivity. It's a difficult halance which must be drawn between allowing in foreign manpower vis a vis grooming local talent. This "right balance" is key to sastatining and growing he economy, and steering the direction away from over-relance on foreign labour. Continuous training and upgrading of skills, newer and more relevant university or executive education programmes should be the main considerations of businesses to raise the productivity of their staff to be more efficient.

Rathakrishnan G
CEO
London School of Business and Finance Global
London School of Business and Finance Global
London School of Business and Finance Global
This foreign manpower issue has been a thorny one at
many business forums with government. Unfortunately, the current policy has been broadbrushed
without much deep consideration and consultation.
With declining burth rates, Singapore definitely needs a
wide range of alient pool that cannot be satisfied just depending on Singaporean workforce.
In this era of Af, our pace of education, grooming,
and entrepreneurship is not keeping pace with the deforeign talents, and a 'point-based system railored
around our needs is a good suggestion. However, for all
the businesses that depend on human service such as retail, manufacturing, construction, F&B, hospitality and
fourtism, this is a no-brainer Singaporeans are not coming forward to take up the jobs and as a result, business
founders. The solution may be in the form of students,
both Singaporeans and foreigners, studying in both publea and private institutions who can effectively solve this
labour crunch in service-based businesses on a temporary basis.

Anton Ravindran

Anton Ravindran
Founder & CEO
Raplicitari Fee Ltd
THE evidence that skills matter for productivity growth
is stronger than ever even as the indistry is straining to
find talent in the areas of data analytics and cybersecu-

The shortage is not limited to only these two areas as the new wave will be from Artificial Intelligence and Robotics amongst others. Stills have a significant effect on preductivity growth by increasing the capacity to innovate, apply new Ideas and disrupt the market, Income growth is directly linked to output per worker. While we have several initiatives and attractive schemes for training and skills development, we must note that a number of factors are critical for increasing

productivity, there are no quick fixes and in many cases the impact may not be seen for decades. According to report, our profit per employer has been affected due to rising operational costs while many businesses are struggling to find talent locally when access to markets and customers are not limited by geographical boundaries. Willingness to challenge conventional thinking and bold policies with respect to employment quotas will help alleviate this.

help alleviate this.

\*\*Ronald Lee\*\*
Managing Director Primestaff\*\*
THE question of whether our foreign manpower curbs should be relaxed is one that has been brewing with greater intensity within the business community for years. Recent findings of official reports confirm that there are positions within certain sectors that are most difficult, if not impossible, to fill because few Singanor-cans or PRs want them. This is not something new; it has been the case for many years.

So in the intertin, many businesses are still suffering due to the manpower curbs – with impact ultimately on business and CDP growth. This is the tradeoff the authorities must consider, when reviewing whether to relax the foreign worker policy.

Many companies, especially SMEs, are unclear how to go about rating productivity. Singapore is already doing all it can, with grants for businesses to adopt technology and other help for enhanced productivity. Some firms may not be aware of the support available, while others are constrained by budgets in seeking the help of external consistances.

There are also skills upgrading initiatives like the Skillsfuture Centi scheme. But these will take time to bear fruit, if effective.

Earing in the recruitment and human resource consulting business for a good 23 years, we have gone through many economic cycles and have witnessed the manpower trends and challenges across industries over the period.

To raise productivity that eventually translates or topolits, companies big and small must have in place effortifs, companies big and small must have in place effortifs.

the period.

To raise productivity that eventually translates to profits, companies big and small must have in place effective and operable HR policy, processes and marries. There is no short cut.

# Henry Tar

Henry Tan
Managing Director
Neata 13
SINGAPORE has been working on productivity improvement for a long time and this recent uptick in growth is one of the first Ituits.

We cannot afford to relax now and reopen the foreign skills floodgate too widely. Productivity investments only make sense to companies when the labour cost of alternatives is too expensive. Whenever companies can get cheaper labour, the productivity impetus will not be ther. A bigger benefit of pursuing the current path is the innovation part of striving to be productive. We have begun to see many innovative ideas across the board, from government sector to private. One good example. Barking appropriate the productivity of the increases productivity for all, motorist and parking attendant. The increased use of self-help customer-ordering at restaurants and self-checkout at supermarkets are also crear scannings. In professional services firms like ours, we have digitalised most of our processes and are exploring various tools linked to data analytics and Al to further enhance these.

I would suggest that any relaxation of manpower curbs be done on a sector-specific-skills basis and only for a short perfor of of time to fill certain gaps. I would certainly welcome a temporary relaxation of the hiring curbs for cybersecurity and data analytics staff on a short term whilst letting the industry and schools catch up on the supply side.

WE fully support the Singapore government's intent to control the inflow of foreign workers whilst supporting local talent. Certain sectors such as IT, medical and en

local Talent. Certain sectors such as IT, medical and en-gineering might require extreme specialism, which needs to be imported as a skillset. In a broader sense, skills and productivity can be en-base of talent development is still education. Hence re-filning and modifying the education system constantly is key. It needs to adapt to evolving global needs and hence training can start at base level. We as a company promote local creativity and talent, and will continue to do so.

and will continue to do so.

Derrick chang
Chief Executive Officer
PSB Academy
SincaPORES continued investment in education is a reassuring indication of the nation's unwavering drive to
nurrure a future ready core. As an immigrant society,
one of our greatest strength as loo less in our diversity of
local and foreign talent. At PSB Academy we've been able
to build on that strength for singapore with an imternational student community of graduates with a global onentiation. Our transnational network in Asla has anforded us a training ground that will help students
trive in a cosmopolitan business climate, with the ability to exchange cross border knowledge and ideas to
boost innovation and improve productivity.

To that end, both public and private institutions of
higher learning and training must work in tandem with
national efforts to develop human capital even beyond
our shores. A homegrown hothed of diversified talent is
a truly unique advantage that businesses here can lever
age upon, and with quality foreign talent that will help
bofster our Singapore core, we can build a robust workforce for this region's next economic transformation.

David Leong

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Private Limited
THE whole thrust of employing foreigners is to boost
our economic activities though labour inputs where we
are short locally, and in roles that can help Singapore's
economy grow competitively. There are known jobs and
roles that Singaporeans will not fill and these jobs
should have a high quota to allow employers to fire forelarners.

should have a high quota to allow employers to hire for-eigners.

This is a sensitive balancing act but the Ministry of Manpower must seriously relook the industry classifica-tions and labour sources since some of these policies were set years ago and the workforce compositions and sources have changed drastically.

It is not about relaxing the curbs but relooking the policies governing labour utilisation, particularly, in re-defining the limits around the industries, roles and na-tionalities.

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