

## Transforming a Business that Preserves Heritage Delicacies



Cooking Art started out as a culinary school in the 1980s in Singapore. Under the directives of its Wilton School of Cake Decorating-trained founder, Kim Sim, Cooking Art soon became one of Singapore's premium cooking schools – known for its wide repertoire of cooking courses taught by well-known professional teachers. The mid-90s saw Cooking Art enter a new arena to meet rising needs for a first-rate local dessert supplier for Singapore's hotel industry. Using the wealth of culinary expertise garnered from its acclaimed cooking school days, Cooking Art went behind the scene, manufacturing confectioneries to support the demands of the booming local food industry.

Since then, Cooking Art has been supplying Singapore's top hotels with local and international speciality desserts, pastries and wedding cakes.

The products are freshly made everyday with the best ingredients, without the use of any harmful preservatives.

"We take joy in providing high quality 'kuehs' to our customers. Four years ago I decided to join the family business as we would like to preserve the heritage of the Singapore-Peranakan delicacy. Feedback from our customers is a source of motivation. We have attended various events at Istana and royalties have also placed special requests for the kuehs from us!" shared Ms. Claire Ariela Shen, Director, Cooking Art Industries.

After joining the business, Ms. Shen has been pro-active in the search for solutions to enhance the business. Cooking Art joined Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) in 2006, and has been participating in various events, seminars and trade fairs organised by SME.

Ms. Shen has approached SME Centre@SMF for business advice after reading up on some of the government grants available. "The first programme we have embarked on was the IMPACT assessment. It is very useful as the assessment helped us to think through the business situation and the challenges we need to tackle. Cooking Art has been growing in tandem with Singapore's economy. In line with Singapore's aim to boost productivity and maximize the space and resources, we have also started on 5S and 7W. The knowledge and experiences shared by the consultant from SME Centre@SMF has helped to accelerate our progress in the project we have embarked on. Our team Cooking Art has also become more aware of productivity issues after the professional advice given by the consultants," shared Ms. Shen.

Cooking Art has also tapped on various government schemes for greater improvement. Some of the programmes include SMART,



Together with the team Ms. Claire Ariela Shen, Director, Cooking Art Industries (far right) preserving the Singaporean-Peranakan flavour

ETS and SME QIANG by SMF's Centre for Corporate Learning. Ms. Shen said that the key thrust for business development is the team at Cooking Art. She believes the development of the staff and the growth of the business largely depends on the workers.

In addition to the focus on business growth, Cooking Art is looking at ways to create a sustainable environment. She added that SMEs can work together, share ideas on business collaborations and work towards a sustainable environment for all to live in. "I think SMF youth committee is a very good platform for SMEs or the second generation leaders to network, share ideas and work collaboratively towards a sustainable environment," concluded Ms. Shen.

Contact **SME Centre @ SMF** to find out more!

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