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1. Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing today (25 January 2021) announced a 10-year plan for the manufacturing sector, which included a three prong approach to be increasingly globally competitive with unique capabilities and products.
2. The Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) is aligned with the observations of Minister Chan. The velocity for transformation and change for the future in the manufacturing sector cannot just be driven by how the sector achieved its growth in the last decade. The components of cost competitiveness in contract manufacturing as well as the easy availability of foreign labour can no longer be the main ingredients as we look ahead to the future.
3. Accordingly, since the start of 2020, the SMF has always been encouraging the manufacturing community to adopt digitisation, change their business models towards Industry 4.0 and equip their staff with the necessary technological skills through training.
4. Through our continuous engagement with our members on the future of manufacturing, the SMF has also identified advanced manufacturing in the fields of additive manufacturing, innovation and digitalisation as the way forward. Similarly, some of our members have also highlighted difficulties in hiring and retaining local employees.
5. In response to the above issues, the SMF has engaged with our key partners in the government, the private sector, other trade associations and chambers, as well as institutions of higher learning (“IHLs”) to champion the interests of the future of manufacturing. For example, recognising that intellectual property will become increasingly important as businesses adopt digitisation and advance into new frontiers, the SMF has engaged with the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) to equip our members with the necessary to safeguard their interests.

6. The SMF has also already established collaboration and taken the lead on promoting 3D printing as a service, provide customised job matching services, as well as starting a manufacturing alliance transformation office to encourage our manufacturers to gravitate towards adopting new and innovative technologies for the future.
7. In addition, in terms of attracting talent into manufacturing, the SMF has had a working relationship with our IHLs like Republic Polytechnic and Singapore Polytechnic which allows students to serve their internships at the SMF. More recently, the SMF participated in a career talk organised by Victoria School, bringing to them a virtual walkthrough of a company which utilises cobots in a manufacturing environment.
8. SMF President Douglas Foo said, “Many of our members acknowledge that it is a necessity to transform and inculcate digitalisation, resiliency and sustainability into their business models for manufacturing of the future. Here at the SMF, we are privileged to have industry leaders such as Interplex Holdings and Infineon Technologies among others in our Council to share their experience insights and guide our smaller SME members along the digitisation journey. The key goals of the 10-year plan are a challenge but the SMF believes that they are a necessity, and, are attainable with the unified efforts of different stakeholders. The SMF welcomes all who are interested to join us on the journey we have already started in driving manufacturing forward into the future.”

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About the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF)

Established since 1932, SMF represents the interest of the manufacturing community in Singapore, driving its competitiveness and sustainable growth through serving industry-specific needs. Supported by 10 industry groups and its Associated Services, the SMF enhances the competitiveness of the industry by encouraging capacity development and capability building, innovation and productivity. The SMF provides opportunities for companies to collaborate, network, and to grow and expand both locally and internationally. Current membership stands at about 4,000 members comprising SMEs, MNCs and Affiliate members. For more information, please visit www.smfederation.org.sg.

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