



# CERTIFIED EXCELLENCE

Republic Polytechnic receives the integrated 4-in-1 Business Excellence certifications, as well as the Singapore Quality Class Star for outperforming its previous year's assessments.

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**REPUBLIC POLYTECHNIC (RP)** has long been certified in Singapore Quality Class (SQC), People Developer (PD) and Innovation Class (I-Class) by SPRING Singapore, but the institution reckoned that these were not enough. Earlier this year, RP adopted SPRING's Business Excellence (BE) framework, with the aim to strengthen their management systems and processes, and to enhance their management capabilities in key enablers covering people, innovation, as well as service.

"Since we were due for re-certification this year, the senior management, comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal and Senior Director (Corporate Services), supported the idea of adding the Service Class (S-Class) as an integrated 4-in-1 certification," says John Young, director of the Office of Quality Assurance & Systems (OQS), which spearheaded the process.

Together with Project Leader, Grace Wee, and Project Coordinators, Mak Mei Poh and Neo Pei Yun, the team worked closely with the BE reps of various departments throughout the polytechnic.

As the steering committee for Business Excellence (BE) initiatives, the BE committee members already meet every two months to monitor progress of BE-related activities, but when they were preparing for the 4-in-1 certifications, they established six task forces. These task forces covered

the six categories of the certifications: Leadership, Planning, Information, People, Processes and Customers. Each task force was led by a Director, Senior Director or Deputy Principal, and was responsible for collating information according to the criteria in their assigned categories. These information were then shared with the various representatives who would disseminate them to their departments. "It's a 'whole RP' effort," explains John.

RP successfully attained all four BE certifications, and even the SQC STAR for its improved performance this year.

"The last three months leading up to the SPRING 4-in-1 Business Excellence Assessment involved intense preparation. The adrenaline within us was pumping as the dates drew near," recounts Grace.

During the audit, the SPRING Singapore team threw them a surprise late one afternoon, requesting to interview a randomly selected list of students – the next day. Thankfully, the BE reps from the various departments on standby sprang to action. "The students were very supportive, even though they had to stay back late after a long day of classes to attend the interviews," comments Mei Poh.

More than that, they also wowed the SPRING Singapore team. "One feedback we received was that the assessors were impressed by how articulate our students were, and how openly they shared their experiences, both the good and the not-so-good," says John. "They also commented on the high energy level in our staff and students, a testament to their passion for their work and towards learning," adds Pei Yun.

Pei Yun, who was in charge of the S-Class certification, describes the process as "building RP's representative Lego Structure."

"The categories of the BE framework are like the Lego base-mat, they lay the foundation for RP's BE journey. With the senior management setting the direction, we then judiciously pick the appropriate blocks and stack them according to our desired design," she describes.

Having the important foundation established means that the committee does not need to start all over again each time they sit down with the blocks. Instead, they simply add on and extend the existing structure, which grows over time. This sees RP evolve as a dynamic institution with an even more resilient cohort of facilitators and students every year. **RP**