Media Advisory

ARE TODAY'S SINGAPORE YOUTHS READY TO BECOME TOMORROW'S BUSINESS LEADERS?

Republic Polytechnic's YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONFERENCE 2008 provides tips and insights from veterans who have survived one economic slowdown and ready to face the next

SIX experts, who survived baptisms by fire to emerge as successful entrepreneurs and respected business academics, will share their experiences with teachers and educators at the Youth Entrepreneurship Conference 2008 organised by the Centre for Innovation & Enterprise, Republic Polytechnic (RP) on 5th September 2008. The participants, drawn mostly from primary and secondary schools, Junior Colleges and institutes of higher learning, will in turn share the finer points of entrepreneurship with their students.

With a focus on entrepreneurship education in Singapore, the one-day conference brings together renowned personalities from Singapore’s entrepreneurship landscape. Successful entrepreneurs such as Ms. Elim Chew, President of 77th Street, will share her personal views that will challenge the mindset of participants in the area of entrepreneurship.

Ms. Chew, who turned 77th Street into a household name among fashion conscious youths and young adults, did not achieve success over night. She built up her fashion accessories empire by learning the hard way and through a radical shift in her own mindset and behaviour. Rather than talking down to her youthful customers, she spoke peer to peer with them. Her success story is about seizing opportunities, making sacrifices and showing compassion. When others simply turned their backs on ‘wayward’ youths, Elim Chew welcomed them into her fold by sharing her insights on dressing fashionably without being outrageous or extravagant.

The conference participants, drawn mostly from primary and secondary schools, Junior Colleges and institutes of higher learning, will be captivated by Ms. Chew’s views on the finer points of entrepreneurship. “77th Street entered the street wear fashion retail business in 1988. From a small retail outlet in Far East Plaza we strategise our tactics to popularise street wear amongst the young and trendy in Singapore. With my sister Sulim helping to source trendy items from UK, we predicted youth trends ahead of their arrival in Singapore, and the business prospered”, said the Youth-and-Young Adults Guru Ms. Chew

Ms. Chew, together with respected academia and government representatives such as Dr. Sidney Yee, deputy director of National University of Singapore's Entrepreneurship Centre, Mr. Kenny Low, principal of City Harvest Education Centre Ltd (CHEC), Ms. Chew Mok Lee, group director, Enterprise Promotion, SPRING Singapore, Mr. Leslie Sim, TDC manager (Youth Entrepreneurship) and Mr. Sim Choon Hou, assistant director (Academic) the latter both from RP’s Centre for Innovation & Enterprise, will offer a holistic view of issues faced by various stakeholders of youth entrepreneurship in Singapore.

Dr. Sidney Yee will present a candid discussion on the topic of “How entrepreneurial is Singapore?” Specifically she will share on the evolving role of local institutes of higher learning in this knowledge based economy where a case study on NUS will be discussed on how it attempts to realize the “Enterprise” vision through various modes such as tech transfer, spinoffs and industry projects.

Mr Kenny Low, the Schwab Foundation Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2007, will share through case studies and poignant anecdotes, his extensive experience as a social entrepreneur in this profit driven economy. Specifically, he will explore with conference participants the finer art of identifying and creating value in areas where the conventional market have ignored. Through social entrepreneurship, Mr. Low offers a refreshingly different perspective of the business of educating drop out youths in Singapore.

Ms. Chew Mok Lee will share her observations on the evolution of the entrepreneurial mindset amongst youths, highlighting the various initiatives by various players in Singapore to encourage embracing of the less trodden path of entrepreneurship as an alternate career. Drawing from anecdotes from young entrepreneurs, she will also discuss the challenges and opportunities that youths of today face when starting their business and provide insights on the various financing and non financing support that are available to youth start-ups in Singapore.”

One of the highlights of the conference is a round table forum where participants will be treated to a candid and insightful dialogue with additional guests from Hwa Chong Institution, Techsailor Web Solutions and Republic Polytechnic. This will be followed by a hands-on workshop where participants will be introduced to a step-by-step approach to structure an effective curriculum within their respective institutions.
Conference details and registration forms can be found at [www.rp.sg/yeconference2008](http://www.rp.sg/yeconference2008).

For pre-event interview opportunities or for RSVPs to attend the event, kindly contact Kelly Ooi / Ronald Wong (Mileage Communications Pte Ltd) at tel: 6222-1678 or email: kelly@mileage.com.sg / Ronald@mileage.com.sg or Benjamin Chow (Republic Polytechnic) at tel: 31001779 or email benjamin_chow@rp.sg

---

Annex 1

**Key Highlights of Youth Entrepreneurship Conference:**

5th September 2008, 8.30am to 5.00pm, Republic Polytechnic

**Hot Talks Topics**

- How can we foster a ‘right’ mindset to inspire more entrepreneurs?
- How to stay competitive globally?
- What is the current climate of entrepreneurship among the youth in Singapore?
- How to create value and get the buy-in of clients?
- What types of government funding are available?
- What it takes to get funding for a start-up?

**Hear from the Experts**

- Ms Elim Chew – “Power in your hands” - the mindset of an entrepreneur
- Dr Sidney Yee – “Entrepreneurship in Singapore: Trends and Observations from Current Research”
- Mr. Kenny Low – “Social Entrepreneurship - The Art of Creating Value”
- Ms Chew Mok Lee – “What's In It for Youth StartUps?”

**Forum**

- A candid and light hearted forum (in a talk-show setting) to explore why are Singaporean youth not moving forward in Entrepreneurship?
- What are the obstacles faced by them?
- How can we as educators help them move forward?
- Gain insights in a light hearted manner

**Workshop**

- From the insights gathered (research insights), a step by step hands on workshop is designed to help all participants to learn how to creatively structure and develop a successful entrepreneurship program.

**Appreciation Draw**

- Participants are eligible for a lucky draw, and stand a chance to win the top prize of an Acer laptop worth over $1000.

Details of the conference can be found at [www.rp.sg/yeconference2008](http://www.rp.sg/yeconference2008).

---

**About Republic Polytechnic**

The first educational institution in Singapore to adopt the Problem-Based Learning approach for all its diploma programmes, Republic Polytechnic has six schools and one centre offering twenty-nine diploma courses in Information & Communications Technology, Engineering, Applied Science, Technology for the Arts, Sports, Health & Leisure, Events and Hospitality, Innovation and Enterprise, and Culture and Communication. Republic Polytechnic is committed to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial learning in an environment that develops problem-solving process skills and a lifelong learning attitude. Its holistic, broad-based curriculum, covering culture, enterprise development and cognitive processes, prepares students for an active and meaningful role in society. Republic Polytechnic strives for excellence by achieving various national and international accreditations, including People Developer Standards, ISO9001, ISO14001, OHSAS 18001, Singapore Quality Class, Singapore Innovation Class, and the Singapore Health Awards (Gold). For more information, visit [http://www.rp.sg](http://www.rp.sg).