

## MEDIA RELEASE

# Innovation takes centre stage at Republic Polytechnic Tech Fest

*New Supply Chain Innovation Lab launched for applied learning and research, featuring region's first driverless forklift, automatic picking system and robotic arm working in tandem*

**Singapore, 12 October 2015** – Republic Polytechnic's (RP) three-day Tech Fest was the backdrop for the launch of its new Supply Chain Innovation Lab. The purpose-built facility at RP's Industry Centre provides integrated solutions for supply chain and logistics management. Equipped with the latest state-of-the-art logistics technologies, the lab will benefit RP students and adult learners by providing a realistic distribution centre environment for hands-on learning and skills training.

The lab also presents Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with new opportunities to partner RP's Centre of Innovation for Supply Chain Management (COI-SCM) to develop and testbed new logistics solutions and technologies to improve cost competitiveness, productivity and create new value for customers. Jointly set up by SPRING Singapore, the Economic Development Board (EDB) and RP in 2012, COI-SCM is a one-stop centre that assists local companies and SMEs in enhancing productivity and efficiency at enterprise and industry levels through the refinement of supply chain processes and the adoption of technology<sup>[1]</sup>. Since it commenced operations in 2012, the Centre has initiated more than 180 projects with Singapore-based companies across various industries.

"We are delighted to mark this year's Tech Fest with the launch of RP's Supply Chain Innovation Lab, which provides new opportunities for applied learning and research. RP is well-placed to support the supply chain growth of the industry with the expertise of our Centre of Innovation for Supply Chain Management. The lab is a testament to our commitment to partner industry in training work-ready logistics professionals and enabling companies to strengthen their supply chain capabilities," said **Mr. Yeo Li Pheow, Principal/Chief Executive Officer, Republic Polytechnic**.

For the first time in South East Asia, an automated logistics setup featuring a driverless forklift working in tandem with an automatic picking system and robotic arm was unveiled in a live demonstration at the lab. A region's first for an applied learning facility, the fully automatic forklift operates independently to lift and move palletised goods from one point to another within the facility. Coupled with the automatic picking system and robotic arm, it integrates the latest automated logistics solutions, simulating an integrated distribution centre for applied learning and research.

"Republic Polytechnic's COI-SCM continues to be an important partner in the Singapore government's efforts to develop and enhance supply chain management capabilities to meet the future needs of the logistics industry. By combining process optimisation methodologies with technology solutions such as robotics, automation and augmented reality, the new Supply Chain Innovation Lab will encourage more companies and logistics practitioners to adopt cost-

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<sup>[1]</sup> <http://www.rp.edu.sg/COI-SCM.aspx>

effective and innovative business processes and solutions,” said **Mr. Lee Eng Keat, Director for Logistics and Natural Resources, Singapore Economic Development Board.**

“The Supply Chain Innovation Lab is an excellent platform to encourage technology adoption among SMEs. I would like to thank RP COI-SCM for thoughtfully curating a set of modular and cost-effective solutions that are suitable for SMEs. As part of our efforts to enhance SMEs’ productivity, SPRING will continue working with RP COI-SCM and industry partners to heighten awareness and promote adoption of innovative technologies,” said **Mr. Jonathan Lim, Director for Business Services, Industry and Enterprise Group, SPRING Singapore.**

The SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme for Logistics was also officially launched by Guest-of-Honour Ms Low Yen Ling, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry & Ministry of Education on the opening day of Tech Fest 2015, as part of the SkillsFuture initiative to provide Singaporeans with the opportunities to develop their fullest potential throughout life. Targeted at fresh logistics diploma graduates from all five polytechnics, the 12-month structured work-study programme, rolled out in partnership with the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), provides individuals with the opportunity to attain a Specialist Diploma in Supply Chain Management at RP while working full-time at partnering companies. It features structured on-the-job training to transit the fresh graduates smoothly to the workplace and give them a career headstart in Singapore’s growing logistics sector. Each trainee will also be assigned a company mentor who will play a key role in their skills development by providing career progression guidance and strong emphasis on lifelong learning.

The first intake of 39 trainees from 15 companies began classes on 2 October and some 36 industry mentors have also been assigned to them.

### **Joint Republic Polytechnic-McKinsey Productivity Lab for Lean Production and Services**

Come April 2016, a Lean Production and Services laboratory will be set up within the new Supply Chain Innovation Lab in collaboration with global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company. This lab will provide an effective environment for students and businesses to build the necessary skills to achieve and sustain strong improvements in operation while producing real products in a real-life factory setup. A Cooperation Agreement was signed today between RP and McKinsey to mark this collaboration.

"We are pleased to form a partnership with Republic Polytechnic to create a real-life factory setting for students and business leaders. In order to maintain economic growth, Singapore must increase its output per worker 2.6 times faster than its historic pace. To act on this productivity imperative, organisations need to rethink how they operate and derive value through lean management. Similar to our capability centres in Munich and Atlanta, the Productivity Lab will provide hands-on learning in lean management to help participants transform their operations to be more efficient. The lab underscores McKinsey’s commitment to bring the best of the Firm’s global expertise to Singapore," said **Mr. Javier Vara, Associate Partner, McKinsey & Company.**

## **Technology as a catalyst for productivity and innovation**

Themed “Empowering Supply Chains”, Tech Fest 2015 provides a platform for industry experts to convene and discuss the latest technology trends, insights and best practices. This year, RP’s 11<sup>th</sup> annual technology event is held from 12 to 14 October 2015, with each day focusing on how innovation and technology can enhance supply chain productivity for a specific industry sector. The opening day will focus on transport and storage, while the following two days will focus on hospitality and food services, and distribution and retail respectively.

On display at Tech Fest 2015 will be innovative projects which leverage technology to solve particular challenges, jointly developed by COI-SCM and industry partners. Some project highlights include a ‘shoot-store-share’ project that allows companies to automate their photo-taking tasks, and a cloud-based logistics tracking system for quicker and more efficient deliveries taking into account road and traffic factors.

The second day of Tech Fest will focus on logistics best practices in the hotel and hospitality industry. RP has been appointed as a partner to the Hotel Productivity Centre (HPC), which helps hotels address challenges through productivity and innovation solutions. Among the highlights include a case study on how Studio M Hotel undertook an applied research project with RP via the Centre. Using the Lean approach, RP and HPC identified new opportunities to create better guest experiences by streamlining work processes in its operations. As a result, Studio M Hotel’s operational efficiency improved by 12% after optimising its room availability during peak check-in period. This has helped to improve guests’ check-in experience and create a positive first impression.

For more on Tech Fest 2015, please visit: <http://www.rp.edu.sg/techfest/index.aspx>

## **About Republic Polytechnic**

The first educational institution in Singapore to leverage the Problem-based Learning approach for all its diploma programmes, Republic Polytechnic (RP) has six schools and two academic centres offering forty-one diplomas in Applied Science, Engineering, Enterprise and Communication, Events and Hospitality, Infocomm, Sports, Health & Leisure, and Technology for the Arts.

Republic Polytechnic is committed to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial learning in an environment that develops problem-solving skills and lifelong learning opportunities. Its holistic and broad-based curriculum prepares students for an active and meaningful role in society as problem solvers, respected professionals and passionate citizens.

Republic Polytechnic strives for excellence by achieving various international and national accreditations, including ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001, ISO 22301, Singapore Quality Class, People Developer, Innovation Class, and Service Class.

For more information, visit <http://www.rp.edu.sg>

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