

## Hospitality sector launches job fair

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Marina Bay Sands is one of sixteen employers taking part in the two-day job fair at the Kallang Wave Mall. By the end of the first day, the fair had received over 500 job applications. TODAY file photo

SINGAPORE — An employment fair, offering more than 3,000 jobs in the hospitality and food and beverage industries, was launched today (April 10) in a bid to address the persistent problem of manpower crunch in these two sectors.

Sixteen employers, such as Pan Pacific Group, Marina Bay Sands and BreadTalk Group, are taking part in the two-day fair at the Kallang Wave Mall. By the end of the first day, the fair had received over 500 job applications.

Organised by the Hospitality Alliance Singapore and the Singapore Workforce Development Agency, the fair seeks to inform potential job-seekers of the career expectations and prospects within the industry.

By offering them such information, the organisers hope that they will be able to ultimately attract and retain more people in the two sectors.

The problem of manpower shortage was cited by industry players as the main reason for poorer customer satisfaction in hospitality and F&B services here, according to the Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore survey conducted last year by the Singapore Management University's Institute of Service Excellence.

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The survey showed that both sectors had suffered a drop in customer satisfaction level — the tourism industry scored 69.1 out of 100 points, reflecting a 7.3 per cent drop, while the F&B sector fell by 6.5 per cent to 65.8 points.

Several industry stakeholders TODAY spoke to said there are ongoing efforts to retain and attract more manpower to the two sectors.

Mr Cheong Hai Poh, president of Food & Beverage Managers Association, said the issue of low pay — a key factor deterring Singaporeans from taking up positions within the industry — was slowly being addressed, such as through pay increment.

For example, he noted that a restaurant captain now draws a monthly salary of S\$1,800 — an increment of S\$400.

“Over the last two years, relevant organisations also (started to) recognise professions where they adjust the salaries ... I recognise your skills, I recognise this is a profession, and that is the reason we are also raising the bar of your salary,” Mr Cheong said.

Ms Judy Tan, president of the Association of Singapore Housekeepers, noting that higher positions and career acceleration are among the younger generation’s concerns, said informing them of their career prospects in the industry might motivate them to stay on longer in the job.

One visitor to the fair, 23-year-old hospitality management student Pamela Neo, said she hopes to get a job that offers her a starting pay of S\$2,500.

“It’s a 50-50 chance of me staying in this industry for long ... work-life balance is a challenge and there is also the pay,” said Ms Neo, who is studying at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Singapore.

Another UNLV student Teo Pei Ming, also 23, said she is not considering a long-term career in the sector as she lacks passion — a key factor she feels is needed to stay long in the hospitality industry.