

STAFF RECOGNITION CEREMONY ON 12 APRIL 2024

Opening & Welcome

Good afternoon, everyone. I am delighted to be here today as we gather for our staff recognition ceremony.

Today, we celebrate with close to 70 colleagues in VITAL. They have either been promoted to a higher substantive grade, or are receiving their long service awards, special appreciation awards and valedictory letters, in recognition of their years of contribution to the Singapore Public Service.

To the promotees, my heartiest congratulations! If you have not already been told by your bosses, a promotion represents two things – first, recognition for past contributions; second, expectation of future contributions. So we look forward to your continued good work in the years ahead!

For those of you receiving long service awards and special appreciation awards, thank you for your contributions to the Singapore Public Service! May you continue to find meaning and purpose as you serve alongside the rest of us.

And last but certainly not least, for those of you receiving valedictory letters, thank you so much for dedicating so many years to public service! We wish you all the best in the next season of life, whether it is an extension of your time with us, or to spend time in areas that you had less time for in the past.

I would also like to recognise the invited guests amongst us today. Some of you are family and friends; some of you are fellow VITAL colleagues. The fact that you have been invited must mean that you have been an important part of the journey for whoever invited you. We are glad to have you join us this afternoon.

A Time for Reflection

Recognition ceremonies like this are an occasion not just for celebration. They are also a timely occasion to reflect on the past and to look forward. Why do I say so? Because a promotion or having served X years is not a finishing point, but a milestone.

What do we do at milestones? I would suggest two things.

- First, we can look back and ask ourselves two questions – (i) what brought us here, and (ii) what have we learnt in the process? Each one of us will have different answers to these questions. But I hope reflecting on these questions will help us to remember not just the skills, effort and time we have put into the work, but also the collaborative colleague, the supportive supervisor, the understanding family member, and to give thanks for the vital role these individuals have played in supporting our journey thus far.
- Second, we can look forward and again ask two questions. One, if this has been a journey worth taking for us, and we know what was helpful along the way, how can we also be that collaborative colleague or that supportive supervisor, to make a positive difference to a fellow VITALite along his or her journey? Two, for the journey ahead, how can we continue to grow professionally as members of the VITAL team and of the Singapore Public Service?

Investing in Growth

Let me take this opportunity to share some thoughts about professional growth.

Having seen VITAL on the outside for many years as a service partner and experiencing it as a VITALite this past month, I can say with confidence that we are an organisation that values our people. One of the ways we demonstrate this has been our investment in skills building and development. Over the years, we have mounted many upskilling initiatives in VITAL. The more obvious ones are the training programmes - RPA, Data Analytics and Design Thinking. I believe many of us present today have attended one or more of such programmes. Perhaps the less obvious skills development initiative are the hackathons that we organise. Some of us may see this as platforms to find solutions to problems and issues. Yes, indeed they serve this purpose, very well. But beyond being solutions platforms, these hackathons are also rich opportunities to sharpen and hone our skills. It is only through application of skills that our competencies come alive. And it is only through challenge that we up our game. And if you have not already discovered this, great learning takes place when one is having fun!

Apart from training programmes and hackathons, we have also developed a Shared Services Competency Framework. This is our guide to develop competencies for an effective and future-ready VITAL.

VITAL Values for Growth

But I must also say this. Training programmes, hackathons, competency frameworks – these are all just instruments and tools. For these to truly work their magic, there needs to be a strong learning and growth mindset. So I asked myself this question - is there anything special about learning and growth in VITAL that can set us apart as an organisation.

I think I found some answers in our VITAL values. First, Visionary. A curiosity about the future and its possibilities. An instinct to look for opportunities, even in challenging circumstances. A belief that we can make things better. Second, Innovation. A “divine” sense of discontent to want to always make things better. The courage to try. Even if no one has tried it before. Learning from experiments and failures to become better the next time. An ambition to make a difference. Third, Teamwork. Supporting each other as we learn and grow together. A supportive and encouraging word when the learning gets tough, as it sometimes does. A pat on the back when a new level of skills achievement gets unlocked. Sharing lessons learnt. Sharing of constructive feedback with a team member or even another team. Fourth, Agility. A deep interest in what is happening around us and making sense of how this might affect us. Sharing this information so we learn and respond as one VITAL. Fifth, Leadership. Each VITALite being a self-directed learner. Committed to individual excellence and impact. Every VITALite aspiring to be a vital member to the team.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by again congratulating the colleagues with whom we are celebrating an important milestone today.

Many opportunities abound for us as we seek to transform and deliver shared corporate services for the Singapore Public Service. May we continue to grow together, guided by our mission and anchored by our VITAL values, as well as the Public Service values of Integrity, Service and Excellence.

Thank you.

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