

National Day Awards 2021 – Part 2

In the previous issue, we featured two officers who received the **Efficiency Medal** at the 2021 MOF Family National Day Awards. In this issue, we will feature two awardees of the **Commendation Medal**. A quick recap of the **Commendation Medal**.

THE COMMENDATION MEDAL

Pingat Kepujian



Instituted in 1996, the Medal may be awarded to one who has distinguished himself or herself through commendable performance and conduct, or significant efficiency, competence and devotion to duty.

AWARD WINNERS:

Katherine Chong Chee Yoon

William Chan

Congratulations to both winners of the **Commendation Medal**, let's hear from them!

Commendation Medal: **Katherine Chong**

Katherine joined VITAL in 2010 as the Assistant Head of Payroll & Claims (PAC). She has served various roles including leading the PAC team as Deputy Head in 2014 and subsequently leading the Compliance team as Deputy Director.

Describe what do you think is important when working with or leading a team?

Servant leadership style and lead by example. I believe in working closely alongside my team members to get work done. When I take on a new role in the function, I respect and learn from the other experienced team members. I will do my own research and rationalise information to seek better understanding. I also encourage my team members to countercheck their work instead of simply accepting my inputs as final.

How do you and your team maintain a high level of teamwork in this



Winner of the Commendation Medal, Katherine Chong (DD, Compliance)

hybrid work arrangement mode?

Compliance's work can be performed extensively via remote working. During this time, the team made extensive use of the various collaboration tools available to interact and work collaboratively. I keep

the communication channels open for my team to approach me whenever they need to. Often, we will gather virtually for debrief sessions after the virtual Audit & Compliance meetings to find out how to improve for the next meeting.

Commendation Medal:

William Chan

William leads a team of over 20 officers as an Assistant Director in HPE (HR) Appointment and Exit team. Under his guidance, the team managed to significantly improve customer satisfaction. A champion for ops-tech and continuous learning, William created learning circles with colleagues from other Function to exchange experiences on projects and process improvements.

How do you and your team identify workflows that could potentially be enhanced to be more efficient?

We often encourage one another to surface ideas on potential opportunities for further streamlining and automation. The frequent internal sharing within HPE allows us to build automation capabilities.

How do you encourage your team to adopt the innovation mindset and continuously improve processes?

I adopt an agile mindset and encourage staff to produce more efficient and innovative workflows. Team members are encouraged to review the processes they are handling and proactively suggest ways to make it better. Very often, this led to new and interesting insights. For example, the team managed to transform the time



consuming and error-prone manual data entry of contract renewal returns by injecting a barcode into generated letters so that the returns can be easily scanned and updated into the tracking sheet automatically.

With a simple mindset shift and investment in time to learn, the team was able to efficiently and accurately meet work targets.

Were there any challenges faced by your team during pilot launches of new initiatives and how did you and your team overcome them?

A key challenge was to obtain buy in from service partners and to convince them on how services are made better for their officers and members of public. Some decisions involve a certain degree of risk as there were concerns that the new way of doing things might result in issues or complaints. Thus, perseverance and patience are necessary traits for the team's success.

What are some key contributing factors to maintain a high level of collaborative spirit within the team?

Two factors contributed to the very strong 'kampong' spirit. Firstly, mindful execution through people excellence and secondly, communication.

HPE Appointment and Exit teams have a strong sense of mission towards contributing to the Civil Service. We believe that VITAL's good service delivery enables the teacher trainees to remain focused and highly motivated on their core duties to teach their students.

I hope to additionally showcase a few team members who had

exhibited passion for service. Firstly, Miss Ng Yun Jia took up a challenging appointment with HPE

Payroll during the COVID crisis to continue contributing her skills and expertise to the team. She demonstrated a highly motivated and passionate spirit by serving with excellence in times of need.

Also, Mr Axl Lim and Miss Priscilla Goh proactively sought approval for an exception to execute a deed signing at a trainee's home upon knowing that his sureties were elderly and had limited mobility.

Communication also played an important role in maintaining a high level of teamwork in this Hybrid Working arrangement. My Section Managers would communicate with their teams daily to analyse the operations workload and discussed challenges faced. This intimate communication established strong bonds as they worked towards achieving the success of a common goal. Beyond the completion of work tasks, supporting one another was important towards building the 'kampong spirit'.