

UOB champions inclusive hiring through first such public, private and people sector collaboration in Singapore

Partners SG Enable, Autism Resource Centre, MINDS and SPD to promote sustainable employment for persons with disabilities

Singapore, 16 July 2019 – United Overseas Bank (UOB) is helping to enable more inclusive hiring practices by forming for the first time, a collaboration among the public, private and people sectors in Singapore. Under the new initiative, ‘The Unlimited’, UOB is partnering SG Enable, Autism Resource Centre (ARC), Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) and SPD to connect businesses with persons with disabilities for suitable and sustainable employment.

According to a UOB survey¹ of 220 key decision-makers at companies in Singapore, two-thirds of them indicated that they would hire persons with disabilities if provided with sufficient guidance on the hiring process. ‘The Unlimited’ aims to encourage companies, starting with UOB’s corporate clients, to take the first step and to facilitate the process of hiring for interested companies.

UOB has been hiring persons with disabilities since 2013 at the UOB Scan Hub, its nerve centre for checking, digitisation and archiving of customer documents. Their attention to detail and high levels of concentration and accuracy have helped improved UOB Scan Hub’s productivity and employee retention rates. Currently, about 30 per cent of UOB Scan Hub colleagues are persons with autism or hearing impairment.

Ms Gan Ai Im, Head of Group Brand, UOB, said, “With experience in developing an inclusive workplace, UOB recognises the opportunity for businesses to create meaningful employment. To help cultivate a more inclusive mindset among companies in Singapore, we are collaborating with our public and people sector partners and have been actively engaging our corporate clients, business partners and other organisations to share best practices. Through this initiative, we hope to encourage more companies to join us in providing sustainable employment for persons with disabilities.”

¹ UOB commissioned independent research agency, InsightzClub, to conduct a survey in July 2019. Respondents included business leaders from various industries, such as manufacturing, retail trade, hospitality, food and beverage, transportation and warehousing.

Tripartite employment model under UOB's 'The Unlimited' inclusive hiring initiative

Under the 'The Unlimited' initiative, UOB acts as the private sector catalyst for inclusive hiring, engaging companies to raise their awareness and to generate interest in the hiring of persons with disabilities. Interested companies can first conduct an online self-assessment of their readiness for inclusive hiring using the Workplace Disability Inclusive Index². The Bank then links up these interested companies with SG Enable, which will in turn work with the ARC, MINDS and SPD to identify suitable candidates for the job roles.

SG Enable, along with ARC, MINDS or SPD, will provide training and support for both the employer and employee before, during and after the hiring process. SG Enable will also administer to eligible employers relevant grants under the Open Door Programme³, a government-funded initiative by the Ministry of Social and Family Development and the Workforce Singapore.

Ms Ku Geok Boon, CEO, SG Enable, said, "We are heartened to see increasing interest among employers to hire persons with disabilities and to champion inclusive employment. UOB's 'The Unlimited' initiative is a step in the right direction. SG Enable looks forward to working with businesses to build their capabilities in hiring persons with disabilities and putting in place inclusive practices that enable them to be contributing members of the workforce."

Ms Denise Phua, President of ARC, said, "We are delighted to partner UOB in this initiative. As an exemplary inclusive employer with a longstanding partnership with our charity's Employability and Employment Centre, UOB is leading by example and showing how inclusive hiring has yielded good business outcomes for the Bank. We hope more companies will follow UOB's lead and embrace the special needs community and give them a chance to become contributing members of society."

Ms Koh Gee May, Deputy CEO, MINDS, said, "We are heartened by UOB's leadership in hiring persons with disabilities and encouraging their business partners to do so. For persons with intellectual disability, there exists a continuum where some can work in open employment, while others will need supported

² The index was jointly developed by SG Enable with Cornell University and supported by Singapore Business Federation Foundation (SBFF) for employers in Singapore. For more information, please refer to <https://employment.sgenable.sg/employers/get-assessed/>

³ For more information, please refer to <https://employment.sgenable.sg/employers/open-door-programme/>

employment. We need to embrace a broader definition of employment and give support to the different employment models that matches their needs and abilities.”

Ms Chia Yong Yong, President of SPD, said, “We applaud UOB’s ambition of supporting inclusive employment beyond their own business operations and taking the lead to advocate the hiring of persons with disabilities among their corporate customers. We hope more employers will open their doors to hiring persons with disabilities and create opportunities for people with different abilities to contribute to our society.”

UOB commenced a pilot of its inclusive hiring initiative in July 2017. Under the pilot, UOB successfully facilitated the employment of persons with disabilities by three companies from the food and beverage, hospitality and manufacturing industries.

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About United Overseas Bank

United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB) is a leading bank in Asia with a global network of more than 500 offices in 19 countries and territories in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. Since its incorporation in 1935, UOB has grown organically and through a series of strategic acquisitions. UOB is rated among the world’s top banks: Aa1 by Moody’s and AA- by both Standard & Poor’s and Fitch Ratings. In Asia, UOB operates through its head office in Singapore and banking subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as branches and representative offices across the region.

Over more than eight decades, generations of UOB employees have carried through the entrepreneurial spirit, the focus on long-term value creation and an unwavering commitment to do what is right for our customers and our colleagues.

We believe in being a responsible financial services provider and we are committed to making a difference in the lives of our stakeholders and in the communities in which we operate. Just as we are dedicated to helping our customers manage their finances wisely and to grow their businesses, UOB is steadfast in our support of social development, particularly in the areas of art, children and education.

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