

SP Alliance & Network

# SP Alumni eNews

March 2023



**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:  
BOLD ENOUGH  
TO BREAK THE MOULD**



## Mr Gerald Ong

Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, 2007

# BUILDING A PROMISING FUTURE, BRICK BY BRICK

**Meet Gerald Ong, a Singapore Polytechnic (SP) Alumni, who helps others discover themselves through facilitation and coaching with the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Method.**

Gerald conducts facilitation with students and organisations, enabling people to become better team players and hone their leadership skills. As someone who believes that each person is unique, Gerald wants to help individuals uncover their identity. Through building LEGO® bricks, he helps participants understand their worldview and how they can harness their strengths in a team setting.

### Early beginnings

Ever since he was a student, Gerald always believed in taking charge of his life. As a proactive learner, he incorporated the skills he learned during his time at SP into other aspects of his life.

“SP’s Mechanical Engineering course helped shape my character and lifestyle and taught me how to be organised and build things in a systematic manner,” he shared.

His passion for learning, coupled with the structured thinking skills he acquired, proved to be the perfect combination. Through leveraging his strengths, Gerald eventually paved a way for himself to embark on new undertakings.

### Making a bold career switch

When Gerald joined the workforce, he decided to take his aspirations in a new direction. Unlike most engineering students, he chose to go into sales where his outgoing personality flourished. Soon enough, that gave him a chance to step into roles in training and consulting.

“When I was in sales, I had been doing training indirectly to my colleagues. So, it was quite a natural transition for me to go into training moving forward.”

### Finding his true calling as a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Method facilitator

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Method is a

programme that combines visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning approaches. During the workshop, participants are invited to use LEGO® bricks to find solutions to questions and eventually present their unique perspectives through sharing stories.

The first time Gerald learned about the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Method was when he was teaching robotics in schools and he was instantly drawn to it.

“I’m happier doing my LEGO® facilitation work. What brings me joy is watching participants laughing, enjoying themselves, and learning at the same time in team building sessions,” he shared.

Through the facilitation, Gerald finds meaning in bringing out the special qualities of individuals. He is energised by his work and finds meaning in calling out their strengths that are not often emphasised in Asian cultures.

“With the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Method, we get to tap into the creativity of participants as well, a quality that is not as emphasised in Asian countries.”

### Uncovering the unique identity of others

Just as Gerald took time to explore and figure out his calling, he finds fulfilment in helping others learn more about themselves. He believes that each individual is shaped by their experiences and shown through the way they build their LEGO® models.

“Our Asian culture has a strong focus on establishing order and that shows in the models we build at the workshops,” he shared.

“When we gather the models on the table, we can distinctly see a trend and pattern. Seeing how the model is built, I can tell what the person is like, what he is thinking, his upbringing.”

### Making training accessible to all

With years of experience under his belt, Gerald can conduct training remotely and guide individuals to learn more about themselves, wherever they are. His vision is to bring the uniqueness of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Method to participants’ doorsteps, helping them embark on their journey of self-discovery from the comfort of their homes.

“That’s why I’m starting the Career Coaching model with LEGO® Bricks where I can send the sets and workbooks to participants’ homes and run the session on Zoom.”

As someone who is keen on taking action, Gerald has unrolled his first virtual training with Education and Career Guidance, a programme he designed in 2018. With time, he hopes to scale his virtual training and make them available to others.

### Advice for those who are discovering themselves

“Just keep venturing out and finding something that they have always liked to do,” Gerald shared.

To Gerald, the school environment is the best place to hone leadership skills and become a better team player. He believes that there are many paths to success and forging the right relationships can be pivotal in anyone’s career.

“Find leadership roles to hone your skills. Polytechnic is the best place where you can learn to build your network. Know that there are many paths to higher studies.”



Source: Today, 22 Jan 2023

## SP alumna Hanisah Rehan discovers new area of study after graduation

Miss Hanisah Rehan, 24, recounts her unexpected move to study Environmental and Life Sciences in Brunei, after graduating with an SP diploma in Nutrition, Health and Wellness in 2018. During her time there, she ended up falling in love with the Bruneian lifestyle and discovered her love for marine animals.



Source: The Straits Times, 19 Jan 2023

## SP hospitality courses strengthen sustainability focus to meet demand in sustainable tourism

With nearly 4,000 openings in the tourism industry, Singapore Tourism Board's assistant chief executive (policy planning group) Jeannie Lim said that hospitality school students are primed to help Singapore further its push to become a sustainable tourism and urban wellness destination. She was speaking at the Tourism Transformation 2023, a joint polytechnic-ITE hospitality and tourism career fair held at SP on 19 January. Minister of State for Trade and Industry Low Yen Ling mentioned that hospitality schools and courses at polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) are also continually improving their curriculum to meet these demands and ensure that students are equipped with the skills to support the industry. SP PCEO Soh Wai Wah noted that sustainable tourism and wellness have fast become growth opportunities. In order to prepare graduates for these emerging opportunities, SP students have already started incorporating sustainability practices and strategies in their course work when planning events in support of the industry's move towards sustainability. SP student Javan Law said that the tourism industry is attractive and he is excited to join the industry and be part of major, large-scale events.

## SP student is awarded new green skills scholarship with The Institute of Engineers, Singapore

With a new focus on sustainability, The Institute of Engineers, Singapore, has launched a green skills certification for working professionals. From this year onwards, Engineers can apply to get professionally certified in this field.

Source: Lianhe Zaobao, 18 Jan 2023



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