

*Speech by Mr. Wong Loke Hwee, Group Vice President, Strategic Projects APAC, Giesecke+Deverient Mobile Security Asia Pte. Ltd., at Singapore Polytechnic 58th Graduation Ceremony on 7th May 2018, 1.30pm*

Mr Soh Wai Wah, Principal and CEO of Singapore Polytechnic, Distinguished Guests, Parents and Graduands, Ladies and Gentlemen,

## **A. Congratulation**

1. I am deeply honoured to be invited to grace this graduation ceremony. To all Graduands, my heartiest congratulation! This is a major milestone in your academic journey. I am sure you and your loved ones are proud of your achievements.
2. So, what's next ? Some of you may decide to start looking for a job while others may opt to continue your studies.
3. Regardless of your choice, graduating with Diploma in Mechanical Engineering and Diploma in Bioengineering have already put you are in good position:
  - >50% will successfully get a place in our local universities
  - >85% will receive full time employment within this year with starting salary >\$2500
4. For all male graduands awaiting for National Service enlistment, you are the 'lucky one' as you have 2-years more to procrastinate and to decide what you want to do.

## **B. My Journey**

5. 30 years ago, I faced similar "work or study" cross-road. I decided to take on both challenges; to enter the workforce and to continue my studies through night classes.
6. It was a difficult journey with many sacrifices. 3 nights a week, I had to commute >1.5 hours by public transport from my workplace to attend my classes. Dinner was usually taken at 11.00pm. Most weekends were burnt; spent in libraries to do assignments or attend project meetings.
7. Thinking back, I was glad I had chosen the challenging but gratifying "work and study" option. I was able to finance my studies and at the same time, gain valuable working experiences. From 1991-1997, I managed to complete my bachelor degree and master degree while working full-time.
8. Acquiring those degrees opened up new career opportunities for me. I was able to join Multi-National companies where degree was a pre-requisite. The qualifications also enabled me to successfully apply and perform different functional roles as I progressed in my career.

### **C. Lifelong Learning**

9. Throughout my career, I have the opportunity to attend many courses, trainings, workshops and leadership programs. It has been, and still is, my Lifelong Learning journey. These learnings have certainly helped me stay abreast with the latest management thinking and to gain better insights in managing and leading people.
10. As you enter the workforce, there will have many learning opportunities in various stages of your life. Fully embrace these opportunities and embark on your Lifelong Learning journey! In today's internet age, it is even more crucial to make continuous learning your way of life... or you risk your skills and knowledge to be disrupted and replaced by algorithm and artificial intelligence!
11. I like to draw a distinction that LifeLong Learning is NOT about acquiring and amassing as many certificates, diplomas and degrees. Instead, Lifelong Learning is about acquiring skills and knowledge which are relevant and applicable for your career advancement.
12. The most effective form of LifeLong Learning is to pursue what you are truly passionate in. Your passion will motivate you to spend long hours to gain depth knowledge and skills as you have the strong desire to excel. I am sure some of you will relate to this feeling. You know exactly what you want and will focus your energy to achieve your ideal job. As the saying goes, "Do what you like, you will be good in what you do". Maintain your enthusiasm and passion and live your dream! Remember this: "Your vocation in life is when your greatest joy meets the world's greatest need!".

### **D. Core Skills**

13. My first job was as an Assistant Process Engineer in a local company. I thought it will involve applying knowledge and skills gained from my mechanical engineering training. However, I soon learnt that the actual job scope was very different and hardly involve any engineering aspect!
14. You will come to similar realization that the core skills in any organisation are actually Effective Communication, Problem Solving and Project Management. The good news is - you have already subconsciously acquired these essential skills from Singapore Polytechnic education. These skills will serve you well throughout your entire career.

## **E. Adaptability**

15. I started my career thinking that I will only do process engineering works. However, I decided to take a leap of faith and switch from Engineering to Sales when I received an offer from a multi-national company. It was a good move and that actually propelled my career; I was subsequently head-hunted to join other multi-national companies to assume more senior roles in Business Development and Sales & Marketing.
16. I again made a dramatic career-switch from Sales to Operations when opportunity arise. Since then, I continued to response to the changing needs of the organization and performed different leadership roles in Operations, Supply Chain, Merger and Acquisition and Strategic Projects.
17. My underlying message is this - be bold, be adaptable and be prepared to try different roles and responsibilities throughout your career. Have faith and believe in yourself. You will never know what you are good at if you never try. You will be pleasantly surprised on what you can accomplish.

## **F. Mindset**

18. As you progress in your career, you will realise the differentiating factor that set you apart is your mindset. This is the X-factor that separate the best from the rest. Remember - mindset drives behaviour, and behaviour drives results! So, always be positive, bold, resilient and set high aspirations.
19. I like to end my speech with a dedication poem I had written 30 years ago for my officer cadets. I find the theme befitting as it espoused the sense of pride, discipline, focus and resilience; all the characteristis of positive mindset. I hope it will resonate with you; especially for all male graduands awaiting for NS enlistment. It is called "A new beginning".  
Here goes:

You are the chosen one  
A specially selected being  
Freshly graduated from your Basic Military Training  
To face new challenges, expecting...  
A new beginning.

On the first day in your new environment  
Anxiety and curiosity gripped you  
As you were presented your Junior Bar

You stood smartly, like a statue...  
Officer Cadet looking far.

For the next 9 gruelling months  
Many uncertainties await you  
As you were put to the ultimate test  
In administration and in field...  
To prove your best.

You were mentally and physically pushed  
By instructors who looked so stern and cold  
“perform to your peak,” they used to scold  
But deep inside, each with a heart of gold  
I assure you.

How many times have you thought of quitting  
To escape from the regimentation and suffering  
But whenever you were down and out  
There was an inner voice coaxing, “press on, keep going...”  
You stood up.

Looking back at those seemingly endless months  
Which you have toiled and endured  
Images of incidents, sad and happy  
Are all but memories you recalled...  
Very gladly

Now standing proudly at the parade square  
Smartly dressed in No. 1 proper  
You are THAT specially selected being  
To be commissioned as an OFFICER...  
A new beginning.

20. This is YOUR new beginning. As Singapore Polytechnic graduands, you are the ambassador  
to the world. Unleash your full potential, Expand your Horizon. Prove it is **So Possible**.

21. Thank you

By: Wong Loke Hwee (Mr.)

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