

SP Alliance & Network

# SP Alumni eNews

Aug 2023



**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:  
APPLYING LESSONS AT SP  
FOR CAREER SUCCESS**



## Marc Teo

Regional MD (South Asia), Croda Singapore Pte Ltd

Diploma in Chemical Process Technology, 1988

# FROM CHEMISTRY COURSE TO CORNER OFFICE



**Back in his school days, Regional Managing Director for the specialty chemical company Croda Singapore, Marc Teo did not have an interest in Chemistry.**

During his secondary school days, Marc readily admits that he was a carefree student with little interest in studying. In Secondary 4, his former Chemistry teacher even declared that he would never pass the subject.

It surprised even Marc himself when the 'O' level results came out and he had in fact, passed the said subject. His next step was to apply for a polytechnic as his results did not qualify him for the traditional junior college pathway.

He enrolled in Chemical Process Technology (CPT) at Singapore Polytechnic (SP) and fell in love with poly life. The freedom from a rigid school environment and the opportunity to meet people from different walks of life helped hone his soft skills.

"You get to know many people and learn from all these interactions, and I think I came out of it more streetwise."

### Climbing the Ladder of Success

Fresh out of school, Marc banked on his soft skills, personal brand of values, and thirst for learning to propel him up the ranks at work. He shares that "a diploma is just the entry ticket to the workforce, after getting in, it all comes down to what you can do and how you can add value to the business."

The greatest test of Marc's career came when he was posted to China for two years to help build a team and create a foothold in the Chinese market. Despite feeling like he was thrown into the deep end, he tried his best to overcome the challenge and eventually succeeded.

He still uses the invaluable lessons that came with undertaking new challenges and applies them to how he operates daily. The most important of these lessons he says is to stay hungry.

The hunger to take on new challenges without thinking about the reward and rather focusing on how he can adapt and stay resilient is what kept him rising above his competition, and got him head-hunted by professionals.

### Building Up the Future Workforce

As the Regional Managing Director of Croda, Marc feels that SP has done a great job building up the chemical industry's future. SP has made sure that the lessons learnt in school are closely related to the job, with the current curriculum reflective of where the chemical industry is headed.

By anticipating industry trends and instilling a sense of solution-oriented thinking, SP alumni can go on to become leaders in the workplace.

As someone who has interviewed countless candidates, Marc suggests adopting a soft skills module into the current CPT curriculum to help students stand out from their competition. "Soft skills such as work ethic, attitude, adaptability, resilience, and the thirst to learn will help them weather any industry upheavals."

He also acknowledges that the responsibility for preparing the future of the workforce does not only fall to the schools, but also to the companies that will be hiring them.

### His Version of Success

Despite his industry going through intense changes and always having new challenges to face, he credits his unchanging values for his professional success these last three decades.

When asked what drives him to succeed, Marc shares that it's simply being happy. "For me, having work satisfaction and getting recognition for a job well done is what makes me happy and feel successful."

Speaking to future SP graduates, Marc explains that success can also depend on the type of mentors you meet along the way. Mentors help by exemplifying the career progression pathways and having someone to aspire to. Leveraging on a senior's experience can be of great help to someone looking to rise up the ranks.

In the words of Marc Teo, let us stay hungry, embrace challenges, and find success in the pursuit of happiness and work satisfaction.



## Chok Vui Shung

Site Head, Croda Singapore Pte Ltd

Diploma in Marine Engineering, 1996

# SAILING WITH THE WAVES OF CHANGE



**Dreams of sailing the high seas inspired Chok Vui Shung to take up Marine Engineering at SP. While his role as Site Head at Croda Singapore keeps him on dry land today, he nevertheless keeps his eye on the horizon, always ready to set sail to new destinations of knowledge.**

### Visionary Inspiration

Looking back on his time as an SP student in the mid-1990s, Chok Vui Shung remembers one lecturer in particular, who probably set the tone for Vui Shung's own approach to life.

"Mr Kalyan Chatterjea was very much into digitalisation even back then, and incorporated Object Oriented Programming into our Marine Engineering Final Year Project," he recalls.

The forward-looking attitude of this inspiring lecturer has no doubt left an indelible mark on Vui Shung, who is filled with passion about his work and always keeping his mind open to new possibilities.

### Dynamism at Work

This openness is critical in his role as Site Head at Croda Singapore Pte Ltd, a global chemical manufacturing company that produces products that are sold in more than 30 markets.

Vui Shung notes that the environment is intensely dynamic. Within his scope of work in operations, he has to make day-to-day decisions frequently. It is a delicate balancing act, where production is driven by consumer market demand, whether to ramp up, or scale down, which makes the business cycle unpredictable. Thankfully, Vui Shung has his marine engineering skill sets to keep him afloat.

"Think of it this way: in the past, when you sailed at sea, you were subject to the external environment. If it's good weather, the ship runs fine; not so good weather,

you better standby the diesel generator. That level of alertness has stayed with me, even when I am no longer sailing as a marine engineer."

### Multi-Faceted Advantage

Vui Shung also credits his time at SP for establishing a firm foundation on which to build his knowledge base in the industry. This has enabled him to communicate well with engineers from different disciplines.

This multi-disciplinary grounding was also useful in dealing with challenges that crop up at work. Vui Shung's ability to look at problems at different angles, on issues such as raw material shortages, or supply chain resilience, meant he was more open to novel solutions.

"My perspective comes from marine engineering, so I have different inputs compared to the traditional specialised engineer and I think that gave me the confidence to speak in a language both of us can understand."

### Practical Advice

Having experienced for himself the many opportunities that SP offers, Vui Shung is a fervent supporter of Work-Study Programmes. He believes that the SP approach gives students more options, and more importantly, the confidence to take on a university degree in the future.

"You can choose whether you want to work, work enough to save money and study full-time, or you can take up a WSP programme. So, you have that option."

### Working with SP

To this end, Vui Shung is currently working on several joint initiatives, such as SP staff attachments, customised training, and projects to tackle operational challenges.

Participants will be required to complete actual projects for Croda, which means whatever they learn, they can apply immediately. There are also plans to invite SP lecturers to consult at Croda, and to impart their knowledge to the staff.

"This is a win-win for Croda as well, because the company is able to gain traction."

### Open Learning

To future marine engineering students, Vui Shung offers two words of advice: Be Open. He feels that Marine Engineering actually offers a very broad education, which leaves their future open to many possibilities.

"And keep on learning. Success is not about achieving a certain status in society. It's about improving day by day, becoming a better person today than you were yesterday."

Wise inspiration indeed from this passionate alumnus, reminding all of us to keep sailing forward on the vast seas of knowledge.



## Romi Shariff

Shift Team Leader, Croda Singapore Pte Ltd

Diploma in Chemical Process Technology, 1993

# FINDING OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN



**Singapore Polytechnic (SP) Alumnus Romi Shariff is very familiar with the learning journey. In his current role as Shift Team Leader, he applies this approach to life by taking every chance he gets to keep improving, not just for himself, but also for his team, and the company he works for.**

### First Steps

Romi Shariff's grandfather had some sage advice for him: "You have to study hard to get good grades, then you get good pay." Although not academically-inclined, Romi took these words to heart, and eventually entered SP to study Chemical Process Technology.

"This was the start of my learning journey. And also the realization that I had a desire to explore, to discover more."

Romi admits that he did not take his studies seriously during his first year at SP. Thinking back to those days, he is thankful for his seniors and the role they played during this formative period.

"I would have been lost without them. Those moments of social interactions laid the important foundation for me to manage a team later on in my career."

It was only in his third year that Romi began to take things more seriously. He showed an interest towards the industrial aspects of the field, such as industrial processes, process control, process plant, etc, and decided to focus his attention on those areas.

### Valuable Lessons at SP

It was at this juncture of Romi's time at SP that he faced some real challenges. He remembers that besides the main hurdle of the exams, the other major one came in the form of group projects.

"We had to form teams, do our research, and get our hands on the resources and materials that we needed for our projects."

In hindsight, Romi credits this experience as essential to prepare him for the path he eventually chose to take in his career.

"It's very similar ... issues like time management, people management and project management ... whether it's a school project or a manufacturing process, I needed to get everyone to work together towards a common goal."

Romi also said that although what he studied at SP was not immediately applicable to his role at his first job, it would still eventually prove to be invaluable. After two years at a company working as a lab tech in plastic compounding, he eventually moved over to process, which was much closer to what he learned at SP.

### Working Knowledge

Today, Romi is thriving in his role as Shift Team Leader at Croda Singapore. His key responsibilities are to monitor and manage the plant activities, as well as delegate tasks to the technicians. In addition, he is required to attend production meetings, as well as collaborate with other departments, e.g. the mechanical or maintenance departments on equipment breakdown studies.

"It's quite a wide role, but the main thing is to look after the manufacturing plant."

Based on his experiences at SP, Romi knows that in order to foster teamwork and collaboration within his team, he has to be a team player himself first.

"I need to establish a certain level of trust with my peers, have healthy interactions, and clear two-way communication. Otherwise, I won't be able to manage them well."

### Trust Above All

For Romi, the crucial element that makes things work is "trust". He recalls the most outstanding moment of his career – when his superior appointed him to lead a team and provide training to them.

"I realised that I had managed to earn my superiors' trust. With the confidence boost that came with this trust, I was able to pass on what I had learned to others, and it was very satisfactory to see how these people I trained became better at their jobs and their roles."

### Words of Wisdom

"Take any and all opportunities that come your way. Because it means someone has put their trust in your abilities, has chosen you, and knows you can do it."

This is the advice that Romi wants to offer new SP alumni, and adds a reminder not to procrastinate, and to grab the opportunities immediately.

Ultimately, this humble and unpretentious alumnus is highly appreciative of his years at SP. Romi is where he is today because of his experiences there, which isn't surprising. After all, that's where his true learning journey began.

## SP Alumna Goh Xin Yi enters NUS at 26 after postponing studies to support family through career in ICA

Management Executive at Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and SP alumna Goh Xin Yi recounts how she put her dream of furthering her studies on hold to support her family. As a young adult, she had always considered pursuing higher education after obtaining a Diploma in Integrated Events and Project Management from SP in 2014, but her family's financial situation did not permit this. She later joined the ICA as an assistant management executive in 2017 and



secured a scholarship from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). As part of her career development, she is now pursuing a four-year bachelor's degree in Sociology at the National University of Singapore's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, supported by a Ministry of Home Affairs scholarship.

Source: TODAY Online, 18 Jun 2023



Source: The Straits Times, 14 Jul 2023

## SP Alumnus Liao Jun Heng faces life experiences with the help of a mentor

After graduating with a Diploma in Maritime Business in 2023, SP alumnus Liao Jun Heng's top priority was to secure gainful employment and help his family financially while enjoying a meaningful career. Having since secured a place to study business management at Singapore Management University (SMU), the 20-year-old has joined a mentorship programme to better prepare for his career progression. The National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) Youth Career Network paired him with business analyst Luke Chu and they meet monthly to catch up on Jun Heng's concerns about career progression, as well as family and personal issues such as his upcoming national service enlistment.



Source: Lianhe Zaobao, 5 Jul 2023

## SP enlists KPMG as consultant to develop sustainable blueprint for net-zero emissions

SP has appointed KPMG as an advisor to develop a sustainability roadmap by 2024 to achieve the net zero goals set by the government ahead of schedule. The announcement was made at the Go Green SP event on Wednesday, driving decarbonisation of campuses, industries and communities. SP is also the first local IHL to engage consultants to develop sustainable approaches. SP Principal and CEO Soh Wai Wah said that the government has mandated that the public sector reduce energy consumption by 10% in the 10 years leading up to 2030, but to set a good example for students, SP has set a target of a 15% reduction. He shared plans to achieve net zero emissions by 2045, ahead of schedule, and also pledged SP as a champion for the Green Nation Pledge. In addition, SP's PACE Academy will launch six new sustainability and green skills courses.

## On-Campus Privileges



Alumni access hours:

**GYM@POOL**

Weekdays : 12pm - 4pm | 6pm - 9pm

Saturday : 9am - 7pm

**SWIMMING POOL**

Weekdays : 9am - 4pm

Saturday : 4pm - 7pm

Please note your SP Alumni e-card and any form of identification is required for verification purposes. SP Sports Facilities may be closed due to curriculum or events without prior notice.



SP Alumni eCard holder is entitled to 20% off annual library membership fees.

Library membership is required to enter SP Library.

[Click here](#) to find out more.

**OPENING HOURS:**

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## Off-Campus Privileges



**ARTEA**

10% discount

**Terms and conditions apply**



**CRISAL SEAFOOD**

15% off on LACTOSEAFOOD

**Terms and conditions apply**



**LOCKDOWN**

10% off the usual retail price  
1 pass for 1 gameroom discount

**Terms and conditions apply**



**SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC GRADUATES' GUILD**

10% discount for ala-carte menu at SPGG F&B outlets (SPGG Coffee Hub & The Restaurant)

**Terms and conditions apply**



**THE ESCAPE ARTIST**

10% discount for the entire bill

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**TUAN YUAN PORK RIBS SOUP**

5% discount when you spend above \$50 before GST

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**THE KETTLE GOURMET**

5% discount when you quote "HAPPY5"

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Stay notified on the latest alumni events by updating your particulars on the **SP Alumni Portal**.

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## SP Alumni eCard

Enjoy exclusive benefits when you apply for your free **SP Alumni eCard** via the SP mobile app.

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## Exploring new career opportunities?

Check out the **SPAN Job Portal** to discover various job listings.



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BY SPGG X GEN SINGAPORE

## MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Better Clarity for your Career Aspirations & Learn from Industry Mentors

Session 01  
15 Aug, 7-8pm

Session 02  
15 Sep, 7-8pm

**1 to 1 Mentoring** Up to 10 Selected Mentees



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## NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

Just graduated from SP < 6 months ago and feeling like life's thrown you a curved ball?

Contact our friendly SP counsellors for short-term counselling support if you need.

Email SP: [contactus@sp.edu.sg](mailto:contactus@sp.edu.sg) with subject 'Requesting for Counselling'



## NEW SP UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Supporting our Graduates beyond SP

### About the Scholarship

The Scholarship aims to support deserving and talented SP students in their undergraduate studies. We hope to encourage our academically strong graduates to further their achievements in SP and to make a positive impact on Singapore in the future.

### Scholarship Benefits

- Bond-free scholarship
- Full scholarship award of \$30,000 will be given out in three tranches of \$10,000 across three academic years of undergraduate studies.

### Eligibility

- Singapore Citizens/Permanent Residents
- Graduated from SP with a Diploma with Merit
- Demonstrate good leadership qualities and conduct
- Possess strong portfolio and CCA records
- Freshly matriculated at any of the local autonomous universities

Stay tuned to SP's website for more updates!

**Application opens: 18 - 30 Sep 2023**

Scan the QR Code for more information on the SP Undergraduate Scholarship.



For enquiries, please email [scholarships@sp.edu.sg](mailto:scholarships@sp.edu.sg).



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Email us at [ecg@sp.edu.sg](mailto:ecg@sp.edu.sg) for an appointment

## PolyGES

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2023

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[Click Here](#)

For Query, email [polyges@beacon.com.sg](mailto:polyges@beacon.com.sg) for your survey link.



## Upcoming Events & Courses



# DT|UX SUMMIT

Moving towards Humanity-Centred  
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**22 September 2023**

Singapore Polytechnic Convention Centre

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