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MEDIA RELEASE

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SPEAK GOOD ENGLISH MOVEMENT 2008 TARGETS SERVICE AND RETAIL SECTORS

The Speak Good English Movement 2008 aims to go beyond raising awareness of the importance of speaking good English, to encouraging people to change their attitude towards speaking English and to actively improve their English.

The key message of this year's Speak Good English Movement is simply - "I can". I can help others improve their English. I can take action to improve my English. I can speak good English if I want to.

The Speak Good English Movement 2008 will be officially launched by Minister Lim Boon Heng, Prime Minister's Office, on 26 August 2008 at METRO, The Paragon at 2 pm.

Why speak good English

The Movement aims to have Singaporeans speaking and using Standard English. Standard English is English with correct grammar and pronunciation. It has nothing to do with accent.

English has enabled generations of Singaporeans to communicate and do business with many countries around the world. More importantly, it is the social glue which binds us together for it is the language common to all regardless of race or religion. As Singapore welcomes more immigrants, English will become more important as a unifying language.

Speaking good English also has a ripple effect. People tend to reply in the same way in which they are spoken to.



Target Audience

This year, the Speak Good English Movement is targeting Singaporeans in the workforce who need to communicate with other Singaporeans as well as international visitors. In particular, the Movement is focusing on service and retail staff. These are the people we meet everyday as soon as we step out of our homes – on the buses and MRT trains, in restaurants, in shops, clinics and hospitals, as well as in places of interest.

The Movement also aims to reach out to parents and teachers who play vital roles in the learning and use of good English by youths, as well as students.

Strategy

The Movement's strategy for this target audience is to increase:

- the willingness to speak good English
- the willingness to take action to improve their English
- proficiency in spoken English.

To help focus our efforts, we have divided Singaporeans into three broad segments. The first comprises **Singaporeans who can speak Standard English**, including those who choose to code-switch. The strategy for this group is to engage them as role models and champions of good English.

The second segment, which forms our main target group, are **those who cannot yet speak Standard English and are open to improving themselves**. The strategy for this group is to direct them to resources that will help them to improve their English

The last band is made up of **those who are not able to speak Standard English and do not see the importance of doing so**. The Movement aims to persuade them to change their attitude and take action to improve their English.



Partner Programmes

The Speak Good English Movement's partners play a critical role by organising various programmes to reach out to different groups of Singaporeans, and to our target audience in particular.

The Movement has planned many programmes with its partners, some of which are highlighted below.

- The ***Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA)*** is forging a closer partnership with the ***National Library Board*** to give Singaporeans the opportunity to ascertain their English language proficiency through WDA's Employability Skills System (ESS). WDA will host road shows in four public libraries.
- Leading the way for retailers are ***METRO*** and ***TANGS***, which will collaborate with WDA in its Workplace Literacy (WPL) initiative under its ESS to encourage frontline staff to communicate better through the use of good English.
- The ***Singapore Retailers Association*** will be launching "Service English for Retail Professionals", a new training program targeted specifically at raising the level of spoken English among frontline retail staff.
- ***STOMP*** is building on the very successful "English As It Is Broken" micro-site and, ***STOMP*** and ***Panpac Education*** will be launching the sequel to their bestselling book of the same name at the launch of this year's Speak Good English Movement on 26 August 2008.
- The staff and students of ***Singapore Polytechnic's School of Business*** conducted a benchmark survey for the Movement in November last year to evaluate the effectiveness of the Movement, as well as to find out Singaporeans' perceptions of the importance of speaking English well. The findings from this survey, which have helped the Movement chart its future, will be announced by Minister Lim Boon Heng at the launch next week.



- **Journey Pictures** has teamed up with the Movement to further spread the Speak Good English message through the entertaining documentary, “Mad About English”.
- **The Straits Times** and the Speak Good English Movement have co-organised the “Inspiring Teacher of English Award” with strong support by the **Ministry of Education**. Winners will be announced in October 2008.
- **MediaCorp Radio 938LIVE** continues to broadcast the “English@Work” e-newsletter fortnightly. The e-newsletter provides tips on English to working adults.
- The **British Council** contributes web resources and will hold workshops for parents at various **NLB** libraries later this year to promote the Movement’s message.
- The **YMCA** will hold its 22nd “Plain English Speaking Awards” for students to sharpen their speaking skills and to build confidence in public presentation.
- The **Institute of Technical Education** supports the Movement with its very own ongoing Speak Good English Movement that encourages its students to speak up, speak out and speak well.

These programmes are designed to be informative and interesting so that people will find learning to speak Standard English achievable and fun. For details, please visit www.goodenglish.org.sg

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