



OUR PEOPLE, OUR SKILLS

The ComfortDelGro family consists of people of all ages who hail from all walks of life, from fresh newcomers to experienced mentors with decades on the job. Written on every face is an inspiring story – of lessons learnt, laughter shared, and challenges overcome.

PROFESSIONAL AND PROUD

EVERY TAXI DRIVER THAT DRIVES A BLACK CAB HAS TO PASS THE KNOWLEDGE OF LONDON. This test involves learning 25,000 streets and 20,000 points of interest, which grows as London grows. This takes, on average, four years to obtain. I obtained my badge by studying full time in just over three years.

As a London taxi driver, my customers vary from Lords to mums with prams, from able-bodied people to wheelchair users. Our taxis are especially designed to cater to people with different needs. As a driver, I have to know how to help the customer into the taxi safely and then be able to secure them safely for the journey.

One of my more memorable trips was picking up Mr Dustin Hoffman as a fare on Marylebone High Street. He was a lovely man. We got talking and I told him my mum was a really big fan and he said

‘Why don’t we speak to her then?’ I called up my mum and told her I had someone who wanted to talk to her. She couldn’t believe it when I handed the phone to Mr Dustin Hoffman.

I like to treat every journey as if I were the customer trying to get somewhere. I see the most important part of my work is to do the job to the best of my ability, ensuring everyone gets to his destination as quickly and safely as possible.

It’s inevitable that the taxi industry will change in the future but I firmly believe that where London is concerned, there won’t be many changes. Why would you make a change to the greatest taxi service on the planet? I also don’t think the professionalism and pride of London Taxi Drivers would ever change. I picked up a customer recently who was a wheelchair user. He travelled with his hoist, his wheelchair, equipment and

his carer. I dropped the customer at his home address and he told me his neighbour was Mr Jeremy Clarkson.

After the customers left, I went on my way. I noticed that a piece of equipment was left in the taxi. I immediately went back to the street to return the equipment as I knew it would be essential for the customer. Lo and behold, I saw Mr Jeremy Clarkson who needed a taxi! Needless to say, each customer is treated exactly the same regardless of his individual needs — with professionalism and pride.

Technology has been the biggest change in the last few years and will no doubt continue to evolve. Taxi hailing apps have impacted me but I think that as the situation stabilises, many have and will come to appreciate that a professional taxi driver offers a service that is unparalleled — and that cost isn’t everything.



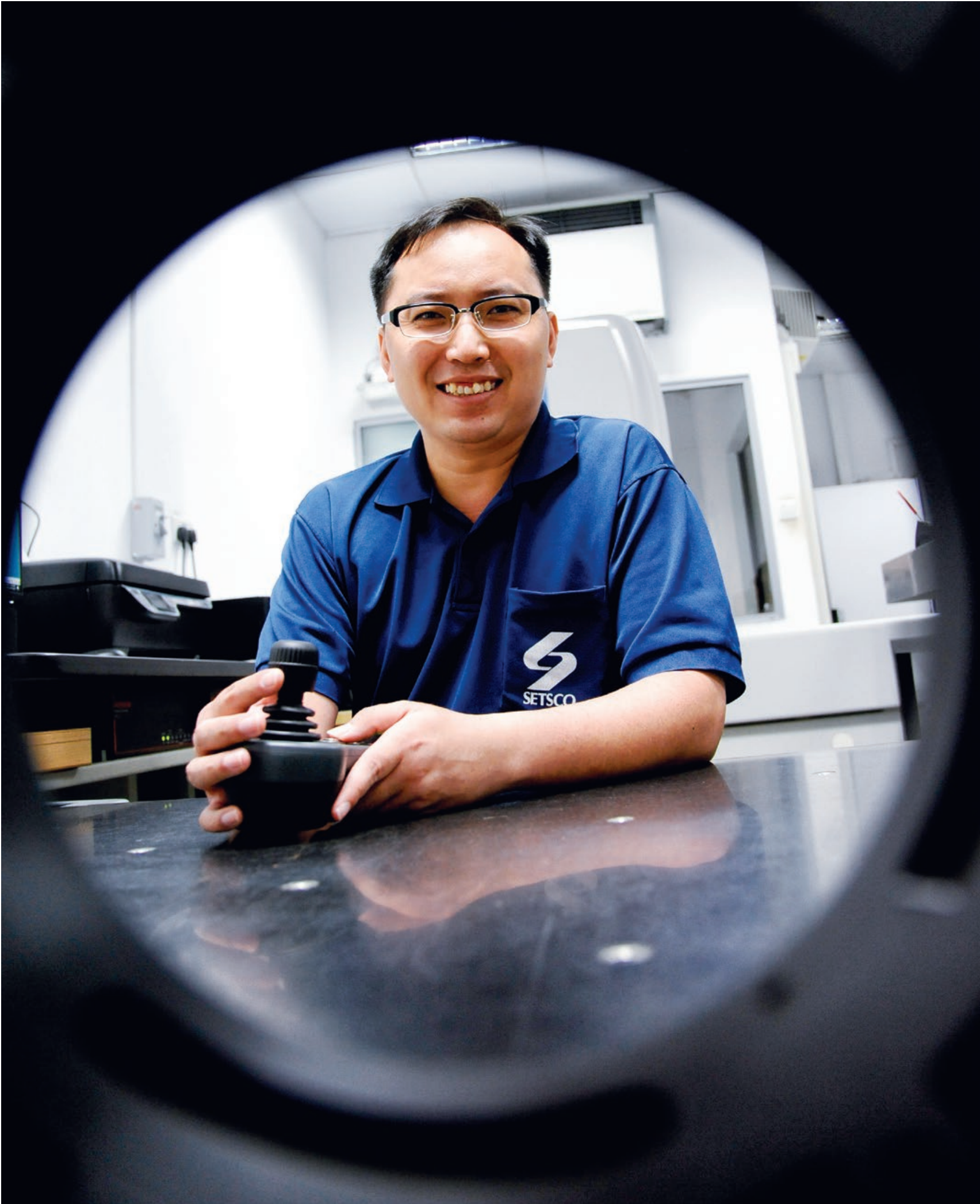
I like to treat every journey as if I were the customer trying to get somewhere.

John

MR JOHN BUTLER

Computer Cab

Mr John Butler, 45, earned his qualification to drive a black London cab in 1997. He joined Computer Cab soon after.



THE LOVE OF PRECISION



MR STEVEN TEU CIHUA

Assistant Engineer, Mechanical & Metallurgical Technology Division, SETSCO

MR STEVEN TEU CIHUA, aged 36, is a very precise man — with a margin of error no larger than a tenth of a hair's thickness.

It is his job, but over time, he has made it part of himself. He remembers each course he has attended since he joined the Company in 2011, refers to each piece of machinery by its full name (“the universal length machine” and the “dial gauge calibrator”) and once spent more than two hours polishing a work table to a perfect flatness.

“Anyone can go for a course, but you make it part of your eye, your hand, the way you think — that’s what makes a difference,” he said.

What I do will affect the lives of hundreds of people on each flight.

Steven works for a part of ComfortDelGro that is not often in the public eye but whose work is no less important than some of its more “popular” sister companies. In fact, look around you and chances are that you might have come in

contact with something that Setsco Services (SETSCO) had tested or inspected, in part or whole.

From food stuff to clothing, glass walls to brick walls, SETSCO has done it all. In fact, the test and inspection centre has been providing services such as testing, calibration and inspection of high precision and engineering parts for the aerospace, building and construction, electronics, oil and gas, pharmaceutical and petrochemical industries for more than 30 years.

Accredited by the Singapore Accreditation Council under its Singapore Laboratory Accreditation Scheme, SETSCO is one of Singapore’s largest specialist test centres. It was acquired by ComfortDelGro through its listed subsidiary, VICOM, in January 2003.

As an assistant engineer in the Calibration Department, Steven’s work lies in certifying the dimensional measurement of parts and components. They can be big parts or small components. Regardless of the size, they are all important.

He recently performed a dimensional measurement on

an airplane part worth tens of thousands of dollars.

“It’s a very small part, no one on the plane would see it, but dimensional measurement work is like that, secret, hidden, but quite important and useful,” he said.

That is the pressure but also the thrill of his work — to see how each part, no matter how small, contributes to the smooth working of the whole.

“What I do will affect the lives of hundreds of people on each flight. There is no room for error.” The value of his work, he says, lies in the lives of the people who rely on the small but vital component holding up against the strongest of tests.

With so much riding on passing the quality tests, are there customers who pressurise him to pass the components and parts of machines when sending them for inspections?

“Of course, everyone wants their parts or components to pass. But I have to tell them — the value of this certificate is that people must trust it — if you cut corners, close one eye, what is the point? All it takes is one failure, and your name is gone,” he said.

CALM UNDER PRESSURE

IN THE POLICE FORCE, ONE IS TAUGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING CALM, COLLECTED AND COMPOSED DURING A CRISIS.

These lifelong skills certainly came in handy one cold morning in March 2012, when North East Line (NEL) Operations Control Centre (OCC) Senior Manager, Ms Chan Yoke Foon, was in the midst of her shift.

“It was past 4am and there was a power trip between HarbourFront and Outram stations. We couldn’t get it back up so one of the guys set out on foot to do a manual check.

“A short way into the tunnel, he saw smoke. I told him to stop at once and turn back. I immediately activated the Singapore Civil Defence Force,” she recalled.

Yoke Foon, who had seen six years of tough police operations, also at the operations command centre, remained calm and collected. She had learnt the art of making rational, cool decisions in the heat of complex operations.

“When I joined the Company, I had no idea about driverless trains, or railway operations. But even under very heavy pressure, I knew how to work through information, how to weigh pros and cons, I knew how to decide,” says Yoke Foon.

So that fateful morning, she applied the same cool procedures.

She decided she had to stop trains from running between HarbourFront and Dhoby Ghaut stations, rang the Head of Department for Traffic who then got permission from the Chief Executive Officer to activate the bridging buses. These were the buses to ferry commuters between the affected stations.

By 5am, the tunnels had been swept, the lack of connectivity determined, and buses on standby to roll out if train services were not up by 5.42am.

“I knew by then that there was no fire, despite the smoke, but there

was no way the trains were going to run,” says Ms Chan.

And as the buses rolled out, the investigators worked feverishly to find out what was wrong. It was eventually learnt that a stainless steel U-shaped bolt holding the cantilever arm of the overhead power cables had snapped, causing the power wires to bend out of alignment.

When Yoke Foon joined SBS Transit 16 years ago, she was the only female Traffic Controller. Today, she remains the only female Chief Controller in the NEL OCC. “I work well with colleagues and have never been made to feel that gender was a hindrance in the railway industry, even though it may be male-dominated,” she says.

Working in the high pressure and complex operational nerve centre may seem a strange choice for an English graduate who loves Jane Austen, (and still watches Downton Abbey) but for Ms Chan, it was a happy accident.

“Initially it was the attraction of the stability of a big local transport player, but I grew with the Company. Over time, I found that its philosophy was in line with my own workstyle and personality,” she says.

Nowadays, Yoke Foon also spends her time inspiring and mentoring staff in the control room.

“The demands of the job are high, we are running 33 trains, and close to 40km both bounds. In the meantime, young people are talking about ‘work life balance’ after 10 months of work. So it is a matter of mentoring them, making adjustments and helping them see the meaning of what we do,” she says.



Even under very heavy pressure,
I knew how to work through
information, how to weigh pros
and cons, I knew how to decide.

Yoke Foon

MS CHAN YOKE FOON

Senior Manager, NEL OCC, SBS Transit



THREE MEN AND THEIR BABIES

THE YEAR OF THE ROOSTER BEGAN A FEW MONTHS EARLY FOR AH SIANG, WILLY AND ANSON.

These three men, with more than six decades of experience between them, are behind some of the most iconic advertising structures in Singapore. From the delicate filigree of a Peranakan shoe, to the clever visual wink of a beer bottle delivering a drink to a bus commuter, these prop artists have assembled a dazzling array of installations.

So when they were asked at the end of 2016, to produce a giant rooster, the height of two men, with the realistic touch and feel of feathers, they immediately asked themselves: “How can we work together?”

Because, although all three of them bear the same title — “prop artist and illustrator”, each has a special skill.

Mr Simon Lim See Siang, or Ah Siang, 49, the oldest and most experienced, is the Engineer. He has been doing sculpting and outdoor installations for 30 years.

“I am the one who designs the structure in my head, how it should stand, what materials work best to hold it up. So, I can build a rough outline and tell the team how to move forward.”

Mr Anson Cheah, 44, who has a diploma in Commercial Art and Graphic Design, is the Artist.

“I think of the curves, the colour and the texture. For this project, I stared at the rooster’s jowl for a long time, wondering how to get it to look hard, yet life-like.” He has 13 years behind him.

Mr Willy Chai Wee Meng, 43, who worked as a carpenter, is the Chemist. “For more than 20 years, I’ve worked with all kinds of materials — putty, chemicals, moulds, anything you have in mind, I can make it. I am also the problem-solver — whenever we are stuck, I always have something new to try.”

All three joined the Company as technicians in 2007, when Ah Siang first made the move. Within months, he gave a call to both Anson and Willy, telling them this was a place where the three of them could grow.

MR WILLY CHAI WEE MENG (LEFT)

Prop Artist/Illustrator, Moove Media

MR ANSON CHEAH (MIDDLE)

Prop Artist/Illustrator, Moove Media

MR SIMON LIM SEE SIANG (RIGHT)

Chief Prop Artist/Illustrator, Moove Media

Ten years ago, he said, the giant rooster would have been a straightforward project — carved out of styrofoam, some basic support structures, and a few coats of paint.

about S\$1,000 and took the team 20 days to complete — just in time to form the centrepiece of ComfortDelGro's Chinese New Year celebrations.

“Surprisingly, it turned out to be very hardy, and everyone liked it so much that we kept it,” said Anson, standing next to the rooster which has a home in Moove's office.

LET THE BEER FLOW

Given the larger-than-life nature of these installations, the sheer weight of some of their projects becomes a challenge. Once, they had to make a beer bottle that weighed 60kg!

“We sketched it, got it passed by a professional engineer, and then worked to build it,” recalls Willy who took the lead in the project. “We also had to get approval from the Land Transport Authority, because it stuck out from the top of the bus.”

Over the years, all three have obtained different specialised-skills certificates, including courses that allow them to “work-at-height”, for risk management as well as for metal scaffold erections.

Sometimes, the project does not require specific skills, but just fresh ideas.

Willy recalls the beer advertisement, which was visually strong and which he thought would require a lot of Anson's artistic skills.

“But in the end, there was not much painting in this project

Moove Media, the advertising arm of ComfortDelGro, was established in 2005 when Comfort Ads and SBS Transit Advertising combined in a merger. Today, Moove finds its canvas across 30 cities in seven countries, with special expertise in outdoor advertising.

Today however, expectations are higher. They pored over the skeletal structure of a rooster, and colours and types of different chickens and their postures. In the end, they decided to make the comb and jowl from recycled PVC, and to construct the body as a hollow mesh held up by thin wooden slits — but it was the feathers that confounded the team.

Willy tried painting them on, but the team felt it was not sufficiently “three-dimensional”. Anson tried carving it from different materials, including a polymer of Willy's making, but it was not “life-like enough”.

In the end, they opted for a simple solution — buy large feathers off the Internet, trim them and slice them before affixing these onto the body. It was a simple and cheap solution — especially since the rooster was meant to be a temporary installation. In all, the cost was



**“Anything out of the ordinary
that you see on a bus, train or
taxi — that’s probably us.”**

Mr Simon Lim See Siang, Chief Prop Artist/Illustrator, Moove Media



The trio sees their strength as consisting of their unique skill sets, their ability to work well together, and their desire to push the boundaries of their craft.

— it's all printed and pasted. The art is to make people, who look at this advertisement, see the beer flowing, the effect of the froth and beer coming out," he said. Much of this was accomplished by spray-painting and airbrushing, including the droplets of water condensation.

Anson, who had cast the mould for the fibreglass bottles, called the finished product "little pieces of art". "So, I was very sad that in the end, we had to take them off, and recycle them."

He accepts this as part of the ephemeral nature of his work. "Advertising means we make an impact, but only for a short time," said Anson who won the first prize of a sculpting competition in Malaysia in 2015.

"We try to enjoy each piece as much as possible while it lasts," he said.

IF THE SHOE FITS

The largest labour of love, he said, was a pair of shoes. "You won't believe it — but just one shoe took a month to make. Luckily, they wanted only one pair!" he said. Ah Siang added laughing, "So many small details we nearly went blind!"

The clients were experts in embroidery and beadwork. The project was to build a large pair of Peranakan shoes, otherwise known as *kasut manek*, for an exhibition of nyonya needlework, at the museum.

This time, the project required all of Anson's skill in the arts.

"We only had a photo to work with, no idea what the materials felt like, or their three-dimensional look — for example, there was a tassel that we think was made of silk, but we couldn't use that for the display, which was to be mounted on the top of a bus. So, we had to count on Anson to create the illusion," said Ah Siang.

The challenge was to make a giant, weather-proof shoe that reflected the delicate look and feel of silk shoes and gold threads. So the team used metal plates, foam balls, plaster — and lots of imagination. The beads were made of styrofoam, the folds of the cloth were mere tricks of light and shadow, and the embroidery was mesh and netting.

The trio sees their strength as consisting of their unique skill sets, their ability to work well together, and their desire to push the boundaries of their craft.

"We see new materials, new demands from clients all the time. We learn from each other, and we learn from seeing how things work. Most of all, we learn from the clients pushing the boundaries of advertising."

"Anything out of the ordinary that you see on a bus, train or taxi — that's probably us," Ah Siang beamed.

MANAGEMENT IS A SKILL

IN THE 23 YEARS THAT I'VE BEEN WITH COMFORTDELGRO, I'VE SEEN IT ALL. Cut throat competition, changes in regulation, rising consumer expectations and an evolving workforce.

Amidst all these changes, the most significant must surely be the advent of new technologies which has transformed the entire way the industry operates.

New technologies require new responses — in Jilin, the Company itself has radically restructured from a traditional “pyramid” organisational structure to a flat one, which improved our efficiency and market competitiveness.

With advances in artificial intelligence, my job will also transform from a traditional enterprise manager to a modern one. New technologies bring new opportunities.

For example, with the growing reliance on ride-hailing services, we translated Singapore's

ComfortDelGro Taxi Booking App into Chinese. As a result, commuters can now make hassle-free bookings on the app.

I see my job as making systems work with people. A corporate organisation is a living organism — you need to be sure that it has a good relationship with the local environment, including the government, other taxi companies, and the consumers.

Management is a skill. Like any other, it can be improved and learned. Part of my training involved obtaining the 'General Manager Certificate' for large and medium transportation companies in Shenzhen City.

I learned how to fully combine ComfortDelGro's taxi operation philosophy in Singapore with actual taxi market conditions in China. In Jilin, I was able to expand the operations of the Company, turning it from a loss-making unit into a profit centre.

Today, it is the largest taxi company in Jilin City.



I see my job as making
systems work with people.

Ni Peng

MR NI XI PENG

General Manager, Jilin ComfortDelGro Taxi

Mr Ni Xi Peng, 66, has given over two decades of his life to ComfortDelGro, making him the longest serving staff in the North China Business Unit.



FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO HOUGANG



MR DANIEL JACOBUS ELLIS

Bus Captain, SBS Transit

Bus Captain Daniel Jacobus Ellis, originally from South Africa, has been driving for SBS Transit since April 2017.

“GOEIE MORE” IS SOMETHING YOU ARE MORE LIKELY TO HEAR IN PRETORIA RATHER THAN PUNGGOL.

The phrase (pronounced “ho-yah mo-rā”) means “good morning” in Afrikaans, but Singaporeans hopping on bus service 27 might hear a cheery “goeie more” from SBS Transit Bus Captain (BC) Daniel Jacobus Ellis.

We believe that strength comes from having a diverse workforce and we are working hard to ensure that our hiring processes are fair and meritocratic.

The 34-year-old, who is originally from South Africa, has been driving for SBS Transit since April 2017.

BC Ellis had been working as a freelance business analyst but wanted a steady job. “I saw an advertisement at the LRT station advertising positions for bus captains, and I thought to myself, ‘Why not give it a try?’” he said.

Commuters on bus service 27, which is a loop service that starts in Hougang Central and runs through Punggol, Sengkang and Changi Airport before heading back to Hougang Bus Interchange, say that BC Ellis, who is now a Singapore citizen, is polite and courteous.

It may seem a little unusual to see a Caucasian bus captain in Singapore, but mixed nationalities are actually part

and parcel of our entire Group. With operations in seven countries, we employ a broad mix of nationalities. Of our 22,000 staff, Singaporeans account for 28 per cent, Malaysians 21 per cent, British citizens 14 per cent, and Australians and Chinese, 10 per cent each.

We believe that strength comes from having a diverse workforce and we are working hard to ensure that our hiring processes are fair and meritocratic. And while 86 per cent of our employees are men because driving heavy vehicles has historically been a male domain, this is fast changing. Thanks to the advent of technology, brute strength is not as important anymore and the proportion of women in the workforce has been increasing over the years.

ONE UNITED TEAM

SINCE I WAS A LITTLE BOY WATCHING MY FATHER WORKING ON HIS OLD CARS, I've always been trying to work out what was wrong with cars if they weren't running smoothly. I was sort of an (unpaid) apprentice to my father, who wanted me to become a mechanic.

This childhood dream carried me through to becoming an Apprentice Mechanic with ComfortDelGro Corporation Australia (CDC). I later obtained my Diesel Mechanic qualifications while on the job. I rose through the ranks, becoming a mechanic, then the second-in-charge for the Oakleigh site, and then Foreman.

That workshop at the old Oakleigh Depot was affectionately known as 'The Dungeon', a small space with

minimal natural light. In 2012, I oversaw the relocation of the workshop and worked hard to ensure that physical assets were moved and a new workshop established from scratch, without a reduction in the quality of maintenance services.

Moving to the new depot was a great experience, with more space and light, and overall, a great feel to it. The move itself wasn't too much of a challenge but right after it, we took over operations of another route service and had to integrate the new and existing teams — in addition to getting used to a completely different fleet.

I worked to integrate the work of the two teams, and also became proficient in maintaining vehicles with a

different drive line. My guiding principle is to focus on outcomes and I rolled up my sleeves and worked hard next to my colleagues to get the job done.

In late 2017, I moved into the newly created role of Workshop Manager for our brand new Wyndham Depot, where the maintenance team is twice the size of Oakleigh's. I'm very excited about moving to the new depot. The plans for the workshop have been thoughtfully considered, and this depot is a special place, built for purpose.

I'm looking forward to working with members of the maintenance team that I had worked with so many years ago, and bringing together the two depots and creating one united team.



My guiding principle is to focus on outcomes and to roll up my sleeves and work hard next to my colleagues to get the job done.

Atik

MR ABDUL ATIK

Workshop Manager, Wyndham Depot

Mr Abdul Atik, 41, has been with CDC Victoria for over 20 years and he is now the Workshop Manager at Wyndham Depot. CDC Victoria provides essential bus transport across the western and eastern suburbs of Melbourne.



PLANNING AND STRATEGISING



MS HENG TIA SEE

Senior Manager, Fleet Operations, ComfortDelGro Taxi

Ms Heng Tia See, 57, joined the Company as a clerk with just an 'O' Level certificate in 1985. Today, she is Senior Manager, Fleet Operations, at ComfortDelGro Taxi responsible for planning and strategising the expansion of the operating fleet.

WHEN I JOINED THE COMPANY,

I had no background in operations and I was put to doing clerical work. In those days, everything was pen and paper, so I had a lot to learn with not much time.

As the industry transforms, with the advent of new technologies — this focus on people is something that I hope will never change.

In this industry, you can never stand still, things are always moving. Thanks to the

guidance of my supervisors and colleagues, I was able to do well in my different roles and progress in my career.

I learnt how to deal with customers and about delivering service quality — this helped me deal with hirers and external parties like the Land Transport Authority, Traffic Police, Housing and Development Board and Urban Redevelopment Authority. As I gained more responsibility, I also attended courses to learn to interpret data and work with figures.

In addition, I learned about business continuity management, enterprise risk management and internal auditing. This was not just book-

learning for me as over the course of my career, I have been through major changes including the merger.

I have been with the Company for most of my life, and witnessed its growth over the years. I see my job as fulfilling two main tasks. First, I monitor the portion of the fleet that is not hired to ensure that overall taxi revenue can be maximised. At the same time, I take care of the welfare of the cabbies.

That's always been true from the first day I joined the Company — and even as the industry transforms, with the advent of new technologies — this focus on people is something that I hope will never change.



THE HUMAN TOUCH

WHEN MR MOHAMED JEFFRY BIN RABARDI JOINED ComfortDelGro Rent-A-Car at the tender age of 23, he was painfully shy, with no special skills to speak of.

He did, however, have a driving licence and a whole lot of enthusiasm. As it turns out, that was all that was needed to get him started on a career which has now entered its 14th year.

“Before I joined the Company, I was a despatch driver for a brief period. How different could it be? I thought it was just delivering cars to different people. But I was wrong! It is about delivering a service, the car is just something that you rely on to make a difference in service,” he says.

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Jeffrey". The signature is stylized and cursive.

MR MOHAMED JEFFRY BIN RABARDI
Team Leader, Operations, ComfortDelGro Rent-A-Car



In the future, there will be automated cars, but never automated people — and it is dealing with people that makes my job special.

The test was to come — just a couple of months into the job.

He delivered a car to a customer who was very unhappy with it. Young Jeffry could not appease the customer so he called his supervisor on his week-old handphone.

A few minutes went by and the customer was clearly unhappy. Before he knew what was going on, the man flung Jeffry's handphone on the floor.

Jeffry's heart broke just as the handphone screen became smithereens.

"What could I do? I was very angry but I told myself to stay calm, don't react," he recalled. In the end the Company sent his handphone for repair and paid for it.

This is a story that he tells to newcomers to the Company, as part of his work as a trainer and a Team Leader. The message? "Always remain calm, no matter how bad the situation gets. You represent the Company and its reputation so make sure you hold your head up high."

Jeffry, who is now 37, is no longer the young, inexperienced rookie.

"I would never have thought, shy, awkward me, a trainer!" says Jeffry, laughing. Now a father of one, he has come a long way, learning computer skills, effective communication as well as more technical skills such as defensive driving.

The last is an essential skill for someone who is on the road sometimes, five to six hours a day. The car he trained in is like a hedgehog — full of mounted cameras to catch the slightest mistake.

"I always thought I was a very careful driver but I only had 14 points on my first try at the defensive driving test! You need 18 to pass," he said, almost embarrassed.

As professional drivers, defensive driving is a key skill and one that Jeffry makes sure he is always honing. "For other people, it may be just a way to get around. For us, it's our job so we better know how to drive extra well, to take extra care."

He also goes the extra mile by taking basic classes in car repair — not that he would ever need to repair cars but so that he can answer questions better. "Sometimes I get questions like — why is there this noise? What part of the car is being repaired?" He likes to know enough about the internals of a car to answer these questions. But sometimes, even such technical knowledge is not enough, like the day he received a call from a lady who just returned a car.

"She called me and said she wanted her 10 CDs from the player. I know this car very well — there is a rotation of only six CDs that you can store, but the lady said she has been driving that car for four years, there were always 10 CDs!"

So he sent the car to the workshop — which found only six CDs.

"She kept asking — 'Where are my 10 CDS?'. And I wanted to tell her: 'How can you get 10 CDs out of a six CD rack?' But I kept my cool. In the end, her husband explained to her — 'There has always been just six CDs'. And I laughed."

He sees his work as being with people, not automobiles.

"In the future, there will be automated cars, but never automated people — and it is dealing with people that makes my job special," he says.

GOING THE DISTANCE

I JOINED THE COMPANY IN 2001 WHEN WE SOLD TICKETS MANUALLY. Now we sell tickets online and use WeChat for payments. We even send out e-invoices to customers who purchase their tickets via WeChat, a first in the industry.

Thanks to automation and technology, productivity at the bus station has really improved and things have become more convenient for passengers too.

As a manager in the Finance Department, I help to manage the Company's assets, control the budget and carry out supervised checks. It's my job

to ensure that the financial data is accurate. That, together with good data analysis, means we can ensure good corporate governance, lower production costs, increase profits and improve efficiency.

Tianhe is the starting point for long journeys — we know the importance of going the distance. Technology and artificial intelligence keep improving, but you will always need the expertise of a finance manager to analyse figures and make appropriate recommendations. I, too, will keep improving — it is the human spirit that goes the distance.



I, too, will keep improving —
it is the human spirit that
goes the distance.

Liu Ying

MS LIU YING

Senior Supervisor Finance, Guangzhou Xin Tian Wei Transportation Development Co, Ltd

Ms Liu Ying, 42, is a Senior Supervisor in the Finance Department of Guangzhou Xin Tian Wei Transportation Development Co., Ltd, which manages the Tianhe Bus Station, that serves long-distance buses in Guangzhou. In 2016, some 12.2 million passengers transited there.



THE BASICS

Martin

MR MARTIN TOMKINS

Level 3 Engineer, Metroline

Mr Martin Tomkins (right), 60, is a Level 3 Engineer at Metroline's Central Engineering and Logistics Facility. Metroline is the second largest public bus operator in London and has more than 1,700 buses operating out of 14 garages in north west London.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN MECHANICAL THINGS.

I used to work on and race motorcycles at trials when I was 11 years old, at school. I still build my own motorcycles from scratch. I build them for racing and pleasure, and for other people to ride.

I love the engineering behind the machines.

After completing my 'O' levels at school, I went on to do an engineering apprenticeship in 1974 and qualified at Paddington Technical College after five



For me, engineering is about problem-solving. The industry in general, and buses specifically, have gone from very basic machines to sophisticated, technical and innovative engines. Sometimes the solution itself can be very complex, other times it might need you to craft a steel bar and use a lump of wood, but using the basics, being creative and hands-on has always helped.

years. As an apprentice, I worked and studied under the last steam locomotive engineers in the industry.

I also studied under Royal Air Force (RAF) engine fitters who served during the Second World War keeping the fighter planes battle ready. When I retire, I hope to volunteer and work on historic RAF war planes.

Interestingly, as a first-year apprentice back in 1974, we never touched or went near a bus the whole year. Instead we worked the milling machines, lathes, surface grinders, shapers and learned welding; it was very hands-on, learning how to make things, learning the skills needed before touching a bus. If we didn't have the tool we needed, we were able to make it.

This mindset taught us to be creative, to look for solutions, and it gave me skills that have been invaluable throughout my career. To this day, we might be faced with a significant challenge, but with these skills and mindset, we can diagnose and solve the problem, keeping the fleet moving.

For me, engineering is about problem-solving. The industry in general, and buses specifically, have gone from very basic

machines to sophisticated, technical and innovative engines. Sometimes the solution itself can be very complex, other times it might need you to craft a steel bar and use a lump of wood, but using the basics, being creative and hands-on, has always helped.

Over the years, I've completed numerous manufacturer-approved training, Ministry of Transport training and a number of specific, tailor-made Metroline training courses.

Day-to-day, I carry out a wide range of engineering repairs. My job also includes vehicle inspection, fault rectification, and giving advice and technical guidance to colleagues and engineering apprentices.

As I am getting older and have more experience, a large focus is passing on my knowledge to those learning the trade and developing their careers.

You have to be willing to work hard to understand the changes we are facing in this industry and approach challenges with a learning mind. You never stop learning. Always be prepared to evolve with developments, but never lose sight of the basics and common sense.