

# Going beyond the surface

TAK Products & Services uses the Business Excellence framework to cement its role in the global building materials market

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TAK Products & Services chairman and managing director Andrew Tan believes that the company's customer-first approach and continuous learning culture have allowed it to secure Singapore Quality Class certification.  
PHOTO: TAK PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Hard Rock Hotel Singapore, Duo Residences, Hai Di Lao restaurants. If you are familiar with any of these residential and commercial spaces, then chances are that you would probably have come across the products of Singapore born-and-bred brand Lamitak, one of the wholly owned brands of TAK Products & Services.

The lifestyle surfaces company, established in 1989, is a key player in the region, with three wholly owned brands in the high-pressure laminates market: Lamitak, artäk and Newedge.

Lamitak, in particular, is a familiar name with architects, interior designers and property developers in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, China, and Hong Kong. It designs

and produces some of the most innovative surface materials that boast the latest colours, textures and finishes that mimic natural materials to create new interior design possibilities.

You will find Lamitak products on built-in furniture and interior surfaces in some of the region's luxury residences Aria KLCC, The Bangkok Thonglor in Bangkok's hippest neighbourhood, and One Oasis in Macau China as well as across showrooms and retail shops of familiar names such as Mercedes Benz, Mazda, Pedro and Skechers.

To keep ahead of market competition, the Singapore-headquartered company embarked on a Business Excellence (BE) assessment to align its management processes to international standards.

### **Striving for excellence**

Launched in 1994 by Enterprise Singapore, the BE framework provides organisations with a roadmap to align their strategies and goals to their objectives for sustainable performance. The framework includes an assessment process where companies go through an evaluation to understand their strengths and identify areas for improvement. It further supports companies' efforts to improve their processes and systems through certifications and awards.

As a testimony to outstanding robust business fundamentals and standards for good business performance, TAK attained the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) Certification last December.

TAK chairman and managing director Andrew Tan says that the company applied for the SQC certification because it wanted to review its management standards and standard operating procedures.

He adds, "With the systematic and structured method of assessment of the BE framework, we think that it can guide TAK to perform at world-class levels. We also want to enhance competitiveness and improve our overall organisational procedures."

Mr Tan believes that the company's customer-first approach, continuous learning culture and strong leaders have allowed it to secure SQC certification. For instance, TAK's customer service has shifted from transactional to inspirational with its carefully crafted narrative on product designs to capture customers' imagination.

At the same time, the practice of continuous improvements, process refinements, and staff engagement and coaching sessions allow the company to cultivate an approachable and progressive organisational structure.

### **New initiatives**

Since receiving its SQC certification, TAK has launched several new initiatives. These include the adoption of the SERVQUAL Model, a method that measures a broader perspective of

service — far beyond simple customer service. It measures five service factors that meet customers' needs, namely reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness.

By focusing on service quality, the company hopes to strengthen its business goals so that it can gain recognition locally and internationally.

Another initiative that the company has rolled out is the ongoing Behaviour Charter workshop that encourages employees to identify positive behaviours and reject negative behaviours at the workplace.

During the workshop, staff draw out examples from their experiences and share them across departments. Through these sessions, the company has been able to create a set of ground rules to guide employees on how they can improve interaction, communication and collaboration with one another to create a more enjoyable work environment and, ultimately, improve their service to customers. This initiative will also be carried out in TAK's regional offices so that staff there will be able to benefit from this Business Excellence journey.

### **Anticipating the future**

According to Mr Tan, everyone in the organisation plays a pivotal role in leading the company down the path of business excellence.

"A vision with an actionable plan communicated to every team member, encouraging innovation, driving new ideas and embracing C.N.E.I. (Constant Never-ending Improvement) will bring the organisation closer to our corporate vision," he says.

Internalising a culture of business excellence is crucial for the company as it operates several offices in the region, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, China and Hong Kong. Now that TAK has attained the SQC certification, Mr Tan says that the next step is to harness this momentum to close the assessment gaps and embark on achieving the Singapore Quality Award.

The pinnacle award for businesses recognises organisations with outstanding management capabilities and world-class performance standards using the BE framework.

Learn more about TAK Products and Services at [tak.com.sg](http://tak.com.sg), [www.lamitak.com](http://www.lamitak.com), [www.artak.com](http://www.artak.com)