



EMAS Bulletin May/June

In the month of April, we had a very busy schedule packed to the gills with exciting events, and as such, we would like to apologize for the lack of a dedicated bulletin for the month of April. However, this means that all members will get a bumper update from both April and May in this month's June bulletin!

To kick off the update, the month of April was eventful for EMAS as we embarked on a trade mission to Hong Kong, from 25th to 27th April. The delegation met with the Hong Kong counterparts, Environmental Contractors Management Association (ECMA) and Hong Kong Pest Management Association (HKPMA). There was much understanding gained for participants who went, in their engagement and dialogue with industry players in Hong Kong, especially since there are many similarities between our local marketplace and Hong Kong's. These include:

1. Shortage of workers in Hong Kong
2. Facing ageing population like Singapore

However their labour situation differs in that:

1. There is a minimum wage but salaries are paid above minimum wage on account of demand and supply. Minimum wage is HKD28 per hour, but in town, salaries are already at HKD33 per hour.
2. No foreign workers are allowed in the industry. The industry is able to operate smoothly and meet client demands without the deployment of foreign workers.
3. No certification or licensing and no formalized training for pest control or cleaning.
4. However, companies do still send staff for training and there are subsidies for such training. This is done namely for staff retention and also dependent on the organizational culture and the type of client it is rendering service to.

During the trip, participants had a chance to understand how service operators there run their operations. There were many opportunities to learn from how the large market players there manage their operations. Key observations include:

1. Buildings are graded by grade A, B, C. This is represented by the type of tenant, finishing, and level of hygiene. For grade A buildings, they must have extensive track record so that assurances are granted based on this. It is seen as an understood norm that costs and level of expertise will be higher to maintain the value and prestige of the building. For instance, external glass cleaning is typically monthly for grade A buildings.
 2. A briefing was conducted Dr Ellen Chan from the Environment Protection Department on how Hongkong manages her waste issues.
 3. Those attended understood the recycling efforts and the participatory manner at which this is done with the private and the general public.
 4. Food And Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) shared their national rodent program that they govern and they use various statistical tools to monitor rodent population levels. This includes a computation based on bait consumption, burrows etc.
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5. FEHD also briefed the delegation on how portable toilets are utilized in Hong Kong.

Another area of interest for participants, was the issue of fair contracts and how this is managed between the service operators and buyers of services. To this end, we managed to speak with Mr Felix Chan (Jones Lang Lasalle), who was managing the Bank of America Tower, and he shared that long term relationships are based on fair contracts. There is a need to ensure that service providers and buyers operate as partners and he needs to look after his contractors as their survival and success will also reflect on his company's capability at the end of the day. We also found that:

1. Contracts generally focus on areas of specialization rather than all inclusive contracts.
2. In the event of policy change, contracts typically allow for this arbitration with the client to take place. Usually the client can terminate in 1 month if negotiations are not met and the service provider can terminate in 3 months in such situations.

Next, EMAS members got the opportunity to kick back and relax over a variety of wine earlier this month. On the 18th of May, EMAS worked with 3M and STVE to organize a Wine Appreciation and Networking Session. The session was attended by 30 participants from 20 companies. They learnt about the vehicle leasing services that STVE is providing and also the products and services that 3M is providing to the market. NEA also shared with the attendees of the "Enhanced Accreditation Scheme". The session ended with a Wine appreciation session, where the attendees learnt about the different types of wines available and tasted 3 types of wine – Red, White and Sparkling. This session was well received and with the good response, EMAS hopes to organize more of such similar sessions, where business meets pleasure.

That's the update for April and May, and as we pass the halfway mark for 2012, EMAS hopes all members will continue to support the association with your enthusiastic participation in events, and efforts at recruiting more industry players to the fold. With our collective strength, more change can be effected to the benefit of our industry.

