

Scanner saves time, shows what's possible when rivals team up

November 29, 2016



WAF director of strategic partnerships Celine Sim, Mr Chan (centre) and Mr Teo looking at a demonstration of a model produced by the 3D-Scan Visualiser, which was launched yesterday. ST PHOTO: LAU FOOK KONG

But there were never enough site supervisors to take the measurements of each place and get the quotations done in a day, said chief executive Chan Chong Beng.

Spurred to find a solution, he came up with the idea of a handheld scanner that can measure rooms and generate 3D models of the place suitably furnished - all done in an hour, instead of five hours, for a regular flat.

The device was launched yesterday at a forum for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to learn to be more lean and productive.

Mr Chan said it took a year to develop the software for the 3D-Scan Visualiser after discussions with other SMEs in the interior design industry, including rival companies.

"If the industry can upgrade and be more productive, it will benefit everyone in the long run," he told The Straits Times at the second Lean Enterprise Development (LED)

Forum. It was organised by the Workforce Advancement Federation (WAF) and statutory board Workforce Singapore.

Mr Chan is also chairman of the WAF, which worked with technology start-up Aviation Virtual to develop the software. WAF is a non-profit body that helps SMEs improve their business.

Another device unveiled at the forum is technology company HTC's virtual reality system HTC Vive, previously unavailable in Singapore. When combined with the scanner, it can help produce a virtual reality view of the interiors.

Collaboration is key for small businesses intent on innovating, Minister of State for Manpower Teo Ser Luck said in his speech to about 200 SME bosses at the event.

Childcare centres and Indian restaurants are among the SMEs that have teamed up to simplify processes, he added.

Mr Teo urged SMEs to explore ways to improve their business amid the economic slowdown and said innovations will also raise job quality and make their industries more attractive to workers.

Mr Chan said 25 SMEs, including those in interior design, construction, and hospitality, have signed up to use the scanner. He hopes to draw in another 75.

The 3D-Scan Visualiser costs about \$4,500 for SMEs, after subsidies from Spring Singapore. It is one of the projects under the LED scheme.

Ms Evelina Hu, design director at interior design consultancy The Plush, said using the scanner has, for example, helped save about 100 hours of work on a good class bungalow. It cuts time taken to take measurements and draw models.

"Clients push us to give quotations and designs fast, and we hope this device will reduce the stress level for our staff," she said, adding that with more time freed up, designers could focus on the creative aspects of projects rather than the tedious drawing of 3D models.

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