



Ms Idah Mariyani, a librarian with the National Library Board (NLB), is among the 16 individuals and organisations to receive the Singapore Service Excellence Medallion (SSEM) award. -- PHOTO: BERITA HARIAN

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SINGAPORE - Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Monday that Singapore has focused on its businesses and workers in the past decade while building a strong service culture.

But in the next decade, Singaporeans must strive to be good customers as well, he added.

PM Lee delivered a strongly-worded reminder in a speech at the 2015 Singapore Service Excellence Medallion awards on Monday night at The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore.

He said: "If the customer treats the service staff like dirt, it makes it much harder to serve with pride and give you good service.

"Just because a person is serving us, does not mean he or she is a servant, or even worse, a slave.

He also delivered a reality check: When it comes to service, Singapore is still not quite where it wants to be yet.

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**Lee Hsien Loong**

about 4 years ago

At my ND Rally ten years ago, I talked about building a strong service culture. Since then we have made progress, despite bad incidents from time to time (e.g. in Sim Lim Square).

At the old Rally, I showed two videos: "Tao gay not enough" and "Tao gay never enough". (You can view the clips here: [bit.ly/1A9MWh3](http://bit.ly/1A9MWh3).) My point was that businesses, workers and customers all have roles to play in creating a good service culture.

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He cited an incident in November 2014, where a mobile phone shop in Sim Lim Square treated a Vietnamese tourist poorly, and reports caused an outrage online.

He added: "Ask any tourist, or even a Singaporean, which country has good service? And I don't think Singapore will come immediately to mind.

He mentioned how he had screened two videos at the National Day Rally 10 years ago.

The first was called "**Tao Gay Not Enough**" - showing a hawker who was rude to customers.

The second video was "**Tao Gay Never Enough**" - showing the same hawker, this time serving a rude customer.

He added that everyone had a role to play on the journey towards a service culture: Both the seller (businesses who are selling and service staff) and the buyer (customers and consumers).

He held Service Excellence Medallion award winner National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) up as an example of an organisation that has those elements.

The centre, part of the Singhealth cluster of healthcare services, focuses not only on treating patients, but also tends to the emotional needs of patients and their families by running programmes, support groups and by connecting them with others in the same situation.

Also highlighted were the efforts of two of the night's Individual Medallion award winners: SMRT chief bus captain D. Suppiramaniam and National Library Board staff Idah Maryiani.

The feeder bus service 913 driver went out of his way to comfort a crying child when he realised she was lost in his bus, and Ms Maryiani went the extra mile by helping a customer print out library articles for her research paper.

A record number of 16 companies and individuals were held up as role models at the award ceremony at The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore.

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