

**SPEECH BY MINISTER JOSEPHINE TEO AT THE  
LAUNCH OF TEMUS'S STEP IT UP PROGRAMME ON 26 JANUARY 2023**

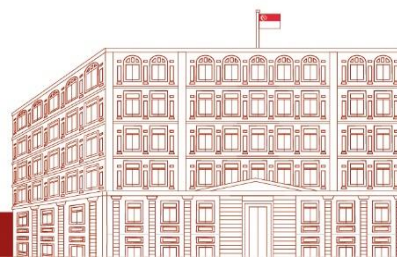
Mr Yeoh Keat Chuan, Chief Executive Officer, Temus

Mr Srijay Ghosh, Chief Revenue Officer, Temus

Distinguished guests

Colleagues and friends

1. A very good morning to all of you. Thank you for inviting me to launch Temus's "Step IT Up" programme.
2. The tech industry has been one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing sectors of our economy in recent years, offering significant career opportunities for Singaporeans. I still recall that Singapore experienced some of the most challenging conditions to our job market amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet during that period, we continued to see many opportunities open up for our people in tech-related job roles. However, recent announcements by several tech giants have raised concerns.
3. Last week, Microsoft and Amazon began cutting a total of 28,000 jobs across the globe, citing slowing sales and possible recession. Alphabet, Meta and Twitter have also announced layoffs, which may impact their Singapore presence. The question, of course, on everyone's minds, is should we be worried about opportunities in tech? Is it foolhardy to continue encouraging our people to look at opportunities in tech?
4. At the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos last week, political and industry leaders I met acknowledged the challenges faced by tech companies today. Geopolitical tensions, the lingering after-effects from the pandemic, over-hiring in the past few years, were just some of the problems highlighted.
5. But there is also recognition that **technology will continue to undergird the growth of our economies**. Take for instance, in the development of the green economy, in the pursuit of sustainable goals, technology is expected to play an increasingly important role. Right-sizing the workforce for these tech companies is a painful exercise, particularly for the affected individuals and their families. But without a more disciplined approach to headcount growth, tech companies risked becoming more bloated and less agile.
6. It's worth noting that besides tech, **other sectors are ramping up their hiring of tech talent**. A brief scan on LinkedIn will show that these sectors include banking, logistics and even accommodation. Many companies – such as those in financial services, hospitality, logistics and retail – that are not considered as particularly tech-driven in the past are also now positioning themselves as tech companies.



7. Tech workers with highly specialised skills continue to be in demand, such as in software development, cloud management, cybersecurity and data science. This comes as no surprise as technology has become a critical part of every industry. It is increasingly relied upon to drive innovation, productivity, and competitiveness.

8. As far as we can observe, Singaporeans remain hopeful of the career opportunities in tech. Intakes of ICT-related courses are still growing. It's not just the size of the intake, but the quality of the people that are choosing to enter these courses. The cut-off points for such courses are sometimes even more stringent than entry into some of the highly sought-after courses.

9. Likewise, over in the Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI) family, we are observing sustained interest in the programmes supported by IMDA. We therefore continue to believe that investing heavily in reskilling and upskilling Singaporeans for career opportunities in tech is not only the right thing to do, but also a significant investment to provide opportunities for Singaporeans. Since its inception in 2016, IMDA's Tech Skills Accelerator, or TeSA, has trained and placed more than 13,000 individuals into good tech jobs. Another 180,000 have been trained in tech skills in emerging areas such as cyber security, artificial intelligence, and data analytics.

10. An important initiative under TeSA is the Company-Led Training programme. It aims to accelerate professional development for fresh and mid-career professionals through on-the-job training. Today, there are about 1,000 openings that companies like Accenture, NCS, and PayPal have committed to fill as part of the CLT programme.

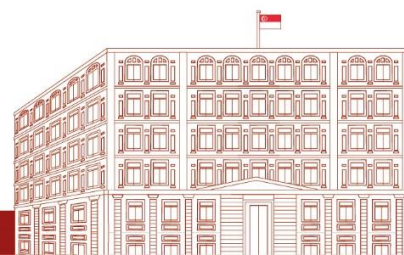
11. We will continue to work with our industry partners to develop these pipelines, tapping on your in-depth understanding of the skills and knowledge required and the trends driving change in the sector.

12. One good example is the "Step IT Up" programme by Temus, which we are launching today. "Step IT Up" is an accelerated talent conversion programme to help more Singaporeans secure roles as technology professionals. The company has committed to help 400 workers in Singapore become software developers over the next 3 years through this programme. Upon graduation from the programme, trainees will be offered full-time employment with Temus.

13. Of particular interest is the fact that Temus's programme targets persons with no background or prior training in computing. One of its criteria, is that applicants must not have any prior experience in tech, either through formal education or work. Instead, applicants will be assessed on non-technical areas like their cognition, reading and linguistics, and personality traits, primarily their tenacity to persevere through a very intense boot camp and persist in the face of challenges.

14. Temus's pilot has shown that such trainees can successfully transit into tech roles when given the right opportunity and training. Take Thaddeus Loei for example. Before joining the programme, Thaddeus was working as a chef, having graduated with a bachelor's degree in F&B Management. Thaddeus always had an interest in tech, which led him to explore coding. One thing led to another, and he eventually signed up for the "Step IT Up" programme.

15. Another example is Melissa Chua, formerly a freelance editor. As many entry-developer jobs required at least a Computer Science degree or 2 years of industry experience, Melissa found it hard to break into the tech sector. Being part of this programme gave Melissa the chance to



develop tech know-how, with the added benefit of being employed in the tech company upon graduation.

16. Given the success of the pilot, I am glad to note that Temus intends to offer its training to other companies. This is as bespoke a train-and-place programme as it gets. It goes directly to the kind of role that the person is intended to perform, and the programme is curated specifically to meet that role. Several organisations from the public and private sectors have already expressed interest to partner with Temus, to expand their pool of tech talent that they can draw on. I commend Temus for taking the initiative to train talent not only for itself, but also for the broader ecosystem.

17. I want to encourage companies who are looking to hire tech talent to consider collaborating with Temus on this programme. These are potentially win-win partnerships that benefit more Singaporeans.

18. With this strong commitment from both the government and industry, I am confident that even with recent headwinds, our tech sector can continue to grow. I wish Temus all the best and for the success of its “Step IT Up” programme.

19. Thank you.

