

## About the OD Practitioner

Mui Yim is currently Director, Corporate Services at Vital. She oversees HR, OD & Learning, Corporate Planning, Corporate Communications and Administration. Mui Yim has been practising OD for 24 years now, both in the public and private sector, including organizations in the US. OD is a lifelong passion. She believes that OD is very important if all organizations want to grow and be strong and aspire to build great work places for their employees.



Photo: Mui Yim (5th from the left) with her HR and ODL teams.

## OD in Action Series: *Chua Mui Yim, Vital* **Reaching out everyday**

by The Institute of Leadership and Organisation Development

### **What does a day at work look like for you?**

I am a self-professed workaholic, so my days start early, at 7am. The good thing is that I love my work. I oversee a diverse portfolio and team in Corporate Services.

Every day, I work with my team to formulate strategies, develop initiatives and implement programmes for Vital and our 480 staff. We talk through various issues, such as implementing our talent programme. I especially enjoy our

small group discussions, as it allows me to understand them and do group mentoring and coaching.

A large part of my job is talking to Vital staff. I look forward to my sessions with them, as I learn a lot and can connect with them and understand ground sentiments. Many of our OD strategies and initiatives, such as our leadership development programmes and the Vital Leaders Creed, have been developed from these sessions. I also feel these sessions help us to build trust with the staff.

### **Please share one of your most memorable experiences of energising staff in their work.**

I have always believed that motivating staff in their work is not a difficult thing if we know what they value most. Many of us are driven by a vision and a purpose, and that's when we do our best work. My most memorable experience was energising our Business Excellence team to formulate a 5-year strategic plan for Vital. At that time, Vital was at the crossroads of change and we really needed to reinvent ourselves.



My team then was very young and inexperienced. We talked a lot about how we wanted to drive the organisation towards achieving excellence. Though we were quite unsure of the path ahead, we were all drawn towards the vision that one day Vital would be a great organisation.

That was 4 years ago and it has been an amazing journey. Vital recently achieved the BE 4-in-1 certification (SQC, People Developer, Innovation Class and Service Class) on our first try and without any external help. We also received many awards along the way, such as the Leading HR Practices Award (HR Communications & Branding) given out by SHRI, so we are very proud of our accomplishments.

### ***What do you find most challenging about employee engagement efforts and why?***

Employee engagement requires paying close attention to the needs of different groups of staff and designing suitable communications. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. In 2010, when we started doing employee engagement more proactively, we discovered that the older and more senior employees enjoy stories and informal chats in groups and activities like dancing, singing, plants and arts and crafts. The younger employees prefer games, digital communications such as emails, individual lunches or tea sessions and programmes to save the Earth. They especially like responsibility and being empowered.

I like to think that employee engagement opportunities are everywhere and embedded in our everyday work life. Going for lunch after a meeting is employee engagement. Visiting a colleague who has just had a baby is employee engagement. So are peer coaching and mentoring sessions, leaders' forums, business meetings, raising funds, celebrating Halloween, giving out awards and a myriad of other daily activities.

### ***What advice would you give to someone who wants to join the OD profession or is new to the field?***

I think you really need to love and believe in people. You also need to believe that the work you do makes a difference to them and builds a conducive workplace. People should look forward to coming to work every day and find meaning and happiness in the workplace. The workplace is more than the physical space we occupy. It is our work community, the relationships with one another, the meaning of our work, and our affinity for the organisation.

An OD practitioner is an idealist and most of all, an optimist. One of the challenges he or she will face is getting support from senior management and partnering them in OD efforts. It takes a lot for an organisation to decide that OD is critical to its growth and development. One has to be patient and opportunistic to influence the leadership, and when the time comes, to seize the opportunity.

### ***What do you do when you are not working?***

I believe in seizing the day, so my motto in life is "Carpe diem quam minimum credula postero", i.e., seize the day, put very little trust in tomorrow. I enjoy living and experiencing all of life. I love nature, the unknown, the unpredictable and people. They energise and comfort me at the same time, so I spend a lot of time outdoors when I can. My interests range from cycling, swimming, hiking, diving, travelling and soccer to reading, music and dance, movies, cooking and spa treatments. I particularly love Hindi music, especially the great songs of Mohamed Rafi and Lata Mangeshkar and their contemporaries. My life is incomplete if a day goes by without thinking of my beloved Arsenal Football Club, of which I am a lifelong fan.

### **Contact us!**

Have any burning questions or feedback about this article or any OD-related topics that you are interested in? Email us at [cscollege\\_ILOD@cscollege.gov.sg](mailto:cscollege_ILOD@cscollege.gov.sg).

