Urban planning in Singapore

British merchants established a trading post in Singapore in the early nineteenth century, and for more than a century trading interests dominated. However, in 1965 the newly independent island state was cut off from its hinterland, and so it set about pursuing a survival strategy. The good international communications it already enjoyed provided a useful base, but it was decided that if Singapore was to secure its economic future, it must develop its industry. To this end, new institutional structures were needed to facilitate, develop, and control foreign investment. One of the most important of these was the Economic Development Board (EDB), an arm of government that developed strategies for attracting investment. Thus from the outset, the Singaporean government was involved in city promotion.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the government realised that, due to limits on both the size of the country's workforce and its land area, its labour- intensive industries were becoming increasingly uncompetitive. So an economic committee was established which concluded that Singapore should focus on developing as a service centre, and seek to attract company headquarters to serveSouth East Asia, and develop tourism, banking, and offshore activities. The land required for this service-sector orientation had been acquired in the early 1970s, when the government realised that it lacked the banking infrastructure for amodern economy. So a new banking and corporate district, known as the 'Golden Shoe', was planned, incorporating the historic commercial area. This district now houses all the major companies and various government financial agencies.

Singapore's current economic strategy is closely linked to land use and development planning. Although it is already a major city, the current development plan seeks to ensure Singapore's continued economic growth through restructuring, to ensure that the facilities needed by future business are planned now. These include transport and telecommunication infrastructure, land, and environmental quality. A major concern is to avoid congestion in the central area, and so the latest plan deviates from previous plans by having a strong decentralisation policy. The plan makes provision for four major regional centres, each serving 800,000 people, but this does not mean that the existing central business district will not also grow. A major extension planned around Marina Baydraws on examples of other 'world cities', especially those with waterside central areas such as Sydney and San Francisco. The project involves major land reclamation of 667 hectares in total. Part of this has already been developed as a conference and exhibition zone, and the rest will be used for other facilities. However the need for vitality has been recognised and a mixed zoning approach has been adopted, to include housing and entertainment.

One of the new features of the current plan is a broader conception of what contributes to economic success. It encompasses high quality residential provision,a good environment, leisure facilities and exciting city life. Thus there is more provision for low-density housing, often in waterfront communities linked to beaches and recreational facilities. However, the lower housing densities will put considerable pressure on the very limited land available for development, and thiscreates problems for another of the plan's aims, which is to stress environmental quality. More and more

of the remaining open area will be developed, and the only natural landscape surviving will be a small zone in the centre of the island which serves as a water catchment area. Environmental policy is therefore very much concerned with making the built environment more green by introducing more plants - what is referred to as the 'beautification' of Singapore. The plan focuses on green zones defining the boundaries of settlements, and running along transport corridors. The incidental green provision within housing areas is also given considerable attention.

Much of the environmental provision, for example golf courses, recreation areas, and beaches, is linked to the prime objective of attracting business. The plan places much emphasis on good leisure provision and the need to exploit Singapore's island setting. One way of doing this is through further land reclamation, to create a whole new island devoted to leisure and luxury housing which will stretch from the central area to the airport. A current concern also appears to be how to use the planning system to create opportunities for greater spontaneity: planners have recently given much attention to the concept of the 24-hour city and the cafe society. For example, a promotion has taken place along the Singapore river to create a cafe zone. This has included the realisation, rather late in the day, of the value of retaining older buildings, and the creation of a continuous riverside promenade. Since the relaxation in 1996 of strict guidelines on outdoor eating areas, this has become an extremely popular area in the evenings. Also, in 1998 the Urban Redevelopment Authority created a new entertainment area in the centre of the city which they are promoting as 'the city's one-stop, dynamic entertainment scene'.

In conclusion, the economic development of Singapore has been very consciously centrally planned, and the latest strategy is very clearly oriented to establishing Singapore as a leading 'world city'. It is well placed to succeed, for a variety of reasons. It can draw upon its historic roots as a world trading centre; it has invested heavily in telecommunications and air transport infrastructure; it is well located in relation to other Asian economies; it has developed a safe and clean environment; and it has utilised the international language of English.

Question 1-6

Complete the summary below using words from the box.

Singapore

When Singapore became an independent, self-sufficient state it decided to build up its 1....., and government organisations were created to support this policy. However, this initial plan met with limited success due to a shortage of 2......and land. It was therefore decided to develop the 3..... sector of the economy instead.

Singapore is now a leading city, but planners are working to ensure that its economy continues to grow. In contrast to previous policies, there is emphasis on 4....... In addition, land will be recovered to extend the financial district, and provide 5.... as well as housing. The government also plans to improve the quality of Singapore's environment, but due to the shortage of natural landscapes it will concentrate instead on what it calls 6........

Question 7-13

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage?Write:

True- if the statement agrees with the information False - if the statement contradicts the informationNot Given - if there is no information on this.

7. After 1965, the Singaporean government switched the focus of the island'seconomy.

8. The creation of Singapore's financial centre was delayed while a suitable site wasfound.

9. Singapore's four regional centres will eventually be the same size as its centralbusiness district.

10. Planners have modelled new urban developments on other coastal cities.

11. Plants and trees are amongst the current priorities for Singapore's city planners.

12. The government has enacted new laws to protect Singapore's old buildings.

13. Singapore will find it difficult to compete with leading cities in other parts of theworld.

IELTS *Fighter*
Chiến binh IELTS

Reading Passage contains six Key Points.

Choose the correct heading for Key Points TWO to SIX .from the list of headingsbelow. Write the correct number, i-viii, in boxes 14-18 on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

i   Ensure the reward system is fairiiMatch rewards lo individuals

iii   Ensure targets are realistic

iv   Link rewards to achievement

v   Encourage managers to take more responsibility

vi   Recognise changes in employees' performance over timevii   Establish targets and give feedback

viii   Ensure employees are suited to their jobsExample   Answer

Key Point One   viii

1   Key Point Two

2   Key Point Three

3   Key Point Four

4   Key Point Five

5   Key Point Six

Motivating Employees under Adverse Condition

THE CHALLENGE

It is a great deal easier to motivate employees in a growing organisation than a declining one. When organisations are expanding and adding personnel, promotional opportunities, pay rises, and the excitement of being associated witha dynamic organisation create Slings of optimism. Management is able ta use the growth to entice and encourage employees. When an organisation is shrinking, the best and most mobile workers are prone to leave voluntarily. Unfortunately, they are the ones the organisation can least afford to lose- those with me highest skills and experience. The minor employees remain because their job options are limited.

Morale also surfers during decline. People fear they may be the next to be made redundant. Productivity often suffers, as employees spend their time sharing rumours and providing one another with moral support rather than focusing on their jobs. For those whose jobs are secure, pay increases are rarely possible. Pay cuts, unheard of during times of growth, may even be imposed. The challenge to management is how to motivate employees under such retrenchment conditions. The ways of meeting this challenge can be broadly divided into six Key Points, whichare outlined below.

KEY POINT ONE

There is an abundance of evidence to support the motivational benefits that result from carefully matching people to jobs. For example, if the job is running a small business or an autonomous unit within a larger business, high achievers should be sought. However, if the job to be filled is a managerial post in a large bureaucratic organisation, a candidate who has a high need for power and a low need for affiliation should be selected. Accordingly, high achievers should not be put into jobs that are inconsistent with their needs. High achievers will do best when the job provides moderately challenging goals and where there is independence and feedback. However, it should be remembered that not everybody is motivated by jobs that are high in independence, variety and responsibility.

KEY POINT TWO

The literature on goal-setting theory suggests that managers should ensure that all employees have specific goals and receive comments on how well they are doing in those goals. For those with high achievement needs, typically a minority in any organisation, the existence of external goals is less important because high achievers are already internally motivated. The next factor to be determined is whether the goals should be assigned by a manager or collectively set in conjunction with the

employees. The answer to that depends on perceptions the culture, however, goals should be assigned. If participation and the culture are incongruous, employees are likely to perceive the participation process as manipulative and be negatively affected by it.

KEY POINT THREE

Regardless of whether goals are achievable or well within management's perceptions of the employee's ability, if employees see them as unachievable they will reduce their effort. Managers must be sure, therefore, that employees feel confident that their efforts can lead to performance goals. For managers, this means that employees must have the capability of doing the job and must regard the appraisal process as valid.

KEY POINT FOUR

Since employees have different needs, what acts as a reinforcement far one may not for another. Managers could use their knowledge of each employee to personalise the rewards over which they have control. Some of the more obvious rewards that managers allocate include pay, promotions, autonomy, job scope and depth, and the opportunity lo participate in goal-setting and decision-making.

KEY POINT FIVE

Managers need to make rewards contingent on performance. To reward factors other than performance will only reinforce those other factors. Key rewards such as pay increases and promotions or advancements should be allocated for the attainment of the employee's specific goals. Consistent with maximising the impact of rewards, managers should look for ways to increase their visibility. Eliminating the secrecy surrounding pay by openly communicating everyone's remuneration, publicising performance bonuses and allocating annual salary increases in a lump sum rather than spreading them out over an entire year are examples of actions that will make rewards more visible and potentially more motivating.

KEY POINT SIX

The way rewards ore distributed should be transparent so that employees perceive that rewards or outcomes are equitable and equal to the inputs given. On a simplistic level, experience, abilities, effort and other obvious inputs should explain differences in pay, responsibility and other obvious outcomes. The problem, however, is complicated by the existence of dozens of inputs and outcomes ana by the Fact that employee groups place different degrees of importance on them. For instance, a study comparing clerical and production workers identified nearly twenty inputs and outcomes. The clerical workers considered factors such as

quality of work performed and job knowledge near the top of their list, but these were at the bottom of the production workers' list. Similarly, production workers thought that the most important inputs were intelligence and personal involvement with task accomplishment, two factors that were quite low in the importance ratings of the clerks. There were also important, though less dramatic, differences on the outcome side. For example, production workers rated advancement very highly, whereas clerical workers rated advancement in the lowerthird of their list. Such findings suggest that one person's equity is another's inequity, so an ideal should probably weigh different inputs and outcomes according to employee group.

Questions 6-11

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in Reading Passage?

In boxes 6-11 on your answer sheet, write:

YES - if the statement t agrees with the claims of the writerNO - if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer

NOT GIVEN - if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

6. A shrinking organisation lends to lose its less skilled employees rather than its more skilled employees.

7. It is easier to manage a small business ban a large business.

8. High achievers are well suited lo team work.

9. Some employees can fee! manipulated when asked to participate in goal-setting.

10. The staff appraisal process should be designed by employees.

11. Employees' earnings should be disclosed to everyone within the organisation.

Questions 12-14

Look at the follow groups of worker (Question 11-13)and the list of descriptions below Match each group with the correct description, A -E.

Write the correct letter, A-E, in boxes 25-27 on your answer sheet.

12. high achievers

13. clerical workers

14. production workers List of Descriptions

A. They judge promotion to be important.

B. They have less need of external goats.

C. They think that the quality of their work is important.

D. They resist goals which are imposed.

E. They have limited job options.