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SPEECH BY DR TAY ENG SOON, MINISTER OF STATE (EDUCATION),
AT THE OFFICAL OPENING CEREMONY OF WISMA ATRIA
ON THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 1986 AT 5.00 PM

I am delighted to be here at the official opening of this beautiful blue building - the WISMA ATRIA. I am pleased to learn that the shopping area of the Wisma Atria has been completely taken up. This speaks well of the confidence of our retailers and businessmen in the continuing recovery of our economy.

A shopping complex gains popularity with the public because of a number of factors. Good marketing promotions, well-known brand names, good value for money are of course important ingredients. But perhaps one of the most important factors is the quality of service.

The best definition of quality of service is the feeling that a customer has that his needs and feelings have been attended to by the sales person. A customer may be a little lost or indecisive or he may have a specific request. If he finds that the sales person is patient, courteous and willing to help, he will go away feeling that he was well served even if he does not buy anything. He will remember the service he received and is likely to come back again.

SIA is flying in stiff competition with many other international airlines. They all fly the same 747 Jumbos, so there is nothing to choose in terms of aircraft comfort or safety. Even the food and beverage served is a matter of the imagination of the airline and its catering service.

The main difference comes in the quality of cabin service. I believe that SIA's success is because it has managed to distill the essence of what is good service and maintained it at a consistent quality. Our air hostesses, the Singapore Girls, have become a legend for good service.

Can our shops and department stores become the "SIAs on the ground" so to speak? Can they develop such a good standard of service that visitors will go away talking about it? If they can, then together with providing good value for money, we can become the shoppers' paradise of Southeast Asia.

I believe that the Singapore Retail Merchant's Association has drawn up training programmes for sales assistants. The COSEC scheme of NPB is also aimed at improving skills of our service workers. I would like to suggest that for training for key people such as sales supervisors, the SRMA should consider bringing in experts from countries such as Japan which have developed sales service into a fine art. If our bigger department stores start by supporting such a programme, I believe that we will begin to make significant improvements in the quality of sales service.

In concluding, I have much pleasure in wishing the proprietors and shopowners in this beautiful building every success.

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