

Scheme links SMEs to expert help

MR KHOO Beng Keat, the managing director of MAJ Aviation, has plenty of engineers on his payroll – but is a little short of staff with financial expertise.

That is where the Business Advisers Programme, launched three months ago, was able to leap to the rescue of the firm, which offers aviation engineering services.

The programme – aimed at providing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with expert advice in the form of unemployed professionals – supplied an experienced banker to MAJ Aviation.

Mr Khoo explained: “In my company, the directors are mainly engineers and so the depth of our understanding of financial issues is a bit shallow. We recognised that

if we are going to undertake more complicated projects, we’d better get experts.”

A former banker was assigned under the scheme to help the company.

The scheme, run by the Singapore Management University, links up unemployed professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs) with SMEs. These professionals will serve full-time project-based attachments for six months.

The programme got 300 applications from unemployed professionals, 23 of whom have been matched to SMEs. The matching process for the rest is ongoing.

Under the scheme, SMEs will be able to benefit from expert advice which they would ordinarily be unable to afford as

Spring Singapore is funding 70 per cent of the \$5,000 monthly project fee.

One successful applicant, Mr Lee Kin Yun, has over 20 years of experience in both trading and management. He has worked in multinational companies and family businesses, and is now attached to AeroMobiles, which manufactures aircraft ground support equipment.

“The SME is in expansion mode – on a branding exercise – so there will be a lot of challenges and excitement down the road,” he said.

Mr Lee will be advising AeroMobiles on new marketing strategies to help the firm expand at home and abroad.

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