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## At Technology's Frontier

For those with a strong interest in engineering and IT, working in the defence industry, where you will be in touch with the latest technologies and developments, is like a dream come true.

By Ruth Wong.

### People and technology

Engineering trained and working in the defence industry, 27-year-old Tang Wey Lin certainly does not fit your typical stereotype of an engineer. Friendly, confident and articulate, Wey Lin is currently a manager at Defence Science & Technology Agency's (DSTA) International Relations Office. He plays an active role in maintaining the diplomatic relationships with foreign defence establishments and R&D institutions.

Wey Lin became interested in pursuing a career in the defence industry when he was introduced to the latest weapons and technologies while serving his National Service. His initial curiosity with the development process and the related R&D work later transformed in to a decision to pursue an engineering degree. He obtained a Masters in Mechanical Engineering (First Class Honours) from Imperial College London in 2005.

He first joined DSTA as a systems engineer. Summarising his role, he says, "What we do is to understand the needs of our end users like the Army as well as procure weaponry and develop capabilities to fit their operational requirements. We also make sure the soldiers have the proper training to use these equipment effectively."

While he likes technical work, he discovered that he has a real knack for dealing with people. "I found that talking to people and making the link came more naturally for me. I think this is due to the experiences I went through in university, where I am very involved with extra-curricular activities," he explained.

Possibly so. Wey Lin played water polo and was in the Imperial College Union. He is also a recipient of the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, which is awarded to individuals who have qualified themselves by demonstrating personal achievements in various specified areas. He was recently selected to be one of 10 participants in the Singapore-Switzerland Youth Exchange Programme that is only open to National Youth Achievement Award participants and Gold Award holders.

### More than engineering

"The interest was sparked off then but it never really took off until I realized DSTA has more to offer than just being an engineer," he says.

"When I realized that there's something else I wanted to explore, the organization was not dead set against it. I had to prove my case but that's the same for everyone if they want to do something else. I went through the relevant processes like interviews and explaining why I want to make a change." He was given a chance to "try out" the new division before making the switch officially.

“DSTA gives people an opportunity to fit their interests with the organisation’s interests,” says Wey Lin and he attributes this to the openness of the management to give employees the chance to explore their career goals and aspirations.

### **Matching preferences**

Ang Jian Yun, ...

### **Ample opportunities**

In fact, employees who have been in a certain role for a few years can seek a change by applying for openings posted in the DSTA internal job portal. Besides ample career opportunities, Wey Lin and Jian Yun also enthuse about the close working relationships they enjoy in the work place.

Wey Lin says, “My colleagues are supportive and everybody here is quite close to one another. My bosses bring us out for meals and we have gatherings once in a while. These informal interactions between supervisors and staff help bridge the gap and we’re not afraid to go to our supervisors and discuss about work issues we face.”

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Like other statutory boards, DSTA places an emphasis on work-life balance and has pro-family policies and benefits. Training opportunities also abound at DSTA. Besides induction programmes and trainings such as project management courses, self-improvement courses like creative thinking and in-house talks on financial planning are also on the plate. Some staff like Wey Lin have also attended overseas conferences that are relevant to their work.

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### **A sense of achievement**

If you’re considering a career in defence industry, Wey Lin has this to share. “In DSTA, there are many projects you can embark on which are very fulfilling. At the end of the day, when you see the final product coming out, you’ll feel a great sense of achievement.” He adds, “You’ll also get to see a lot of things that are happening behind the scene in protecting your own country. I guess there’s a certain sense of pride in knowing that if anything is to happen, the things you’ve worked on will be directly used for you and your family’s protection.”