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NTU Professor Develops Tool To Help TNT Customers Design Efficient Supply Chains

Associate Professor Chen Shaoxiang from the Nanyang Technological University’s (NTU) Nanyang Business School has teamed up with TNT, the leading provider of global express and logistics services, to develop a modelling tool called ‘Integrated Direct Express and Logistics’ (IDEAL).

The IDEAL model is a software tool that helps TNT customers optimally design their supply chains for better returns-on-investment. It provides a holistic cost/benefit analysis that quantifies the financial and service impact of supply chain solutions, such as the TNT’s Integrated Direct Express, on a company’s supply chain performance. Behind the tool is a set of models that are built on advanced theories and years of empirical industry knowledge.

IDEAL uses a set of input data that are in the same language of the business, simple but comprehensive enough to capture the essence of business process.

Associate Professor Chen, a supply chain expert with more than 10 years of experience, developed the IDEAL model in seven months. A prototype version of IDEAL was successfully implemented in March this year. Following the positive feedback received by customers, the IDEAL model is now set to be translated into Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages for deployment by TNT in markets outside Singapore.

Besides being an accurate cost barometer, the IDEAL model is also an effective marketing and educational tool as it incorporates self-learning capabilities. TNT managers can use the system to understand the supply chain process dynamics and modeling behaviour. This helps them design the right supply chain solution which translates to higher value for their customers.
“Many businesses regard speed, reliability and visibility as qualitative notions that have an intangible impact on their bottom line. The IDEAL model helps businesses put a dollar figure to benefits that can be realised with a highly efficient supply chain,” said Associate Professor Chen.

“IDEAL demonstrates how our professors are able to translate theory into something that is practical and relevant to the industry,” said Professor Hong Hai, Dean of Nanyang Business School at NTU. “With specialist expertise and an appreciation of business needs, Nanyang Business School professors can help companies gain a competitive advantage.”

**About Nanyang Technological University**

Established in 1991, the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is a top-tier university in Asia. Acclaimed for its science and technology curriculum, the University is also reputed for its business school which ranks among the region’s best.

Committed to its mission in *Educating Leaders and Advancing Knowledge for Singapore and Beyond*, the university is positioning itself to be a global university of excellence.

NTU has an undergraduate and graduate enrolment of about 25,000 and an international faculty of over 1,500. It offers a broad-based curriculum, which focuses on the development of global views, entrepreneurship and adaptability, through the following schools:

1. College of Engineering, which consists of five schools:
   - Civil and Environmental Engineering
   - Computer Engineering
   - Electrical and Electronic Engineering
   - Materials Engineering
   - Mechanical and Production Engineering
2. Nanyang Business School (Accountancy and Business)
3. School of Biological Sciences
4. School of Communication and Information
5. School of Humanities and Social Sciences
6. School of Art, Design and Media *(to be established by 2005)*
7. School of Physical Sciences *(to be established by 2005)*

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