

## An article on radical bosses



Any goods to declare? If you're thinking about hiding a suitcase full of taxable items, be warned that Ban Heng – better known as Mike – has ways of making you talk. In fact, he might even approach you before you set off on your holiday abroad...

Read on to find out more about how Mike's creative and bold problem-solving attitude inspires his staff at Singapore Customs.

When faced with travellers trying to avoid paying what they owe, Mike gets tough – he has been able to use his past investigation experience to obtain confessions from offenders about their intent to evade taxes.

On the other side of the carrot-and-stick approach, Mike inspires his team to think up creative solutions to convince travellers to pay their taxes owed.

Bobby – who directly reported to Mike for a year – recounts how Mike came up with a different take on educating travellers: "The new way requires officers to proactively engage travellers before their departure, rather than wait for them to approach our Tax Payment Office when they return."



Leading by example, Mike came up with the idea to issue vouchers as an incentive, and directly spoke to travellers to persuade them to use the Customs@SG mobile app for an easier, cash-free option.



"I was personally a bit surprised Mike did so as it is never an easy task to gain buy-in from staff, particularly if it involves changing officers' mindsets and work processes that they are used to," says Bobby.

"Supervisors should create a safe zone for their officers where officers feel comfortable to spontaneously speak up and share ideas.

And officers shouldn't be too quick to put 'foreign' or 'unthinkable' ideas aside. Share them with your bosses, as you may be surprised at the benefits of eventually implementing them," Bobby shares.

“Keep it up, Mike! You’ve been an inspiration to me and many others in our branch and always keep the fire in you burning! Your passion has inspired us to strive further!”

