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TechInnovation 2025: Bridging SMEs and Global Partners for Sustainable Growth

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Discover, Connect, Collaborate: Real-World Innovation insights for SMEs at TechInnovation 2025 "Innovation doesnÃ¢â?¬â?¢t always have to be massive or disruptive. It can be small, achievable moves that quickly build confidence and momentum" explains Michael Goh, Chief Executive Officer, IPI Singapore

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Innovation is a word that can feel overwhelming to many SMEs. It often brings to mind grand projects, long timelines and huge costs. But most SME leaders we work with don’t live in that world. They are running lean operations, balancing cash flow, managing people, and thinking about the next contract. They know they need to innovate, but the real question is: where do you start, and how do you avoid the hype?

Discover — Innovation That’s Relevant, Not Hype

At IPI Singapore, we believe the answer lies in what I call bite-size innovation — breaking change down into manageable, practical steps. Innovation doesn’t always have to be massive or disruptive. It can be small, achievable moves that quickly build confidence and momentum. For SMEs, attending TechInnovation 2025 is all about discovery: it is where we help SMEs see through the noise to find technologies that are relevant, not just flashy.

For instance, a solar systems integrator here in Singapore wanted to improve the efficiency of its panels. They didn’t need to reinvent the wheel. They needed a ready solution that could help them capture more sunlight and increase performance. Through TechInnovation, we introduced them to a Hong Kong startup with a coating solution. Within weeks, they trialled it and saw efficiency gains — a small, practical step that delivered measurable results.

That’s what discovery is about. It is not about chasing what looks “cutting edge.” Innovation is relative. What may feel advanced to one enterprise may already be everyday to another. What matters most is whether a technology can solve a real business problem or open a new opportunity.

This is also why we emphasise curation at IPI Singapore. There's no shortage of technologies, but SMEs don't have time to waste. By working closely with both tech providers and SMEs, we co-create a shortlist of solutions that are practical, relevant, and ready to adopt.

For SMEs, discovery should never feel like wandering through a maze of hype. It should feel like finding a door that leads to the next level of growth. That's what we want TechInnovation 2025 to deliver: clarity, focus, and confidence.

Our invitation to SMEs is this: let's explore together. You may not walk away with science- fiction breakthroughs, but you'll find practical technologies that strengthen your business today — and that is what real innovation means.

Connect — Partnerships That Flow Both Ways:

Singapore is a small market. Any enterprise that wants to sustain growth knows they have to think internationally from day one. But for SMEs, venturing abroad can be intimidating. Where do you go first? Who can you trust? How do you avoid costly missteps? That's where IPI Singapore steps in, with TechInnovation as our flagship platform to connect local enterprises and global partners.

For over a decade, we have positioned Singapore as a trusted gateway — a neutral platform where local SMEs meet international partners, and overseas companies find local enterprises to work with. It's about building credibility on both sides, and ensuring partnerships flow both ways.

Let me share a few examples. We work closely with Korea's KILSA, which has brought startups here who are keen to co-create with Singapore companies. Japanese corporations such as Panasonic and Ricoh have opened their patent libraries to our SMEs, allowing them to access technologies they would never see otherwise. European partners look to Singapore enterprises as springboards into ASEAN, because of our reputation for reliability and trust.

These partnerships don't happen by accident. They happen because over 13 editions of TechInnovation, IPI Singapore has shown we are serious about outcomes. We prepare overseas technology owners before they come here, so they understand what local SMEs are really looking for. And we help SMEs clarify their goals, so they are ready to engage with partners. That preparation builds efficiency and trust, which is why many collaborations sparked at TechInnovation turn into long-term business relationships.

I often describe this as finding the overlap in a Venn diagram. On one side are the global companies bringing technologies. On the other are our local enterprises with specific needs. Our role is to see where those circles intersect, and to bring the right people together. When we do that well, real partnerships emerge.

TechInnovation has always been about forging those connections. This year's edition will raise the bar, creating more opportunities for SMEs to sit across the table from corporates, startups, research institutes, and international players to explore what's possible and move beyond introductions into real conversations about markets, standards, and growth. For SMEs who are serious about scaling, this is the place to be. Come ready to share your aspirations, listen with an open mind, and be prepared to meet partners who can take you further than you imagined.

Collaborate — Chemistry That Sparks Growth

Collaboration is a word we hear a lot in business, but what does it really mean? For me, collaboration is like chemistry. When the right people meet, sparks fly. And when it's done right, the explosion is positive — creating something new and useful.

At IPI Singapore, we see our role as facilitators of that chemistry. We do the due diligence upfront, so that when enterprises come together, they don't just talk, they get to work. That spirit will be at the heart of TechInnovation 2025, where the focus is on collaboration that drives real impact.

Here's an example. A multinational had developed an AI tool for anomaly detection. They wanted to find an SME who could put it to use. We connected them with a Singapore company serving data centres — a sector where cutting energy costs is critical. Together, they tested a robotic inspection solution. The SME gained access to advanced technology without having to build it from scratch, and the MNC found a practical partner to deploy its innovation. That's collaboration with measurable results.

We’ve also seen how legacy companies can thrive when they embrace co-innovation. Traditional brands like Eu Yan Sang, or family-run businesses such as Kwong Cheong Thye and Scanteak, are finding ways to modernise through partnerships. These collaborations show that innovation is not only for startups or corporations. Even established firms can reinvent themselves by working with the right partners.

What makes collaboration impactful is not just the idea of working together, but the discipline behind it. It is about matching the right needs with the right technologies, and ensuring both parties are committed. At IPI Singapore, we break this into bite-size steps, so SMEs can see early wins and stay motivated.

As we look ahead, my vision is for IPI Singapore to be the trusted partner that helps SMEs scale beyond Singapore with confidence. But it starts here, with collaboration at home — with corporates, startups, researchers, and advisors coming together. I encourage SMEs to join us at TechInnovation 2025 to see what’s possible. Come ready to share, ready to learn, and ready to spark the kind of chemistry that leads to real growth.

Michael Goh *is the Chief Executive Officer of IPI Singapore, a subsidiary of Enterprise Singapore dedicated to empowering businesses through technology and innovation. With nearing two decades of extensive and exclusive role in intellectual property management, commercialisation, and open innovation., Mr. Goh previously held roles at the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) and ETPL (now A*ccelerate).*