The Economic Growth Centre in the Division of Economics School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU cordially invites you to a seminar by Mr Lam Chuan Leong

**Speaker:**
Mr Lam Chuan Leong  
*Adjunct Professor, Division of Economics  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences*

**Topic:**
"Sense Making and Complexity: Implications on Management and Leadership Styles"

**Chairperson:**
Assoc Prof Tan Khye Chong  
*Division of Economics  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences*

**Date:**
Monday, 24 April 2006

**Time:**
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

**Venue:**
Executive Seminar Room 7 (Block S3.1-B1-11)  
Nanyang Business School (Southspine 3)  
Nanyang Technological University

**About the Speaker:**

Mr Chuan-Leong Lam is the Second Permanent Secretary of the Singapore Ministry of Finance, in charge of Special Projects and an Ambassador at Large with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is also the Chairman of the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore and the Chairman of the Competition Commission of Singapore. Mr Lam has had a long and distinguished career in the Singapore civil service. He has held the appointment of Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of National Development, the Ministry for Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Communications and Information. From 1981 to 1984, Mr Lam was the Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister of Singapore. Previous to that he has served in the Ministries of Finance and Defense. Mr Lam’s key areas of interest and expertise are in micro-economics, regulation of monopolies, competition policy, pricing and market efficiency, privatization of government services, transport economics, and the structuring of public, private financing initiatives. Mr Lam graduated from the University of Singapore, with First Class Honours in Physics. He completed his MBA in Harvard Business School. In 1991, Mr Lam was an Eisenhower Fellow, under the USA Eisenhower Fellowship Programme. He was a Singapore President Scholar.

**Abstract:**

Sense making is a process that takes place continually amongst individuals and organizations to give meaning to the cues they receive from the environment. Proper interpretation of these cues can mean the difference between success and failures of organizations. This talk explores the key properties of sense-making and its limitations on individual and organization perception. Sense making generates frames of reference or mental models. These frames and models strongly influence on the way decision-making is undertaken and the actions that arise from these decisions. Improvements to the frames and models would improve the ability of organizations to undertake innovations and also to manage uncertainties. Some big organizations in Singapore and elsewhere have invested in new key techniques and processes to improve their sense making abilities. Most managers in both the private and public sectors have to deal with complex systems of human beings. This ranges from the organizations in which the manager works to the whole market place and even the global economy. The behaviour of complex systems are fundamentally different from simple systems. Many of our managerial interventions are implicitly based on observations of the behaviour of simple systems. This talk will bring out the 3 key properties of complexity: emergence, non-
linearity, and bifurcation and draw the key implications of these properties on future strategic planning, innovation and risk management. The findings of the sense making process combined with complexity theories suggest certain decision-making and leadership styles appropriate to operational and strategic management interventions. Parallels would be drawn from actual examples of managerial action.

Reservation:

Admission is free. Please reply to Christina, mailto: achristina@ntu.edu.sg or Tel: 6790-5689 to confirm your attendance.