Hire locals first

The search is on for ways to stop employers from hiring skilled foreigners before Singaporeans, either because the former accept lower wages or just seem easier to recruit. Jessica Chia and Janice Heng report.

No job for 55-year-old electronics engineer

Elaine Hoong, 55, has been out of work for five years and has had limited success finding a job. "I decided to go for the government's Employment Pass trial scheme in 2007," she says. "I was told that if I apply for the scheme, I would have a higher chance of employment, and my career could remain good."

Elaine found work for five months as a holder of an Employment Pass. "I actually held a position as a holder of an Employment Pass for three years after that," she says. "I was told that the scheme is not only for foreigners and PMEs, but also for locals and mid-level PMEs."

Elaine says she is unable to find work as a holder of an Employment Pass. "I have tried to find work, but I have been rejected," she says. "I have been told that my qualifications are not good enough."