

Moving to a new space

Cook Singapore relocates to bring entire team under one roof

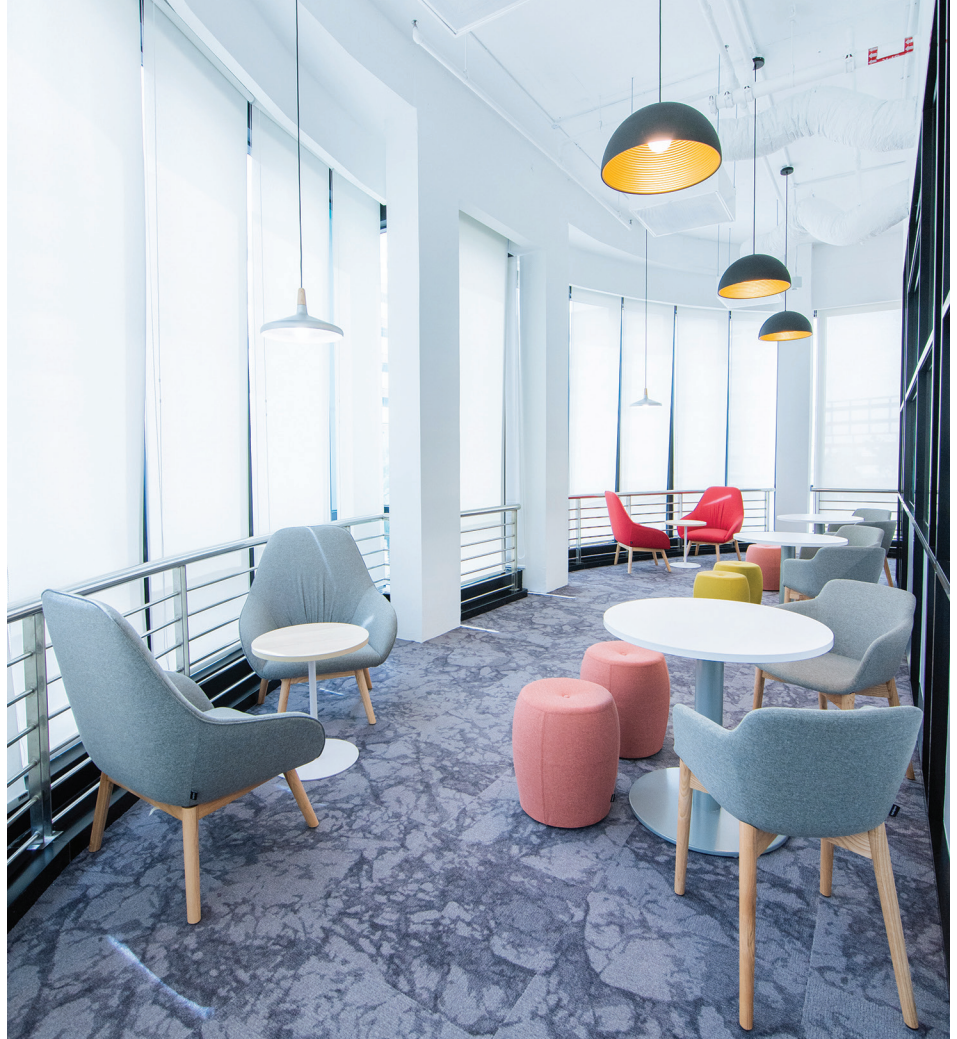
After nearly two years of preparation, Cook Singapore, including the South Asia Support Centre (SASC), moved into a new office space in September 2020. The new location is in the same building as the South Asia Delivery Centre (SADC) and offers modern, intelligently designed office space, meetings rooms, and more. Read on for a conversation with **Samuel Teh**, general manager for Singapore & Malaysia.

Why did the Cook Singapore office move?

Samuel: When the Cook Singapore office opened at Novena Square in 2013, it was the only Cook facility in the city. However, when the SADC opened its doors on Chai Chee Lane in 2016, a goal was formed to move all operations into the same building. The Novena Square lease's expiration in November 2019 was the perfect opportunity. The lease for the new office was signed at the end of 2018 for operations to commence in 2020 under one roof.

What are the benefits of the move?

Samuel: There are four major benefits. First, a larger space. Novena was 4,015 square feet, while the new office is 4,715 square feet. Second, the rental rate is 67% less than Novena Square, which means big savings for Cook. Third, it provided the opportunity to



▲ The casual open discussion lounge at Cook Singapore's new office.

transform the office into a modern, open, and agile space. Finally, it will also allow us to hold events under one roof and build our teamwork, community, and sense of connection across teams.

What setbacks have you encountered?

Samuel: Other than the COVID-19 pandemic, which delayed the project and made it harder to get building supplies, we faced multiple other setbacks throughout the project, including awarding the initial contract, changing the contractor, and redesigning the concept with a new contractor in a short time frame.

What are the special features of the new office?

Samuel: There are a number of special features that we are excited

to offer in our new space. We have split the office into two sides—the front office area, which contains our agile meeting space and pantry, and the back end, which contains the general office space with additional meeting rooms and the discussion lounge. This means that daily operations will not be affected when large meetings or events are being held in the front office area due to the separation of space. We have also installed high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters throughout the office for fresh and purified air, for a safe environment. In our agile meeting space, we have two meeting rooms (eight-and-12-person capacity), which can be transformed into an open space or a classroom-style setup. This space can also be used for future Wellness Program activities.

We have a six-and a seven-person Webex equipped meeting room, two quiet/phone/discussion rooms, and one recovery/resting/lactation room.

The workstations in the general office space are height-adjustable so they can be used while standing or sitting.

We also have a casual open discussion lounge with natural sunlight coming in through the large windows.

What are the next steps?

Samuel: We are working with a consultant to obtain a WELL Silver Certification in the near future, encompassing all ten elements of an excellent office environment. The elements are air, water, nourishment, light, movement, thermal comfort, sound, materials, mind, and community.

Once conditions post-COVID allow, we look forward to arranging for wellness programs like yoga and other activities. We also hope to hold activities involving the whole of Cook Singapore on a regular basis, creating a One Cook culture.

Finally, we also plan to upgrade to a digital visitor management system. We currently require manual registration of visitors and contractors, but we would like to get a digital registration system like the one used by Cook Hong Kong for their new office and SADC.

What are your personal thoughts and views on the process?

Samuel: I am excited about the potential the new office will bring in terms of fostering a close working relationship among all Cook Singapore team members while living our Cook values. We have the space literally under one roof, which is open to all, and I hope that everyone will use the facilities available and join in the activities held between the new office and SADC facilities. We will be able to

host events here without needing to rent outside space, which could mean big cost savings for Cook. I also hope that we will be able to upgrade the SADC office in the future to align the features available in both offices.

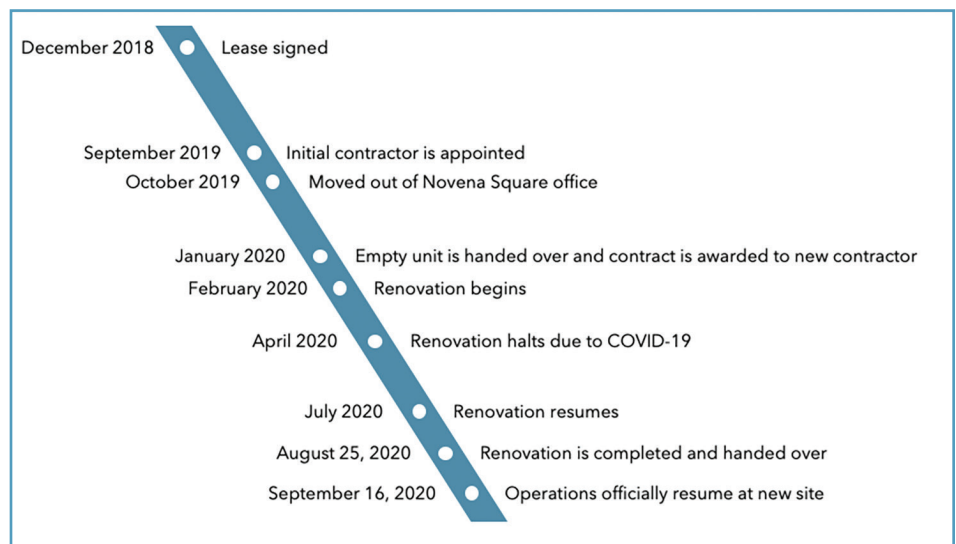
There are a lot of teammates who have helped out on this project, and it is difficult to single out anyone, but I wanted to take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude to everyone who has helped in many ways from inception until the final completion of the office. You have helped in providing a new home to our colleagues. Thank you.

At the time of writing, Singapore has now entered Phase Two of their Circuit Breaker, a government initiative to tackle COVID-19, and employees are able to spend about 50% of their work time in-office as arranged by management.

A version of this article will also appear on APAC Engage on the Cook APAC intranet.



▲ A look inside Cook Singapore's new office space. The top picture shows the seven-person meeting room and the bottom image is of the entryway.



▲ A timeline of the preparations that it took to get to the new office space.