



He pulled the plug on the first attempt to form an association, but Mr Jack Sim's idea may fare better this time around — 15 people and companies are interested in it.

First restroom association planned

Businessman who's had enough of dirty toilets spearheads formation of group to educate public

By GINNIE TEO

BUSINESSMAN Jack Sim has had enough of public toilets which do not flush properly, are dirty and are smelly. And he is doing something about it.

He wants to set up Singapore's first restroom association and with that, start a grassroots movement to improve the cleanliness of public toilets here.

He said: "Every time I enter a public toilet, I pray that the bowl will flush properly, the cubicle door will be able to lock and the loo is not smelly. It's terrible."

He wants the association, which will include people and companies involved in the cleaning, design and maintenance of toilets, to educate the public on good toilet habits.

It will also work with similar toilet bodies in other countries to share ideas.

Mr Sim, 41, the director of Besco Building Supplies, which deals in toilet partitions and lockers, said he wanted to set up an association two years ago, when

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tries had their own toilet associations.

"I thought, 'Why don't we have one? We need a pool of experts to come together to say what can be done.'"

He gave up the idea when he could not find enough interested people.

This time round, he has had better luck. Fifteen people and companies have said

in toilet brushes.

Ms Evelyn Koh, marketing manager (Away From Home Business) at Kimberly-Clark, said: "We joined because it's always been our intention to increase people's awareness on how an ideal washroom should be."

She hopes to start by educating coffeshop owners on how to keep a toilet clean.

Mr Sim said he is still looking for a cleaning specialist to advise on the maintenance of toilets. Having a sociologist on board, he added, would also help tremendously.

He said: "We need to understand toilet behaviour, why certain people vent their anger in loos, why we have so many toilet poets who scribble on the walls."

Though he is waiting for the Registry of Societies to approve the society's registration, he already has grand plans.

He wants to take over the running of the Environment Ministry's annual Keep Public Toilets Clean campaign.

"For a month every year, we have this campaign. But it's not continuous. Each year, we have to start all over again. There's a need for a private initiative."

His other ideas include encouraging "loo-scaping", or beautifying toilets, and organising a toilet design contest in which architects and designers can take part.

He said excitedly: "We need to think of ideas. We have to make our toilets here world-class. I think we can do it, and this is a step in that direction."

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong suggested using clean public toilets as a marker to determine social graciousness.

"I did some research and I found out that many coun-

tries are interested in joining the association.

They include an architect, toiletries company Kimberly-Clark, which supplies toilet paper, and 3M, which has dealings

GRAND PLANS: What Mr Sim wants to do

- ◆ FIFTEEN people and companies have expressed an interest in joining the restroom association, including an architect and toiletries companies. The group is still seeking a cleaning specialist and sociologist.
- ◆ The founder wants to take over the running of the Environment Ministry's annual Keep Public Toilets Clean campaign.
- ◆ He plans to encourage "loo-scaping", or the beautifying of toilets.
- ◆ He wants to organise a toilet design contest in which architects and designers can take part.