

# KUALA LUMPUR DEVELOPING FOR STEELCASE

Steelcase Inc. – the largest office furniture manufacturer in the world – joined the Configura journey in 2007. The company initially started development of its own CET Designer Extension, SmartTools, with two internal developers in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, and a large group of Configura developers.

Over the years, Steelcase has progressed to handling most software development by themselves. Their largest development team today is located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where seven developers are working on implementing new features and adding new products.

“Our team is more than just programmers, because we need to understand how the products work in order to make them into smart objects in CET Designer,” said Lim Szu Kiak, team leader in Kuala Lumpur for the SmartTools project. “Thanks to CET Designer, our users get smarter and demand more, so we spend a lot of time discussing with the requirements team before we even start to program.”

Lim came onboard seven years ago and was the first developer Steelcase hired to work on the CET platform in Kuala Lumpur. The team has now grown to seven developers, with additional developers in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA and Monterrey, Mexico.

“Our developers are spread across multiple time zones, which of course adds complexity, but it also means that we always have someone working around the clock,” Lim said. “If you have an issue at night before you go home, it’s usually fixed when you come to work the next morning. We also have a very stable and customized requirement system that fits very well with CET.”

**Lim Szu Kiak, Senior Application Engineer for SmartTools at Steelcase in Kuala Lumpur.**



## CASE STUDY: STEELCASE

For over 100 years, Steelcase Inc. has helped create great experiences for the world’s leading organizations, across industries. The company demonstrates this through its family of brands – including Steelcase®, Coalesse®, Designtex®, Details®, PolyVision® and Turnstone®. Together, they offer a comprehensive portfolio of architecture, furniture and technology products and services designed to unlock human promise and support social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Steelcase is globally accessible through a network of channels, including over 800 dealer locations. Steelcase is a global, industry-leading and publicly traded company with fiscal 2015 revenue of \$3.1 billion. Steelcase and Configura have cooperated since 2007, a partnership that has resulted in business improvements for Steelcase’s sales, design, order and manufacturing processes. Today, Steelcase’s CET Designer Extension, SmartTools, is used by more than 1,300 designers and salespeople worldwide.





Jesse Tan, Senior Applications Engineer at Steelcase in Kuala Lumpur.





Steelcase has developed its own training materials to get new developers started. Lim estimates that it takes about two months for a new developer to learn the CM language, but, once mastered, the possibilities are endless.

“Before I started at Steelcase, I worked with developing similar software, but in Microsoft .NET,” Lim said. “The programming language CM is pretty easy to learn, but it takes slightly longer than .NET because you can’t use Google if you have problems. On the other hand, since it’s open source, we can always access the source code to identify the issue, and the Configura support is very helpful whenever we have questions.”

**Huge improvements in the development environment**

Lim’s colleague Jesse Tan also enjoys working on the CET platform.

I think the predefined framework that Configura has created gives us some benefits,” Jesse said. “It’s well defined and describes how snapping and properties should behave, which makes it easier for us to inherit or extend from our current Extension.”

Wayne Tan has worked on Lim’s team for a little over three years. With a background in web development, Wayne says he finds it easier to program in CM and on the CET platform.

“It’s very easy to use to create furniture,” Wayne said. “I used to work in Java where you have to do a lot of manual checking, but with CM, I just need a symbol to see if what I’ve done is correct.”

Since Configura released CET Developer last year, Lim and his team have seen huge improvements in the development environment. They especially find it easier to install and also appreciate such new features as Auto Crash, which automatically sends a report to the developers when a user hits an error.

“Configura should be very proud of CM because it’s very unique,” Lim said. “It’s specifically created for this purpose where, for example, .NET is created to fit every purpose. It’s easy to start with .NET, but in the end it will take longer, because you need to restart the application whenever you make a modification. With CM, you just need to refresh, which saves a lot of time in development.”

**Wayne Tan, Applications Engineer at Steelcase in Kuala Lumpur.**