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## Editor's Message



*I* am honored to present to you the first edition of Successful Entrepreneur.

As the title well suggested, the subject of the publication focuses on several true stories of fellow Singaporean whom have paved themselves a new venture through hardship, responsibility and unpredictable risk.

Successful Entrepreneur was started with an idea to promote business creativity and sharing of knowledge & experiences with readers and as a catalyst to aspire our younger generation. It is also a platform to give due recognition to organisation and individuals that have demonstrated outstanding performance on the various standards.

From a third world fishing port to a world class trade hub, Singapore has well-benefited from the impeccable efforts by many extraordinary entrepreneurs. They play a key role in Singapore's economy. These are the people who have the skills and initiative necessary to take good new ideas to market and make the right decisions to make the idea profitable. An Entrepreneur possess characteristics that includes spontaneous creativity, the ability and willingness to make decisions in the absence of solid data, and a generally risk-taking personality. Numerous successful entrepreneurs that I come across may be driven by a need to create something new or build something tangible.

Finally, allow me to thank the SMEs entrepreneurs featured in this publication, their willingness to share and patience with us through the whole production is truly commendable. My thank-you list extends to the members of our panel of advisors. They have mostly journeyed with us in this endeavor and we can't imagine where we will be without them.

**Ken Pan**  
CEO and Group Managing Editor  
GRC Press Holdings





## Publication Chairperson's Speech



*I* am happy to share a message on the occasion of the launch of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS". I like to congratulate all the recipients of 2009 Successful Entrepreneur.

Singapore needs more entrepreneurs to take us to the next level of development. Whilst a good government, hardworking people, effective organisation, sound government policies, strong professionals and a competent civil service are key components which have brought us to where we are today, we need to throw up more business-minded people who are prepared to take risks. For those who succeed, the rewards are enormous as the region and indeed the world is now our stage.

Real-life stories can serve as role models that act as catalysts in this process of nurturing entrepreneurs. The accounts in these pages are poignant because they reflect real-life struggles that some entrepreneurs went through. In business, not everything works according to plan all the time. There will be surprises and setbacks. Indeed, this is true of life itself, although probably more real in the hurly-burly world of business. It is in how we react to and overcome these setbacks that really matters.

To all readers, especially younger Singaporeans contemplating whether or not to "xia hai" ie enter the world of business, I hope these pages will guide and inspire you.

I wish you every success as you chase your dreams and aspirations.

**Rita Koh, P.B.M.**  
Publication Chairperson  
GRC Press Holdings



*I* would like to commend GRC Press Holdings, for doing an excellent job of promoting Singapore entrepreneurs with their publication, "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR".

As Singapore looks to a future increasingly marked by globalization, our country is positioning itself as the region's financial and high-tech centre in competition with other East Asian cities.

Singaporeans must be aware of the potential implications on them. In these turbulent and uncertain times, the important thing is to be anchored in the knowledge that whatever service you are providing is entirely relevant to serving the needs of the people. I hope the committee members of GRC Press Holdings and readers will be part of the solution towards a Strong Singapore, a vision that challenges all of us.

Adversity has a way of uniting people to battle fear, terrorism, H1N1 and economic uncertainties. On these words, I wish GRC Press Holdings with many successful years ahead. Lastly, I like to congratulate the recipients of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS".

Well done!

### **Looi Im Heok, B.B.M.**

Honorary Chairman, "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR"  
Patron, Chong Pang CCC, CCMC, CCDEC  
Chairman, Chong Pang CC, SCEC  
Chairman, Ahmad Ibrahim Sec. Sch. SAC



*I* wish to congratulate the management and staff of GRC Press Holdings on the initiation of this publication to encourage young entrepreneur of Singapore to face challenges despite global economy crisis. I wish them all best as proud recipients of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR".

It is during tougher times that we see the real challenge ahead and I would encourage our young entrepreneurs to maintain their stamina to overcome the challenges with determination.

Before embarking on any business or trade one needs to be cautious and it is always good to learn from experienced and successful businessmen. My advice to those who want to start a new venture; never jump into a trade or business that you are not familiar with.

I compliment GRC Press Holdings for the good effort in the initiation of various meaningful publications and I wish them the very best in all their future endeavours.

### **Tan Jin Thong, PGP, B.B.M., FIFireE(UK)**

President, National Safety Council of Singapore  
President, Instit Engineers Singapore  
Honorary Chairman, MountBatten CCC  
District Councillor, South East CDC





**SUCCESSFUL** In this auspicious occasion of launching the "2009 ENTREPRENEUR", it gives me great pleasure to extend the heartiest congratulations to the management and staff of GRC Press Holdings. This milestone has positive spin-offs for the entrepreneurs in this country and will serve as a beacon of hope for the sustainability of respective programs and commitment to Singapore.

Entrepreneurship in Singapore is promising. The government has been excellent in promoting business-friendly policies and encouraging entrepreneurship. It is no surprise that Singapore is a top destination for U.S. investment, with US\$106.5 billion of foreign direct investment here. We do see small and medium sized US companies establishing offices in Singapore because of some of these investments.

According to many surveys, including AmCham's ASEAN Business Outlook Survey, Singapore is one of the easiest places in the world to business. It is also a good springboard for companies to venture into other parts of Asia.

Entrepreneurs should remember that with crisis comes opportunity. Although it is a challenging time for some companies to operate in, there are always opportunities to innovate, to increase market share, and to strengthen relationships with your core consumers. For example, the economic downturn has made it cheaper for businesses to rent or purchase property. The Singapore government has been proactive in supporting businesses by developing several schemes and grants to help companies through the crisis.

The advent of technology and social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube has also opened a world of opportunities for small businesses, even those with small budgets or none at all as these platforms allow them to reach and engage a global audience for free.

Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft Corporation said this about his business, "We were young, but we had good advice and good ideas and lots of enthusiasm." That is the spirit of an entrepreneur – creative, enthusiastic and resilient. I would advise all aspiring entrepreneurs to never give up and to follow their dreams, whatever they may be. Many of the world's leading entrepreneurs today endured many financial and personal challenges – even fail a few times -- before they became successful.

## Laura Deal

Executive Director  
The American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore



**SUCCESSFUL** On behalf of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Singapore, I would like to congratulate all the recipients of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR"!

This is an accolade reserved only for the best in a group motivated by inner strength, tremendous drive, quiet confidence and inspired action. These entrepreneurs are the cornerstone of successful business and the role model for all who aspire to success in our highly competitive world.

Once again, congratulations to GRC Press Holdings and all the recipients!

## Marlene Han

President  
Canadian Chamber of Commerce



Entrepreneurship has always been prominent in Singapore; on both private and public fronts. Singapore's forefathers engaged in unique forms of trade to sustain a small economy that contributed to pre-independence growth. Similarly, Singapore's public sector has put proper structures for development in place through its state-entrepreneurship.

While the current economic downturn may have reduced opportunities in most sectors, there is still much faith in entrepreneurs. Society, now more than ever, desires inventive business plans that use unorthodox methods to achieve economic success. Entrepreneurs therefore, should view the economic downturn as an opportunity to put forth unique ideas that may be ignored in better economic circumstances when classic mechanisms are effective.

As a commercial institution, SICCI understands the importance of recognizing and rewarding budding talent and spirit. SICCI hosts the SICCI-DBS Indian Entrepreneur Awards which showcase Singapore's leading Indian Entrepreneurs and businesses and serves to highlight contemporary entrepreneurial spirit. Aspiring youth should learn from such achievements and be encouraged to develop their own plans. To promote this, EDC@SICCI organizes Youth Enterprise Awards which is aimed at reviewing innovative business plans and giving due recognition to youth.

Those with a good plan should definitely take advantage of such opportunities to hone their talent and head towards their future as entrepreneurs.

I wish GRC Press Holdings and "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR" success.

## Vijay Iyengar

Chairman  
Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry



In behalf of Longmai Singapore Chamber of Commerce, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to the management committee and staff of GRC Press Holdings for the first launch publication of '2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR'.

Time has changed the operational requirements. We have to move up the value chain and be innovative to remain relevant, efficient and competitive in providing quality services to our community. Only then survival is assured. The period of turbulence was the best opportunity that can stir the inner talent of each organization to overcome obstacles and work out strategic solutions.

This publication encourages our young Turks to march ahead and take Singapore to its pinnacle of success in the financial world. I wish all the young readers to value the experiences of those who have gone before them, use their knowledge and create more opportunities for themselves.

Lastly, I like to extend my heartiest congratulations to GRC Press Holdings and their continued growth and success in all its future endeavours.

## Steven Kwok

Founder  
Longmai Singapore Chamber of Commerce



*I* commend each of you of GRC Press Holdings for your dedication and hardwork. Your community deserve to be proud of your achievement. May your future efforts be equally successful and rewarding.

In post-crisis Singapore, as the economy struggles to emerge relatively unscathed, entrepreneurship has acquired unprecedented significance. Even as we talk about slow recovery, it will be a while before the traditional sectors can be expected to churn out enough jobs to fulfil the aspirations of our talented young professionals.

If Singapore is to retain its standing as a premier developed nation in Asia, it will need the support of business pioneers who are willing to tread new paths and find diverse channels for the creation of wealth. The government has demonstrated itself to be committed to encouraging innovators by creating a business environment conducive to the start up and continuing success of new ventures.

Much has been written about the lack of creativity and thinking 'out of the box', as outcomes of the rigid education system in the country. However, all this is showing definite signs of change. With its trademark swift remedial action, once the local government recognized the aspects that were working against building an entrepreneurial mindset among its young people, it has acted to make impactful corrections.

Special government organizations and thought centers have been opened to foster the entrepreneurial spirit. The interesting thing to see will be how the Singaporean thought leaders will seize the opportunities being offered to nurture the growth of entrepreneurs in Singapore.

Congratulations, recipients of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR".

### Professor Vinika Rao

Professor Strategy  
General Manager of Business Development  
SP Jain Center of Management, Singapore-Dubai



*E*ntrepreneurship is the call to allow the spark of creativity in each one of us to bloom. It is not about being well-connected or having financial resources, it is about creativity, the spark of imagination and courage to see a vision through. One will not succeed on the first attempt, and for many, not even on the 100th. What matters most are passion, positivity and perseverance. To be a successful entrepreneur, you must believe in yourself and your ideas. However, self-belief must not transform into over-confidence or inflexibility. It is important to be humble yet highly self-aware, to be able to learn from your mistakes, adapt to circumstances and continuously innovate. And to always tell yourself, 'I can do it, I will do it.'

I extend my warmest wishes to GRC Press Holdings and the recipients of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR" for having reached where he/she is today despite the odds.

I hope that he/she will continue to be a strong role model for all aspiring entrepreneurs and the future generations.

### Doctor Ann Tan MBBS(S'pore), FRCOG (London), M Med (O&G), FAM (S'pore)

President Singapore Council of Women's Organisations  
Member, College of O & G Singapore  
Member, O & G Society, Singapore  
Member, International Society of Ultrasound in O & G  
Member, European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology  
Visiting Consultant, Singapore General Hospital



"I have a dream" – Martin Luther King.

Pursuing that dream and translating it into reality is what makes an entrepreneur. On behalf of Singapore Sindhi Association, I like to extend my heartiest congratulations to GRC Press Holdings and their creative initiative, "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR".

In Singapore, in earlier times, the Government took the lead to fulfill the needs of the people. Now it is creating an environment where entrepreneurship can flourish. The system of education is being overhauled to include more project work- field trips are being organised and exchange programs implemented. The perception that only exam results count is slowly being changed. There is a realization that there must be a total development of the individual – only then can entrepreneurship thrive.

Where a need is identified and a pro-type created government funding and assistance is easily available. What we have to do as parents is to encourage our children to have inquisitive and enquiring minds. We must patiently answer their "Why, why, why?"

Singapore is on the right track in encouraging entrepreneurship. A downturn in the economy is perhaps the catalyst. It is in difficult times that leaders are born. Belief in themselves and their project is the key to success.

## Divya Advani

President  
Singapore Sindhi Association



We have had 44 years of independence and astonishing achievements that have placed us in the high pedestal of success in the international level in all aspect as a developed country. Singapore is a tiny island on the globe but its success has been spectacular. Personally, I am so thankful & proud to be a Singaporean as it has provided safe and wonderful opportunities for my family and me. With an excellent government, we are able to soar thru challenging situations with ease. Despite a spectrum of culture & traditions, Singaporeans has remained united at all time.

Trade generates profits for business, it creates new jobs and it spreads new technologies around the world. Put simply, trade stimulates growth, and what the world needs now, more than anything, is growth. Now is the very time we need to search out opportunities and seize new markets.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Young Singaporeans who are inspired to venture as entrepreneurs must accept this challenge, and make our country a strong power in this era of globalization.

I wish GRC Press Holdings and "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR" all the very best in all your future endeavours and may you attain greater heights as the years roll on.

Best Wishes!

## Farouk Maricar

Administrative Specialist  
Singapore American School





*W*e thank GRC Press Holdings for doing a commendable job of acknowledging the entrepreneurs of Singapore and salute the Organizing Committee of GRC Press Holdings for their laudable effort.

"I believe to accomplish great things; we must not only act but also dream, not only plan but also believe." ~ Anatole France

This is the motto of my company, FLY Entertainment, an artiste management agency I started 10 years ago with only \$2,000. Today we represent more than 30 bi-lingual and talented artistes!

Singaporeans need to think out of their box and create innovative non-existence entities aka blue oceans in order to have a competitive edge over others. Young entrepreneur should pick one concept and follow it religiously to completion. They need to be responsible for all the changes and decisions they make in their life and being responsible means not quitting when things get tough. Honesty and Integrity are imperative to success. It is the acceptance of one's mistakes, learn from it and take measures in rectifying it. Our youth should be humble, creative, dedicated, optimistic and ever inquisitive in order to improve. Educating themselves through experience and learning from books are very important because one is never too old for reading and learning.

Our successful entrepreneurs should make an effort to teach and guide our young Singaporeans; after all, they are the future of this country. Mentoring the next generation is very crucial as they are the ones who will elevate Singapore to the next level, spreading our wings wider on the world's map.

We will keep scaling and keep breaking boundaries, that's just the kind of people, We SINGAPOREANS Are!

Without Pride, Passion and Purpose, No One Can Succeed!

## Irene Ang

Founder  
FLY Entertainment Pte Ltd  
Artiste / Comedienne / Host / Motivational Speaker



*I*t gives me great pleasure to extend my heartiest wishes to the committee of GRC Press Holdings on their launching of '2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR'.

An Entrepreneur's job is never easy. So it's a great venture to recognize them through this publication. It creates a platform to exchange ideas and share experiences. It is something very different and important to read.

The investments we make today in strengthening our economies and our businesses will position us to capitalise on the recovery that is coming and will be well-rewarded. One must be prepared for handwork, as nothing in life is free.

My advice to our young entrepreneur's would be to use their skills, and knowledge to be creative and adventurous. No success is achieved without risk. They have the advantage of computers and internet to research and understand the market. They can brainstorm ideas with other entrepreneurs.

I would like to congratulate the Staff and Management on this special initiative, and wish them all success in their future endeavours.

## Royston Low Hee Tang, P.B.M.

Managing Director, Katong Flower Shop  
Council Member, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry



*W*arm and hearty congratulations to the GRC Press Holdings  
for

their highly commendable effort on the extensive compilation of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR". They are doing a great job supporting and encouraging our upcoming entrepreneurs.

I made my name promoting traditional Malay art form, but it is my entrepreneurial spirit and ability to make the arts relevant to today's youth.

Every young aspiring entrepreneur should ensure that they have a solid foundation or understanding of the business before embarking on. They have to do everything on their own. They have to have their own idea, capital, ability to create and conceptualizing it. This is what I have been doing all my life; from all the small decision to the big challenges I face. This is how I define entrepreneurship

My philosophy in life, 'Where there is a will, there is a way'. Nowadays, everyone thinks success is like an instant noodle. There is no shortcut to success and it cannot be achieved overnight. The journey is long and it might take years to become successful. Most importantly is not to give up even if the light at the end of the tunnel is getting smaller.

I would like to wish all Singaporeans a better tomorrow filled with peace and harmony.

### **Som Md Said P.B.M. Singapore Cultural Medallist**

Honorary Advisor, "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR"  
Founder / Artistic Director, Sri Warisan Som Said Performing Arts Ltd  
Lecturer, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts



*I*t is my pleasure and honor to congratulate the GRC Press Holdings on the impeccable compilation of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR". May they keep walking on this path of success.

This short stint of our economy downturn has taught us to be strong and adaptable to changes so as to stay viable and competitive. Challenges must be faced with aspiration and opportunities available must be converted to benefits so that Singaporeans could gain from it.

Structural reform is fundamental in creating well-performing, resilient and robust economies by tackling behind the border barriers to trade and investment. It fosters an economic environment that supports the efficient functioning of markets. It also contributes to macroeconomic stability, productivity and economic growth. Listen carefully, set your goals, determine your strategy and get moving. Be the one who makes the changes.

With the launch of this compilation, I believe more Singaporeans will be enriched by the life-stories of our successful entrepreneurs. Our youth need to follow in their footsteps, by learning from their experiences and mistakes.

I would like to thank GRC Press Holdings, which is doing a commendable job of supporting and cheering the local SMEs entrepreneurs of Singapore.

Congratulations!

### **Doreen Lum, P.B.M.**

Honorary Advisor  
"2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR"



*I*t gives me a great pleasure on this auspicious occasion of launching the "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR"

Our intention is to create a nation-wide effort to foster and initiate Singapore into a creative and entrepreneurial nation where innovation and entrepreneurship can be translated into wealth creation and where diversity of ideas thrives. Entrepreneurship and venturing out is a key pillar in strengthening Singapore's economic competitiveness and complements our engines of growth in the numerous trade sector and services.

The publication committee of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR" have worked tirelessly in promoting and creating awareness of our local SMEs entrepreneurs.

I take this opportunity to thank all our supporting agencies, endorsements, supporters and advertisers who have helped us make this publication a successful one.

I wish to congratulate and thank all the recipients of "2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR" for sharing with our readers their valuable experience and knowledge.

**Philip B.C. Yeo**

Head, Corporate and Community Affairs  
"2009 SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR"