

42 Local Entrepreneurs Honoured for Their Entrepreneurial Spirit

The Honourees of the Spirit of Enterprise Awards 2007, presented in alphabetical order of their company name:

Adelina Pang
ADELINA PANG FENGSHUI CONSULTANCY PTE LTD

Steven Ng
BAN NEE CHEN PTE LTD

Alvin Lee
BEAUTIFUL MINDS

Vincent Lim
BIG COMMUNICATIONS PTE LTD

David Black
BLACKBOX RESEARCH PTE LTD

Carol Lim
BRA SHOPPE (S) PTE LTD

Areena Ng
BRIDGE LEARNING PTE LTD

Jernine Pang
CALIFORNIA-ASIA SUSHI ACADEMY C/O THE ACADEMY PL

Kevin Loh
CAMPAIGN CLEANING SERVICES (PTE) LTD

Benny Chua
CHOCZ PTE LTD

Steve Melhuish
BUSINESS2PROFIT & COMIASIA

Irene Gomez
CORPORATE MEDIA SERVICES PTE LTD

Palani Pillai
CRUSH ADVERTISING PTE LTD

Seah Liang Chiang
DIGITAL SCANNING CORPORATION PTE LTD

Dave Rogers
E-ART-H WORKS PTE LTD

Huang Liang Yu
E-COM DIGITAL INTERNATIONAL PTE LTD

Geoff Ang
GEOFF STUDIO PTE LTD

Michael Lim Koh Leong
GO FLY KITE PTE LTD

Foo Siew Eng
IFB FREIGHTBRIDGE PTE LTD

K Sivaraman Nair
INDIA SAREE EMPORIUM PTE LTD

Irene Teo
IRENE'S CREATION PTE LTD

Lee Man San
KIA HIANG GOURMET PTE LTD

Donna Lee
KINDERGOLF PTE LTD

Rachel Ng Sheok Hoon
LIFESTREAM GROUP PTE LTD

Lee Chee Wee
LYNK BIOTECHNOLOGIES PTE LTD

Max Tan
MBC AIRCONDITION ENGINEERING

Karthik Tirupathi
NIHONGO BASHI PTE LTD

Mark Tan
PAGE ONE HOLDINGS PTE LTD

David Gan
PASSION HAIR SALON PTE LTD

Gloria Ho and Mr. Augustine Lim
PETSTYLIST

Peggy Ong
PRO-TEACH BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Bhakt Yap
QUEST MODEL MANAGEMENT LLP

Yeo Gim Lam
RESOUND HEARING SERVICES CENTRE PTE LTD

Deborah Soh, Ms Liu Sin Yee, and Mr. Kelvin Tan
ROOM FOR DESSERT

Irene Ong
SERENE NURSING HOME PTE LTD & IRENE
NURSING HOME PTE LTD

Sebastian Tan
SHOOTING GALLERY ASIA PTE. LTD.

Lim Chee Song
SIMPLEX PTE LTD

Ivan Lee
THAI EXPRESS (S) PTE LTD

Ted Ngo
THE GALLERY HOTEL PTE LTD

Ong Sze Ching and Mr. Shegar V.K.
THE TATAMI SHOP PTE. LTD.

Lim Tiong Kok
TIONG KEE KATONG LAKSA

Edward Wee
WEE CHWEE HUAT SCAFFOLDING &
CONSTRUCTION PTE LTD

The Best Student Interviewer Awards went to Mr. EU XING LEONG of National University of Singapore and Ms. HUIXIANG CHEN of Singapore Institute of Management.

The Friends of Enterprise Awards went to Shell LiveWIRE and the Singapore Institute of Management.

CONGRATULATIONS

Spirit Of Enterprise 2007

Honourees & Nominees



Spirit of Enterprise
To Honour & Inspire

The Spirit of Enterprise (SOE) promotes and advances entrepreneurial spirit in Singapore by honouring local self-reliant entrepreneurs operating small and medium-sized businesses, and serves to inspire Singaporeans, especially the young, to become entrepreneurs by facilitating interaction, communication and knowledge dissemination between students, the entrepreneurs and the general public. Its key programmes include Spirit of Enterprise Awards, Start-Up TV Series, Student-Entrepreneur Programme and SOE Books on Entrepreneurship.

SOE is funded by the private sector and its board of governors which consists of established entrepreneurs, corporate senior management, students, public service and political leaders. For more information, please visit www.soe.org.sg.

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The Spirit of an Entrepreneur

■ by Chrizette S. Larin

The Spirit of Enterprise had been recognising local entrepreneurs for five consecutive years now. In the past years, the main focus of SOE was to be a distinguished award giving body. In this year's SOE Awards, 42 entrepreneurs were honoured.

BOLDLEAPS had an exclusive interview with this year's Chairman, Mr. Steven Fang.

What's New in SOE?

The Spirit of Enterprise Alumni was recently inaugurated. "The launch of the alumni was an important milestone for us because for the first time, fellow entrepreneurs and honourees can get together on a regular basis," Mr. Fang said. The alumni aim to serve as a platform for entrepreneurs to get together and to stimulate business alliances and collaboration.

He added, "Through the alumni, we are also looking at how we can co-opt some of these entrepreneurs to help in the whole effort of SOE." He recalled that in the past, it was only a handful of them who felt strongly about SOE. Therefore, they were all prepared to volunteer time. "But I guess the fruits of SOE can't be restrained by a just a handful of people, it has to be shared by as many capable individuals as possible."

Also, nowadays there is a greater focus on how to further bring the spirit of enterprise in to the school programs. "In the past, the programs that we've ran support primary school entrepreneurship (this is a program which you can read more from our website), where we provide financial support for specific projects of the school, in the hopes to nurture entrepreneurship at a very young age," Mr. Fang stated. "This year, under the supervision of Dr. Rosemary, we hope to create one that will become a part of the curriculum of all primary schools."

Another development about SOE is its growing presence in



the communities outside of Singapore. Mr. Fang shared, "Without us even prompting or making a conscious effort to introduce the program, we've got interests from as far flung as South Africa, Vietnam, and Mauritius."

SOE is now looking at ways on how they can globalise their whole philosophy of recognising entrepreneurship. Mr. Fang admitted that to reinforce such move, they are not structured correctly yet. "But we are looking at ways on how we can provide support so that we can replicate SOE into the different parts of the world," he assured. "Through this, our local entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to network

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with entrepreneurs from outside of Singapore. So, being a part of the SOE Alumni allows them to have an access to global SOE Alumni.”

SOE is moving towards more than just recognising. With a list of activities in their future plan, the Board had set an annual 200 thousand dollars sponsorship that they needed to raise. When asked whether they were able to meet their target sponsorship, Mr. Fang disclosed that they have not met it yet. “We only have enough to cover for our basic activities but we have to raise more, perhaps from corporate sponsorship so that we can actually expand on other core activities that we have within SOE,” he furthered. Every year SOE gets over 300 nominations. This indeed is a captured market for those companies that want to get connected with entrepreneurs who are voted and nominated by the public.

SOE, a not-for-profit organization, no more?

“No, there is no plan to make SOE a profit-generating organisation and it will not make sense to do so,” Mr. Fang firmly stated when asked if SOE plans to make itself profitable in the future. “We do not want to turn it into a commercial endeavour because then, there would be a clear conflict of interest.” He added, “For us, when we recognise a company or an individual, it is just that. There shouldn’t be any strings attached. Say, you were recognised but you have to do this; you have to make a donation; you have to pay for something. It just takes the whole meaning out of it.”

Mr. Fang admitted that it’s a difficult path to take. “Because want to stay neutral and stay independent, the only way to do it, is for us not to become commercialised.” So, he added “Therefore, we still rely on the generousities of some of the biggest companies in Singapore. Also, a lot of SMEs have similarly come forward to acknowledge the things that we do.”

The Secret Formula to Becoming an SOE Honouree

Mr. Fang shared what they look for in a potential Honouree. “We don’t judge based on the business’ financial turnover or competitiveness. We judge based on how well they have walked the talk and how well they have fought the fight.” He added, “So it comes down to really hearing their story, on how some of them sold their house to finance their business, how some have put together a thousand dollars here and there from family and friends, how some have basically put their personal life on hold to fulfil the vision of their business.”

Another noteworthy factor is the age of the business. SOE gives due recognition to young companies. “We don’t want to cut of relatively young companies versus that of the very established ones,” Mr. Fang explained.

Furthermore he related, “I personally feel that if the business fails, it doesn’t mean that one doesn’t have the spirit of enterprise.”

SOE as an Inspiration

Mr. Steven Fang was also once an Honouree, back in 2003. Right after, Mr. Russel Miller and Mr. Tan Kin Lian co-opted him to be a part of the Board of Governor.

When asked how he was inspired then as an Honouree, and how he is being inspired now as the one granting the honour, he sparkled saying, “How I was inspired in the early days, is with the fact that one does not have to be a hundred million dollar company to have someone to recognize your hard work. How I am inspired now, is the feeling that I can give an inspiration to someone else. It’s the feeling of having received it yourself, and now being able to share it with another individual.”