

SPEECH BY MR THOMAS FERNANDEZ, AWARD CO-CHAIRMAN, ASSOCIATION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, DELIVERED AT THE ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARD 2015 PRESS CONFERENCE ON MONDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT THE VANDA BALLROOM, MARINA MANDARIN SINGAPORE

Mr Kurt Wee
President, ASME

Mr Alan Tan
President
Rotary Club of Singapore

Mr Reinhard Klemmer
Co-Chairman, Award Organising Committee

Mr Linus Goh
Head, Global Commercial Banking, OCBC Bank

Our media partners,

Distinguished Guests,

Our most deserving winners of EYA 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- 1 Good morning and thank you for joining us here today as we announce the winners of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award (EYA) 2015
- 2 Into its 27th year, EYA has recognised over 200 entrepreneurs. Today, I am extremely proud to announce that yet another 16 entrepreneurs have made it through the

rigorous rounds of judging and emerged as outstanding examples of entrepreneurial excellence. Congratulations to all 16 winners!

- 3 Our winners have all come from extremely diverse industries such as petrochemical, F&B, sustainable energy and healthcare to name a few. Yet, one striking feature that makes all of them equally remarkable is *ambition*. Unlike dreamers, entrepreneurs have the ability to transform their visions into reality, even when the odds are stacked against them.
- 4 This is also why I believe that the Award theme this year, *Ambition, The Driver of Success* is extremely appropriate. Not only do we recognise entrepreneurs who have excellent business performances, but also entrepreneurs who have faced countless of challenges, yet shown unceasing drive to reach their ambitions, propelling their business to success.
- 5 Amongst our Winners today, one outstanding entrepreneur who has displayed this endless determination is Mdm Cheah Bee Chew founder of Bee Choo Origins. Realising her ambition to be a hair dresser, she came to Singapore alone at a mere age of 19. Then, Mdm Cheah worked as a helper in order to fund her hair dressing courses and even after marriage and three children, she never gave up on this dream. She would schedule her lessons between the time she had to fetch her children to and pick them up from school. During her spare time, she would experiment with natural ingredients to come up with natural treatment solutions to hair problems. Today, Bee Choo Origins is booming with outlets spreading across the region. Mdm Cheah's determination has clearly paid off.
- 6 Another shining example of an ambitious entrepreneur is Ms Lee Rong Xian Regina, Managing Director of Amplitude Inc Holdings. Ms Lee participated in EYA last year and although she did not qualify then, she returned with a better proposal and business performance this year. Hence, rising as one of our Winners this year. This shows that nothing can stop a truly ambitious entrepreneur.

- 7 One notable similarity between Mdm Cheah and Ms Lee is that this is not their first participation in EYA. You may ask *what is it that brings entrepreneurs back to us year after year?*
- 8 In recent news, there has been talks on the unregulated business of creating and handing out of industry awards. Here, I can proudly say that what makes EYA distinctive, is not only the stringent rounds of assessment of the entrepreneurs on both qualitative and quantitative standards, but also the valuable and informative takeaways, that the entrepreneurs stand to gain from our panel of distinguished judges during the judging sessions and site visits.
- 9 At this juncture, on behalf of the Award Co-Organisers and Award Secretariat, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to the judges of the first round of judging, for their time, and for bringing their insights and experience to bear during the intense round of judging.
- 10 I would like to thank our main sponsor OCBC for coming on board as the Award Sponsor for the 14th year running. OCBC has always been dedicated to supporting entrepreneurship, guiding both start-up and veteran alike to eventual greatness. Once again, thank you for your continued support to the EYA.
- 11 To our Official Whisky: Chivas, Infocomms Partner: StarHub, and Official Media Partner: Channel News Asia, thank you for making the Award possible once again.
- 12 In addition, the EYA would not have been such a stellar success without the strong support from iDA Singapore, IE Singapore, SPRING Singapore and the Institute of Standard Chartered Accountants.
- 13 I would also like to extend my appreciation to our Co-organiser Rotary Club of Singapore, for their absolute commitment to EYA. You have been a great partner to ASME and we deeply appreciate your cooperation and dedication to EYA.

- 14 Last but not least, my appreciation goes out to the EYA Award Secretariat who once again provided meticulous support and attention to the smooth conduct of EYA 2015.
- 15 Once again, congratulations to all our winners. Thank you. I wish you all a good day ahead.