

**SPEECH BY MS CHEW LEE CHING, SPBA 2015 ORGANISING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN,
DELIVERED AT THE SPBA 2015 OFFICIAL LAUNCH, 7 APRIL 2015, SINGAPORE PRESS
HOLDINGS AUDITORIUM**

1 A very good afternoon to:

Ms Goh Sin Hwee

Associate Editor of Lianhe Zaobao, who has come onboard as my Co-chairperson of the SPBA Organising Committee,

Mr Choong Wai Hong

Head

Community Financial Services, Maybank Singapore

Distinguished guests,

Media partners,

Ladies and gentlemen,

2 Thank you for joining us today as we officially launch the Singapore Prestige Brand Award 2015, otherwise known as SPBA 2015.

Innovation is key

3 “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” These were the words Charles Darwin used to describe evolution. The same message applies to the way businesses and brands evolve today.

4 New brands are emerging every day and the business landscape has become intensely competitive. In such an environment, brands cannot afford to lose the preferential status they enjoy with their customers. Only those that are constantly responding and adapting to change will stay relevant to their customers, remain in their favour and stay ahead of their competitors. Brands therefore cannot afford to stand still. They have to constantly innovate or fade away. The good news is that past winners of SPBA have shown how they innovated and stayed preferred by their customers. These are companies that recognize that branding is a journey, not a destination.

5 Homegrown gift company Noel Gifts started in 1975 focusing solely on year-end hamper packaging with a vision of “*Bringing people closer, making every day better*”. The company didn’t rest on its laurels of 40 years of success. Noel Gifts understood that

transformation was essential to meet the changing tastes of its customers. Launching fresh branding strategies in 2010, it introduced innovative styles of hamper packaging, moving away from the traditional pyramidal wrapping, to flower arrangements and several other innovative gifting ideas. Today, the company has expanded into many countries including Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand.

Brands Beyond Boundaries

- 6 The theme of SPBA 2015 is Brands Beyond Boundaries. Just as an ascent to the peak brings new trials along the way, each branding journey will have its fair share of challenges. A mountaineer needs a good guide, stamina and determination to reach the peak. Similarly, a brand needs a champion to strategise and navigate the sea of sameness so that it shines and rise above its competitors. SPBA epitomizes that journey that brands can embark on to help them succeed. In going through the stringent rounds of judging, past participants tell us that they have learned much from the judges and have taken away invaluable insights that help them to hone their brand and enhance their appeal.
- 7 Into its 14th year, SPBA has recognised over 300 unique brands and I am proud to say that many of our past winners have made great progress not only within Singapore but in the regional and international markets as well, underscoring the thought behind this year's Award theme, *Brands Beyond Boundaries*.
- 8 Going beyond boundaries means many things for a brand. Firstly, it represents the brand owner's long term commitment to achieving branding excellence. In 2008, we launched the Hall of Fame to recognize those who have gone the extra mile to nurture their brands. Those inducted into the Hall of Fame are brands which have won the SPBA five time or brands which have won the SPBA three times as well as an overall winner award. Being an inductee of the SPBA Hall of Fame is an honour that attracts much admiration and respect. To date, 15 brands have been inducted into this prestigious circle. They include Rigel Technology, Thomson Medical, Cherie Hearts, Tung Lok Group and Jason Parquet, Noel Hampers, Smile Inc, and Wanyang
- 9 Secondly, riding on the prestige SPBA bestowed upon them, many past winners have grown further and sought public listing. One of them is Neo Garden. It first won SPBA in 2011 under the Established Brands category and in the following year, not only did the brand receive triple-honours for being the Winner in the Established Brand category, Overall Winner in the Established Brands category and Most Popular Established Brand, the company was also listed in the market.
- 10 This year's theme also underscores the need for brands to venture abroad. It is heartening therefore to note that in the recent budget, a number of grants was announced to help SMEs internationalise and venture overseas. They include the Market Readiness Assistance

grant that provides SMEs with accelerated assistance to help them begin their overseas activities, as well as the Global Company Partnership which provides customised support to companies to help them grow holistically, entrench themselves in overseas markets, and explore new markets.

- 11 Today, we are pleased to say that SPBA has also helped many Singapore brands in their preparation to venture overseas. One need not look further than BreadTalk. After winning the award in 2002 under the Promising Brands category, the company went on to list itself in 2003 and in the same year, it opened its first overseas outlet in Indonesia. Today, BreadTalk is a household name not only in Singapore but in 17 countries across the globe.
- 12 I hope these success stories will inspire you to think about how you can leverage on the SPBA to further develop your brand beyond boundaries. For brands that have participated in SPBA before, there is always a good reason to return to benchmark your brand investment and scale new peaks.
- 13 I hope that all of you present will take this opportunity to find out more about the various categories of Awards and participate. Do join the Q&A session, our panelists will be happy to answer your questions.
- 14 In closing, I would like to thank our longtime Co-Organiser, Lianhe Zaobao, for their continued involvement in the SPBA. My sincerest appreciation to Official Bank, Maybank and our Supporting Organisations IE Singapore, IPOS (Intellectual Property of Singapore) and SPRING Singapore for their unstinting support to the Award. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our panelists for taking the time to share their Award experiences.
- 15 So embark on a Brands Beyond Boundaries journey with SPBA 2015! We look forward to cheering you on.
- 16 I wish you every success. Thank you.