

SPRIT OF ENTERPRISE AWARDS 2020/2021

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The Spirit of Enterprise (SOE) Awards honoured 44 local entrepreneurs at the 2020/2021 award ceremony which took place last month.
PHOTO: SOE

Showing their mettle during challenging times

Local business owners honoured at the SOE Awards prove that adaptability is key to staying ahead of the game

BY FENG ZENGKUN

Many Singapore entrepreneurs and firms have shown resilience and inventiveness during the Covid-19 crisis. Non-profit organisation Spirit of Enterprise (SOE) honoured 44 of them at its SOE Awards 2020/2021 which took place on May 25.

“Adaptability is a major key to success, now more so than ever. Our honourees used different methods to face and overcome the pandemic’s challenges, and their innovation showcased their mettle as entrepreneurs,” says SOE president Rachel Wong, who is in her 50s.

Restaurant chain Swatow, for example, added online ordering and catering to its business to thrive despite dining-in restrictions. Bluetree Education Learning Centre moved its classes online at the start of the pandemic.

“In fact, Bluetree shifted online so quickly that it was able to pull the trigger on existing plans to expand into overseas markets such as Hong Kong and Vietnam. It effectively upgraded itself from a local business to a regional player in the education sector, turning a crisis into an opportunity,” Ms Wong notes.

Held annually since 2003, except in 2020 and last year due to the pandemic, the SOE Awards recognise the achievements of home-grown entrepreneurs. The 2020/2021 Awards recognise business owners who have shown entrepreneurial excellence, leadership, perseverance and other qualities in the past two years.

Rewarding resilience

SOE chooses the winners based on interview transcripts submitted by tertiary students who participated in its SOE Student Interviewer Programme. This programme invites students from local tertiary institutions to interview entrepreneurs they admire.

“The approach varies. Some students reach out to entrepreneurs they have always wanted to connect with, while others contact those they already know via school or personal connections. We encourage the students to cast their nets wide,” says Ms Wong.

Entrepreneurs can also self-nominate or nominate fellow business owners whom they feel fit the criteria and are deserving of the award. “In such cases, we assign student interviewers.”

The SOE Board of Governors reviews the transcripts and evaluates nominees according to a stringent set of criteria, including an assessment of how the firms developed their strategic plans and harnessed employees’ potential.

The 44 winners at the 2020/2021 Awards were the cream of the crop among over 100

candidates. Besides handing out awards in two categories, namely start-up and established firms, SOE chose Mr Alan Lee, executive chairman of engineering solutions company Elmich, for the SOE-PropNex Top Honouree of the Year Award, and Mr Ronald Soh, managing director of IT support services company Win-Pro Consultancy, for the SOE-Dian Xiao Er Social Contributions Award.

The SOE-Nexia TS Entrepreneurship Award went to Mrs Tjendri Anastasia-Liew, founder and managing director of Bengawan Solo.

“We always have interesting submissions and honourees every year, and these past two years have brought out more examples of resilience and perseverance,” says Ms Wong.

“At the same time, the pandemic has taught us important lessons, such as the fragile nature of our globalised supply chain. Companies need to have solutions for potential supply chain disruptions, including through non-traditional partnerships.”

Staying agile

Ms Wong added that speed and flexibility are increasingly crucial for business success, especially in uncertain times. “Today, more firms are valuing urgency in problem-solving. Sales teams and marketing teams are more than willing to jump on a video conference call to solve issues. Remote teams are being given more autonomy to make decisions.”

As companies look to the future, they must be open to change. “Business owners may have to fundamentally rethink their revenue profiles to position themselves for the long term and stay ahead of their competitors, as many of our honourees this year have done.”

SOE is also walking the talk on adaptability. It is considering including categories for digitalisation, sustainability, green initiatives and business transformation in the next edition of the awards.

Ms Wong concludes: “We look forward to seeing how companies and entrepreneurs evolve and update themselves, and will continue to honour their achievements.”

SPRIT OF ENTERPRISE AWARDS 2020/2021 WINNERS

HONOREE	DESIGNATION	COMPANY
SOE-Nexia TS Entrepreneurship Award 2020/2021		
Tjendri Anastasia-Liew	Founder / Managing Director	Bengawan Solo Pte Ltd
SOE-PropNex Top Honouree of the Year Award 2020/2021		
Alan Lee	Executive Chairman	Elmich Pte Ltd
SOE-Dian Xiao Er Social Contributions Award 2020/2021		
Ronald Soh	Managing Director	Win-Pro Consultancy Pte Ltd
SOE Award 2020/2021		
Richard Koh	Co-founder / Director	1degreeC Pte Ltd
Anson Kuah Siau Hian	Managing Director	@ASK Training Pte Ltd
Kuah Wan Keng	Founder / Chairman	@ASK Training Pte Ltd
Geoffrey Foo	Director	Adsec Singapore Pte Ltd
Wein Ang	Director	Allstar Waterproofing & Services Pte Ltd
Chua Chin Hup	Director	Asia Supply Trading Pte Ltd
Norhuda Bte Rabani	Managing Director	Asyura Pte Ltd
Jolene Ang	Director	Bluetree Education Learning Centre Pte Ltd
Michael Koh Thong Hee	Managing Director	Caratell Pte Ltd
Daniel Tay	Founder / Director	Cat & the Fiddle Pte Ltd
Tony Tan	Director	Comms Square Creative Pte Ltd
Bjorn Low	Executive Director and Co-founder	Edible Garden City
Alan Lee	Executive Chairman	Elmich Pte Ltd
Frankie Pang	Director	FormTeam ConsultancyPte Ltd
Tom Ho	Director	FormTeam Consultancy Pte Ltd
Er Wee Liang Gerard	Director	GE Lines Pte Ltd
Eugene Cheng	Co-founder / Director	HighSpark Pte Ltd
Koh Kai Xin	Co-founder / Director	HighSpark Pte Ltd
Maddy Barber	Founder	Madly Pte. Ltd.
Qng Kae Uei	Brand Strategist	Omni Worldwide (S)Pte Ltd
Tee Chee Keong	Director	People Impact Singapore
Melissa Ng	Co-founder	Project Acai
Charmain Tan	Director	QuickDesk Pte Ltd
Henry Tan	Creative Director	Se7en Friday Pte Ltd
Rita Yeo	Founding Director	Stradivari Strings
Subra M Suppliah	Director / Advocate & Solicitor	Subra TT Law LLC
Tan Tiang Yong	Managing Director	Swatow Restaurant Pte Ltd
Mandy Chan	Director	The Bold Company
Thomas Ting	Managing Director	TT Innovation and Technology Pte Ltd
Ronald Soh	Managing Director	Win-Pro Consultancy Pte Ltd
SOE-Neo Start-up Award 2020/2021		
Tan Lee Tuan	Founder, Director	Bekind Solutions Pte Ltd
Melissa Lou	Co-founder	Delegate Pte Ltd
Vinita Choolani	Founder and CEO	Float Foods
Anders Tan	Co-founder	Inclus Pte. Ltd.
Shaun Tan	Co-founder	Inclus Pte. Ltd.
Willy Tan Kian Ping	Managing Director	Mirage Labs Holdings Pte Ltd
Ng Shi Wah	CEO and Founder	Ms Ng's Learning Academy
Seah Chee Chong Janson	Co-founder, CEO	StaffAny Private Limited
Ng Chuen Weng Eugene	Co-founder, CRO	StaffAny Private Limited
Paul Tang	Co-founder	The Dutschene Company
Tariq Mansor	Co-founder	The Dutschene Company
Jia Rajput	Founder	Trobaba Pte. Ltd.
Gerald Tan	CEO & Co-founder	Yummy Bros By Gym Bros Pte Ltd

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Ms Rachel Wong, president of SOE

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Founder

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