

## A JOURNEY BECKONS AND PATHFINDERS SHOW THE WAY

**T**HE buzzwords among corporations today are productivity and innovation. The concepts, however, are not new, and certainly not to the four winners of this year's Singapore Business Awards.

Each of them has made his mark by adopting innovative approaches to business that have made them forerunners in their industries.

In this supplement, they share their journeys, and how they have made it big despite the very trying times they had to endure.

There are also contributions from economists, human resource professionals and consultants on how to ace Singapore's economic restructuring.

It is not going to be easy, but the stories of the SBA winners could provide some inspiration and optimism.

Raffles Medical Group (RMG) executive chairman and co-founder Loo Choon Yong, for instance, started his own practice with good friend and classmate Alfred Loh. From the two clinics they purchased in 1976, the practice grew and they established South-east Asia's first stand-alone day surgery centre.

RMG was also the first fully fledged healthcare service provider here to go public with a listing on Sesdaq, then the secondary board of the Singapore Exchange. The move received flak from some quarters, with many saying the profit-maximising nature of listed firms would lead to RMG compromising on quality patient care.

Today, however, Dr Loo probably has the last laugh. The RMG group has a reputation for



Tan Suee Chieh

Tham Khai Meng

David Teo

providing quality care to patients, remains profitable and is expanding.

It's not surprising to see that Dr Loo has earned the Businessman of the Year accolade.

For CEO of the Year Tan Suee Chieh, there is little doubt that he has made a difference not just to NTUC Income, but also to the insurance industry in Singapore. With Mr Tan at the helm, Income began to sell what he terms "honest insurance" – where the insurer pays claims based on the intent of the policy rather than point at the fine print to escape a payout.

Under his leadership, Income is now the leading composite insurer serving over two million customers in Singapore.

Then there is advertising guru Tham Khai Meng, who is chief creative officer of Ogilvy & Mather, the world's third largest advertising agency.

In his 32-year career, Mr Tham has played a part in building some of the biggest brands such as Singapore Airlines, American Express, Coca-Cola, Heinz, IBM, Johnson &

Johnson and McDonald's.

He is the first worldwide Asian chief creative officer of any Western international holding company or global agency network.

For his achievements, New York-based Mr Tham clinched the Outstanding Chief/Senior Executive (Overseas) award.

Taking home the Enterprise award is instant food maker Super Group. It was started by chairman David Teo and his wife, who both knew nothing about the coffee business. That, however, had little impact on how successful the company has become.

Super started by creating 20-gram coffee sachets that each had coffee powder, sugar and creamer. Established market players then scoffed at the firm's strategy, and said they were naive to think that they could create one product to suit the taste of crowds of people.

But its coffee sachets became so popular that today, its 20g sachet is the industry standard for regular 3-in-1 coffee packets in Singapore.

There is much to learn from these four super businessmen, so read on.

– *Felda Chay*



Loo Choon Yong

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## SINGAPORE BUSINESS AWARDS 2013



### Raffles Medical Group

Raffles Medical Group has grown from a two-clinic practice to a fully integrated healthcare organisation, with a network of family medicine and dental clinics, a tertiary care private hospital, insurance services and a consumer healthcare division. It has evolved in the last 36 years to become a multi-disciplinary group practice of family physicians, specialists and dental surgeons, nursing, allied health and management staff, working together to leverage on each other's talents and strengths to provide quality care for its patients.

Listed on the Singapore Exchange since 1997, the Group has seen its revenue grow 1300 times, from \$240,000 in 1976 to \$311.6 million in 2012.

“ Look after the patients well,  
 and the business will look after itself ”

– Executive Chairman, Dr Loo Choon Yong

RafflesMedical

RafflesHospital

RafflesDental

RafflesHealth

RafflesHealthInsurance

RafflesJapaneseClinic