



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR EYA 2019 – ESTABLISHED ENTREPRENEURS!



DAVID BLACK
MANAGING DIRECTOR
BLACKBOX RESEARCH PTE LTD

As early as 2000, David Black knew Asia was going to be the next big thing. Travelling frequently across the region, the opportunities he saw lured him to venture out of his cushy job in Australia.

David chose Singapore to set up Blackbox, a home-grown research firm offering quality polling services, something sorely lacking in the region.

Serendipitously, his past experiences prepared him for his entrepreneurial journey with Blackbox. His law degree endowed him with a capacity for detail and logic. Writing speeches trained him to be an adept storyteller who can articulate complex ideas that appeals to the public. And as a polling specialist, he has met with people from all walks of life and learned to appreciate their hopes and aspirations.

During its first six years, Blackbox lived through multiple drastic events – dot.com crisis, 9/11, SARS and the global financial crisis. David weathered through these tumultuous events without compromising on the quality of service to his local and international clients.

As Blackbox grew, David brought in people with mutual aspirations and matching expertise. He also began to work on projects of national importance—the first originated from current DPM Heng Swee Keat. More followed, including the rebranding of OCBC Bank and NTUC Income. In 2011, David was honoured to assist the government with Singapore's international branding.

For David, providing value is about transforming data into meaning for his clients. This could be in the form of data stories, strategic plans or social advocacies. To put it simply, Blackbox is data+.



KELVYN CHEE
CEO & FOUNDER
DECKS PTE LTD

Mr Kelvyn Chee Choon Hian, CEO and Founder of Decks Pte Ltd, did not achieve today's accomplishments without hardship.

Mr Chee's family owned an apparel retail, wholesale and manufacturing business in Singapore, and he was initially poised to take over the family business.

Unfortunately, the company shut down in 2003 due to dwindling revenue during the SARS epidemic. Thereafter, Mr Chee was desperately looking for a job to repay debts and also to provide for the family.

To his surprise, Mr Chee received a call from Liang Court's leasing manager then, offering him a 33000 sq ft retail space at an unbelievable rate. Without hesitation, he took up the offer and set up his business.

16 years on, Mr Chee is a proud owner of multiple businesses and continues to push boundaries by defying societal standards and the status quo. Under his leadership, Decks has become a tight knit organisation, one that is focused, targeted and efficient.

Decks is one of the leading apparel suppliers in Singapore, with 24 of their own retail boutiques and more than 63 counters in departmental stores around the region. It is also a multi-brand group with popular brands such as Mjphosis, Island Shop, Surfers Paradise, Isle & Isle, Hangten and Santa Babara Polo and Racquet Club and Beverly Hillis Polo Club. Decks has also delved into being the authorised manufacturer for Universal Studios Singapore and Resorts World Sentosa (Singapore).

To keep up with ever-changing fashion trends, Decks prioritises creativity, flexibility and innovation while retaining traditions that keep them rooted to the company's DNA.



JAMES CHEOW
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & CO-FOUNDER
CRAWFORT PTE LTD



JJOHN CHEOW
CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER & CO-FOUNDER
CRAWFORT PTE LTD



RACHEL WONG MAI KIM
CO-FOUNDER & MANAGING DIRECTOR
MARUNDA UTAMA ENGINEERING PTE LTD

James Cheow is the CEO and Co-Founder of Capital C Corporation, a private investment business that specialises in providing integrated, dynamic, and innovative financial services.

Prior to founding Capital C, James had been the brain behind Singapore's leading microfinance institution Crawfort, which now makes up one of the companies under Capital C's portfolio. As the man responsible for its digitalisation strategies to this day, James has managed to bring the brand to where it is today through leveraging smart digital processes and streamlining the company's operations. His vision for Crawfort was for it to become a leader in digital micro-finance across Asia, empowering under-served individuals and resolving funding issues.

His entrepreneurial streak, however, had started long before Crawfort. In his late teens, James had ventured into an event management company with his friends. Shortly after, he founded a food and beverage business with his brother, JJohn. This was when the brothers first experienced the difficulties that small business owners face when trying to obtain bank financing. With the intention to help those who faced the same problems as them, the brothers decided to venture into the financial sector. Leveraging on the lessons of their past, they now use their experience to provide financial advice for their customers.

Today, James is the CEO of one of Singapore's leading alternative digital microfinancing companies, and continues to spearhead it towards greater heights. His unwavering passion and service towards the under-served have benefited thousands of people, and changed many lives for the better.

The life motto that JJohn lives by is to believe in yourself, to be persistent in the face of adversity, and to treat failures as opportunities. With this philosophy driving everything he does, JJohn readily takes on challenges, which can be seen in his many business ventures before Crawfort.

As a small business owner, JJohn had experienced great difficulties when trying to obtain bank financing. Due to that, he was inspired to help others who faced the same problems. This eventually led to him co-founding Crawfort, one of Singapore's leading alternative microfinance institutions, with James. Apart from offering financial advice, JJohn also shares his entrepreneurship experience with his customers.

His efforts in Crawfort have seen resounding success; in the span of eight years, the company has managed to processed over 200,000 loans, changing thousands of lives for the better.

On the corporate front, JJohn is the Chief Investment Officer for Capital C Corporation. His expertise lies mainly in corporate investments and acquisitions, but he is also proactive in priming the company's expansion and long-term acquisitive growth. This has led to him spearheading the company Capital, which caters to corporate customers like SMEs.

As a firm believer in giving back to society, JJohn also champions the group's CSR efforts. He believes that everyone has a part to play in contributing to a more caring society, and seeks to embed philanthropy in the company's culture.

Rachel Wong Mai Kim is the Co-Founder and Managing Director of Marunda Utama Engineering Pte Ltd. Famously known as the "Woman in Power", she made heads turn in the engineering sector, especially in the power generation, equipment maintenance, ship husbandry and defence ship repair business. In what was once a male-dominated field, Rachel's indomitable drive showed her determination in breaking stereotypical glass ceilings. First established in 1985, Rachel has since diversified Marunda into a multi-million-dollar business. She oversees all aspects of the company, which counts the United States and Singapore Government as their main clients.

Born into an impoverished family, Rachel's climb to the top was far from granted. Having single-handedly built the company up from the brink of bankruptcy, her story is a powerful reminder that in the face of adversity, one can either give up or keep going. While giving up may be the easier option, defying the odds teaches an invaluable lesson in resilience. In overcoming the many challenges, she managed to prove critics wrong and led Marunda to where it is today.

An eminent face in Singapore's high society, Rachel's success story has been featured in various publications and numerous media. In recognition of her achievements, she has been the recipient of several outstanding entrepreneurship awards. She is also the President of the Spirit of Enterprise and an active Rotarian who never hesitates to give back to society. Her success thus far is a testament to her strength of character as an entrepreneur.



CHAN LEE YING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HOCK SENG HOE METAL COMPANY PTE LTD



SAM CHEE KEONG
MANAGING DIRECTOR
HOCK SENG HOE METAL COMPANY PTE LTD

The success achieved by Hock Seng Hoe Metal Company Pte Ltd today is attributed to the hard work, determination and entrepreneurial spirit of two people, Ms Chan Lee Ying and Mr Sam Chee Keong.

In 2009, Ms Chan established Hock Seng Hoe Metal Company. In its initial years, Ms Chan operated the business from the premises of her home, committing long hours to push the business forward. Equipped with a keen insight, she realized that few firms were involved in nail manufacturing and decided to capitalise on the opportunity. Under her lead, Hock Seng Hoe Metal Company took up the challenge and successfully implemented nail production. Through determination, hard work and team effort, the company found success.

Meanwhile, Mr Sam Chee Keong was recruited by another listed company in the same industry as General Manager and he worked for 25 years. During the 1998 financial crisis, he learnt how to make adjustments for the company to reduce costs and tide through the difficult period. This prior experience enabled Mr Sam to thrive when he assumed the position of Managing Director of Hock Seng Hoe Metal Company in 2014.

Since then, Ms Chan and Mr Sam have been working together hand in hand, to bring the company to greater heights. Their plans and strategies led the company to tremendous growth, and enhanced the Hock Seng Hoe brand to larger client bases in foreign markets. Under their leadership, Hock Seng Hoe had grown from a small metal trading firm into a robust enterprise.

Together, they aimed to build deep and strong relationships with their customers by providing them with the highest level of service. Apart from being the first to offer deliveries on Sundays, the company also offers customization of their products as a value-added service to their customers. This has turned Hock Seng Hoe Metal Company into the lean, efficient and highly profitable enterprise it is today.

Today, Hock Seng Hoe Metal Company has successfully moved into a 58,000 sq. ft. office in Tuas Singapore and initiated a "Smart" warehouse management system that increased the efficiency of their workers. Coupled with Mr Sam's determination in growing the business, Hock Seng Hoe has served clientele in the region which includes Malaysia, Brunei, Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam from diverse industries.

With the belief that any business should contribute to the society, Ms Chan and Mr Sam have implemented Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives within the company. They have contributed actively in helping the less fortunate by committing to 100 hours to CSR yearly which all employees actively and voluntarily participate. This not only brought assistance to the beneficiaries, it also fosters bonds within the employees, making the company united as one family.

This wonderful team has great chemistry in working together and aims to put the company on the roadmap to get listed in the near future.

