

# PRE-AGM TALK: ENTREPRENEURSHIP & LEADERSHIP

URBAN ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

reported by



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The Urban Engineering Development Special Interest Group (UEDSIG) of IEM held its 2nd AGM on 8 December, 2018 at 11.00 a.m. Prior to this, 50 participants attended a pre-AGM talk on "Entrepreneurship & Leadership", presented by Mr. Ngian Siew Siong at 9.00 a.m..



Mr. Ngian

Mr. Ngian initially worked as a engineer at JPS and later moved to the property development arena with the Sunway Group in 1985; he was the only employee at that time. He retired in 2012 as its Managing Director. Now a board director for a few large property developers as well as the COO of Glomac Bhd, he is recognised for developing Talent, Product & Procession Innovation, and Sustainable Development.

Mr. Ngian began by relating his early days at Sunway – from the exceptional aptitudes of his boss, Tan Sri Jeffery Cheah, to his own experiences in entrepreneurship and leadership, which he defined as both an art and a science.

He pointed out that in order to shape a successful enterprise, there were 3-interlinked qualities to be addressed: Entrepreneur, Leadership and Management (see Figure 1 and Table 1).

Mr. Ngian gave risk-taking examples such as how Sunway sent employees to Disney World in Orlando, Florida, to learn and gain ideas for the Sunway Group. In addition, Sunway had a good reputation with local banks

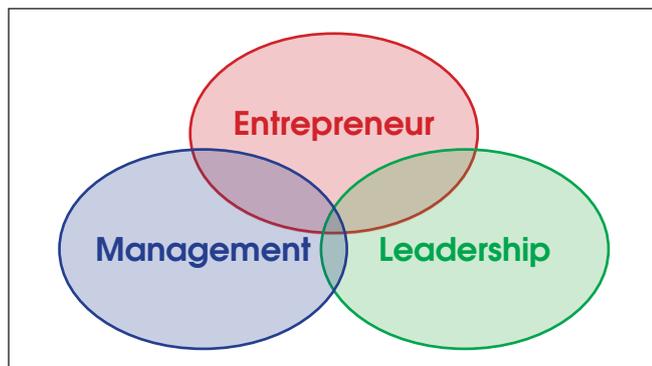


Figure 1: Successful Enterprise (3-interlinked qualities)

Table 1: Three Interlinked Qualities

| Entrepreneur        | Leadership            | Management               |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Innovative          | Visionary             | Resources                |
| Seek Opportunity    | Creative & Innovation | Strategy of Organisation |
| Recognise Potential | Passion               | Planning/ Organising     |
| Risk Taking         | Inspiration           | Staffing & Coordination  |
| Hope for Profit     | Team Building         | Leading/ Directing       |
| Perseverance        | Empowering            | Assets                   |
| Vision & Courage    | Accountability        | Skills                   |
|                     | Change Agent          |                          |

Table 2: A.J.I.D. (Talent Skills Assessment Qualities)

| Agility               | Judgement                 | Influence             | Drive               |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Flexible              | Rational thinking         | Other skills          | Positive mindset    |
| Fast to think & grasp | Objective                 | Ability to influence  | Positive energy     |
| Receptive to ideas    | Not personal              | Motivate/ inspire     | Energetic           |
| Accept change         | Think of other's feelings | Ability to sell ideas | Determination       |
| Change agent          | Do not over-react         | Rally staff support   | Result driven       |
| Innovative            | Think before speaking     | Convince management   | Alternative options |
| Think out of the box  | Analytical thinking       | Response skills       |                     |
| See positive side     | Think out of the box      | Positive perspective  |                     |
| Resistance to change  |                           | How to say            |                     |

Table 3: Quotations of Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah

| Topics                   | Quotations   |
|--------------------------|--|
| Lesson 1                 | Recruit staff smarter than you. Boss to pull up & staff to push you up. Customer first. No complaints from purchaser. Be bold.   |
| Long term                | View long term. Win a war but lose a battle.   |
| Value creation           | Cost vs value creation. Supply chain management (e.g. Dell). Value engineering.  |
| People the biggest asset | Develop people. Training budget. Good company but bad boss.  |
| Culture                  | Visionary. Trust. Forgiving. Lets you talk at a meeting. Leadership by example. Pick talent. Strong career development programme. Management trainee programme. Competency vs KPIs. Work with people and not against them, |

and raised capital; it never defaulted on loan repayments. To overcome adversity during the 1986-89 economic downturn, it decided to sell Quarry, 48% of Sunway Pyramid Mall and only retained the best talent.

Highlighting leadership, people and management skills, Mr. Ngian briefly described A.J.I.D. (A=Agility, J=Judgement, I=Influence, D=Drive) as qualities for talent assessment as a form of Sunway's staff asset (Table 2).

As practised at Sunway, Mr. Ngian continued, the 3 main assets of an organisation are Staff (talent), Brand (product) and Knowledge. For staff talent, the main goal is attraction, development and retention. This may include coaching, mentoring, succession planning and knowledge learning at institutions. Other factors include respect for staff, fair treatment, equal opportunities, growth, performance rewards and good managers (see Table 3).

As for creating a brand, the factors are creation of a quality product which is elegant, which does not require renovations, which delivered ahead of schedule with zero defects, the use of durable materials and prompt communication, response and service. Thirdly, knowledge belongs to the company; however, it stays with the staff which poses a risk. Knowledge includes SOP, various reports, work references, checklist templates and case studies.

Lastly, he stressed on the importance of a good supply chain management which includes design & engineering, new product introduction, purchasing & planning, factory & test automation, production, dedicated logistics and after sales service.

After the question-and-answer session, Mr. Ngian ended with the advice that in order to be ahead in property development business and to stay competitive, entrepreneurs need to adopt the latest BIM tools and technology available. A certificate and a token of appreciation were then presented to Mr. Ngian. ■