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Lotus Emeya

A New Era of Electric Performance

by Alexis Toh

In a significant leap toward the future of automotive excellence, Wearnes Automotive has unveiled the all-new Lotus Emeya in Singapore. This electric hyper-GT marks a milestone for Lotus Cars, embodying the brand's rich heritage while embracing cutting-edge technology to redefine what it means to drive an electric vehicle.

The Lotus Emeya, the first electric grand tourer (GT) from Lotus, is engineered for the driving enthusiast. It seamlessly combines sports car performance with the comfort and practicality expected of a GT. With an acceleration of 0-100 km/h in under 2.8 seconds, it stands as one of the fastest electric GTs globally, showcasing the superior engineering prowess that Lotus is known for.

A key feature of the Emeya is its advanced charging capability. Utilising a 400-kW DC fast charger, the Emeya can charge from 10% to 80% in just 14 minutes, making it one of the fastest charging electric vehicles on the market. This, combined with a maximum WLTP range of 610 km, ensures that the Emeya is as practical as it is powerful, ready for long journeys without the anxiety of frequent charging stops.

Design and aerodynamics are at the heart of the Emeya's appeal. Retaining the core Lotus DNA, the car features bold, muscular wheel arches reminiscent of the brand's classic road and race machines. Its active aerodynamic components, including a pioneering active front grille, rear diffuser, and rear spoiler, enhance stability and performance, particularly at high speeds. These features not only improve the car's handling but also showcase its racing heritage.

Inside, the Emeya marries luxury with sustainability. The interior is adorned with advanced materials, including Wyron Truecycle, a luxury thread made from repurposed fashion industry fibres, marking Lotus as one of the leaders in sustainable automotive design. The cabin is further elevated by ambient lighting that responds intuitively to the driver's actions and a state-of-the-art infotainment system powered by the Lotus HyperOS, featuring a 15.1-inch HD OLED display.

Emphasising both form and function, the Emeya provides an immersive driving experience, complemented by advanced safety features such as deployable LiDARs and a comprehensive surround-sensor system, ensuring 360-degree perception with no blind spots. These innovations, paired with a 55-inch head-up display and an award-winning KEF audio system, make the Emeya a truly modern grand tourer.

Starting at \$415,000 before COE and options, the Lotus Emeya is competitively priced within the luxury GT segment. It represents the pinnacle of electric vehicle performance and design, setting a new standard on what drivers can expect from a hyper-GT in the electric era. 🏆



The Power Playbook

Strategies, Success, and
the Stories Behind Them

by Toh Mu Qin

Success in business is often determined by one's ability to negotiate. Whether closing high-stakes deals, navigating cultural complexities, or securing the best opportunities, negotiation is both an art and a science. This issue of *Millionaireasia* unpacks the strategies, insights, and real-world stories that define effective deal-making, spotlighting leaders who have mastered this essential skill.

Leading our cover story is Chitpol “Fight” Mungprom, a true visionary reshaping the MarTech and Neurotechnology industries. As the driving force behind Zanroo and Brainspoke, Fight has demonstrated how innovation and strategic thinking can disrupt markets and redefine industries. His expertise in harnessing technology to enhance customer insights and mental wellness makes him one of the leaders in the digital era.

We also highlight the inspiring journey of head chef Kazumine Nishida, whose culinary mastery has elevated fine dining experiences. Through his 4 Stars at Home Experience, he brings Michelin-level craftsmanship into private spaces, proving that luxury dining is not just about taste but also about storytelling and connection.

Our Aspiring Entrepreneurs Series introduces three extraordinary individuals who exemplify resilience and determination. Lee Song Yong's journey from humble beginnings to a leader in financial advisory showcases the power of perseverance and faith. Jason Ong's relentless pursuit of excellence, despite early setbacks, proves that success is a product of grit and authenticity. Meanwhile, Jason

Goh's rise from self-doubt to building a thriving business proves that turning personal struggles into professional strength is not impossible.

In *Living Large*, we indulge in the finest aspects of luxury. From Cartier's Musubi Half Century art exhibition in Japan to the electrifying Lotus Emeya and the ultra-luxe Bentley Flying Spur, we explore the pinnacle of craftsmanship and innovation. Fashion aficionados will revel in Bvlgari's exquisite high-end bags, while watch collectors will be captivated by H. Moser & Cie.'s Pioneer Perpetual Calendar. For those with a penchant for travel, we embark on lavish journeys – whether aboard Amanjiwo's exclusive Java train, whale watching in Mozambique, or experiencing the grandeur of Capella's newest retreat in Macau.

Beyond luxury and success stories, this issue dives deep into the art of negotiation. Understanding cultural intelligence is key in today's global business environment, and we explore how it can shape successful deals. Additionally, we dissect different negotiation strategies, ensuring readers can make informed decisions that lead to long-term success. For those navigating legal agreements, we provide expert insights on how to prepare for effective negotiations, turning potential conflicts into advantageous resolutions.

This issue is a celebration of strategy, resilience, and ambition. Whether you are an entrepreneur, executive, or visionary, *Millionaireasia* equips you with the insights and inspiration to be successful. 🏆

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ART SG

Singapore's vibrant canvas showcasing local and global expressions.

by Adli Yashir Kuchit

The recent instalment of ART SG speaks volumes about the increasingly vibrant, innovative and globalised arts scene in Singapore.

The international art fair presented an eclectic collection of exhibits, as well as a citywide schedule of dynamic exhibitions, installations, and activations.

Now in its third year, the event was held from 17-19 January.

Millionaireasia was invited to the VIP Preview and the Vernissage, a day before the event opened its doors to the public.

ART SG welcomed over 41,000 visitors across four days – attending from Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Australia, Japan, Korea, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan as well as Europe and the US.

Some 105 galleries, from 30 countries, converged at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands to showcase talents from a mix of different styles and cultural backgrounds and artworks produced in various mediums. The fair sprawled over a significant part of the first floor and another area at Basement 2.

Notable galleries included Gagosian (New York, Los Angeles, London, Paris, Le Bourget, Geneva, Basel, Gstaad, Rome, Athens, Hong Kong), White Cube (London, Hong Kong, Paris, Seoul, New York), Thaddaeus Ropac (London, Paris, Salzburg, Seoul), Lehmann Maupin (New York, London, Seoul), neugerriemschneider (Berlin), Galerie Gisela Capitain (Cologne, Naples), Annely Juda Fine Art (London), Goodman Gallery (Johannesburg, Cape Town, London, New York), P.P.O.W (New York), Ota Fine Arts (Singapore, Shanghai, Tokyo) and Cardi Gallery (Milan, London).

Other galleries like Zilberman (Istanbul, Berlin, Miami), INKstudio (Beijing, New York) and ESLITE GALLERY (Taipei, Beijing) returned to the fair after a one-year hiatus.



Visitors appreciating a work of art created by Mr Pablo Reinoso at ART SG 2025.
Photo: ART SG



Mr Khairulddin Wahab,
The Lands Below the Winds
Photo: ART SG



According to Ms Shuyin Yang, fair director of ART SG, the event showcased remarkable talent hailing from Southeast Asia and beyond, and offered thoughtfully curated sectors and programs.

The event was presented by founding and lead partner UBS.

Acknowledging the increasing appetite among high-net-worth (HNW) individuals for fine arts, Mr Jin Yee Young, co-head UBS Global Wealth Management Asia Pacific and country head UBS Singapore, said a recent survey showed that 97 percent of Singapore's HNW collectors were the most optimistic about the global art market and Singapore collectors ranked amongst the highest in favouring art fairs to purchase art works.

Mr Jin expressed: "As founding and lead partner of ART SG for the third consecutive year, we are delighted to provide this important platform to reinforce Singapore's rising role in engaging art enthusiasts, collectors and the public across the region."



Ms Shavonne Wong, *Meet Eva Here*, 2024, video installation.
Image courtesy of the artist and The Columns Gallery.

Photo: ART SG



Dr Libby Heaney, *Ent-er the quantum cyborg*.

Photo: ART SG

“UBS has a history of supporting contemporary art and artists, and has one of the most important corporate collections of contemporary art in the world,” he added.

As part of the private bank’s commitment to fostering a vibrant art scene, the UBS Art Collection has commissioned Thai artist Mr Mit Jai Inn to create artworks for the UBS Lounge and UBS Art Studio.

UBS Singapore also launched its inaugural “Art for All” community programme with a 60-metre-long tapestry to commemorate Singapore’s 60 years of independence. Displayed at the UBS Art Studio, the weaving of the tapestry was opened for public participation during the fair.

There was something for everyone at this year’s ART SG, from the progressive to the very basic art form. From greys and blacks to luminous eye-popping colourful neon signs. The event had something for every taste and budget.

Hushed conversations overheard at one part of the show floor revealed a prospective buyer with a budget of \$400,000 but claiming that “unfortunately the artist wanted \$1 million for his piece”.

The crowds began to swell for the Vernissage, a preview of the art exhibition, before the formal opening, with one visitor exclaiming he “did not expect so much crowd at the event”.

For first timers, the fair was an eye-opener. From the sights, the sounds and the scents, art can indeed be exhilarating. Even the visitors, in their flamboyant outfits, uniquely coiffured hairstyles and star-studded accessories, provided additional talking points for journalists at the event.

Tech In Art

For those with a passion for technology, ART SG provided a platform for new discoveries. The immersion of technology in art has manifested in various mediums, including digital painting, interactive installations, augmented and virtual reality experiences.

In a nod to the current hot topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI), local artist Ms Shavonne Wong invited audiences to interact with an AI companion named Eva, who listens and evolves based on anonymous conversations. Through interactions, participants help to shape a narrative that explores themes of trust, identity, and connection in today’s AI-driven world.

Another Singaporean artist Mr Jahan Loh showcased how he melded art and blockchain technology. For starters, he embedded his works with non-fungible tokens, often referred to as NFTs. These are blockchain-based tokens that represent a unique asset like a piece of art, digital content, or media. An NFT can be thought of as an irrevocable digital certificate of ownership and authenticity for a given asset, whether digital or physical.



Showcasing a series of huge postcards with neon pink coloured astronauts, Mr Loh delved into the realms of science fiction and environmentalism, exploring the convergence of space exploration and migration.

The series envisions a future portraying humanity in new habitats. At the heart of it is the concept of 'interplanetary diaspora', where humans are presented with a scenario in which mankind migrates from Earth to celestial bodies such as Mars, the Moon, or potentially habitable exoplanets to ensure our species' survival and progression, using terraforming technology.

These paintings encourage contemplation on the challenges and opportunities of colonising new worlds, as well as the cultural and societal shifts that may occur, and how humanity might adapt to uncharted environments.

Inspired by historical archaeological finds and elements of popular culture, the works portray a future where interplanetary migration becomes not just a choice but a necessity.

These visual 'postcards' offer a glimpse into a reality where adapting to the demands of space is vital for human existence.

By blending elements of reality and fiction, these postcards also aim to spark conversations about the essential nature of sustainability and the repercussions

of mankind's current actions on the future of the human species. Through his work, Mr Loh invited viewers to reflect on the fragility of the planet and the potential consequences if it was left to waste.

At another gallery, UK-based artist Dr Libby Heaney explored the world of quantum computing in her art. The UK artist, with a PhD in Quantum Information Science, showcased her latest inspiration titled 'Ent-er the quantum cyborg (2024)'. The work combined diverse media such as glass, and watercolour painting with cutting-edge technologies.

Dr Heaney was not in Singapore for the event but through an Instagram post she explained that her work is a new unique print in which she explored the entangled hybrid sculpture Ent- (non-earthly delights) (2024) she brought to life in Regent's Park.

Digitally printed on a mirrored gold Dibond aluminium panel – a material that Dr Heaney has utilised since 2022 – the work layers quantum-edited textures with fragments of the animated AR experience from Ent- (non-earthly delights) and digital renders of the quantum-cyborg itself.

"Ent-er the quantum cyborg therefore invites audiences to think about new queer forms of hybrid life in our quantum future," she posted.

Luxury automobile marque Porsche, also took the opportunity at ART SG to deepen its tradition of blending art and innovation. The German luxury car maker unveiled a new commissioned artwork by Malaysian artist Ms Red Hong Yi.

Speaking to Millionaireasia at the event, Ms Red explained that she took inspiration from 60 shades of red from Porsche's Paint To Sample catalogue, with the number 60 also a tribute to Singapore's 60th birthday in 2025.

Mixing car paint with sand, Ms Red painstakingly painted the layers making sure the colours do not bleed into each other and then subtly embedded a silhouette of the iconic Porsche 911 into the art piece.

"The first top 8 colours, 8 is a lucky number right, are their (Porsche's) most popular colours. The silhouette of the 911 is also supposed to look like a mountainous landscape representing life is continuous – the past and the present are interlinked," stated Ms Red.



Ms Red Hong Yi, The Red Thread: Past, Present, Future.

Photo: Porsche Asia Pacific

Commenting on the artwork, Mr Yannick Ott, marketing director for Porsche Asia Pacific said the partnership underlined Porsche's dedication to pushing boundaries and exploring new dimensions of creativity.

Beyond ART SG, Porsche Studio Singapore also hosted complementary art-themed events.

For example, Porsche unveiled a bespoke 911 Dakar art car by celebrated automotive artist Mr Chris Dunlop. This one-of-a-kind masterpiece was shown for the first time in Singapore on the weekend of 18-19 January 2025, alongside a 'Driving Tomorrow' panel discussion with both artists at the Studio.

Religion in Art

One interesting installation at the fair is 'The Broken Boat', a life-sized wooden fishing boat split into two as if it is sinking. In and around the boat were hundreds if not thousands of round communion bread.

Artist Mr J. Ariadhitya Pramuhendra confessed with a laugh: "I didn't get the communion bread from my church but got it online."

Explaining his art, he said the fisherman's boat can be linked to how Jesus met his disciples. These disciples

then became 'Fishers of Men', to gather believers and hear the word of Jesus.

The communion bread symbolises two things. It symbolises the bread that was shared at the Last Supper and it refers to all individuals who believe in salvation.

Mr Pramuhendra also considers the sinking boat a "dilemma, as humanity's inherent fragility and imperfection contradict the ideal image of unshakeable faith that is faultless".

Art of Sight And Scents

Walking through ART SG was a sensory delight. As you approach the SAC Gallery for example, the air is suddenly filled with the sweet fragrance of fresh blooms.

Here, Thai artist, Mr Naraphat Sakarthornsap reimagines traditional flower garland as a grand orange and white chandelier – reminiscent of those featured in Thai Royal Ceremonies. While the grand chandelier represents wealth and luxury, its components – fresh and perishable flowers – symbolises fragility and impermanence of hope. Each garland was meticulously made up of local flowers, reflecting the diversity of people and their different aspirations.

By assembling the garlands in this way, Mr Sakarthornsap visualises a poignant metaphor for the precarious nature of dreams and desires.

Taste of Art

Enjoying art would not be complete without having the other finer things in life. One ever crowded area at ART SG was The Glendronach whiskey booth.

As ART SG's Official Whisky Partner for the fair, the whiskey brand invited guests to sample some exceptional sherry cask whisky and appreciate the reimagined designs for their core range.



Porsche Art Car
Photo: Porsche Asia Pacific



Mr J. Ariadhitya
Pramuhendra,
The Broken Boat.
Photo: A. Yash





Photo: ART SG

Futures of Art

The recent ART SG was also an important platform for young galleries, established within the past ten years, to showcase new artwork by rising talents, specially created for the event. The works have been created within the past 18 months and not previously exhibited in a gallery or institutional setting. Haridas Contemporary (Singapore) for example presented a sculpture by Singapore artist Ms Melissa Tan, titled 'The Fates: Klotho, Lachesis & Antropos'. The largest work in Ms Tan's iconic metal sculpture series (began in 2018), this monumental work explores the notion of womanhood through the lens of mythology.

Art in Film

Apart from art exhibits, ART SG also organised screenings of art films curated by Mr Stefano Rabolli Pansera, the founding director of Bangkok Kunsthalle and Khao Yai Art Forest. The film programme offered fresh insight into contemporary art practices across different histories and disciplines, celebrating the synergy between visual and cinematic arts. The screenings were organised into three chapters: 'Constructing Landscapes', 'Voices and Signs', and 'Ruins and Memories', offering audiences fresh perspectives on contemporary art practices.

As part of the fair, the organisers also lined up a series of talks and discussions exploring contemporary art themes and issues, and with artist talks by significant rising stars hailing from Southeast Asia. Supported by AXA XL, the programme also spotlighted Singaporean art, celebrating the rich landscape of the region.

During the fair's four-day run, galleries reported significant sales, with works placed in important private and institutional collections. A snapshot of reported sales includes:

1. Cardi Gallery (Milan, London) led with the sale of Pablo Picasso's *Buste d'Homme à la pipe* (1969) for US\$1,200,000.
2. White Cube (London, Hong Kong, Paris, Seoul, New York) achieved strong results, including Georg Baselitz's *Mettere mano a - anfangen* (2019) sold for €650,000
3. Antony Gormley's *VIEW* (2024) sold for £500,000, and
4. Tunji Adeniyi-Jones's *Celestial Gathering* (2024) for US\$350,000

Additional highlights included Minoru Nomata's *Continuum-12* (2024) for US\$95,000 and *Far Sights-1* (2009) for US\$35,000, alongside Tiona Nekkia McClodden's *NEVER LET ME GO | XXII. drop* (2024) for US\$75,000 and Tracey Emin's *Away From The Cross* (2023) for £28,000.

In Asia, Johyun Gallery (Busan, Seoul) performed exceptionally well, with Lee Bae's *Issu de feu K-20* (2003) sold for US\$180,000 and works from his *Brushstroke* series (2024) achieving US\$60,000 each. Sundaram Tagore (New York, Singapore, London) achieved notable sales including Zheng Lu's *Water in Dipping – Yangtze* (2023) for US\$175,000, Miya Ando's *Tasogare (Dusk) Moon Triptych 02.08.2024* (2024) sold for US\$84,000, and Jane Lee's *Unearthed I* (2024) for US\$70,000 among others.

Singapore-based galleries continued to assert their influence. artcommune (Singapore) for example, saw outstanding results including Cheong Soo Pieng's *By the Lake* (1979) for S\$116,000 and Chua Mia Tee's *Smith Street* (1981) for S\$110,000. Ames Yavuz (Singapore, Sydney) placed six major works by leading Thai-artist Pinaree Sanpitak in the range of US\$60,000 to US\$85,000 each to private collectors in the region; Highlight Art (Singapore) placed Meng Zhigang's *Subcelestial Touch - Awaiting South Wind No.3* (2019) for S\$50,000; Haridas Contemporary (Singapore) reported Melissa Tan's *The Fates: Klotho, Lachesis & Atropos* (2024) fetched S\$50,000 to S\$60,000 in a sale to a private museum in Southeast Asia.

The latest addition of ART SG reinforces Singapore's dynamic and evolving arts scene, further nurturing global collaborations and providing a platform for diverse artistic expressions. It also underscored the city's commitment to becoming a significant player in the global art landscape and a Renaissance City. 🌟

SAM ART SG FUND

New Acquisitions for Singapore's Contemporary Art Scene

by Adli Yashir Kuchit

A \$150,000 fund was launched by the Singapore Art Museum in support of selected artists showcased at ART SG, Southeast Asia's largest international art fair. Named the SAM ART SG Fund, the budget will be used to acquire artworks by leading and emerging artists.

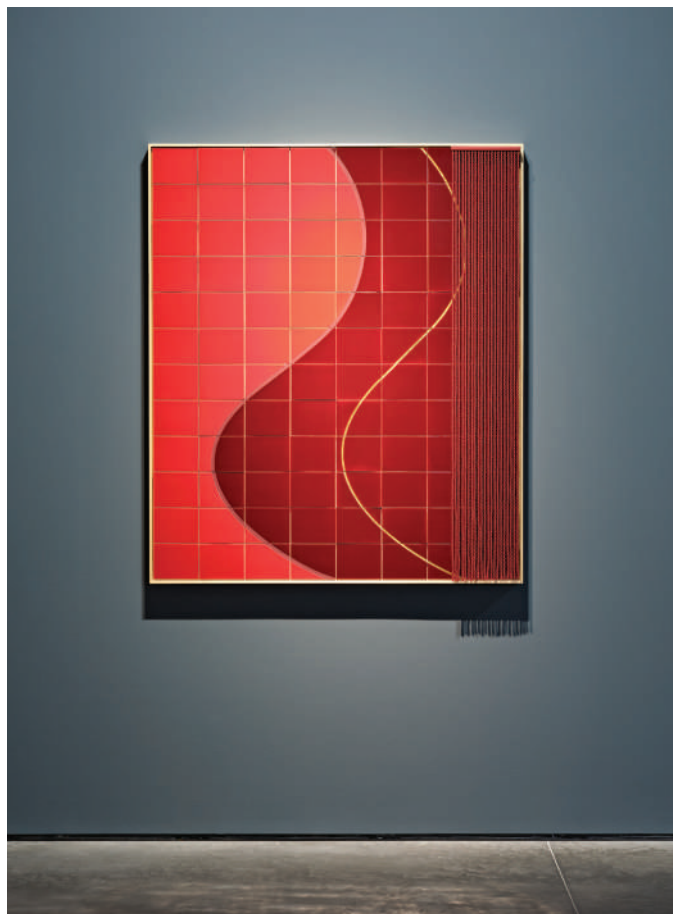
These art pieces will then become part of SAM's permanent collection, further strengthening the museum's role as a hub for contemporary art while nurturing a philanthropic spirit within Singapore.

The fund was made possible by the generous support of art patrons Ms Carmen Yixuan Li, Ms Pure Yichun Chen, and other anonymous donors.

Cultural strategist Mr Zong Han and fair director of ART SG Ms Shuyin Yang provided key advisory



Pictured [L to R]: Shao Qihao, director of VIP Relations and Partnership, Angus Montgomery Arts; Zong Han, Cultural strategist; Ong Puay Khim, director of Collection, Public Art and Programmes, Singapore Art Museum; Shuyin Yang, fair director of ART SG; Eugene Tan, CEO and director, Singapore Art Museum; Pure Yichun Chen, founding patron, ART SG SAM Fund; Carmen Yixuan Li, founding patron, ART SG SAM Fund; June Yap, director of Curatorial and Research, Singapore Art Museum; Delissa Handoko, aide to the CEO & director, Singapore Art Museum.



Kapwani Kiwanga
Magma, 2024
 Handmade ceramic tiles, acrylic paint, rope, metal profile, gold leaf and wood frame
 135.7 x 115.5 x 9.5 cm
 Courtesy the artist and Goodman Gallery.

support to bring this initiative to life. Their collective effort underscores a commitment to boosting Singapore's international art collection and nurturing meaningful partnerships between SAM Museum, ART SG, and the local arts community.

The fund represents a significant boost for Singapore's arts scene, contributing to its vibrancy and growth. Over an initial three-year period, the fund will enable SAM to acquire artworks annually at ART SG. These pieces will then be showcased in SAM's exhibitions, making them accessible to the public and enriching visual arts education in Singapore.

Emphasising the initiative's importance, SAM's CEO and director, Mr Eugene Tan said that the fund would allow SAM to broaden its collection by acquiring remarkable works by artists from diverse regions, backgrounds, and generations.

The fund represents a significant boost for Singapore's arts scene, contributing to its vibrancy and growth.

He added: "These acquisitions reflect our commitment to building a collection that inspires our audiences and fostering a deeper appreciation for contemporary art. We look forward to further cultivating this partnership and enriching the SAM collection with works from future editions."

For 2025, the fund has acquired three works of art by Korean artist Mr Kim Yun Shin, Canadian artist Ms Kapwani Kiwanga and Vietnamese artist Ms Lêna Bui.

Mr Kim's art piece that was selected for acquisition is a Chinese mahogany sculpture titled 'Add Two Add One Divide Two Divide One 2023-6, 2023'.

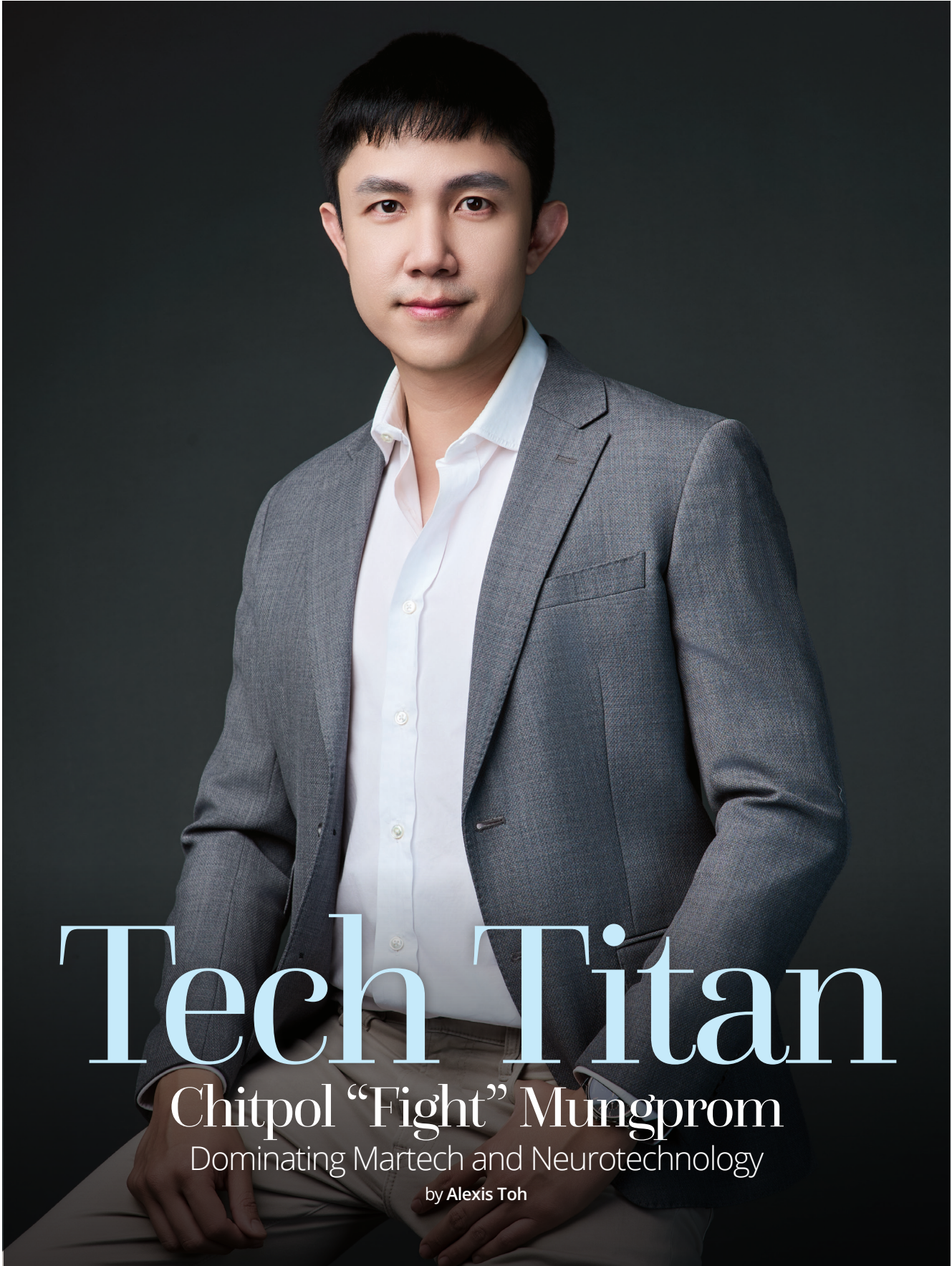
Ms Kiwanga's selected art piece is made up of handmade ceramic tiles, acrylic paint, rope, metal profile, gold leaf and wood frame, while Ms Bui produced an ink and watercolour painting on silk and archival paper.

Commenting on the acquisitions, Ms Shuyin Yang, fair director of ART SG, expressed delight with the inaugural acquisition of the SAM ART SG Fund.

"The three artworks, whose acquisition the Fund made possible, are curatorially significant works, and I am excited to see them become part of the permanent collection of Singapore Art Museum, to further enrich their exhibition-making and the diversity of Singapore's cultural offerings."

Summing up the initiative, ART SG co-founder Mr Magnus Renfrew added that the fund has further strengthened ties between the fair, its participating gallery, key arts patrons and local institutions, truly championing a connected and dynamic arts landscape within Singapore.

"We look forward to our continued collaborations with everyone involved over the coming years," he added. 🙏

A portrait of Chitpol "Fight" Mungprom, a man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt under a grey blazer. He is sitting and looking directly at the camera against a dark background.

Tech Titan

Chitpol "Fight" Mungprom

Dominating Martech and Neurotechnology

by Alexis Toh

Some people are born into legacy; others build their own. Chitpol Mungprom, known affectionately as “Fight”, falls firmly into the latter category. His name alone speaks volumes about the man – a relentless innovator, a problem-solver, and a visionary who refuses to accept the status quo. From transforming the landscape of marketing technology (MarTech) with Zanroo to spearheading neurotechnology and mental wellness with Brainspoke, Fight is proving that true entrepreneurs don’t just chase trends; they create them.

Forged by Resilience – The Making of Fight

Born and raised in Thailand, Fight grew up in a household that placed a premium on resilience. His father, in a bold act of foresight, named him “Fight” as a reminder that life would demand grit, not entitlement. He taught Fight that life will challenge him, so he either fights or gets left behind. Nothing was handed to Fight, and he had to learn how to push through all the obstacles from a young age.

“As a kid, I was always curious about how things worked. I wasn’t someone who dreamed of being a CEO or businessman,” Fight recalls. “I just wanted to build something that mattered. I didn’t know what it was at the time, but I knew I wanted to create something meaningful that could help people in a real way.”

That innate curiosity, combined with his upbringing, shaped his approach to business. He didn’t simply want to participate in industries; he wanted to reshape them. And he did – first with Zanroo, then with Brainspoke, rewriting the rules of MarTech and neurotechnology in the process.

Zanroo – Breaking Barriers in MarTech

In today’s hyper-connected digital age, MarTech is at the forefront of drastically altering brand engagement and customer experience. Among the most innovative players in this space is Zanroo, a data technology company that has redefined the way businesses harness information for strategic advantage. Founded in 2013 by Fight in Bangkok, Thailand, Zanroo has rapidly expanded into a global powerhouse in social listening, data analytics, and marketing consultancy. With a relentless focus on transforming how brands understand their customers, Zanroo has grown from a small startup into an industry disruptor, setting new standards for marketing intelligence and data-driven decision-making.

Fight has always been a problem-solver. With a background in Engineering Mechanics, he possesses a deep understanding of technology’s role in optimising systems. Recognising that traditional marketing strategies were becoming outdated in the digital age, he saw an opportunity to integrate data analytics into marketing decision-making. This led to the founding of Zanroo, a company designed to bridge the gap between consumer insights and brand strategies through cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics.

When Zanroo first launched, it was a modest operation with just two employees. However, within four years, it had grown into a multinational enterprise with over 150 employees spanning 15 countries, including Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Australia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the UK, and its headquarters in Thailand. The company’s





meteoric rise was driven by its commitment to innovation, agility, and an in-depth understanding of market dynamics.

Understanding Zanroo's Unique Offerings

But what truly sets Zanroo apart is its specialisation in real-time big data analytics, allowing brands to derive actionable insights from massive streams of online content. The company's suite of products focuses on three key pillars:

1. **Social Listening** – Zanroo's platform enables businesses to track conversations across various digital channels, including social media, forums, and news sites. By analysing multilingual content, brands can understand customer sentiment, monitor trends, and respond proactively to crises.
2. **Social Engagement** – Unlike many MarTech firms that solely focus on analytics, Zanroo integrates engagement tools that allow businesses to interact with their audience meaningfully. This ensures that insights are not only gathered but also acted upon in real time.
3. **Marketing Consultancy** – Data without strategy is like a ship without a compass. Zanroo offers consultancy services to help businesses interpret the data they collect and turn it into actionable marketing strategies.

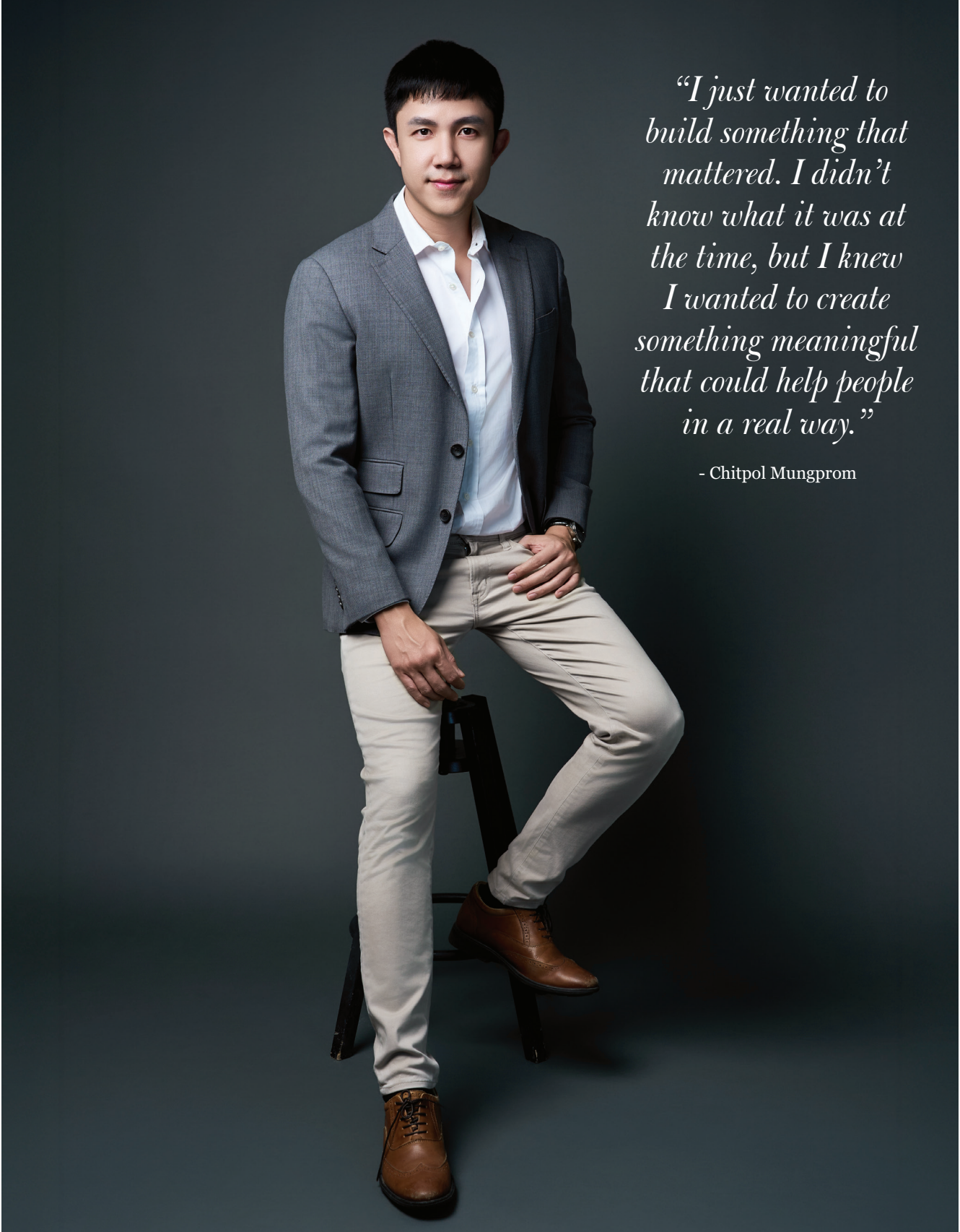
One of Zanroo's game-changing innovations is Arun, a tool designed to track return on investment (ROI) across paid, earned, and owned media. Arun's ability to process big data quickly and intelligently provides marketers with an unprecedented ability to measure the impact of their campaigns.

Scaling the Impossible

Zanroo's rapid ascent in the industry is no accident. The company has distinguished itself through:

1. **Proprietary Technology** – Zanroo developed its own advanced AI algorithms to process and analyse complex datasets at scale. This gives businesses a competitive edge in understanding customer behaviour.
2. **Localised Expertise** – With teams in multiple countries, Zanroo ensures that insights are culturally relevant and tailored to regional markets.
3. **ISO 27001 Certification** – Earning this gold-standard certification for information security management, Zanroo has established itself as a trustworthy data partner for brands handling sensitive consumer information.

By addressing a major gap in the MarTech industry – combining deep data analysis with actionable business

A full-page photograph of a man with short dark hair, wearing a grey blazer over a white button-down shirt and light-colored trousers. He is sitting on a black stool, leaning forward with his hands resting on his knees. He is wearing brown leather shoes. The background is a solid dark grey.

“I just wanted to build something that mattered. I didn’t know what it was at the time, but I knew I wanted to create something meaningful that could help people in a real way.”

- Chitpol Mungprom

strategies – Zanroo has positioned itself as a global leader. Zanroo's impact was undeniable. With impressive year-on-year revenue growth between 200% and 400%, Zanroo caught the attention of investors. In a strategic move to fuel expansion, the company raised \$7.4 million in its Series A funding round. This investment has been instrumental in enhancing Zanroo's proprietary technology, expanding its workforce, and reinforcing its global presence.¹

That kind of hypergrowth, however, came with challenges. One of the toughest challenges is maintaining the company culture while scaling at breakneck speed. "Growth isn't just about numbers; it's about people. Balancing vision with real-world execution, and making sure your team is aligned, that's the real challenge," Fight says.

For any startup, scaling globally is a monumental challenge. For Zanroo, the key to success has been adaptability. Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all model, the company customises its solutions based on regional market dynamics. By hiring local talent and ensuring that each market has dedicated professionals who understand consumer behaviour in their respective regions, Zanroo has maintained a competitive edge.

Another challenge was the evolving landscape of data privacy regulations. With stringent policies like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the United States, ensuring compliance was crucial. Zanroo invested heavily in security

infrastructure and data protection measures, demonstrating its commitment to ethical data use while building trust with global brands.

The Future of Martech and Zanroo's Role

The MarTech industry is evolving rapidly, with AI and automation playing an increasingly significant role. Brands are no longer satisfied with traditional marketing approaches; they demand hyper-personalised experiences and real-time customer insights. Zanroo is at the forefront of this transformation, continuously innovating to meet the changing needs of businesses.

Some of the key trends shaping the future of MarTech include:

- 1. AI-Driven Insights** – As artificial intelligence advances, brands will rely more on AI-driven insights to predict customer behaviour and fine-tune their marketing strategies.
- 2. Voice and Visual Search** – With the rise of voice assistants and image-based search, companies need tools that can analyse and optimise content beyond just text.
- 3. Privacy-First Marketing** – As consumers become more aware of data privacy issues, brands must find ways to personalise marketing without compromising user trust.

Zanroo is already developing solutions to address these trends. The company is integrating advanced AI-driven predictive analytics, ensuring that brands can anticipate customer needs rather than just reacting to them. Additionally, its technology is expanding to incorporate voice and visual data analysis, ensuring that clients stay ahead in an increasingly interactive digital landscape.

Even as it expanded into new markets, Zanroo never lost sight of its core mission – helping brands make sense of an increasingly noisy digital world. And in doing so, Fight has established himself as one of the most formidable players in the MarTech space.

But he wasn't done yet.

Brainspoke – Merging Tech and Mindfulness

Fight has always been a forward-thinker, fascinated by the intersection of technology and human potential. After successfully scaling Zanroo in the MarTech industry, he turned his attention to something even more personal – mental wellness and neurotechnology, recognising the immense potential of brain-computer interfaces (BCI) in



¹ – The figures are with reference from Bangkok Post (<https://www.bangkokpost.com/life/tech/1285459/zanroo-to-be-martech-unicorn>) and Digital News Asia (<https://www.digitalnewsasia.com/startup-scaleups/us74-million-funding-brings-zanroo-closer-unicorn-dream>)



From left: Dr. Sirawaj Itthipuripat (Sean), Peter Tan, Dr. Jwanwat Ahriyavraromp and Chitpol "Fight" Mungprom.

Chitpol "Fight" Mungprom and his team visited Dr. Jwanwat Ahriyavraromp, CEO of Shellhut Entertainment on 18 February 2025 to showcase the functionality and future potential of Brainspoke. Dr. Jwanwat Ahriyavraromp is impressed and has agreed to provide support for the development of Brainspoke globally.

improving daily life. He saw a glaring gap in the way people approached brain health, and he knew technology could fill it.

Why mental wellness? For Fight, the answer is simple, "I believe mental health is the next evolution of human potential. If we can optimise our minds, we can change everything – our productivity, our happiness, our quality of life."

Enter Brainspoke.

In a world increasingly obsessed with physical health, Brainspoke shifts the focus inward. Brainspoke isn't just another wellness brand – it's a fusion of neuroscience, AI, and mindfulness, designed to enhance human potential. His vision for Brainspoke was simple yet powerful – to create accessible, science-backed solutions that help individuals achieve peak mental performance, manage stress, and enhance overall well-being.

The company has developed Alpha Pro, a state-of-the-art neurotechnology headset designed to monitor brain activity and provide real-time feedback to users. This device leverages electroencephalography (EEG) sensors to track brainwave patterns, offering insights into cognitive states such as focus, relaxation, and stress levels.

The headset is complemented by the Brainspoke App, which provides users with actionable recommendations based on their brain activity. Through guided meditation, cognitive training exercises, and neurofeedback techniques, Brainspoke helps users train their minds for optimal performance.

How Brainspoke is Changing Mental Wellness

Brainspoke's approach to mental wellness is rooted in data-driven personalisation. Unlike traditional meditation apps that offer generic content, Brainspoke tailors its recommendations to individual users based on real-time brainwave analysis. This level of customisation ensures that each person receives a unique, effective path to better mental health.

Key benefits of Brainspoke include:

- 1. Enhanced Focus and Productivity** – By analysing brain activity, Brainspoke helps users identify periods of peak cognitive function and optimise their work schedules accordingly.
- 2. Stress Reduction** – The neurofeedback system trains the brain to manage stress more effectively, promoting relaxation and emotional balance.



Founding shareholders, from left: Potchanart Seebungkerd, Porntida Boonsa, Peter Tan, Dr. Sirawaj Itthipuripat, Chitpol “Fight” Mungprom and Kasidit Anukun.

- 3. Improved Sleep Quality** – Brainspoke’s guided interventions help regulate brainwave activity, leading to deeper, more restorative sleep.
- 4. Cognitive Performance Optimisation** – Regular use of Brainspoke’s technology enhances memory, problem-solving skills, and overall mental agility.

Brainspoke’s neurotechnology is built on the latest advancements in AI and machine learning. The company employs sophisticated algorithms to analyse brainwave data, translating complex neural signals into meaningful insights. These insights are then used to develop personalised training programmes that cater to each user’s unique cognitive profile.

A major breakthrough in Brainspoke’s technology is its adaptive learning system, which continuously refines its recommendations based on user progress. This ensures that the mental training experience evolves over time, providing increasingly effective interventions as users continue their journey toward better brain health.

The global conversation around mental wellness has evolved significantly in recent years. With rising awareness of mental health issues and the impact of stress on overall well-being, there is a growing demand for solutions that go beyond traditional therapy and medication. Brainspoke is meeting this demand by offering a proactive, technology-driven approach to mental wellness.

The company’s work is particularly relevant in the context of remote work and digital overload. As people spend more time in front of screens and deal with increasing cognitive demands, Brainspoke provides a much-needed solution to help individuals maintain mental clarity and emotional resilience.

Fight isn’t just creating a product – he’s building a movement. “Success is empty if you lose yourself in the process. “With Brainspoke, we’re giving people the tools to strengthen their minds, not just their bodies,” he emphasises.

The Future of Neurotechnology

The implications of Brainspoke’s technology extend far beyond personal wellness. Fight isn’t content with disrupting just one industry – his ambitions are global. The company is actively working on expanding its reach to global markets, including the United States and Asia. With a focus on research collaborations, Brainspoke is partnering with neuroscientists and universities to further validate its technology and explore new applications for brainwave-driven interventions. Fight envisions applications in healthcare, education, and even corporate performance. By working with mental health professionals, schools, and businesses, Brainspoke aims to make neurotechnology a mainstream tool for cognitive enhancement and emotional well-being.

“Our goal is to integrate AI, mindfulness, and neurotechnology to help prevent cognitive decline,” he says. “It’s not just about living longer; it’s about living better.”

“Our goal is to integrate AI, mindfulness, and neurotechnology to help prevent cognitive decline. It’s not just about living longer; it’s about living better.”

- Chitpol Mungprom

Brainspoke’s work has the potential to redefine how society approaches mental wellness. By making neurotechnology accessible and easy to use, the company is empowering individuals to take control of their mental health in ways that were previously unimaginable. This shift from reactive mental health care to proactive brain training could lead to a healthier, more resilient population.

For businesses, Brainspoke offers a powerful tool to enhance employee well-being and productivity. Companies that prioritise mental wellness see improvements in job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and increased overall performance. Brainspoke’s solutions provide an innovative way for organisations to support their employees in a meaningful way.

Brainspoke is more than just a tech company; it’s a movement towards a smarter, healthier world. Under the leadership of Fight, the company continues to push the boundaries of what’s possible, ensuring that the future of mental wellness is one where everyone has the tools they need to thrive.

“We’re building something that has no borders. Mental wellness is universal,” he says.

Lessons from a Relentless Innovator

What makes Fight different? It’s not just his ability to build companies – it’s his unwavering belief in long-term vision over short-term wins.

To aspiring entrepreneurs, his advice is clear:

1. **Stay resilient.** The road is tough, but persistence is everything.
2. **Think long-term.** Shortcuts don’t build legacies.
3. **Surround yourself with the right people.** A great team makes the impossible possible.



4. **Stay mindful.** Success means nothing if you aren’t at peace with yourself.

A Legacy of Innovation

Chitpol “Fight” Mungprom isn’t just building businesses – he’s shaping the future. From Zanroo’s data-driven marketing revolution to Brainspoke’s neurotechnology breakthroughs, his impact spans industries, continents, and generations.

How does he want to be remembered?

“As someone who combined innovation and mindfulness to make a real difference. Someone who didn’t just chase success, but built something that helped people live better lives,” he says.

And with Brainspoke poised to redefine mental wellness, it’s clear that Fight’s greatest work is still ahead of him. 🙏

The Art of Precision

Shoukouwa Head Chef Kazumine Nishida's Culinary Journey and the 4 Stars at Home Experience

by Alexis Toh



“The precision, the elegance, and the philosophy behind sushi-making left a deep impression on me.”

- Chef Kazumine Nishida

In the world of haute cuisine, where precision meets passion, head chef Kazumine Nishida of Shoukouwa stands as a master of Edomae sushi. His journey from the serene waters of Kansai, Japan, to the vibrant dining scene of Singapore has been one of dedication and artistry. Now, in an extraordinary collaboration with chef-owner Emmanuel Stroobant of Saint Pierre, Nishida is elevating luxury dining with *4 Stars at Home* – an exclusive, Michelin-starred culinary experience delivered straight to private residences.

A Childhood by the Water – The Foundations of a Sushi Master

Growing up in Kansai, Japan, Nishida was surrounded by the rhythms of the sea. Fishing trips with his family were more than just leisure activities; they were moments of deep connection with nature and the ingredients that would later define his craft. “I have vivid memories of catching Japanese black sea bream,” he recalls. “Fishing not only instilled in me an appreciation for seafood but also a respect for its quality and seasonality.”

This early exposure to the ocean’s bounty laid the groundwork for a career dedicated to sushi, a discipline that demands reverence for ingredients and the mastery of time-honoured techniques.

The Call of Edomae Sushi

Nishida’s fascination with sushi began at a young age, shaped by the family-owned sushi restaurant where he spent countless hours watching skilled hands shape delicate morsels of perfection. “The precision, the elegance, and the philosophy behind sushi-making left a deep impression on me,” he says.

By 17, Nishida had entered the rigorous world of professional kitchens. His early training was gruelling – marked by long hours, meticulous repetition, and an emphasis on discipline. “The intensity of my training shaped my philosophy in the kitchen. Whether it’s selecting the freshest fish, interacting with guests, or leading my team, I give my all to everything I do,” he explains.

Unlike many chefs who attribute their success to a single mentor, Nishida’s approach has been to remain open-minded, absorbing lessons from various sources and continuously refining his craft, while staying rooted in tradition.



A Culinary Journey from Japan to Singapore

Shoukouwa, Singapore's first and only two Michelin-starred sushi restaurant, has been Nishida's platform for showcasing the essence of Edomae sushi in its purest form. Moving to Singapore expanded his culinary horizons, introducing him to new ingredients and a diverse dining culture. His tenure as head chef at Shoukouwa was not without its challenges. Stepping into a leadership role meant taking full ownership of the restaurant's direction. For Nishida, the most rewarding part of his craft is witnessing the expressions of diners as they experience his creations. "Sushi may seem simple, but it carries layers of flavours, textures, and history. Seeing a guest's satisfaction reaffirms why I do what I do," he chimes.

4 Stars at Home – A Michelin-Starred Collaboration

Nishida's latest venture, *4 Stars at Home*, is a groundbreaking partnership with chef Emmanuel Stroobant of Saint Pierre. This exclusive dining concept brings the expertise of Michelin-starred cuisine into the comfort of private homes, offering a fully customised modern kaiseki experience.

4 Stars at Home is built on the perfect balance of Japanese tradition and French finesse. The menu showcases contemporary Japanese dishes refined through French plating and techniques. Each course is executed on-site by a specially trained culinary team, ensuring that every detail reflects the precision and high standards of their Michelin-starred establishments.

Signature dishes include *Tomato*, a delicate composition of Amela tomato, tenshi ebi (angel prawn), okra, junsai (water shield), and mozuku (rock seaweed) in a dashi vinaigrette. Another highlight is the *Lobster*, slow-poached Brittany blue

lobster topped with shavings of karasumi (dried red mullet roe), accompanied by a red miso-infused lobster bisque.

Every ingredient is meticulously sourced, upholding the highest standards of quality. "Ingredient selection is paramount," Nishida emphasises. "It's about respecting the integrity of the produce and allowing its natural flavours to shine."

Beyond the culinary craft, *4 Stars at Home* offers a curated sake and wine pairing service, ensuring that each dish is complemented perfectly. The bespoke nature of the experience allows guests to tailor every aspect of their meal, from menu customisation to the level of service they desire.

The Future of Bespoke Luxury Dining

As the demand for exclusive, at-home dining experiences grows, *4 Stars at Home* raises the standard in gastronomic luxury. Designed for groups of four or more, it is ideal for high-end business dinners, milestone celebrations, or intimate gatherings among epicureans.

With this venture, Nishida and Stroobant are creating unforgettable moments while delivering Michelin-starred cuisine. "Excellence is not a destination; it's a journey," says Nishida. "Whether at Shoukouwa or in a private residence, my goal remains the same – to create an exceptional experience that lingers long after the meal is over."

For those seeking the pinnacle of dining indulgence, *4 Stars at Home* offers a distinctive fusion of heritage, innovation, and world-class hospitality. In the hands of two master chefs, luxury dining has never been more intimate or more exquisite. 🍱



“It was a period of deep renewal that brought clarity, purpose, and hope. God sometimes makes use of such challenging seasons to bring us to Him, and looking back I am grateful to be able to overcome that season by His grace in my life.”

- Song Yong about finding his faith.

Stewardship, Integrity, Faith

The Principles of Song Yong's Success

by Adli Yashir Kuchit

Sometimes life has a cruel way of bringing someone down but it also has a funny way of lifting that person up.

Lee Song Yong has seen how life dished out its toughest lessons but with the love and support from those around him and faith in something bigger than himself, he found a way to live his life with meaning and purpose.

Remembering his humble childhood, Song Yong grew up in a family where money was always tight. “My mum worked two jobs just to send us to school, often packing simple meals for herself

so she could save, yet always adding a little extra when preparing food for me.”

“She never once complained about the long hours or hard work. She’d come home after a long day, still juggling housework and taking care of the family,” he reminisced.

Watching his mother’s sacrifices and quiet resilience left a deep impression on Song Yong. “My sister and I grew up quickly in that environment,” he added.

From just 12 years old, the siblings were already selling flowers on Valentine’s Day, serving tables at Ponderosa, and doing data entry for Diners Club. From these experiences, he learned the value of hard work, resourcefulness, and living simply. With that foundation, Song Yong focused on his studies and eventually graduated with a first-class honours from Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

But life never stops dishing out tough love. Early 2010 was one of the toughest times for Song Yong. His career was floundering, his relationship with his then girlfriend ended and his father passed away.

“I was at rock bottom, questioning my purpose and direction,” he remembered.

But in the midst of his weakness, he found strength in faith. At his dad’s wake, a client’s husband prayed over him and encouraged him to ask God to reveal Himself. Skeptical but desperate, Song Yong did.

“To my surprise, I began having visions that pointed me to leave the company I was in. Though it wasn’t an immediate fix, those steps of faith marked the beginning of a new season for me,” he revealed.

During that time, Song Yong came to know Christ, and his life — both personally and professionally — transformed in ways he could not have imagined.

“It was a period of deep renewal that brought clarity, purpose, and hope. God sometimes makes use of such challenging seasons to bring us to Him and looking back I am grateful to be able to overcome that season by His grace in my life,” he added.

Song Yong first found his calling in the insurance industry in 2004 when he was invited to visit the office of his NTU lecturer Peter Tan.

“I remember being awestruck by the setup of the office and the promise of a meaningful and lucrative career in financial advisory. That moment sparked something in me, and it set me on the path I’m still walking today,” he said.

Peter also played a crucial role in Song Yong’s early career, instilling the importance of structure and systems. Song Yong also paid tribute to Alan Tang, a former director in his previous firm.

Alan exemplified the power of generous leadership, and his philosophy of “giving more than receiving” deeply resonated with Song Yong.

“Watching him lead as a ‘happy giver’ taught me to focus on adding value to the lives of my clients and advisers, trusting that success would follow. As Zig Ziglar said, “You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help enough other people get what they want.”

“This principle is something I carry with me every day,” said Song Yong. Beyond his professional mentors, Song Yong also paid tribute to his wife, Juliana.

“She has been the anchor and stabilising force that has made so much of my journey possible. Her ability to think ten steps ahead and make tough, even unpopular decisions, has been a constant source of inspiration,” he said.

Sharing his life’s philosophy, Song Yong said that he is guided by the values of stewardship, integrity and faith.

Stewardship reminds Song Yong that his time, talents, and resources have been entrusted to him to use wisely and purposefully.

“It’s a guiding principle in how I approach both my personal and professional life. Integrity is non-negotiable. It’s about doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. This value anchors me, especially when faced with tough decisions. It’s the foundation of trust with my clients, my team, and my loved ones,” he said. 🙏

Sparks to Insurance Success

My Road Map to Embrace the Fire Era

by Adli Yashir Kuchit

“My voice became extremely deep with low reverberations. This was a dramatic change in my life. Imagine you are 10 years old, but you have the voice of an 80-year-old man. I sounded like an old man trapped inside a boy.”

- Jason Goh



From a young age, Goh Soon Heng Jason faced significant challenges. As he was growing up, his voice became ‘weird’, and he often found himself the target of ridicule from peers and even his teachers.

“My voice became extremely deep with low reverberations. This was a dramatic change in my life. Imagine you are 10 years old, but you have the voice of an 80-year-old man. I sounded like an old man trapped inside a boy,” he reminisced.

This constant mockery was something he could not let go. It affected his confidence and mental well-being.

“At school, even my teacher made fun of my voice. This teacher would joke about my voice and the whole class would laugh at me. That experience scarred me for as long as I could remember, until later in life, when I began to accept who I am,” said Jason.

Despite the adversities, John’s determination never wavered. He picked up leadership skills during National Service, and life in the army made him a better leader.

Despite being an introvert and a self-confessed person with low self-confidence, he later took on an unexpected job selling credit card memberships. It was probably a way for Jason to face his fears.

“It helped restore and build my confidence by forcing me to meet people and asking them to sign up for credit cards. It also helped me become more confident in speaking in public,” he said.

Jason then ventured into the insurance industry on the advice of his former boss.

“In my first year as a financial consultant, I excelled working at the company’s roadshows and became really good at making cold calls. That track record earned me the prestigious Star Club award – reserved for top-performing individuals in the company,” he added.

With a solid foundation established, Jason began expanding his business. But it was not an easy journey, there were many times that he thought of giving up and leaving the company for another firm with a better salary.

“But I decided to hang on. I thought of my clients who trusted me with their insurance portfolio. I did not want to let any one of them down. I was determined to succeed,” Jason said.

Today, Jason is setting his sights on building his business, growing his team and being an inspiration to a new generation of financial consultants.

“I want to devote the next phase of my life to working with Gen Z. My plan is to start recruitment seminars to identify new candidates. I am also starting a podcast dedicated to Gen Zs who are interested in the industry. I now have an infrastructure to help young consultants fast-track their success,” he said.

As someone who believes in feng shui, Jason is confident that the current Fire Era promises a time of rising opportunities, especially in professions that thrive on creativity, boldness, and connection. Careers aligned with the energy of Fire will flourish, opening doors for growth, recognition, and groundbreaking ideas.

He observed: “As we begin the Fire Era, we are already witnessing a surge in artificial intelligence, innovation, and the transformative power of social media. This era calls on Gen Zs to bring their creativity, technological expertise, and fresh perspectives to the forefront. I believe that this is a golden opportunity to embrace change, express your unique vision, and build a brand that captivates the world.”

“Entrepreneurship is a key pathway during this time – an avenue to turn your passion into impact, transform ideas into reality, and make your mark on an ever-evolving landscape. The Fire Era is not just a shift in time but a call to action,” said Jason. 🏡



Musubi

Half Century of Cartier in Japan and Beyond:
An Everlasting Dialogue of Beauty and Art

by Priyanka Elhence

Cartier marks its 50th anniversary in Japan with a stunning exhibition of jewels, watches, and objet d'art.

The French luxury house partnered with Japan's oldest and largest museum to present Musubi – Half Century Of Cartier In Japan And Beyond: An Everlasting Dialogue Of Beauty And Art. The word “knot” is said to have its roots in the Japanese mythology of “MUSUBI” (Musuhi or Musubi). “Musu” means “to produce” and “hi” means “the mysterious work of a divine spirit”. Thus, the word “MUSUBI” aptly translates to “*the power of the divine spirit is produced by being bound together,*” shown by the many different ‘knot’ jewellery designs seen at the exhibition, which ran from 12 June to 28 July 2024.



Louis Cartier was a cultivated and curious art lover and collector with a keen sense of aesthetics.

Louis Cartier was a cultivated and curious art lover and collector with a keen sense of aesthetics. Even though he was not able to visit Japan, he had assembled a collection of Japanese objects and books, inviting his designers to peruse them to stimulate their imagination. The designers had access to a formal and thematic vocabulary that would contribute to shaping the Maison's style, and they continue to do so to this day, remaining true to an iconic repertoire while also revitalising it.

The exhibition continued with significant showcases in Japan that have displayed some of the most prestigious pieces from the Cartier Collection. Finally, the last room featured a half-century of interplay between Cartier and an evolving Japan, highlighting how the jeweller has captured the spirit of the times, whetting its curiosity in Japan's effervescent creativity in architecture, design, and contemporary art, all while staying committed to its values. 🏯

Conceived by Studio Adrien Gardère, the exhibition's scenography also enhanced and celebrated the Hyokeikan heritage architecture, while echoing Cartier's tribute to Japan and Japanese aesthetics.

Two parallel narratives were presented in the Hyokeikan's two symmetrical wings: "*Cartier and Japan, a Tribute to Art and Beauty*", and "*Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain and Japanese artists, a never ending conversation*".

The exhibition's impressive array included 120 pieces from the Cartier Collection and private loans, over 50 pieces from the Cartier Archives and more than 150 art works from contemporary artists, including 50 paintings commissioned by Cartier for the 50th celebration as well as 2 commissioned wall-paintings.

The first Cartier boutique opened in 1974, in Palais France in the Harajuku district of Tokyo. This significant milestone is captured in the first chapter of the exhibition, showcasing Japanese inspiration present in Cartier's creations, from the early days of Louis Cartier, who joined his father at the head of the Maison in 1898, to the most recent creations.



About The Writer

Bred in The Seychelles and Kenya, Priyanka Elhence studied Hotel Management in Switzerland, coupled with working as a Recruiter in Palm Beach, before doing an MBA in Human Resources Management in London. Calling Singapore home for the past 20 years, Priyanka has been a Freelance Writer now for the past 8 years, writing about everything from luxury and dining, travel and lifestyle, to parenting and finance.

BENTLEY FLYING SPUR

THE ULTIMATE FOUR-DOOR SUPERCAR

by Alexis Toh

REDEFINING POWER, LUXURY, AND INNOVATION

Bentley has unveiled its most powerful four-door sedan ever – the fourth-generation Flying Spur. Combining exceptional luxury with exhilarating performance, the new Flying Spur Ultra PerformaW12 Hybrid sets a new benchmark for grand tourers. Delivering an astonishing 782 PS and 1,000 Nm of torque, this automotive masterpiece accelerates from 0-60 mph in just 3.3 seconds, making it Bentley's first true four-door supercar.



Photo: Bentley

PERFORMANCE MEETS SUSTAINABILITY

At the heart of the Flying Spur lies Bentley's all-new Ultra Performance Hybrid powertrain. A 600 PS 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8 is paired with a 190 PS electric motor, creating an electrifying driving experience that surpasses the previous W12 Speed in every metric – more power, higher torque, faster acceleration, and lower emissions.

With 47 miles (76 km) of all-electric range and CO2 emissions of just 33 g/km, the Flying Spur seamlessly blends sustainability with high performance. A full charge takes as little as 2.75 hours, and with a total range of 515 miles (829 km), long-distance luxury travel has never been more effortless.

UNRIVALLED DYNAMICS AND DRIVING PLEASURE

The Flying Spur Speed introduces Bentley Dynamic Ride, All-Wheel Steering, and an electronically controlled Limited Slip Differential, ensuring agility, comfort, and stability at any speed. The Performance Active Chassis adapts to driving conditions in real-time, making the car equally at home on city streets, winding mountain roads, or high-speed highways.

A DESIGN MASTERPIECE

The Flying Spur retains its signature muscular yet elegant silhouette, with an updated grille, bumper, diffuser, and optional 22-inch wheels. Dark-tint brightware enhances its presence, while LED Welcome Lamps project an illuminated Bentley Wings logo as you step inside.

Inside, Bentley's artisans have elevated craftsmanship to new heights with Precision Diamond quilted seats, 3D diamond hide on doors, and the new Dark Chrome Specification. The Rotating Display allows drivers to switch between a 12.3-inch digital screen, classic analogue dials, or seamless veneer for a tailored experience.

A DIGITAL REVOLUTION – MY BENTLEY APP STUDIO

With an all-new electrical architecture, the Flying Spur integrates cutting-edge technology, including wireless Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and over-the-air updates. The My Bentley App Studio allows drivers to download apps directly to the infotainment system, making connectivity effortless and intuitive.

A CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

To commemorate this milestone, Bentley teamed up with F1 legend Damon Hill and rising star Lia Block, showcasing the Flying Spur's dynamic capabilities in an exhilarating launch film. With its unparalleled performance, bespoke luxury, and forward-thinking technology, the Flying Spur is not just Bentley's finest sedan; it's an automotive revolution.

One-Of-A-Kind Pieces Sparkle in
Bvlgari's
High-End Bags Collection

by Priyanka Elhence

Bvlgari celebrates its 140th anniversary with Aeterna, an extraordinary High-end Collection that gives ode to gemstones and the Roman era.



Photos: Bvlgari

Every year Bvlgari launches a High Jewelry collection of 150 one-of-a-kind pieces. This year's latest collection, Aeterna, celebrates the Maison's 140th anniversary with precious stones and boundless creativity, unveiling a collection of luxury that is inspired by the early Roman era.

The majesty and grandeur of the Eternal City of Rome have always served as a profound source of inspiration for Bvlgari, making it the perfect location to unveil Aeterna. This time, the radiant morning light of Rome lays the groundwork for capturing the spark of imagination, with Bvlgari's precious gems capturing the fragments of eternity, and magnifying the richness of cultural diversity by seamlessly combining different elements, colours, materials, and shapes. The collection is a testament to Bvlgari's innovative, ever-evolving creativity and commitment to venturing into uncharted territories as the Maison continues to push new creative boundaries.

Bvlgari's High-End Bags collection showcases 16 unique pieces crafted from exclusive materials, which include alligator and crocodile skins, and featuring

two of the Roman Maison's most iconic symbols – the Serpenti snake motif and the Monete antique coins.

Among the collection is the Aeterna Serpenti Pallini one-of-a-kind top handle bag in Midnight Plum Shiny Alligator, which features two interchangeable detachable heads. Crafted in 18 carats white gold by drawing inspiration from the iconic pallini technique (which creates the serpent's tactile, flexible body with tiny golden beads), the first head is set with 7.3 carats of pavé diamonds and 22 buff-top rubellites, while the second one is fully encrusted with pavé diamonds.

In both iterations, the magnetic black onyx eyes give a touch of contrast, while a full pavé white gold necklace completes the bags. From design to craftsmanship, the one-of-a-kind creations took about 9 months to be completed.

While the Serpenti creations embody the perpetual cycle of nature, the Monete High Jewelry bags allude to Bvlgari's Roman heritage and perpetual evolution of style. One made of Fuji Crocodile skin and the other in Midnight Plum Shiny Crocodile skin, the two Aeterna Monete one-of-a-kind bags pay homage to Bvlgari's cultural legacy with a unique clasp featuring the ancient coin, moneta.

Nestled into a hexagonal 18-carat yellow gold setting embellished with pavé diamonds, the silver coin dates back to 225-214 BC and depicts the profile of the Roman God Janus on one side, and a "Quadriga" chariot with the writing Roma in capital letters on the other. The clasp can be easily detached and interchanged with an alternative element or be transformed into a pendant, when separated from the yellow gold necklace that is provided with the bag.

As always, this new High Collection flawlessly celebrates Bvlgari's pioneering spirit and its ability to continuously reinvent itself, drawing inspiration from its heritage, embracing the contemporary, and envisioning the future. 



Looking back at a legacy of Luxury

by Urvashi Raizada

Dolce & Gabbana's "From the Heart to the Hands" is the first-ever retrospective of the luxury brand's enduring legacy in the fashion world.

Few names in fashion are as synonymous with luxury as Dolce & Gabbana. The iconic fashion house has left its mark on history with inimitable Italian-inspired designs, including elaborate animal prints, pinstripes, detailed embroidery, black lace, florals, and more. While its couture continues to be coveted by the fashion elite worldwide, many may be unfamiliar with the brand's humble beginnings dating back to 1962. Now, they have the chance to learn more.

For the first time, Dolce & Gabbana has launched an exhibition dedicated to its founders, Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana. Titled "From the Heart to the Hands", the exhibition takes viewers on a journey into the minds of two of the fashion world's most celebrated designers, showcasing their most revered pieces and tracing the translation of their ideas from heart to hand.

From Humble Beginnings

Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana first met at a fashion house in the late 1970s. Although their connection wasn't instant, the pair reconnected a year later when Stefano needed a place to live. As roommates, they quickly realised how well their design styles meshed and began to explore their collaborative potential.

Dolce & Gabbana's origins were modest. Lacking generous financial backing, the duo first made their mark when they secured a spot in Milan Fashion Week in 1985. Their debut collection was titled "Real Women" because they couldn't afford to hire models, so they enlisted close friends to walk in the show. They improvised with bed sheets for curtains and asked their friends to bring their own accessories to complement the designs.



Dolce and Gabbana's intricate craftsmanship has always embodied the Italian values of *Fatto a Mano* – or hand-made.

Despite being new on the scene, the collection was a hit and catapulted the duo into stardom. The rest, as they say, is history.

A Journey Through Time

With the launch of "From the Heart to the Hands", fashion aficionados now have the chance to revisit this rich history, from discovering the sources that inspired the designers to learning about the intricate craftsmanship behind the final pieces.

The exhibition is divided into several sections, each dedicated to different aspects of the brand's creative process. From initial sketches to finished garments, every stage of design and production is meticulously showcased. Visitors can witness the transformation of raw materials into exquisite fashion pieces, experiencing the brand's commitment to quality and authenticity firsthand.



Each space in the exhibition is an homage to a facet of Italian culture that has inspired Dolce & Gabbana's work.

The exhibition also features a collection of iconic pieces from past collections, including items from their Alta Moda, Alta Sartoria, and Alta Gioielleria lines. Each garment tells a story, reflecting the cultural and artistic influences that have shaped Dolce & Gabbana's unique aesthetic, dedication to craftsmanship, and deep appreciation for Italian culture.

Celebrating High Fashion Heritage

"From the Heart to the Hands" celebrates not only Dolce & Gabbana but also the unique Italian high-fashion heritage the brand has come to embody. As the audience moves from room to room, they are shown not only the inspirations behind Dolce & Gabbana's creations but also the cultural influences that shaped them.

Dolce & Gabbana's designs have always been deeply rooted in Italian culture, reflecting the country's rich history and artistic legacy. Their collections pay homage to various Italian traditions, from religious iconography to folklore and historical references. The influence of Italian cinema and art is also evident in Dolce & Gabbana's collections, drawing inspiration from classic films and incorporating elements of glamour and drama into their designs. This deep connection to their heritage has allowed the brand to create timeless pieces that resonate with audiences worldwide. As Stefano Gabbana once said, "Fashion is not simply a matter of clothes. Fashion is about identity and culture."

Each space in the exhibition pays tribute to these aspects of Italian culture that provided context to Dolce and Gabbana's creativity. From art and architecture to

city landscapes, music, ballet, and opera, each theme is deeply rooted in the founders' enduring love for traditional craftsmanship, their Italian heritage, and their passion for *la dolce vita*.

Honoring Haute Couture History

Dolce & Gabbana's impact on the fashion industry is undeniable. The brand has consistently pushed boundaries, challenged conventions, and redefined beauty standards. In fact, the designer duo was the first to take the traditional masculine suit and transform it into a female symbol of power and confidence on a global stage. Their commitment to diversity and inclusivity is evident in their contemporary campaigns as well, which feature models of different ages, ethnicities, and body types.

Over the years, Dolce & Gabbana has also garnered a loyal following among celebrities and the fashion elite. Their creations have graced red carpets and magazine covers, with iconic outfits like Madonna's corset dress at the 1991 Cannes Film Festival, now part of fashion history.

"From the Heart to the Hands" celebrates this enduring legacy, honoring history as it moves into the brand's contemporary present. Having just wrapped up its display in Milan, the exhibition will now travel globally, showcasing the story of Dolce & Gabbana at important cultural centres around the world. With its bespoke creations and spectacular installations, the exhibition will no doubt continue to take audiences into the heart of Dolce and Gabbana's world, where "magic and fantasy, legend and reality intertwine".

Learn more about the exhibition at www.milano.dolcegabbanaexhibition.com. 🏰



About The Writer

Singapore-based writer and editor Urvashi Raizada enjoys delving deep into stories that matter, and delivering the whole scoop. She's spent the last 11 years writing about everything from tech and business to luxury and lifestyle, but the stories she loves the most are the ones that make the world a better place.



Limited to 20 pieces, this special edition celebrates Sincere's remarkable 70-year journey of unparalleled service and dedication in cultivating watch appreciation in the region.

H. Moser & Cie.

Introduces the Pioneer
Perpetual Calendar
Concept MD Purple
Enamel Sincere Platinum
Jubilee Edition

Photos: Sincere Fine Watches

by Priyanka Elhence



In celebration of Sincere Fine Watches' 70th Anniversary, H. Moser & Cie. presents the limited edition Pioneer Perpetual Calendar Concept MD Purple Enamel Sincere Platinum Jubilee Edition. As part of the Pioneer collection, this edition harmoniously blends timeless elegance with exceptional craftsmanship, providing a sophisticated allure paired with practical functionality.

The special edition also pays tribute to the enduring collaboration between Sincere Fine Watches and H. Moser & Cie., characterised by a shared dedication to horological excellence and the relentless pursuit of innovation.

Crafted in 18-carat red gold with black DLC-treated titanium inserts, the 42.8 mm case of the Pioneer Perpetual Calendar Concept MD Purple Enamel Sincere Platinum Jubilee Edition offers a striking contrast and robust durability, offering water resistance up to 120 m. This combination enhances both aesthetic appeal and functionality, ensuring versatility for any occasion.

True to H. Moser & Cie.'s style of irreverent Haute Horlogerie, the exclusive timepiece stands out not only for its technical prowess but also for its aesthetic audacity, blending traditional craftsmanship with innovative and contemporary design elements. The commemorative edition showcases Sincere's 70th anniversary logo engraved on the open caseback, giving collectors a timepiece that is as exclusive as it is extraordinary (available at all Sincere Fine Watches

Boutiques with a retail price of S\$130,000 including GST).

The Pioneer Perpetual Calendar Concept MD Purple Enamel Sincere Platinum Jubilee Edition marks a first for the Pioneer collection, showcasing a "Grand Feu" enamel dial in a purple fumé hue, meticulously crafted by master enamellers using the labour-intensive "Grand Feu" enamel technique.

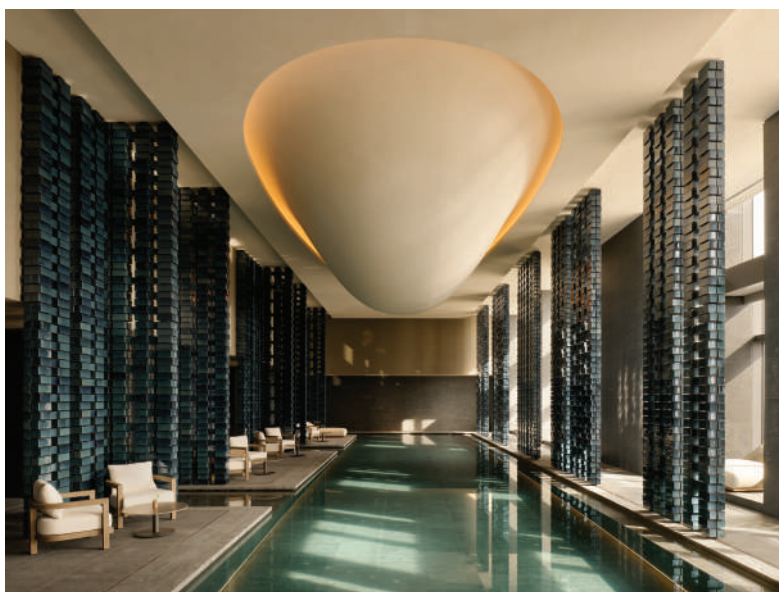
To achieve the signature H. Moser & Cie. fumé effect, each dial undergoes 10-12 firings in the furnace to be imbued with the "Grand Feu" depth and complexity characteristic, resulting in a striking texture and an intensely alluring purple hue, a

testament to the unwavering dedication and artistry that define H. Moser & Cie.

Designed for optimal legibility, the Pioneer Perpetual Calendar Concept MD Purple Enamel Sincere Platinum Jubilee Edition also features two large windows to display the month and date, augmented by H. Moser & Cie.'s innovative "Flash Calendar" function, for an instantaneous date change at midnight.

With a strikingly minimalistic design, the dial is stripped of almost all indications except for the plus and minus signs that indicate the power-reserve at 9 o'clock, an offset small second at 6 o'clock, and with a leap year cycle indicator concealed on the movement side. The partially skeletonised leaf-shaped hands are filled with Super-LumiNova® to further enhance readability.

At the heart of the unique timepiece lies the HMC 808 hand-wound manufacture movement, a marvel of horological engineering that offers a power reserve of at least seven days, thanks to its double barrel design, a movement that epitomises unparalleled simplicity and innovation. Unlike conventional designs where the calendar mechanism is a modular addition, the HMC 808 seamlessly incorporates the calendar mechanism into the movement's core architecture. An exceptional blend of form and function, the HMC 808 exemplifies H. Moser & Cie.'s dedication to precision, reliability, and innovation, pushing the boundaries of fine mechanical watchmaking. 



Aman

Unveils the Brand's First Standalone Residences

by Priyanka Elhence

Overlooking the Tokyo Tower, Aman Residences, Tokyo offers owners a luxurious retreat above the city's skyline.

Aman unveils its first standalone residential project, located in the heart of the new and prestigious Azabudai Hills Mori JP Tower, Japan's tallest residential building. Designed by Pelli Clarke & Partners, Aman Residences, Tokyo comprises 91 fully serviced apartments sprawled across the top 11 floors of the tower, making them the highest residences in Japan.

Says Vlad Doronin, chairman, CEO and owner of Aman Group, "Aman Residences, Tokyo represents a deep immersion into the Aman lifestyle in the heart of the city and sets a new standard for luxury residences not just in Japan but globally. The execution of this project is second-to-none, with a consideration of every detail and refinement in the design which creates an instant feeling of calm, sanctuary, and peace upon arrival and represents a successful collaboration between Aman and Mori Building Co. The scale and quality of the amenities, and in particular the Aman Spa and Lounge, demonstrates our commitment to delivering the revered Aman way of living at the highest level."



Photos: Aman Group

Nature is the root of the design intention and concept at Aman Residences, Tokyo. The elements of water, air, fire, and earth are incorporated in the designs of the shared spaces to enable residents to reconnect with themselves.

Likewise, the residence interiors, designed and curated by the acclaimed Yabu Pushelberg, are inspired by these same elements, uniting the Aman aesthetic of Asian style with European influences, to create a truly unique and luxurious sanctuary for the well-heeled. The use of muted, natural, and earthbound colours that mimic the layers of the earth are used to evoke warmth, serenity and texture, while an extensive display of artworks and thoughtful art curation brings additional colour and dimension to the property. The fusion of the Asian aesthetic with authentic references to Japanese design and culture celebrate the understated elegance of Aman.

Located on the 54th to 64th floors, each of the two- to six-bedroom residences features a private entrance



and dedicated elevators which ascend directly to the residential floor in the tower. True to the Aman lifestyle, residents and their guests have access to an array of exclusive residents-only facilities on the 54th and 56th floor such as a tea room, library, reading room, media room and games room, as well as a private lounge, bar and dining room serviced by private chefs. Other exclusive offerings include numerous dining and cultural experiences, a prestigious international school, an art museum and a gallery. The 1,400 sqm Aman Spa also features a 25-metre pool with panoramic city views, along with treatment rooms and an expansive gym. 🏯

Capella

Hotels and Resorts'

Debut Property In The Greater Bay Area Stands Tall In Macau

by Priyanka Elhence

Capella at Galaxy Macau sets a new standard of luxury in the destination, with a curated collection of authentic cultural experiences in 2025.

Capella Hotels and Resorts, in partnership with Galaxy Entertainment Group, announces the arrival of the luxurious Capella at Galaxy Macau, slated to launch in 2025. The first Capella Hotels and Resorts to open in The Greater Bay Area, Capella at Galaxy Macau brings to the forefront the destination's vibrant and diverse cultural heritage.

"Capella at Galaxy Macau signifies a pivotal moment for Capella Hotels and Resorts as we expand into The Greater Bay Area," says Evan Kwee, vice-chairman of Capella Hotel Group. He added, "Through our

Photos: Capella Hotels and Resorts



partnership with Galaxy Entertainment Group, we are excited to introduce travellers to Macau's rich cultural heritage, delivering thoughtful and enriching experiences while fostering meaningful connections with the local community."

An art-filled retreat, the 93-key hotel is designed by globally esteemed Paris-based designers, Bruno Moinard and Claire Betaille of the Paris-based luxury interior design firm Moinard Betaille. The duo builds on Capella Hotels and Resorts' legacy of melding contemporary elegance with distinctive individual design. The grand hotel marks its design ethos with its tranquil elegance in the vibrant cultural heart of Macau. To create a sanctuary of solace, the designers have curated a haven of effortless sophistication, with radiant interiors comprising hand-painted wallpaper by Lala Curio, celebrating the vibrant colours of Macau's verdant tropical jungles and natural wonders.

to experience the city's rich heritage, presenting a bold new take on The Living Room, which is set to cement the property's standing as Macau's cultural hub, allowing guests an opportunity to venture deep into Macau's culture and heritage.

The hotel's key gastronomic concept is crafted in association with one of Hong Kong's brightest culinary stars, Vicky Cheng, chef-founder of Veà and Wing, which is currently No.5 on Asia's 50 Best Awards 2024. Michelin-starred Cheng is lauded for his culinary excellence in melding together French techniques with modern Chinese flavours, and his restaurant is set to be the most anticipated opening in the region.

Enriching the dining experience, will be the restaurant's sublime design by award-winning Hong Kong-based interior designer Joyce Wang, of the eponymous design shop Joyce Wang Studio.

Interwoven into integrated resort destination Galaxy Macau™, the 17-storey hotel features 36 expansive Sky Villas, each of which features a serene, hidden winter garden, a spacious, light-filled private balcony complete with a full-length transparent infinity-edge swimming pool, outdoor lounge, and sunroom. Meanwhile, 57 suites boast spacious private plunge pools and expansive balconies offering views of the city's scenic architecture.

As the group's first foray into The Great Bay Area, Capella at Galaxy Macau offers the ultimate gateway

Capella at Galaxy Macau will also feature Pony & Plume, a members-only al fresco lounge concept housing the most extensive hotel humidor informed by a tightly held collection of the finest handpicked vintage Cubans of legendary provenance. Inspired by the game of equestrian polo, Pony & Plume will feature a curated cocktail and the finest whiskies of provenance, underpinned by rare vintage Cuban puros. Finally, Plume is the 'whisper-only' name of a hidden, invitation-only terrace, offering a collection of the city's best examples of Havana craftsmanship to serious aficionados. 🍸





A luxury train travel experience from city to sanctuary for the well-heeled in Java, Indonesia.



Photos: Aman Resorts

The Amanjiwo Journey

A lavish exploration of Java by Train

by Priyanka Elhence



Java, Indonesia's cultural heartland is well known for its pea-green paddy fields and rainforests lined with pristine white beaches. It is also home to a UNESCO World Heritage Site – the Borobudur temple, which is the world's largest temple complex built in the 9th century and houses over 500 life-sized Buddha statues.

Named 'Peaceful Soul' for its serene location in Central Java's heartland, Amanjiwo's privileged and private access is an exclusive way to experience the temple's spiritual setting in its purest form. Cascading from a lofty rotunda down the hillside to a magnificent pool, Amanjiwo is perfectly positioned for exploring the nearby historic and natural attractions, or for a relaxing retreat amid blissful surroundings.

And what better way to experience the many facets of the island, than with the Amanjiwo journey – a train voyage through Java to the Ed Tuttle-designed resort organised in partnership with luxury rail operators, PT Kereta Api Pariwisata (available on selected dates throughout 2024).

With dedicated carriages adorned in the Aman style, travellers can expect a luxurious journey in the utmost comfort. After a warm Javanese welcome at Jakarta

Gambir station's exclusive lounge, they board the regal Kereta Api Wisata train and begin a panoramic seven-hour journey to Amanjiwo through Central Java. The resort's resident anthropologist, Patrick Vanhoebrouck, joins the ride and regale travellers about the region's historic and cultural highlights as the train passes them.

Breakfast and lunch will be served onboard, and travellers can enjoy a glass of crisp champagne with their afternoon tea before reaching Yogyakarta Tugu station. There, a 60-minute private transfer to Amanjiwo awaits.

The journey has been further enriched this year to include a three-night stay at Amanjiwo for guests to fully immerse themselves in the tranquil ambiance and panoramic views of the Kedu Plain and Mount Merapi. Reclaimed from the jungle in the 19th century, Amanjiwo's 36 thatched-roofed suites lie in two perfect crescents below the central rotunda.

Throughout their three-night stay at Amanjiwo, guests can look forward to sumptuous breakfast daily. They can also choose one special Amanjiwo experience – from a traditional Makan Malam degustation dinner served in the grand colonial restaurant, a private Aman picnic on the banks of the Progo river or a nightcap overlooking dramatic vistas of the Menoreh Hills. 🏯





A Spectacular Whale Watching

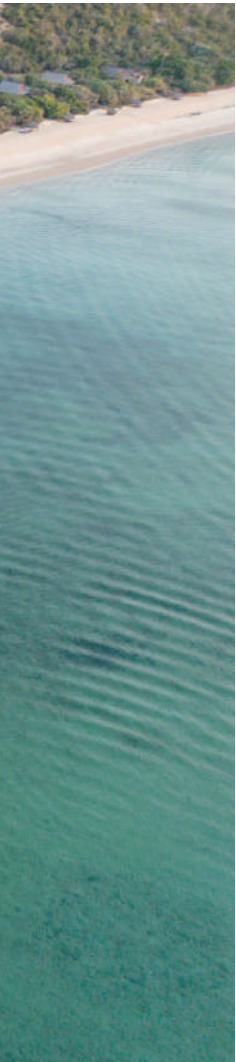
Experience in Mozambique

by Priyanka Elhence

Witness the annual whale migration, one of the longest migrations in the world, at Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort.

Photos: Anantara Hotels





The islands that speckle Mozambique's coastline are a welcome vision of paradise for every guest. Surrounded by natural beauty, Bazaruto Island is an ideal destination for marine adventurers, with stunning ocean views along the 2,500 km of Mozambique's coastline.

Located near the renowned Bazaruto National Park, Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort is perfect for adventure travel and coastal exploration, with extraordinary oceanic adventures in pristine, unspoilt waters.

Every winter, pods of whales embark on their annual migration from Antarctica to Africa, one of the longest migrations in the world, passing through the waters of Mozambique between June and December. The most common species spotted are the humpback and southern right whales. Southern right whales are best seen close to shore in the southern part of the Mozambique Channel from June to December, close to Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort. Between July and October, the humpback whales showcase their acrobatic skills in the waters of the Bazaruto Archipelago, propelling their upper bodies as high as 10 m above the surface.

The whales migrate to cold waters in high latitudes for feeding, before moving on to warmer waters for mating and giving birth. The whale watching trips

are led by Anantara's expert guides, and can be combined with dolphin watching (which is available all year round). An excellent alternative to diving, dolphin watching gives guests the opportunity to go on an ocean safari and get up close with the dolphins in their natural element, not to mention other marine life, such as whale sharks and turtles.

From vibrant coral reefs teeming with tropical fish, to some of the world's largest populations of dolphins, whales, sharks, turtles and dugongs, it is these remarkable ecosystems and the surrounding crystal-clear waters that make Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort a premier whale watching destination.

Guests have a unique choice of experiencing the whale migration in two ways – a morning trip in a charter boat for a three-hour ocean safari excursion (US\$165 per person) or a half-day snorkelling tour at Two Mile Reef (US\$209 per person). The half-day tour includes a picnic lunch on the beach at Pansy Island or Paradise Island, with a specially curated menu of barbecue delights and salad with beverages, served by a personal waiter and chef. For an aerial escapade above the Bazaruto Archipelago, a scenic 30-minute helicopter ride gives guests a birds-eye view of the majestic and gentle humpback whales as they journey through the Indian Ocean (US\$780 per helicopter flight excursion). 🦅



Marriott International opens a Luxury Collection Resort

in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia

by Priyanka Elhence



Photos: The Luxury Collection

TA'AKTANA, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Labuan Bajo presents a luxurious retreat while paying homage to tradition and sustainability.

TA'AKTANA, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Labuan Bajo was recently launched in May this year. It is Marriott International's first property under the prestigious The Luxury Collection brand in Labuan Bajo, strategically located on the western tip of East Nusa Tenggara and adjacent to Komodo Airport, in between wild forests and the shores of the Flores Sea.

As a distinguished member of The Luxury Collection Hotels & Resorts, this opulent sanctuary embraces both contemporary luxury and the traditions of the once fishing village. The resort's layout is inspired by the Lingko field, the spiderweb-shaped agricultural design found only in Flores. The shape of the interconnected terraces of the villas and pathways is also inspired by the geometries of the rice fields, symbolising the region's ancient culture. The materials used throughout the resort further represent and honour the area's rich heritage.

TA'AKTANA, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Labuan Bajo is sprawled across 16 hectares with 70 luxury accommodations, which include Junior Suites, Overwater Sea Villas (the first in the destination), Family Villas, and a 3-bedroom Mansion. All the accommodations are decked out with avant-garde facilities and ultra-luxury amenities for an unparalleled retreat.

With lush hills, pristine beaches and crystal-clear waters, TA'AKTANA is the gateway for guests to explore Labuan Bajo's natural wonders and rich marine biodiversity, especially catering to outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy diving and snorkelling adventures.

TA'AKTANA has several initiatives highlighting the property's dedication to ethical and social responsibility, embodying cultural preservation, environment and human sustainability. From the UNESCO World



Heritage Site of Wae Rebo, a traditional village preserving the authenticity of the ancestral Manggarai people (Flores' original tribe); to Rangko Cave (Goa Rangko), a hidden enclave with a natural blue pool; as well as the Mirror Stone Cave (Goa Batu Cermin), there is a wealth of awe-inspiring treasures to discover in Labuan Bajo. Guests can also visit Taka Makassar, an embossed sandbar surrounded by crystal-clear waters as well as the renowned Komodo National Park, another UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to the legendary Komodo dragons.

Inspired by The Luxury Collection's ethos of connecting with surrounding traditions, TA'AKTANA also embraces a unique tradition from Labuan Bajo's past

where electricity was absent. As a nod to those times, TA'AKTANA provides lanterns in every room for guests to use when strolling around the property to embrace the region's cultural heritage.

From their innovative approach to waste reduction with waste kain batik fabrics repurposed into elegant table napkins and charming hair-scrunchies presented as eco-conscious souvenirs, to their participation in Beach Cleaning activities at Wae Rana Beach, TA'AKTANA actively contributes to the well-being and preservation of Labuan Bajo's rich heritage and natural surroundings as well as the sustainability of local small businesses all over Indonesia. 🌿

World Parkinson's Disease Day

by Debbie Tan

Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a progressive neurological disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. Recognised annually on 11 April, World Parkinson's Disease Day aims to raise awareness and drive efforts towards better understanding, treatment, and ultimately, a cure for this debilitating condition. As we approach the new year, it's imperative to delve into the intricacies of Parkinson's Disease, explore its causes, symptoms, treatment options, and the ongoing research that offers hope to patients and their families.

Photos: Vecteezy & Freepik



World Parkinson's Disease Day aims to raise awareness and drive efforts towards better understanding, treatment, and ultimately, a cure for this debilitating condition.

What is Parkinson's Disease?

Parkinson's Disease primarily affects the motor system, leading to symptoms such as tremors, rigidity, bradykinesia (slowness of movement), and postural instability. These symptoms result from the degeneration of dopamine-producing neurons in the substantia nigra, a region of the brain crucial for movement control. The reduction in dopamine levels disrupts the balance of neurological activity, manifesting in the characteristic motor symptoms of PD. The exact cause of Parkinson's Disease remains unknown, but research points to a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Approximately 10-15% of PD cases are linked to genetic mutations, with several genes identified as contributors, including SNCA, LRRK2, and PARK2. Environmental factors, such as exposure to pesticides, heavy metals, and rural living, have also been implicated. Age is the most significant risk factor, with the majority of PD cases occurring in individuals over 60. Men are 1.5 times more likely to develop Parkinson's Disease than women. Other risk factors include a family history of PD and a history of head trauma.

Symptoms, Stages, and Current Treatments

Parkinson's Disease presents a range of symptoms that vary from person to person. Early signs often include subtle tremors in one hand, slight changes in handwriting, and reduced facial expressions. As the disease progresses, symptoms become more pronounced and can include motor symptoms such as involuntary shaking, muscle stiffness, slowness of movement, and difficulty with balance and coordination. Non-motor symptoms like cognitive changes, mood disorders, sleep disturbances, and autonomic dysfunction also significantly impact the patient's quality

of life. Diagnosis is primarily clinical, based on medical history and neurological examination. No definitive test exists for PD, but imaging techniques like DaTscan can support the diagnosis by highlighting dopamine deficiency in the brain. While there is no cure for Parkinson's Disease, various treatments can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life. The cornerstone of PD treatment is medication, particularly levodopa, which is converted to dopamine in the brain, alleviating motor symptoms. Dopamine agonists and MAO-B inhibitors also play a role in managing symptoms. Non-pharmacological treatments, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy, are crucial for maintaining mobility, adapting daily activities, and addressing speech and swallowing difficulties. For patients with advanced Parkinson's Disease, surgical options like Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) can be considered. DBS involves implanting electrodes in specific brain regions to regulate abnormal neural activity, providing significant symptom relief for some patients.

Research and Future Directions

Ongoing research into Parkinson's Disease is exploring new avenues for treatment and potential cures. Advances in genetics have improved our understanding of the disease's underlying mechanisms, opening doors for gene therapy and other targeted interventions. Researchers are investigating the potential of stem cells to replace damaged neurons and restore dopamine production. Initial clinical trials have shown promise, with some patients experiencing improvements in motor function. However, challenges remain, including ensuring the survival and proper integration of transplanted cells into the existing neural network. Efforts are underway to develop drugs that can protect neurons from



degeneration, potentially slowing disease progression. Compounds like glial cell line-derived neurotrophic factor (GDNF) and other neurotrophic factors are being studied for their ability to support neuron survival and function. By targeting specific genetic mutations associated with Parkinson's Disease, gene therapy aims to correct or mitigate the effects of these mutations. Techniques such as CRISPR-Cas9 are being explored for their potential to edit genes directly within the brain, offering a highly targeted approach to treatment. Identifying reliable biomarkers for early diagnosis and tracking disease progression remains a critical research goal. Biomarkers could include specific proteins, genetic markers, or imaging findings that indicate the presence and severity of Parkinson's Disease. Early detection through biomarkers could enable earlier intervention, potentially slowing the disease's progression.

Research into supplements and dietary interventions for brain health is gaining traction. Several nutrients and compounds are being investigated for their potential to support brain function and possibly slow the progression of Parkinson's Disease. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish oil and flaxseed, have anti-inflammatory properties and support brain health. Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), an antioxidant that plays a crucial role in cellular energy

production, has been studied for its potential to protect neurons from oxidative stress. Vitamin D, curcumin, N-acetylcysteine (NAC), and probiotics are also being explored for their neuroprotective effects. Technology is playing an increasingly significant role in the management of Parkinson's Disease, offering innovative solutions to monitor symptoms, enhance treatment, and improve patient outcomes. Wearable devices, such as smartwatches and fitness trackers, can continuously monitor movement, detect tremors, and provide real-time feedback to patients and healthcare providers. These devices can track medication adherence, activity levels, and sleep patterns, enabling personalised care and timely interventions. Mobile applications designed for PD patients offer tools for symptom tracking, medication reminders, and exercise routines. These apps often include features for caregivers, facilitating better communication and coordination of care. Telemedicine has emerged as a valuable tool for managing Parkinson's Disease, especially in remote or underserved areas. Virtual consultations with neurologists and other specialists can provide timely advice, adjust treatment plans, and offer support without the need for travel. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are also being explored as therapeutic tools for Parkinson's Disease. VR can provide immersive environments for



Living with Parkinson's Disease poses numerous challenges, but with the right support and management strategies, patients can maintain a fulfilling life.



physical therapy, enhancing engagement and improving outcomes. AR can assist with daily tasks by overlaying digital information onto the real world, helping patients navigate their environment more effectively. Artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionising Parkinson's Disease research and treatment. AI algorithms can analyse vast amounts of data from wearable devices, medical records, and genetic information to identify patterns and predict disease progression. Machine learning models are being developed to personalise treatment plans, optimise medication dosages, and even predict the onset of symptoms.

Impact on Individuals and Families

Living with Parkinson's Disease poses numerous challenges, but with the right support and management strategies, patients can maintain a fulfilling life. A multidisciplinary approach, involving neurologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and mental health professionals, ensures comprehensive care. Support groups and advocacy organisations play a pivotal role in providing education, resources, and emotional support to patients and their families. Initiatives like World Parkinson's Disease Day help raise awareness and funding for research, driving progress towards better treatments and, ultimately, a cure. Sharing patient stories can provide insight into the daily realities of living with Parkinson's Disease and offer hope to others facing similar challenges. For example, Michael J. Fox, a well-known actor diagnosed with PD at the age of 29, has become a prominent advocate for Parkinson's research. Through his foundation, he has raised millions of dollars for research

and increased public awareness of the disease. Another inspiring story is that of Alan Alda, an actor and science communicator, who continues to work and advocate for science education despite his Parkinson's diagnosis. His determination and positive outlook serve as a beacon of hope for many.

The fight against Parkinson's Disease is multifaceted, involving scientific research, technological innovation, and community support. As we commemorate World Parkinson's Disease Day, it's crucial to continue supporting efforts that enhance our understanding of PD, improve patient care, and bring us closer to a future without this debilitating disease. By raising awareness, funding research, and advocating for patients, we can make significant strides in the fight against Parkinson's Disease. Technological advancements, particularly in wearable devices, AI, and telemedicine, are set to change the management of Parkinson's Disease. These innovations offer new ways to monitor symptoms, personalise treatments, and improve the quality of life for patients. As we look to the future, the potential for breakthroughs in gene therapy, stem cell research, and neuroprotective treatments offers hope for more effective and targeted therapies. Emerging technologies, such as AI, wearable devices, and advanced imaging techniques, are revolutionising Parkinson's research and treatment. These technologies enable earlier diagnosis, customised treatment plans, and real-time monitoring of disease progression. The integration of technology into Parkinson's care has the potential to transform the way we approach the disease and improve the quality of life for patients and caregivers. 🌱

Disney

A Modern Fairy Tale

by R Jacob

We take a close look at the Disney Empire, and the various kingdoms it encompasses.

Imagine a world without Mickey Mouse. A world without 2D animation, a world where Bambi does not exist. Or for that matter, neither does the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). It's hard to imagine, considering how much these styles and characters have become embedded into daily life – a fact that speaks volumes about the impact of The Walt Disney Company.

Disney, as The Walt Disney Company is usually known, is more than just a household name – it's a cultural institution. With their humble beginnings as a small Hollywood animation studio in the early 20th century, Disney has since grown into a global entertainment juggernaut over the years. This incredible growth is in no small part due to their drive for innovation, and a series of savvy acquisitions. In 2024, Disney ranked in at number 47 on the Fortune 500 list, a jump of six places from the previous year.

A Mouse that became King

Founded on October 16 1923 by brothers Walt and Roy O. Disney, the Walt Disney Company began its journey as a small animation studio based in Hollywood. The company's big break came in 1928 with the creation of Mickey Mouse, who first appeared in the short film *Steamboat Willie*. Mickey quickly became a cultural icon, propelling Disney to the forefront of the animation industry.





Photos: Pexels

The 1930s and 1940s saw Disney produce a string of animated classics, including *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Pinocchio*, *Fantasia*, *Dumbo*, and *Bambi*. These films not only solidified Disney's reputation but also set new standards in animation and storytelling, establishing the company as the best in the field.

Entertaining the Masses

In the 1950s, Disney began expanding beyond film into new ventures. The company made its television debut with shows like *The Mickey Mouse Club* and the Disneyland anthology series. These programmes allowed Disney to reach a wider audience and solidified its brand presence in American households.

Another extremely important milestone was the opening of Disneyland in 1955. Situated in California, USA, it was the world's first theme park, offering visitors a completely immersive experience that combined rides, shows, and beloved screen characters. Its massive success led to the development of several additional parks during the course of time, such as the Walt Disney World in Florida, Tokyo Disneyland, and Disneyland Paris. As of 2024, there are 12 Disney theme parks across the world.

Planting the Beanstalk

Over the years, Disney recognised the need to diversify its offerings and expand its global reach as the entertainment landscape evolved. This led to several strategic acquisitions that have played a crucial role in the company's growth and prominence.

Disney's first major turning point came in 1996, when Disney acquired Capital Cities/ABC Inc. for US\$19 billion. This deal was one of the largest media mergers at the time, and gave Disney control over the ABC television network as well as an 80%



stake in ESPN, the leading sports broadcaster of that time. This acquisition not only expanded Disney's media empire but also provided a steady stream of revenue from sports broadcasting and advertising.

In 2006, Disney acquired Pixar Animation Studios for US\$7.4 billion, a move that revitalised its animation division. Pixar had already made a name for itself with innovative computer-animated films like *Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo* and *The Incredibles*. Under the leadership of Apple founder Steve Jobs, Pixar was known for its cutting-edge technology and strong storytelling.

This acquisition brought fresh creative energy to Disney, leading to a string of successful collaborations, including *Ratatouille*, *WALL-E*, *Up*, and *Toy Story 3*. They had been trailing behind in animation technology, and the partnership helped restore Disney's animation studios to their former glory.

Powering Up with Marvel

One of Disney's most transformative acquisitions was the purchase of Marvel Entertainment in 2009 for US\$4.4 billion. Marvel had a rich history dating back to the 1930s, and was home to some of the most popular comic book characters ever created. Superheroes like Spider-Man, Iron Man, the Hulk, Thor, and the X-Men were characters that were already famous in their own right, and had been adapted to the big screen and TV formats earlier.

While Marvel had already seen some success with films like *X-Men* and *Spider-Man*, the company's financial situation had become tenuous, especially after a bankruptcy filing in the 1990s. After Disney's acquisition, the launch of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) in 2008 with the film *Iron Man*, marked a turning point for both Marvel and Disney, with the movie laying the groundwork for what would become one of the most successful film franchises in history.

With Disney at the helm, Marvel went on to expand the MCU into a vast, interconnected universe that has since dominated the box office. Using Disney's resources and global reach, Marvel Studios produced a series of blockbuster films, culminating in *Avengers: Endgame*, which became the second highest-grossing film of all time. The success of the MCU extended beyond movies to include television series, merchandise, and theme park attractions, making Marvel one of Disney's most valuable assets.

Reaching for the Stars

Another landmark acquisition was Disney's purchase of Lucasfilm, the company behind the *Star Wars* franchise, for US\$4.05 billion in 2012. *Star Wars* had already established itself as a global phenomenon ever since the release of the original film in 1977, but the franchise had been relatively dormant since the prequel trilogy in the early 2000s.

Disney wasted no time in breathing new life into the *Star Wars* franchise. The company announced a new trilogy, starting with *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, in 2015. Directed by J.J. Abrams, the film was both a critical and commercial success, grossing over US\$2 billion worldwide. This was followed up by the remaining sequel movies, *The Last Jedi*, and *The Rise of Skywalker*, both of which performed well at the box office.

Disney also expanded the *Star Wars* universe with standalone films like *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, and *Solo: A Star Wars Story*. They even forayed into the television format, launching the highly successful *The Mandalorian* on its

streaming platform, Disney+. This was soon followed by other shows such as *The Book of Boba Fett*, *Andor*, and more.

This acquisition not only invigorated the Star Wars franchise but also strengthened Disney's position in the global entertainment market, making Star Wars a central part of its content strategy.

Exploring New Frontiers

In 2019, Disney launched its own streaming service, Disney+, entering the competitive streaming market. The platform offered content from Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, and National Geographic, and quickly became a major player in the industry.

Disney+ allowed the company to reach consumers directly, competing with established streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. The platform's success was bolstered by Disney's extensive content library, especially with heavy hitters like the Marvel and Star Wars franchises.

The Mandalorian became one of Disney+'s flagship series, driving subscriptions and establishing the platform as a must-have for fans of the Star Wars universe. Similarly, Marvel Studios produced many exclusive series for Disney+, such as *WandaVision*, *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, and *Loki*, further expanding the MCU.

Bagging the Fox

In 2019, Disney also completed its US\$71.3 billion acquisition of 21st Century Fox, one of its largest acquisitions to date. This deal significantly expanded Disney's portfolio, adding a vast array of content and intellectual property to its already impressive collection. The acquisition brought popular franchises like *Avatar*, *The Simpsons*, and *X-Men* under the Disney umbrella. It also gave Disney a controlling stake in the streaming service Hulu, complementing the company's existing streaming repertoire.

Another significant impact of the Fox acquisition was the reintegration of the *X-Men* and *Fantastic Four* characters into the MCU, allowing these fan favourite characters to be included in future Marvel films. In fact, a new *X-Men* series titled *X-Men 97* has already been released in early 2024.

The Flip Side

While Disney's acquisitions have been largely successful, they haven't been without its own challenges and controversies. Some fans have been critical of the direction Disney has taken with certain franchises, particularly with Star Wars and the MCU. The Star Wars sequel trilogy, while financially

successful, received mixed reactions from fans and critics, leading to debates about the creative decisions made by Disney. Even the MCU seems to be reaching a level of saturation with audiences globally, with over 34 films being released since 2008 – and this is aside from their streaming television shows.

The company's dominance in the entertainment industry has also raised concerns about monopolistic practices and the impact on competition. Critics argue that Disney's control over much of the entertainment landscape stifles creativity and limits opportunities for smaller studios. This has also led to concerns about the homogenisation of content globally. With Disney controlling such a vast array of franchises and media outlets, there is a growing perception that the company is prioritising safe, commercially viable content over innovative or risky projects. This has resulted in a proliferation of remakes, reboots, and sequels, which, while profitable, have been criticised for lacking originality.

Nonetheless, the Marvel and Star Wars franchises remain key pillars of Disney's content strategy, with numerous films, series, and other projects in development. Additionally, the company is exploring new technologies, such as virtual reality and immersive experiences, to engage audiences in new ways.

The Road Ahead

Life imitates art. This is especially true for Disney, a company that started as a humble animation studio creating children's stories and fairy tales, and is now living a fairy tale in real life. Through its strategic acquisitions of Marvel, Lucasfilm, Pixar, and 21st Century Fox, the company has solidified its position as an industry leader and a beloved brand for generations of audiences. They recently commemorated their 100th year anniversary – and it truly seems like Disney will be living happily ever after. 🏰



About The Writer

Jacob is a writer with a strong tech background. An engineer turned writer/artist, he has varied interests encompassing technology, flow arts, music and entrepreneurship. Having worked in the IT and EduTech industry before moving on to establish his own business, he believes in employing a multi-faceted approach in all his endeavours.



The Backbone of Internet

by R Jacob

From Garage Start-Up to Global Giant, Google has always been at the forefront of cutting-edge technology.

The 90s was wild – a time of renaissance, excitement and optimism. It was also wildly chaotic. Apart from the cultural, musical and artistic resurgence taking place, another frontier was silently developing. Hidden from the public eye, the internet was a sort of underground counterculture, privy to those savvy enough or with the means to access it. On the internet, you could find pretty much everything, as long as you knew how to. And that was the rub – amidst the growing jumble of webpages and file servers, navigation was no easy task.

A number of search engines popped up to fill in the demand. These were not the powerful and smart search engines of today's age, however. Yahoo!, AltaVista, and Excite were some of the more popular ones, but struggled to keep up with the rapidly expanding internet. It was clear a more sophisticated solution was needed to properly categorise and index the internet, without falling prey to spam and scams.

At the time, Google did not exist. Google was an idea, a concept with barely a name, in the minds

of two Stanford University Ph.D. students – Larry Page and Sergey Brin. Excited by the internet, they were quietly developing a search engine that would not only efficiently navigate the internet, but also revolutionise our daily lives.

The Search for the Perfect Search Engine

Google's origins are well known. Page and Brin met in 1995, drawn together by their shared interest in understanding the structure and organisation of the internet. At the time, existing search engines ranked websites based on the number of times a search term appeared on a page. This was inefficient and prone to being bypassed by spam tactics. Page and Brin theorised that the relationship between websites were a far better indicator for a ranking factor. They termed this the 'PageRank' algorithm, a system that ranked websites based on the number and quality of links pointing to them. The idea was simple – if a page was linked to by many other reputable pages, then it was likely to be more valuable and relevant.

PageRank became the underpinnings of 'BackRub', their first search engine prototype, and the precursor to Google. Its revolutionary approach meant that its search results were more accurate, immediately setting it apart from the competition. The distinction didn't end there – Google's homepage featured nothing but a search bar and the Google logo, a breath of fresh air compared to the cluttered and ad-filled interfaces of search engines like Yahoo! and AltaVista. This minimalist design style became one of Google's most iconic features, and contributes significantly to its popularity till date.

Yahoo!: A Cautionary Tale

Google was officially founded in 1998, and operated out of a garage in Menlo Park, California. Despite the superior technology behind PageRank, the young company faced an uphill battle to compete with the established search engines of the time. As Google gained traction, Page and Brin approached Yahoo! with an offer to sell their fledgling company for a mere US\$1 million. Yahoo!, still a dominant player in the internet space, declined, dismissing the value of Google's innovative search algorithm.

Yahoo!'s refusal turned out to be a massive blunder. In the next few years, Google began to quickly take over the search engine space. In fact, realising the danger at

hand, Yahoo! tried to buy Google in 2002 with an offer of US\$3 billion. Google countered with an offer of US\$5 billion. Yahoo! refused, again.

Over the years, Yahoo! continued to struggle with its search engine and web portal model, while Google went on to dominate the market. By the time Yahoo! realised its mistake, it was too late. Google had grown by leaps and bounds, and Yahoo! was left to play catch-up in a game it would never win.

Monetising the Search

PageRank was not the only ace up Google's sleeve. A number of strategic decisions and acquisitions led Google to becoming the giant that they are today. The launch of AdWords was one such decision. AdWords was a platform that allowed businesses to display targeted ads on Google's search results page, based on the search terms entered by the user. The revolutionary part was pay per click – meaning that advertisers only needed to pay if their ad was clicked on. This soon became Google's primary source of revenue, transforming their popular search engine into a profitable venture.

Gmail, launched in 2004, was another key product that helped Google build a loyal user base. By offering ample storage and powerful search capabilities, it quickly became the most popular email service in the world. Gmail accounts soon began to be used as the backbone for all services in the Google ecosystem.



Another significant decision was the acquisition of YouTube for US\$1.65 billion in 2006. The video sharing platform was already popular, but struggled to manage the sheer number of videos uploaded per day to its servers. Under Google, YouTube had the resources and infrastructure it needed to scale, while Google managed to secure a foothold in the nascent but burgeoning online video market. YouTube blew up over the next few years, and is now the second most visited website in the world – it makes up a significant chunk of Google’s revenue, and is responsible for bringing in billions of new users into the Google ecosystem.

The most visited website in the world, of course, is Google itself.

The Mobile Era

Now a market leader, Google did not rest on its laurels, diversifying and expanding aggressively. The world had moved on to accessing the internet using their mobile phones, and Google wanted a piece of the pie. At the time, the mobile phone market was dominated by companies like Nokia and BlackBerry, each with their own hardware and proprietary operating systems (OS). In 2008, Google launched the Android OS, an open-source OS for mobile phones. Unlike other proprietary

systems, Android was fully customisable, and free to use and develop on.

The gamble paid off. Other manufacturers began to flock to the Android ecosystem, using it for their devices. In just a few years, Android had become the dominant mobile OS worldwide, overtaking Apple’s iOS and establishing Google as a major player in the mobile market. Through Android, Google ensured that its search engine, services and apps were deeply integrated into devices used by billions of people globally.

Several of Google’s web apps found a new home in the Android ecosystem. Google Maps, Gmail, Chrome and many more, were all extremely well positioned to make full use of the mobile ecosystem, allowing them to integrate with Google’s other services. Google also invested in localisation efforts, ensuring that its services were available in multiple languages, tailored to the needs of users in different countries. This helped Google further capture markets around the world and solidify its position.

Pioneering the New Frontier

Since its inception over 25 years ago, Google has virtually changed the internet landscape completely. Thanks to

In just a few years, Android had become the dominant mobile OS worldwide, overtaking Apple’s iOS and establishing Google as a major player in the mobile market.



Photos: Unsplash, Freepik & Pexels



its search engine, it has never been easier to find answers to practically any question, democratising access to information on a global scale. This has transformed not only the internet, but society as a whole.

Unexpectedly, an entire industry has arisen around Google's search results. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is the process of understanding Google's search algorithms to rank higher on their search results. As businesses realised the importance of a higher rank, they began to invest heavily in SEO strategies to improve their visibility. SEO specialists are now highly sought after professionals who play a vital role in the development of a business.

By driving traffic to websites through search, Google has become also become a key player in the online advertising market. Its ad platforms such as AdWords

and AdSense, have enabled countless businesses to reach new customers and generate revenue.

Even beyond the internet economy, the need to rank highly in Google search results has shaped the way content is written and created, with an emphasis on keywords and SEO-friendly formats. This has had its pros and cons – leading to the creation of high-quality content tailored to users' needs, but also to the proliferation of clickbait and low-quality content designed to game the system.

The Current Landscape

The success of Google has had a profound impact on its competitors. Yahoo! never recovered from their loss as the market leader, despite attempts to outsource their search technology to Microsoft's Bing. In 2017, Verizon acquired Yahoo!, once valued at US\$125 billion, for a paltry sum of US\$4.5 billion.

Bing, Microsoft's search engine, also faced an uphill battle. Despite significant investment and some innovative features, it never managed to break Google's hold on the search market, remaining a distant second to Google in terms of user numbers and influence.

Other competitors, like Ask Jeeves and AltaVista, either pivoted to other services or faded into obscurity. Ask Jeeves rebranded to Ask.com and shifted their focus away from search engines. AltaVista, once a leader in search technology, was eventually acquired by Yahoo! and shut down in 2013.

Moving into the Future

The failure of these competitors to keep pace with Google highlights just how well Google had cornered the market. Its focus on innovation, user experience and aggressive business strategy left little room for others to compete effectively.

Google, on the other hand, has continued to thrive, expanding its reach into almost every aspect of digital life. From search to mobile, video to smart home devices, Google's touch can be seen everywhere. Its parent company, Alphabet Inc., is now one of the most valuable companies in the world, and its products and services are used by billions of people daily.

There's so much more that can be said for Google pioneering and shaping the entire internet. If you want the answers, you just have to Google it. 🐼



Photos: Vecteezy

How to prepare for an effective legal negotiation?

by Richard Siaw

What happens when business partners fail to see eye to eye regarding contract terms? Or how does a landlord resolve a dispute with his tenant?

Negotiation has become an increasingly important skill as we navigate daily complex situations. From international stages to personal relationships, mastering the art of negotiation is key to safeguarding best interests while preserving harmony among parties.

Why choose negotiation?

To put it simply, negotiation is a strategic discussion that aims to resolve differences and achieve a mutually beneficial outcome. It usually takes place between two or more parties involved in a conflict or dispute.

When it comes to legal issues, more people are turning to negotiation (or mediation) as a way to settle conflicts and work towards a common resolution for all parties involved. If parties choose to litigate, it typically takes months or

Negotiation is a strategic discussion that aims to resolve differences and achieve a mutually beneficial outcome. It usually takes place between two or more parties involved in a conflict or dispute.

years before the final court order is made. Drawn-out court battles could take a psychological toll on parties and possibly hinder the progress of projects or partnerships. Negotiation not only saves time and cost, but it also allows more room for discussion and higher control over the proceedings and outcome.

Negotiation is also private and confidential, making it a popular choice when it comes to family conflicts where people prefer not to air dirty laundry in public, or corporate lawsuits which could risk ruining reputations. Furthermore, discussions behind closed doors prevent further damages to the ties between participants. Discussions carried out during negotiation are without prejudice and cannot be used as evidence against parties.

Negotiation versus mediation

However, unmediated negotiation has its risks. Without the presence of a well-trained and neutral mediator, parties might get caught up with their emotions and fail to focus on the issue at hand. A mediator would be able to help participants stay on track and work towards a mutually advantageous and amicable resolution by guiding both sides to consider creative solutions that they have not thought of previously.

Principled negotiation¹

Out of the different negotiation types, principled negotiation – introduced by Fisher and Ury in 1981 – is commonly used in conflict resolution due to its win-win approach. This negotiation type centres upon the principles and interests of parties to pursue an ultimate consensus. Under this framework, the authors introduced four main principles for a successful negotiation.

1. **Separate the people from the problem²:** Instead of being ridden by emotions, focus on understanding and resolving the key differences at hand.

2. **Focus on interests, not positions³:** Concentrate on underlying motivations, goals and needs, instead of hard and fast positions.
3. **Invent options for mutual gain⁴:** Devote time to brainstorm possible solutions which fulfil disputing parties' best interests.
4. **Insist on using objective criteria⁵:** Craft proposals based on data, statistics, expert opinion and relevant legislation.

This article will look into how these principles could come into play when preparing for a legal negotiation.

Preparing for negotiation

As Sun Tzu famously stated in *The Art of War*, “Know yourself and your enemy, and you will never be defeated.” To prepare for an effective negotiation, negotiators should have a thorough understanding of the relevant facts and circumstances of the case.

Next, consider alternatives. BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement)⁶ – also introduced by Fisher and Ury – is a key concept in negotiation that helps one evaluate whether the proposed terms are worth accepting. Individuals should consider beforehand the best-case scenario if negotiation fails. This is especially important if the other party has the upper hand. Being aware of one's options would prevent the negotiator from accepting a proposal that was worse off than their BATNA. Developing and improving alternatives would also give negotiators more bargaining power.

It is also crucial to set goals and develop a strategy plan before the session. Negotiators should be clear about their desired outcomes and the concessions that they are willing to make. One should also try to determine the other party's perspectives (and possibly their negotiation styles). Analysing own and counterpart's strengths and weaknesses enables

¹ Roger Fisher, William Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (1st edition, 1981).

² supra n 1, pages 19-41.

³ supra n 1, pages 42-57.

⁴ supra n 1, pages 58-81.

⁵ supra n 1, pages 82-95.

⁶ supra n 1, pages 99-108.

negotiators to come up with substantive arguments to support own's view or counter the other party's position.

Creating a win-win situation in a trademark dispute

Last year, two local F&B businesses were involved in a dispute over the trademarks of their Japanese restaurants. En Dining Bar Holdings Pte. Ltd. ("Party A") had sued Captain K F&B Management Pte. Ltd ("Party B") for infringing their Marks, citing similarities like the 'use of the word "En"' and 'the use of a brushed red circle around a Sino-Japanese character'.

Following strong recommendations by the Registrar of the Supreme Court, Parties A and B decided to attempt mediation. The session started off with an optimistic tone, where the participants actively contributed to the discussion. They were honest and sincere in sharing their perspectives, including personal details like how they ventured into the F&B industry and their desired outcomes from the session.

After a few hours, both parties managed to reach an agreement. When it came to finalising the settlement terms, they and their team of lawyers were also very cooperative. The session came to a successful conclusion with the signing of the agreement and closing remarks from the participants and the Mediator.

The satisfactory outcome was only possible as the parties looked beyond their past disagreements and focused on seeking a favourable solution for both. Despite the initial standstill, the parties pushed on with the Mediator's help, by searching for creative solutions that were mutually profitable. Their open and collaborative attitude played an instrumental role in the swift and relatively fuss-free process towards settlement.

Most importantly, they actively listened and empathised with each other. Throughout the process, they demonstrated the

principle of 'separating the people from the problem'. Their opposing stance – or the dispute standing between them – did not stop them from recognising the 'person' they were negotiating with.

At the closing of the session, the older party even commented on their similarities, stating that he saw a little of himself in his counterpart. (Both used to be engineers before taking a



⁷ *Captain K F&B Management Pte. Ltd & En Dining Bar Holdings Pte. Ltd.* [2024] AMP MED 1, <https://www.ipos.gov.sg/docs/default-source/protecting-your-ideas/hearings-mediation/mediation-cases.pdf>, pages 7-11.

leap into the F&B industry.) More often than not, disputing parties would take things personally and project their frustrations on their counterpart. However, parties in this case leveraged on similar backgrounds to overcome their differences and collaborate better with each other. In the end, they not only walked away with the problem resolved, but also a better relationship and new found respect for one another.

Post-negotiation

When parties have concluded negotiations and are agreeable with the terms discussed, what will happen next? What loose ends are there to tie up?

The final stage of legal negotiation involves the drafting of settlement agreements. The terms agreed upon during the session are put down in black and white, and both parties have to sign for them to come into effect.

Ensuring the enforceability of a settlement agreement

The case of *Law Chau Loon v Alphire Group Pte Ltd*⁸ is related to the drafting of settlement agreements. In this case, Law Chau Loon (“Law”) had come to a consensus with Han Seng Juan (“Han”), Dr Loh Kim Kang David (“David”) and Wong Kok Hoe (“Wong”) (collectively, “the Investors”) over the settlement of a court judgment debt. Han, David and Wong were Investors of the Alphire Group Pte Ltd (“Alphire”). However, Alphire did not recognise the agreement. They argued that the Investors were not authorised to negotiate and settle on behalf of the company. As a result, Law had to seek a court order to enforce the settlement agreement.

The Court found that Law had met with the Alphire Investors to negotiate a settlement agreement over a court judgment debt of S\$1 million. The meeting concluded with both parties agreeing to settle. They concurred that Law will subsequently repay S\$400,000 in four instalments, in addition to the S\$1 million cash he returned to them at the meeting. Law was also required to carry out a share transfer and provide all the necessary documents. In exchange, Alphire will withdraw the bankruptcy petition. The terms were documented in a WhatsApp text message sent by the Investor to Law. Solicitors of Alphire, in their correspondence with Law’s solicitors, had also acknowledged the settlement that was reached during the meeting.

After examining the case details, the Court was satisfied that “the terms of the settlement agreement were complete, certain and binding”.

This case highlighted the importance of ensuring that the terms of a settlement agreement are legally enforceable. In addition, it is always important to be familiar with the relevant laws pertaining to the case. When in doubt, it is wise to consult a lawyer to obtain comprehensive advice. It would be a waste of time if thorough preparation was done prior to the negotiation, only to come up with an unenforceable agreement. Not only could it complicate matters, parties might end up having to litigate like Law did, spending unnecessary time and money.

Although it might seem like an obvious tip, the case of *Law Chau Loon v Alphire Group Pte Ltd* also showed that it is crucial to verify the identity of the representative attending the mediation. In corporate disputes – especially those involving multiple stakeholders, the parties involved must have the authority to represent the entity. Law was lucky that the Court had deemed the Investors to possess implied authority due to their direct involvement in the company, and could represent the company even though they were not directors.

It is also useful to have post-negotiation exchanges in writing, including texts or emails. In the case of a dispute, these recorded correspondences could serve as evidence to prove that the agreement was indeed final and binding.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in the aforementioned cases, legal negotiation is a dynamic and complex process. It often involves various stakeholders with varying interests. Sometimes, there might be multiple issues to resolve. Comprehensive preparation should be done beforehand to ensure optimal results are gained from the process. Parties should strive to be objective, open and willing to collaborate, so as to create the best outcome for everyone. 🙏



About The Writer

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⁸ *Law Chau Loon v Alphire Group Pte Ltd* [2019] SGHC 275



Photos: Vecteezy

如何为有效的法律谈判做准备？

by Richard Siaw

当商业伙伴就合同条款意见不一致时应该怎么做？一名房东又该如何与租户解决争端？

我们每天都需应对复杂的情况，而谈判已成为一项越来越重要的技能。从国际舞台到个人关系，掌握谈判的艺术是保障实现最佳利益，同时保持各方和谐的秘诀。

为何选择谈判？

简而言之，谈判就是一场旨在解决分歧并实现互利结果的战略性讨论，通常在发生冲突或争端的两方或多方之间进行。

在面对法律问题时，越来越多人选择通过谈判（或调解）来解决冲突，并为所有相关方达成共同解决的方

谈判就是一场旨在解决分歧并实现互利结果的战略性讨论，通常在发生冲突或争端的两方或多方之间进行。

案。如果各方选择诉讼，很有可能需要数月，甚至数年才能等到法院作出最终判决。旷日持久的法庭斗争可能会使双方筋疲力尽，并可能阻碍项目或合作关系的进展。谈判不仅节省时间和成本，还可以提供更多的讨论空间，双方也可以更自由地控制程序和结果。

谈判过程也是保密的，因此在人们普遍不愿公开丑闻的家庭冲突中，或可能损害声誉的公司诉讼中，谈判是更受欢迎的选择。此外，闭门讨论可以防止进一步损害双方关系。谈判过程中的讨论不具有偏见，不能作为对参与者不利的证据。

谈判跟调解的区别

然而，没经过调解的谈判也有其风险。如果没有训练有素、中立的调解员，双方可能会陷入不满情绪中，无法集中精力处理眼前的问题。通过引导双方考虑未曾想过的创新解决方案，调解员可以帮助参与者保持正轨，并努力实现互利的、友好的解决方案。

原则式谈判¹

在不同的谈判类型中，由Fisher和Ury在1981年提出的原则式谈判，由于其双赢的方针，常用于解决冲突。原则式谈判以各方的原则和利益为中心，寻求最终的共识。在此框架下，作者提出了成功谈判的四项主要原则。

1. 将人与事分离。² 不被情绪所左右，而要专注于理解并解决双方的关键差异。
2. 关注利益，而不是立场。³ 将精力集中在潜在的动机、目标 and 需求，而不是强硬的立场。

3. 创造互利选择。⁴ 花时间集思广益，寻找可能的解决方案，满足各方的最佳利益。
4. 坚持使用客观标准。⁵ 基于数据、统计、专家意见和相关的立法，提出解决方案。

本文将探讨这些原则在准备法律谈判时如何发挥作用。

准备谈判

正如《孙子兵法》中所说，“知己知彼，百战百胜。”要为有效的谈判做准备，谈判者应透彻了解案件的相关事实和情况。

另外，谈判者也应考虑替代方案。同样由Fisher和Ury提出的BATNA（谈判协议的最佳替代方案）⁶是谈判中的关键概念，帮助谈判者评估对方提出的条款是否值得接受。谈判者应事先考虑谈判失败的最佳情况。如果对方占上风，那这一点尤其重要。当谈判者清楚地认识自己的选择，就能避免接受比其BATNA更糟糕的提议。积极制定和改进替代方案也将使谈判者拥有更大的讨价还价能力。

在谈判前设定目标和制定战略计划也至关重要。谈判者应该清楚自己想要的结果，以及愿意做出的让步。谈判者也应该试图确定对方的看法（以及他们的谈判风格）。分析自己和对方的优势和弱点让谈判者能够提出实质性的论据来支持自己的观点或反驳对方的立场。

¹ Roger Fisher, William Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (1st edition, 1981)

² supra n 1, pages 19-41.

³ supra n 1, pages 42-57.

⁴ supra n 1, pages 58-81.

⁵ supra n 1, pages 82-95.

⁶ supra n 1, pages 99-108.

在商标纠纷中创造双赢局面

去年，两家本地餐饮企业卷入了旗下日本餐厅的商标纠纷中。En Dining Bar Holdings Pte. Ltd.（“甲方”）起诉了 Captain K F&B Management Pte. Ltd（“乙方”），指控乙方侵犯了其商标，理由是“使用了‘En’这个词”和“在中日文字周围使用了红色圆圈”等相似之处⁷。

经过最高法院书记官的强烈建议，双方决定尝试调解。调解以乐观的基调展开，谈判者积极参与讨论。他们真诚地分享自己的观点，包括他们如何进军餐饮行业、以及他们在谈判中期望的结果等。

几个小时后，双方成功达成协议。在确定和解条款时，双方和他们的律师团队也非常合作。随着协议的签署，以及参与者和调解员的闭幕词，调解圆满结束。

只有当双方放下过去的分歧，专注于寻求对双方都有利的解决方案时，才有可能实现这个令人满意的结果。尽管最初进展缓慢，双方在调解员的帮助下继续努力，寻找互利的创新解决方案。双方开放、合作的态度发挥了关键作用，让他们可以迅速和相对顺利地达成协议。

最重要的是，他们积极倾听，并感同身受。在整个过程中，他们展示了“将人与事分离”的原则。他们相反的立场，或者说双方之间的争议，并没有妨碍他们正视与他们谈判的“人”。

调解结束时，年长一方甚至指出了他们的相似之处，并在对方的身上看见了自己的影子。（在进入餐饮业

之前，两人都曾是工程师。）在发生纠纷时，各方往往会觉得对方针对自己，并将不满情绪投射到对方身上。然而，本案例中的双方通过相似的背景取得认同感，并克服差异，达成更好的合作。最终，他们不仅解决了问题，而且关系也变得更好，彼此之间也重新获得了尊重。



⁷ Captain K F&B Management Pte. Ltd & En Dining Bar Holdings Pte. Ltd. [2024] AMP MED 1, <https://www.ipos.gov.sg/docs/default-source/protecting-your-ideas/hearings-mediation/mediation-cases.pdf>, pages 7-11.

谈判后

当各方已达成协议并对讨论的条款感到满意时，接下来会发生什么？还有什么事情需要解决？

法律谈判的最后阶段涉及起草和解协议。在谈判期间同意的条款需以白纸黑字记录下来，双方必须签署协议才能生效。

确保和解协议的可执行性

Law Chau Loon v Alphire Group Pte Ltd⁸的案例与起草和解协议相关。在此案中，Law Chau Loon (“Law”) 与 Han Seng Juan (“Han”), Dr Loh Kim Kang David (“David”) 及 Wong Kok Hoe (“Wong”) (统称 “投资者”) 达成共识，解决经法院判定的债务。Han、David 和 Wong是Alphire Group Pte Ltd (“Alphire”) 的投资者。然而，Alphire不承认该协议。他们辩称投资者无权代表公司进行谈判与和解。因此，Law不得不寻求庭令来执行和解协议。

法院认定 Law曾与 Alphire投资者就法院判定的100万新元债务进行和解协议谈判。谈判的结果是双方同意和解。他们一致同意 Law在会上偿还100万新元现金，并在此后分四期偿还 40 万新元。Law也被要求进行股份转让，并提供全部必要的文件。作为交换，Alphire将撤回破产申请。这些条款被记录在其中一名投资者发送给Law的 WhatsApp 短信中。代表Alphire的律师，在与 Law 的律师的通信中也承认了谈判时达成的和解协议。

在审查了案件细节后，法院认为 “和解协议的条款完整、确定且具有约束力” 。

此案凸显了确保和解协议条款具有法律效力的重要性。此外，熟悉与案件相关的法律也很重要。如有疑问，最好咨询律师以获得全面的建议。如果在谈判前

做好了充分的准备，却最终达成了无法执行的协议，那就太浪费时间了。不仅事情变得更复杂，各方可能最终不得不提起诉讼，就如同Law，浪费了不必要的时间和金钱。

虽然这看起来是一个显而易见的建议，Law Chau Loon v Alphire Group Pte Ltd的案例还表现了核实代表谈判者的身份至关重要。在企业纠纷中——尤其是涉及多个利益相关者的纠纷中，相关方必须有代表实体的权力。对Law来说，幸运的是法院认为投资者由于直接参与公司事务，因此拥有隐含权力，即使他们不是董事，也可以代表公司。

谈判后的交流最好也以书面形式记录，包括短信或电子邮件。如果发生争议，这些通信记录可以作为证据，证明该协议确实是最终的并且具有约束力。

结论

上述的几个案例展示了法律谈判是一个动态且复杂的过程，通常涉及各种利益相关方，有时候甚至可能会有多个问题需要解决。谈判者应事先做好全面的准备，以确保从过程中获得最佳结果。各方应该持客观、开放且愿意合作的态度，才能为每个参与者创造最好的结果。🙏



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本文提供的内容仅供参考。该内容无意也不应被解释为法律建议或法律意见。读者不应出于任何目的依赖此处提供的内容，并应始终寻求适当司法管辖区律师的法律建议。

⁸ Law Chau Loon v Alphire Group Pte Ltd [2019] SGHC 275, https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5055&context=sol_research.

Photos: Vecteezy



Cultural Intelligence

in Negotiation

Navigating Global Business

by Christina Yip

Introduction

In our increasingly interconnected world, negotiating across cultural boundaries has become a critical skill for international business professionals. Cultural intelligence (CQ) – the ability to relate to and work effectively across cultures – is essential in these global negotiations. Understanding cultural nuances, communication styles, and business etiquette significantly influences negotiation outcomes. This article explores the importance of CQ in international negotiations, illustrating how cultural awareness impacts negotiation processes and outcomes. Through case studies and real-life examples, we will highlight effective strategies for building trust and achieving mutually beneficial agreements across diverse cultural contexts.



The Importance of Cultural Intelligence in Negotiation

Cultural intelligence encompasses various skills and attributes that enable individuals to navigate and adapt to cultural differences. In international negotiations, CQ involves a deep understanding of and respect for the cultural values, norms, and practices of the parties involved. High CQ allows negotiators to approach discussions with sensitivity and awareness, avoiding misunderstandings and fostering stronger relationships.

Understanding cultural nuances is vital in negotiation. Different cultures have distinct expectations and practices when it comes to negotiations. For example, in some cultures, direct communication and assertiveness are highly valued, while in others, indirect communication and maintaining harmony are prioritised. Being aware of these differences helps negotiators avoid cultural missteps and build rapport with their counterparts.

Effective communication styles also vary widely across cultures. In high-context cultures, such as Japan and China, much of the communication is implicit, relying heavily on non-verbal cues and contextual understanding. In contrast, low-context cultures, such as the United States and Germany, favour direct and explicit communication. Recognising and adapting to these communication styles is crucial for preventing misinterpretations and ensuring clear exchanges.

Moreover, business etiquette and protocol differ from one culture to another, influencing aspects such as meeting protocols, decision-making processes, and relationship-building. Being knowledgeable about and respecting these practices can enhance trust and cooperation between negotiating parties.

Case Studies of Cross-Cultural Negotiations

1. The Boeing-Airbus Negotiation

The competition between Boeing and Airbus for an Indian government contract in the early 2000s vividly illustrates the impact of cultural intelligence on negotiation outcomes. In India, where business practices heavily emphasise relationship-building and hierarchical respect, Airbus demonstrated exceptional cultural sensitivity. The company invested considerable time and resources into

cultivating relationships with key stakeholders through frequent visits and local partnerships. By understanding and respecting India's hierarchical decision-making structures and adapting their communication style to align with local cultural values, Airbus was able to build strong rapport and establish a positive reputation, which played a crucial role in securing the contract.

In contrast, Boeing's approach, while professionally focused on the technical merits and financial benefits of its offer, did not sufficiently address the cultural expectations of Indian decision-makers. Boeing's more transactional strategy lacked the depth of relationship-building that Airbus prioritised. This difference highlights that successful international negotiations often depend not just on the substance of the offer but also on the ability to engage effectively with cultural norms and expectations. The Airbus-Boeing case underscores the importance of cultural intelligence in achieving favourable outcomes in global business negotiations.

2. The IBM-Samsung Partnership

The IBM-Samsung partnership formed in the early 2000s exemplifies the critical role of cultural intelligence in successful international negotiations. IBM's approach to collaborating with Samsung involved a thorough understanding of South Korean business culture, which emphasises hierarchical decision-making and consensus-building. Recognising the importance of engaging with senior decision-makers and respecting their authority, IBM's negotiators tailored their strategy to align with Samsung's cultural values. This involved investing time in discussions to build consensus among various stakeholders, rather than pushing for immediate decisions.

By adapting to South Korea's hierarchical and collective decision-making processes, IBM was able to establish trust and credibility with Samsung's leadership. This cultural sensitivity facilitated a successful partnership, demonstrating how effective negotiation extends beyond the technical aspects of an offer. The IBM-Samsung case highlights the importance of cultural adaptability in international business, showing that understanding and respecting cultural norms can significantly enhance the likelihood of achieving successful outcomes.



3. The U.S.-China Trade Negotiations

The U.S.-China trade negotiations during the late 2010s exemplify the complexities of cross-cultural interactions on a global scale. These high-stakes discussions involved navigating the vast differences between American and Chinese business cultures. The U.S. approach, characterised by direct communication and assertiveness, clashed with China's preference for indirect messaging and a focus on maintaining harmony and face. This cultural divide made the negotiations particularly challenging, as each side needed to adapt to the other's norms to facilitate effective communication and reach mutually beneficial agreements.

U.S. negotiators faced the challenge of adapting to China's indirect communication style and emphasis on face-saving. In Chinese culture, avoiding public confrontations and preserving dignity are paramount. Consequently, U.S. negotiators employed strategies to minimise direct confrontations and framed their proposals in ways that showed respect for Chinese values. This involved careful, diplomatic language that acknowledged Chinese concerns while avoiding any actions that could be perceived as disrespectful or overly aggressive.

The trade negotiations highlighted the critical role of CQ in managing international discussions. Successfully navigating the differences in communication styles and cultural values was essential for both sides to make progress. The U.S.-China trade negotiations underscored how cultural adaptability can bridge significant divides, demonstrating that understanding and respecting cultural norms are key to achieving successful outcomes in complex global negotiations.

Effective Strategies for Building Trust and Reaching Agreements

Building trust and achieving successful outcomes in cross-cultural negotiations require a combination of cultural awareness, adaptability, and strategic communication. Investing in cultural research before entering negotiations is crucial. This involves studying the cultural backgrounds of your counterparts to understand their norms, values, and communication styles. Knowledge of local customs helps avoid misunderstandings and fosters mutual respect.

Adapting communication styles to fit the cultural context of the negotiation is another essential strategy. For example, in high-context cultures, it is important to focus on building



rapport and interpreting non-verbal cues, whereas in low-context cultures, clear and direct communication is crucial. Tailoring your approach to these preferences can prevent miscommunication and facilitate more effective interactions.

Building strong relationships is often the cornerstone of successful international negotiations. In many cultures, relationships are a fundamental aspect of business transactions. Taking time to develop and nurture these relationships through personal interactions, respect for local customs, and genuine interest in your counterparts' needs and goals can significantly enhance negotiation outcomes.

Patience and flexibility are also key attributes in cross-cultural negotiations. Negotiations involving different cultural contexts can be complex and time-consuming, requiring negotiators to be adaptable and open to adjusting their strategies as needed. Embracing these qualities can help manage the evolving dynamics of the negotiation process and contribute to more successful agreements.

Respecting cultural norms and practices is essential for building trust. This involves understanding and adhering to business etiquette, decision-making processes, and negotiation protocols specific to the culture you are engaging with. Demonstrating respect for these practices can strengthen relationships and facilitate smoother negotiations.

Leveraging local expertise can provide valuable insights and guidance. Engaging consultants or experts who have a deep understanding of the cultural context can help navigate the nuances of the negotiation process and enhance your overall effectiveness.

Finally, focusing on mutual benefits is crucial for reaching agreements that satisfy both parties. Emphasising how the proposed solutions align with the interests and values of all parties involved can build a stronger foundation for a successful and sustainable agreement.

Conclusion

Cultural intelligence is a vital component of successful international negotiations. Understanding and navigating cultural nuances, communication styles, and business

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etiquette significantly impact negotiation outcomes. The case studies of Boeing-Airbus, IBM-Samsung, and U.S.-China trade negotiations illustrate how cultural awareness and strategic adaptation can lead to successful agreements and lasting partnerships.

In today's globalised business environment, the ability to build trust and reach mutually beneficial agreements across diverse cultural contexts is essential for long-term success. By investing in cultural research, adapting communication styles, building relationships, and showing respect for cultural norms, negotiators can enhance their effectiveness and achieve positive outcomes in international negotiations.

As businesses continue to operate in an increasingly interconnected world, the role of cultural intelligence in negotiation will only become more critical. Embracing and developing CQ will not only facilitate successful negotiations but also contribute to building enduring and meaningful global partnerships. 🌐



About The Writer

Having led and transformed fintech and blockchain companies across Asia since 2015, Christina is an accomplished chief marketing strategist. Her impressive track record includes accelerated growth in startups, ICO structuring, and leading marketing initiatives in various blockchain consultancy firms that worked with more than 200 blockchain projects, including Chainlink, Elrond, EOS, VeChain, NEO, Harmony, and Zilliqa. She is an expert in building effective distribution channels, forming strategic partnerships, and delivering high-impact advertising for customer acquisition, especially in the blockchain industry. Christina is also legally trained and has been actively involved in regulatory compliance topics in digital assets and emerging technologies. She is enthusiastic about the transition to Web 3.0 and believes in the creator economy fueling SocialFi projects.



Negotiating Business Success

by Urvashi Raizada

Choosing the right negotiation strategy can make or break a business.

In the fast-paced and ever-evolving business world, negotiation is a critical skill that every professional must master. Whether it's closing a deal, securing a partnership, or resolving a conflict, the ability to negotiate effectively can make or break a business. Which is why it is critical for business leaders in particular to understand and apply the right negotiation strategy in their pursuit for long-term success.

Negotiation is both a science and an art. Currently, two primary negotiation strategies dominate the business landscape: collaborative and competitive negotiation. Understanding the nuances of these strategies can provide leaders with the tools they need to navigate complex business interactions effectively, helping them to reach an agreement on critical issues that can shape the future of not only their own businesses, but the business landscape as a whole.

Mapping Competition vs Collaboration

Negotiation is a complex and often misunderstood topic. It may be commonly assumed, for example, that the outcome of a negotiation must involve a winner or a loser. This strategy is known as competitive negotiation, or win-lose negotiation, where one party seeks to gain the maximum advantage, often at the expense of the other party. This approach is marked by a more adversarial mindset, where the primary goal is to win the negotiation and secure the best possible outcome for oneself, sometimes disregarding the other party's needs and interests.

In contrast, collaborative negotiation, often referred to as a win-win negotiation, is a strategy where all parties

involved work together to find a mutually beneficial outcome. This approach is characterised by open communication, trust-building, and a focus on long-term relationships. The primary goal of this strategy is to ensure that everyone's interests are met, creating a sense of partnership and shared success.

Collaborating for Success

Collaborative negotiation offers numerous benefits, especially in a business context that values long-term relationships and sustainable success. One of the most significant advantages of this approach is the fostering of a positive and productive relationship between the parties involved. By focusing on mutual interests and shared goals, collaborative negotiation fosters trust and cooperation, which can lead to more successful and enduring business partnerships.

This strategy can be particularly beneficial for businesses operating in or with Asian cultures, where business relationships are often built on trust and respect, with an emphasis on harmony and collective success. A famous example of this is Japanese multinational automotive manufacturer Toyota's approach to working with its suppliers. Instead of treating its suppliers as mere vendors, Toyota makes a demonstrated effort to integrate as partners in its production process. This approach, known as the Toyota Production System (TPS), involves close collaboration, shared goals, and mutual benefits for all parties involved. Toyota ensures that its suppliers benefit from shared efficiencies and innovations, for example, as well as continuous improvements in quality, efficiency and long-term loyalty.

As a result of this approach, Toyota has built a resilient supply chain that can quickly adapt to disruptions. This was most evident during the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, where Toyota's strong relationships with its suppliers helped the company recover significantly faster than its competitors, showcasing the strengths of a collaborative approach.

However, collaborative negotiation is not without its challenges. One of the main difficulties, for example, is the potential for slower decision-making processes. Because collaborative negotiation involves open communication and thorough exploration of each party's interests, it can take more time to reach an agreement. Additionally, the strategy assumes that the desire for mutual benefit is shared, while in reality, there is always the risk that one party may exploit the collaborative approach for their benefit, leading to an imbalance in the negotiation.

A Case for Competitive Negotiation

Competitive negotiation, while often viewed negatively, can also have its advantages. In shorter term situations where time is of the essence or when the stakes are incredibly high, for example, a competitive approach can be incisive and effective by allowing for quick decision-making.

This approach can also be particularly beneficial for demographics that need to assert their position more forcefully. For instance, in a business environment where women might face biases and need to establish their authority, a competitive negotiation strategy can help them secure the recognition and resources they deserve. Similarly, competitive negotiation can appeal to certain generations, such as Gen Z, who are often characterised by their assertiveness and desire for quick results.

However, the competitive approach also comes with significant drawbacks. The most notable is the potential for damaging relationships. By focusing on winning at all costs, competitive negotiation can create animosity and mistrust between the parties involved. This can be particularly detrimental in cultures and organisations that place a high value on relationships and harmony. If done without tact, the win-lose nature of competitive negotiation can lead to short-term gains but long-term losses, with damaged relationships possibly hindering business opportunities in the future.

One notable example of this approach was the rivalry between Facebook and Snapchat. When Snapchat began gaining popularity among younger users, Facebook adopted a competitive strategy to counter its growth. Facebook made multiple attempts to acquire Snapchat,

and when these offers were rejected, Facebook launched similar features across its platforms, including Instagram Stories.

This aggressive strategy succeeded in its objectives to erode Snapchat's unique market position and attract its user base to Facebook's platforms. Ultimately, Facebook retained its dominance in the social media landscape, but it also faced criticism for its aggressive tactics that were perceived as attempts to stifle competition. The long-term impact on Facebook's actions on innovation and market dynamics remains a subject of debate, illustrating the complex outcomes of competitive negotiation strategies.

Negotiating for Long Term Success

While both collaborative and competitive negotiation strategies have their place in the business world, there is a growing consensus that collaborative negotiation is more beneficial when considering long term success. This preference is backed by both business principles and data.

The principles of sustainable business success, for example, emphasise the importance of long-term relationships and trust. Collaborative negotiation aligns with these principles, as it focuses on creating value for all parties involved. By fostering positive relationships and mutual success, businesses can build a solid foundation for future growth and cooperation.

Data also supports the effectiveness of collaborative negotiation in achieving better outcomes in the long run. For example, a study by the Harvard Law School's Program on Negotiation found that collaborative negotiation leads to more innovative solutions and higher satisfaction levels among the parties involved. This is particularly relevant in the context of complex and interconnected global markets, where businesses need to work together to navigate challenges and seize opportunities.

In the Asian business context, the preference for collaborative negotiation is even more pronounced. The cultural emphasis on harmony, respect, and long-term relationships makes collaborative negotiation a natural fit. By adopting a collaborative approach, Asian business leaders can leverage their cultural strengths to build strong and enduring business partnerships across the region.

All things considered, both collaborative and competitive negotiation strategies have their merits. What remains key is that business leaders understand and select the right strategy that can help them meet their objectives, thrive in complex global markets and create lasting value for their organisations. 🌱

All Eyes on the SEA

by R Jacob

The vibrant landscape of M&A in
SEA shows a promising future.

Over the years, Southeast Asia (SEA) has slowly become a financial hotspot globally. Driven by both regional and international players, the region has seen a dynamic year across various sectors such as technology, energy, consumer goods, financial services, and more. Considering the global slowdown in mergers and acquisitions (M&A), the growth in the SEA region has turned out to be a welcome surprise, and promises to be even better, going forward.

The Rise of Tech Platforms

The technology sector in SEA continues to be a hotbed of M&A activity, despite a marked decline in tech related deals. Global liquidity constraints in 2023 reduced deals in key markets like Indonesia and Singapore by around 30-50%. However, 2024 has shown signs of recovery, especially in ecommerce and digital media.

Notably, ByteDance (TikTok) acquired PT Tokopedia, an Indonesian ecommerce giant earlier this year, aiming to integrate the company's platform with their TikTok Shop platform. Alibaba also invested almost US\$630 million into Singapore-based ecommerce platform Lazada – and have just announced their first monthly profit in August 2024. These deals have

Photos: Vecteezy & Freepik





caught the attention of the global market, signalling the importance of these two countries for tech companies looking to expand into SEA.

Driving Towards Sustainability

The last decade has seen growing awareness over the need for clean energy and sustainability, and multiple companies have been exploring green initiatives in SEA. There were over one hundred recorded deals in 2023 for the energy and natural resources sector, and this momentum has carried forward into 2024 a well.

Nusasiri PCL, one of the largest renewable energy providers in Thailand and SEA, further invested into Wind Energy Holding Company (WEH), leading to significant growth for the company. Countries like Vietnam and Philippines have emerged as key players in this sector, with environmentally friendly policies and targets being set and achieved by their respective governments. Vietnam especially, aims to be a leading exporter of renewable energy, with plans to export energy to Singapore already underway.

Super Charged Manufacturing

One of SEA's more active M&A markets has always been the industrial sector. In particular, the electric vehicle (EV) segment usually attracts significant interest. Just last year, Black Spade and VinFast Auto completed their merger, bringing their total valuation to US\$23 billion, and allowing the Vietnamese EV manufacturer to enter the newer markets in other parts of the world.

Chinese automaker BYD also opened a US\$486 million factory in Thailand in July 2024, aiming to expand their presence in the regional EV market. Led by BYD and

VinFast, EV sales in the region have more than doubled compared to last year. Sales of traditional fuel-based cars, meanwhile, have slid by 7%.

Capitalising on the Growing Middle Class

The consumer and retail sector is another sector in SEA that has seen significant M&A activity – primarily due to an expanding middle class with larger disposable incomes. Significantly, The Coca-Cola Company is set to invest an additional US\$1 billion into the Philippines, following the acquisition of Coca-Cola Philippines for US\$1.8 billion by Aboitiz Equity Ventures and Coca-Cola Euro-Pacific Partners in 2024. This deal is part of a broader strategy to capitalise on the growing consumer market in the region, particularly in the F&B segment.

Additionally, the rise of e-commerce continues to reshape the retail landscape. The importance of social media has prompted traditional retail giants to merge with or acquire digital platforms in order to stay competitive. This trend is expected to continue as more consumers in SEA shift to online shopping.

Expansion and Diversification

Another area of intense M&A activity in SEA is the financial services and venture capital sector. It is usually focused on Singapore, which continues to be its primary hub. 2024 saw one of the largest deals in this sector – the acquisition of Singapore-based Singlife by the Japanese owned Sumitomo Life, raising the valuation of Singlife to US\$3.4 billion.

In Indonesia, CVC Capital Partners acquired a 10% in Siloam International Hospitals for US\$240 million. However, in spite of large deals being made, the overall VC & PE sector fell to its lowest point in the last 5 years.

A Bright Year Ahead

Despite a challenging year in 2023, this year has shown the SEA market to be well on its way to recovery. Globally, the region has been seeing a renewed interest in its offerings, with multiple corporations looking to enter or expand their holdings in the region. Both the technology and energy sectors continue to attract substantial investment internationally, while the industrial and consumer sectors seek to capitalise on the growing middle class. The financial sector remains robust, with significant long-term deals and partnerships on the rise.

As Southeast Asia marches forward into 2025, the region's M&A activity is likely to grow even further, offering numerous opportunities for investors and companies alike. 🏡

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