

Business Summit for Global Diaspora

BUSINESSMEN AT THE GLOBAL DIASPORA BUSINESS SUMMIT SHARE THEIR INSIGHTS ABOUT MAKING A SUCCESS IN THEIR CHOSEN FIELDS

Successful entrepreneurs who have grown large businesses that are little known outside their region were in the limelight at the Global Diaspora Business Summit organised in November 2009 in Singapore at the Global Entrepolis @ Singapore. According to George Abraham, chairman of the Global Indian Business Network, the driving force for this event, this summit had grown out of the success of the Global Indian Summit launched at the Global Entrepolis @ Singapore 2006.

“The event was launched to bring the dynamism of the Diaspora business communities

and create a platform for businessmen and entrepreneurs that would not only generate intra regional business prospects but also gain global recognition for successful role models,” he says.

The summit attracted more than 200 participants from Singapore, China, Malaysia, Thailand, USA, Portugal and India. “Available statistics show that of the more than 20 million Diaspora Indians, over 30 percent are in the US, 17 percent in Africa, 16 percent in UK, 15 percent in Asia-Pacific and about 15 percent in West Asia,” points out Abraham.

“In the case of the Chinese Diaspora, they have migrated mainly from Southern China and comprised mainly the dialect group of the

Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochew, Hakka and Hainan. Despite their diversified activities from retailing and wholesaling to manufacturing and real estate, their supportive business network allowed them to grow their business exponentially creating a breed of billionaires across ASEAN and South-East Asia. In the UK, the overseas Chinese population had grown from over 12,000 in 1951 to nearly 250,000 in 2001. The large Chinese investments all over Africa had also seen a growth of the Diaspora Chinese business community. In Japan, from over 40,000 in 1950, they grew to nearly 500,000 by 2003. Even Russia has seen an increase in Chinese immigrants in the last decade,” he adds.

In his keynote address, Dato’ Ghazali, board member of Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) and chairman of Nusantara Technologies, credited the Global Diaspora Business Summit as a historical landmark, which will see continuous series of births of various opportunities within Asean and across the globe and the contributions that the Diaspora community can make by reuniting at such platforms.

Ghazali shared his insights and experiences and provided anecdotes when he first formed his company Nusantara Technologies 22 years ago with just three employees. Today, the company has more than 100 employees. He emphasised the need to understand the cultural nuances and the historical dimensions of different countries to be successful in business globally.

Other speakers at the summit included Michael Ma, owner and group CEO of IndoChina Group, Robert Yap, chairman and CEO of the YCH Group, Ashish Kumar, serial entrepreneur and executive director of Bellis USA and Bellis India, Chitra Stern, owner and board member of Martinhal Beach Resort & Hotel, and Aloysius Wee, managing partner of Dacheng Central Chambers LLP. ■





George Abraham

Ashish Kumar

Michael Ma

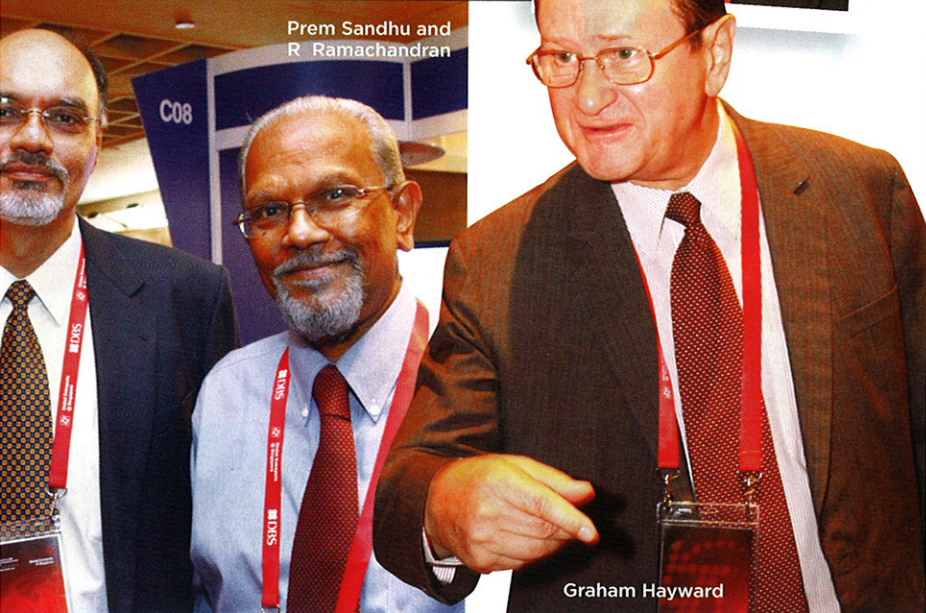


Manmohan Kaur and Grace Zachariah

Yvonne Chong and Serena Wee



Dato MA Vijey



Prem Sandhu and R Ramachandran

Graham Hayward

DATO' GHAZALI BIN DATO' YUSOFF

Executive chairman of Nusantara Technologies Sdn Bhd, Dato' Ghazali is also the vice president of the National Council of Welfare and Social Development of Malaysia and president of the Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation. The honorary executive director of the Business Council for Sustainable Development Malaysia of which he is also the founding member, has been a board member of Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) for the last 20 years. He now heads various committees which are focused on sustainable development and is an active member in associations relating to welfare of the marginalised and disabled.

Tell us about your cutting edge?

My cultural diversity is my major strength. It gives me tremendous flexibility and adaptability. Apart from my multi-cultural background, I derived this global appreciation of business and inter cultural differences from my executive training at Dunlop. As part of my training I was encouraged to participate in the activities of various Chambers of Commerce including the Asean Chambers of Commerce.

What is the best advice you have been given as an entrepreneur?

When I was the chairman of the Malaysia India Joint Consultative Committee, I had the opportunity to know Mr Mulgaonkar who was part of the management team at Tata in India. Mr Mulgaonkar told me two things that I remember very vividly. First is that any country that neglects its cultural heritage has no fortune and the second was that the key to success for any business lies in the success of its components industries and human capital development. In my capacity as director of MIDA and chairman of my company Nusantara Technologies, I always keep these two things in mind. In fact, the former piece of advice urges me to understand the cultural nuances of people from different countries and it has contributed largely to my successful working relationships with the employees of my company and my colleagues in the various organisations that I serve.





ROBERT YAP

Robert Yap is chairman and CEO of YCH Group, Singapore's leading end-to-end supply chain company. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in the 2nd Asia Logistics Award in 2003 for his significant contributions and thought-leadership to the Logistics and Supply Chain Management (SCM) industry. He was also bestowed the IT Leaders Award in 2003 by the Singapore Computer Society for his contribution to the IT industry in innovating and implementing world-class SCM Solutions. Recently, he was named Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of the Year (EOY) Singapore 2007 and was inducted as a lifetime member of the World EOY Academy in 2008.

Since 2007, Robert has been appointed as chairman of the Asean Business Advisory Council and is currently co-chairman. He has also been elected to serve as council member of the Singapore Business Federation.

He serves as founding member of India-Singapore CEO Forum, co-chairman of Korea-Singapore Logistics Council, as well as a member of the Malaysia-Singapore Business Council (MSBC). He is also regional representative (Tianjin) for

Network China and is council member of the Singapore-Tianjin Economic & Trade Council (STETC) and the Singapore-Jiangsu Cooperation Council (SJCC). He is also the founding chairman of the Supply Chain Asia Advisory Council formed since 2005.

His advise? "Think Global, Act Local," stresses Yap who says there is a need to first align with local interests and culture attributes in order to successfully do business in the global Diaspora.

Tell us your cutting edge?

I am in a business that is hyper competitive. Hence, it is essential to do something different to be able to remain globally competitive. I have taken to a paradigm shift in the equation of how things work and devised a 7 PL Model. A major difference is that my company is not just another logistics and supply chain management company but is a company that provides end-to-end supply chains solutions, managing physical and information flows with a stronghold throughout Asean.

S Murugavel and Soe Nan



Johan Nilson



Aloysius Wee



Chan Woei Shyong, Tan Poh Teck and VK Rajan



Mike Teng



R Narayana Mohan and Pushpalatha Niadu

Chitra Stern

Peter Raj Kapoor



Stephen Lai, Ed Cheong and Wu Yu Ee



David Ong, P Jeyaratnam, Derrick Tan and Cheng Soo Sai

MANEESH TRIPATHI

Managing director and CEO of Global Indian International School (GIIS) Maneesh Tripathi outlined the founding of GIIS, which traces its origin to India but was born and bred in Singapore. In more than seven years, GIIS has grown to 21 schools and has spread its wings from Singapore to several places like Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo, San Francisco and Vietnam. GIIS successfully embarked on the social entrepreneurship model and today is the largest International School in Singapore with students from 33 nationalities and was awarded the Asia Pacific Quality Award for being the best school among over a 100 participating schools in the world. He pointed out the difference between social and business entrepreneurship and concluded with the lessons GIIS has learnt which could be beneficial for aspiring entrepreneurs. The fundamentals of social entrepreneurship include making a difference in people's life, adding value to the society and resolving an existing discomfort or closing the gap.

Tell us about your cutting edge?

We are a complete paperless school and have an ERP system called My GIIS. All our schools across the globe function at the same pace. So, students who are forced to change schools mid-term will not feel the trouble of coping with a new school. Each school around the world follows the same curriculum, schedule and method of teaching. All our schools have identical uniforms, too.

What is the best advice you have been given as an entrepreneur?

Someone once told me that as a social entrepreneur you must strive to solve a problem and fill a gap in the society and the money will follow. Hence, we decided to create an organisation that is beyond the motive of just making money and where we can solve a problem. We started the Flip a Generation programme to help Indians. The programme has now grown to Nurturing Global Citizens with 80,000 students of 33 nationalities in eight countries.

