

# StarSpecial

THE STAR, FRIDAY 22 APRIL 2022

SOBA 2021



## Achieving new milestones

The Star Outstanding Business Awards 2021 celebrated the milestones of Malaysia's best non-listed companies, paving a triumphant way forward as the country prepares to transition into the endemic phase.



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# Inspiring tales of triumph

Top Malaysian businesses reach a new milestone with their respective SOBA wins, with the prestigious awards programme honouring their journey in striving for success

AS the country prepares to move into the endemic phase, Malaysia's best non-listed companies are well-gearred to take the next step in growing their businesses further — bolstered by the encouragement of receiving the distinguished SOBA 2021 award.

Held at One World Hotel, PJ, with Carlsberg as official beer sponsor, the gala night was a testament to the excellence of the local business community.

Minister in Prime Minister's Department (Economy) and SOBA 2021 guest of honour Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed emphasised the role played by awards programmes such as SOBA in helping move companies forward.

"[Programmes like SOBA are] one of the most effective avenues that allow organisations to evaluate and reflect on their past performances. It helps small and medium enterprises (SMEs) better understand what works, what does not and more importantly, what more can be done," he shared.

Adding onto this was Star Media Group Bhd (SMG) group chief executive officer (CEO) Alex Yeow, who noted that SOBA 2021 has been particularly memorable.

Pointing to the fact that submissions have doubled from the previous year, he said that it was a reflection of the maturity, professionalism and depth of understanding of participating companies.

He said, "Year on year, the quality of submissions improve vastly. It is clear that our companies are well ahead of the curve and are ready to take their place amongst public listed companies."

The sentiment was echoed by RHB Bank Bhd group chief marketing officer Abdul Sani Abdul Murad, who said that this year's participation has been 'very encouraging' as it shows that SMEs are 'much more confident in facing challenges' and making a comeback.

"The rise of SMEs is inevitable and it's good to see that they're much more confident in facing these challenges and tonight is a night to celebrate their successes," he said.

Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) deputy CEO (exporters development) Abu Bakar Yusof also said that the response during the SOBA 2021 Gala Night reflected the recovery of the confidence of businesses despite Covid-19.

He opined, "SOBA has been very instrumental in growing smaller companies and it is one of the best platforms for us to witness the success of SMEs. We hope that they will become good examples for other SMEs to emulate their success and nurture and grow their businesses, not only locally but globally."

PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd group chief executive and managing director Datuk Seri Dr Michael Tio added that companies are now seeking to strengthen their branding via awards programmes like SOBA, which provide the visibility they need.

"Businesses are starting to reap the benefits of the strategies they have worked on in 2021, so they can now reap the benefits. It's a good time for celebration, but businesses must also not forget to re-strategise the company and move forward again," he said.

Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CGC) president and CEO Datuk Mohd Zamree Mohd Ishak attributed this to the excitement of businesses in riding the wave of recovery with the opening of the borders between Malaysia and Singapore.

He added, "CGC has been partnering with SOBA for the past seven years and we believe that the objectives of SOBA are very much in line with our vision to promote the



**Star SOBA 2021**  
STAR OUTSTANDING BUSINESS AWARDS

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growth and development of competitive and dynamic Malaysian SMEs."

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## Salute to excellence

The most sought-after Malaysian Business of the Year awards won by Alpro Alliance Sdn Bhd in the RM25mil and above annual turnover tier and Oasis Swiss Sdn Bhd for the up to RM25mil annual turnover tier.

Alpro Alliance was also awarded platinum for the Best in CSR and Best in Customer Service under the above RM25mil annual turnover tier, while Oasis Swiss won platinum for the Best Use of Technology and gold for Best Brand in the up to RM25mil annual turnover tier.

The SOBA 2021 Gala Night also saw the recognition of two companies under the second batch of the Maxis Awards, namely SEAD Industries Sdn Bhd and Viva Odyssey Sdn Bhd.

The Maxis Awards recognise innovative Malaysian ideas and projects that benefit the Malaysian society, as Maxis Business SME head Kevin Lee said, "Our aim is to find companies with these great ideas, via a grant and our Maxis Business solutions to help them realise their projects."

For Oasis Swiss, its director Jaden Teoh shared that the company's success was due to the bold transformation of its business model in 2019 before the pandemic, as it had been a traditional retail business operating offline from 2008 to 2018.

Leveraging on technology and social media platforms, Oasis Swiss evolved its business and achieved three folds in total revenue after its transformation, becoming one of the most famous names in the household and kitchenware segment in Malaysia.

In 2020, it also launched its own e-commerce marketplace, where it can garner big data on customer behaviour and needs to better develop its strategy.

"With the implementation of technology, the business model is sexy with bright prospects and the teamwork is very strong with the direction of 'stay hungry and go the extra mile' that we managed to build our own niche market within a short period of time," he said, adding that the company set up a committee to seriously look into its submissions for SOBA.

By doing this deep dive, it also helped the company refresh its outlook on its achievements over the past year to ascertain how it can move forward.

In terms of the plans it is currently implementing, Teoh said that Oasis Swiss will start expanding its current customer base to the Malay market and added, "Our products are very suitable for this market, so we will be kicking off branding efforts across Malaysia starting Mother's Day.

## SOBA 2021 WINNERS

### TOP OF THE CLASS AWARDS (RM25mil & above turnover)

Category	Type of Awards	Companies
Best in Marketing	Gold	Goldsome Innovation Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Apple Vacations Sdn Bhd Empire Sushi Group Sdn Bhd
Best Brand	Platinum	HSH Frozen Foods Sdn Bhd
	Silver	SEA Gamer Mall Sdn Bhd redONE Network Sdn Bhd
Best in CSR	Platinum	Alpro Alliance Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Indah Water Konsortium Sdn Bhd Vista Laser Eye Center Sdn Bhd
Best Green Initiative	Platinum	Veritas Architects Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Ranhill Water Technologies Sdn Bhd Indah Water Konsortium Sdn Bhd
Best Employer	Platinum	Empire Sushi Group Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Maxxan Properties Sdn Bhd
Best Innovation	Platinum	Linaco Manufacturing (M) Sdn Bhd
	Gold	Empire Sushi Group Sdn Bhd
	Silver	The Makeover Guys Sdn Bhd
	Meritorious Achievement	Hoshay Food Sdn Bhd
Best Use of Technology	Platinum	SEA Gamer Mall Sdn Bhd
	Gold	Wellous Sdn Bhd
	Silver	MXM International Sdn Bhd
	Meritorious Achievement	Daythree Business Services Sdn Bhd
Best in Retail	Platinum	TFP Retail Sdn Bhd
	Gold	Star Glory Asia (M) Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Empire Sushi Group Sdn Bhd
	Meritorious Achievement	Alpro Alliance Sdn Bhd
Best in Customer Service	Gold	Empire Sushi Group Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Vista Laser Eye Center Sdn Bhd
	Meritorious Achievement	Alpro Alliance Sdn Bhd

### OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS (RM25mil & above turnover)

Male Entrepreneur of the Year	
Par Excellence Achievement	Ling Hwa Ean, Linaco Resources Sdn Bhd
Outstanding Achievement	Chieng Tee Ming, SEA Gamer Mall Sdn Bhd
Meritorious Achievement	Gavin Liew Hun Wei, The Makeover Guys Sdn Bhd
Female Entrepreneur of the Year	
Meritorious Achievement	Christina Tee Kim Chin, Cape EMS Manufacturing (M) Sdn Bhd
Young Entrepreneur of the Year	
Par Excellence Achievement	Tan Chee Jia, Syarikat Elektrik Siang Sdn Bhd
Outstanding Achievement	Kasey Leong Kok Chuen, Markaids (M) Sdn Bhd
Meritorious Achievement	Puah Leong Yee, Maystar Beauty Sdn Bhd

### Malaysian Business of the Year

Alpro Alliance Sdn Bhd

### TOP OF THE CLASS AWARDS (Up to RM25mil turnover)

Category	Type of Awards	Companies
Best in Marketing	Platinum	BloomThis Flora Sdn Bhd
	Gold	Vanzo Asia Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Poliklinik Shaik Sdn Bhd
Best Brand	Gold	Delux Structural Works Sdn Bhd Oasis Swiss Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Senz Marketing (M) Sdn Bhd
Best in CSR	Platinum	Poliklinik Shaik Sdn Bhd
	Gold	Golden Hover Furniture (S'ban) Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Maxvue Vision Sdn Bhd
	Meritorious Achievement	Perak Medical Centre Sdn Bhd Inhome Engineering Works Sdn Bhd
Best Green Initiative	Platinum	Vigor Agribiotech Solutions Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Trapo Marketing Sdn Bhd
	Meritorious Achievement	Eco Bee Shop Sdn Bhd MM Century Sdn Bhd
Best Employer	Platinum	VIP Edu HQ Sdn Bhd
	Gold	Delux Structural Works Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Maxvue Vision Sdn Bhd
	Meritorious Achievement	Verdant Solar Sdn Bhd Beaute Mori Sdn Bhd
Best Innovation	Platinum	NSW Automation Sdn Bhd
	Gold	Growth Avenue Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Bioskin & Laser Centre Sdn Bhd
Best Use of Technology	Platinum	Oasis Swiss Sdn Bhd
	Gold	BloomThis Flora Sdn Bhd
	Silver	NSW Automation Sdn Bhd
	Meritorious Achievement	LS Aesthetic Sdn Bhd Robopreneur Sdn Bhd
Best in Retail	Gold	Ezzybucks Sdn Bhd
	Silver	Chew Thean Yeang Aquarium Sdn Bhd Taka Cake Supplies Sdn Bhd
Best in Customer Service	Platinum	LBS Logistic Sdn Bhd
	Gold	20dB Hearing Sdn Bhd
	Silver	E Stream MSC Sdn Bhd

### OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS (Up to RM25mil turnover)

Male Entrepreneur of the Year	
Par Excellence Achievement	Datuk Dylan Chui Saig Herg, Delux Structural Works Sdn Bhd
Outstanding Achievement	Giden Lim Soon Ghee, BloomThis Flora Sdn Bhd
Meritorious Achievement	Dr Kuan Chee Sian, Neogenix Laboratoire Sdn Bhd Choo Yan Tiew, Auto Count Sdn Bhd Ernest Yuen Lup Boon, Genesis Spectrum Sdn Bhd
Female Entrepreneur of the Year	
Par Excellence Achievement	Natasha Mah, Wide Tropism Trading Sdn Bhd
Outstanding Achievement	Chan Yun Tyng, Cabe (M) Sdn Bhd
Meritorious Achievement	Datin Leong Hong Yin, Senz Marketing (M) Sdn Bhd Datuk Dr Inderjit Kaur Gurbakhes Singh, Inder Aesthetics Sdn Bhd Chia Ching Yin, Star Light Flag Trading Sdn Bhd

### Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Par Excellence Achievement	Siti Mariam Abd Samad, CTY Mary Resources Sdn Bhd
Outstanding Achievement	Elva Koh Hui Shan, G Daily Supply Sdn Bhd
Meritorious Achievement	Leong Kia Chun, Taka Cake Supplies Sdn Bhd Ai Boon Chen, Yeo Plumber Sdn Bhd Dr Ho Wai Loon, Abbe Group (M) Sdn Bhd

### Malaysian Business of the Year

Oasis Swiss Sdn Bhd

### RISING STAR

Category	Companies
Grand Winner	WF Machinery & Hardware Sdn Bhd
Special Mention	Asteel (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd HeyDoc International Sdn Bhd Next Energy Sdn Bhd AC Agrotech Sdn Bhd

Its Singapore warehouse will be ready by next month, after which it will approach the market with the same business model: engaging customers on social media with influencers for branding and then recruiting women and housewives to be mobile 'usaha-

wan', resellers who distribute the products. "We are also developing more consumable products with a full range of cleaning detergents," he said.



# Realising a better future for all

Visionary tech-enabled ideas win second round of Maxis Awards



Maxis Business SME head Kevin Lee (third from left) with Maxis Awards 2021 winners, (from left) SEAD's Toh and Loo, as well as Viva Odyssey's Jerryson at the SOBA 2021 Gala Night.

THE second round of the Maxis Awards has successfully concluded as SEAD Industries (SEAD) and Viva Odyssey were named the winners for their strong environmental and social impact ideas, following Maxis' usual rigorous review and selection process.

SEAD Industries' and Viva Odyssey's inspiring sustainable environment programme and innovative safety tech solution, respectively, emerged as the latest winners of the coveted awards.

Each winner will receive up to RM150,000 worth of Maxis Business solutions, expert support and financial grants to help turn their visionary ideas into reality.

"We continue to be inspired by the submissions for our Maxis Awards and are really pleased to see the innovation in this round's winners, especially with their demonstrative impact on society.

"At the core of our brand purpose to enable people, businesses and the nation to 'Always Be Ahead' in a changing world, is our desire to help connect and empower more Malaysians on our Rangkaian Maxis.

"We look forward to collaborating with both SEAD and Viva Odyssey to realise their visions to bring positive impact to targeted communities," said Maxis chief marketing officer Loh Keh Jiat.

## Turning ideas into reality

SEAD is an impact enterprise that specialises in building design and environmental consultancy services.

Maxis will be helping the company bring to life their sustainable bamboo harvesting programme, which will ultimately rehabilitate over 20 hectares of former mining lands in Perak's Batu Gajah, using digitally enabled bamboo agroforestry methods.

SEAD founders Lucas Loo and



The Maxis Awards aims to empower, recognise and support outstanding Malaysian social enterprises whose initiatives and contributions drive positive impact for fellow citizens.

Toh Hua-Jie said, "As the trend towards alternative, renewable materials ramps up, bamboo, which is found abundantly in Malaysia, can be a key agent to help combat climate change.

"Our rehabilitation programme involves planting bamboo to capture carbon and restore degraded lands in Malaysia and Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled agro-technology will be a key part of that solution.

"Together with Maxis, we will also be putting technology into the hands of bamboo farmers and harvesters, making their jobs easier, increasing their productivity and improving their livelihoods."

Meanwhile, Viva Odyssey is a provider of safety technology and integration systems for drilling rigs and oil and gas operations.

With support from Maxis, it will be able to build an automated live-reporting and danger alert system to help prevent construction and reduce offshore accidents.

"Winning this award is very

encouraging to us as it affirms that there is no idea too small or not worthy of an opportunity to grow and blossom.

"We are grateful to Maxis for believing in our vision to raise the bar in workplace personnel safety systems and cannot wait to accelerate the building of our live-reporting and danger alert system to bring this important technology to the oil and gas industry," said Viva Odyssey founder and chief executive officer Jerryson Abraham Doss.

## Seeking entrepreneurial heroes

Launched in conjunction with Hari Kebangsaan and Hari Malaysia 2021, the Maxis Awards aims to empower, recognise and support outstanding Malaysian social enterprises whose initiatives and contributions drive positive impact for fellow citizens.

Maxis will help develop, promote and support a total of 12

outstanding, entrepreneurial concepts that will bring social impact to local communities, from the ideation stage to execution and marketing. The support includes, among others:

- > Maxis Business solutions required for e-commerce, IoT, cloud, voice and/or network solutions with technical expertise from Maxis

- > A financial grant to help cover the operational needs of the chosen initiative

- > Marketing and publicity through media and Maxis-owned channels to maximise the project's visibility

To stand a chance to win the Maxis Awards, participating enterprises have to submit their business idea, detailing its goals, mechanics and feasibility, along with the impact that it hopes to bring to the community.

Winners are selected based on three key criteria: Value to community, freshness of the idea in reflecting a 'new and better'



Maxis continues to seek local entrepreneurial heroes like SEAD and Viva Odyssey to bring to life innovative projects that can help the nation and its communities to 'Always Be Ahead'.

theme, as well as how it can be tech-enabled.

The third criteria, in particular, requires finalists to demonstrate how the business idea presents a purposeful, future-forward use of Maxis' network connectivity and digital solutions.

Last October, Maxis announced its first two award winners: Project Benih by Tropical Rainforest Conservation and Research Centre and Project EARTH by Blue Bee Technologies, who topped the list with forward-thinking solutions towards nature conservation and environmental sustainability.

Following its second round, the social enterprise programme will see Maxis continuing to seek local entrepreneurial heroes and bring to life innovative projects that can help the nation and its communities to 'Always Be Ahead'. Stay tuned for the next chapter!

**For more information on Maxis Awards, visit <https://www.maxis.my/maxis-awards-2021>.**





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# Fast-tracking digitalisation for SMEs

WITH the Covid-19 pandemic highlighting the struggle of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in keeping their operations ongoing, it has resulted in the rapid advancement of digitalisation efforts among these companies.

Smaller businesses, once reluctant to turn to technology, were forced to adapt by searching for convenient solutions to digitalise their operations – all in order to survive.

Understanding the woes of SMEs, RHB Banking Group has consistently invested in RHB Reflex Premium Plus, an all-in-one online banking ecosystem that integrates several plug-and-play solutions along with their bank accounts.

Aimed at helping SMEs juggle all aspects of their business efficiently, the platform not only provides companies with access to RHB Banking Group's quality financial services, but also enables them to manage their company accounts, point of sales (POS), human resources (HR) and staff training effectively via the platforms' integrated solutions.

## All-in-one ecosystem

Its affordable package, which starts from as low as RM50 per month, comes in four different digital solutions, namely accounting, HR, sales and inventory management, as well as education.

Most importantly, these solutions are already integrated and updated into the RHB Business current account.

Therefore, SMEs do not need to take any additional steps for manual reconciliation but can jump straight in to better manage their businesses.

With one key pain point being sufficient manpower, SMEs can leverage on HR software Kakitangan or Talenox to automate manual and repetitive HR processes.

This includes the ability to collect, store and view all employee data digitally; automate payroll and expense claims processing,



The RHB Reflex Premium Plus' ecosystem aids SMEs to grow their businesses by enabling them to better manage their companies.

as well as application and approval of leave by mobile device.

Via the accounting software Financio, SMEs can track their expenses on a

consolidated dashboard, as there is seamless reconciliation with the integration of their bank account and a centralised account payable – meaning that companies can have full

visibility to better manage their cash flow, which is the lifeblood of any business.

More in line with the needs of SMEs in the services and retail sectors is electronic POS solutions StoreHub or ARMS, which will enable them to view real-time sales and inventory reports, as there is seamless sales data reconciliation via the mobile POS.

This means they can proactively identify popular products and services or address stock shortage issues.

Companies can then leverage data garnered from these reports for actionable insights, by leveraging the solution's customised promotional tools to introduce the right promotions and deals at the right time.

Lastly, to ease daily administrative tasks for SMEs in the education business, they can utilise the education software iKEY Edutech to receive automated reconciliation of billing information, gain easy access to progress and management reports, as well as centralised customer relationship management capabilities.

## Doing more for SMEs

Aside from encouraging the digitalisation efforts of SMEs, RHB Banking Group has always taken the initiative to ease their access to financing.

Its efforts in doing so have been acknowledged by Syarikat Jaminan Pembiayaan Perniagaan Berhad, which accorded it the Top Performer Award for its strong support towards the growth of SMEs for 2021. This is the fourth consecutive year RHB Banking Group has achieved the recognition.

RHB Banking Group has also introduced other initiatives by working with its partners to enable SMEs to build financial resilience, including the #JomSapot BeliLokal campaign to help local SMEs reach out to a wider audience at zero cost to them.

Visit [rhbgroupp.com/p/rpp](http://rhbgroupp.com/p/rpp) for more information.

# Neutrovis founder named Young Entrepreneur of The Year

## Zayn Puah credits his success to trust and teamwork from partners.

SINCE the pandemic has necessitated the wearing of face masks, many people have been in search of a good quality brand that is comfortable to wear and gentle on skin.

One brand that comes to mind when it comes to face masks you can trust to keep you and your family safe yet comfortable is Neutrovis.

A stalwart brand in the market today, Neutrovis is held by its parent company, Maystar Beauty Sdn Bhd. The company is helmed by managing director Zayn Puah who was recently awarded the SOBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

Puah founded Maystar in 2011 and since then, after making it through many moments of doubt and uncertainty, the company has grown to what it is today.

Puah attributes the company's success and growth to the trust of his business partners.

"We strengthened our partnerships by giving our valued partners the best service possible. We are grateful for their valuable support and feedback that have helped us to grow and continuously improve," he says.

According to company records, Neutrovis netted over RM200mil in revenue in 2021 from over RM6mil in 2019. Puah describes this growth as 1+1=30, which represents one company together with its team of partners and stakeholders equalling 30 times growth for Neutrovis.

Puah shares that this was made possible by the trust and belief of the company's partners, who took a risk to place Neutrovis products on their shelves.

"Thanks to our partners who took that leap of faith, Neutrovis is now in every major pharmacy nationwide and has over 5,000 points of sale to date," he says.

He adds that over the years, these business partners have constantly made the effort to



Neutrovis has become a household name for quality face masks.

forge a closer and deeper collaboration with Neutrovis. On its part, Neutrovis helps its partners in return by taking their feedback into account and innovating its products to enable customers to enjoy their experience of Neutrovis products.

"If we help our partners win, then we win together," he says.

Puah shares that Covid-19 and the resultant rapid digitalisation has irrefutably changed the business scene.

"More than ever, businesses now need each other to make an impact in the market and succeed."

In line with this, more brands and business have approached Neutrovis to create custom made co-branded face masks.

Being a trusted brand, partnering with Neutrovis means being able to meet the needs of specific customers while offering them the superior quality face masks Neutrovis is known for.

Neutrovis is currently developing Disney



Puah was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year by SOBA. Maystar is the parent company of Neutrovis.

and Marvel branded face masks. You can now get face masks with your favourite Disney characters or show the world that you're team Avengers with Neutrovis.

To build on the success of the company, Puah's vision for the future includes extending protection to homes and premises of institutions and businesses via purifying the air and disinfecting surfaces.

"Knowing that the Covid-19 virus is airborne and able to survive on surfaces for

long periods of time, it makes sense for us to focus on these areas moving forward to provide more holistic protection," he says.

He adds that it is their business partners and customers that will truly make a difference and therefore, aims to continue fostering trust and a closer working relationship among them.

"With this, Neutrovis may just be able to protect beyond Malaysians, to venture into protecting the world," he concludes.





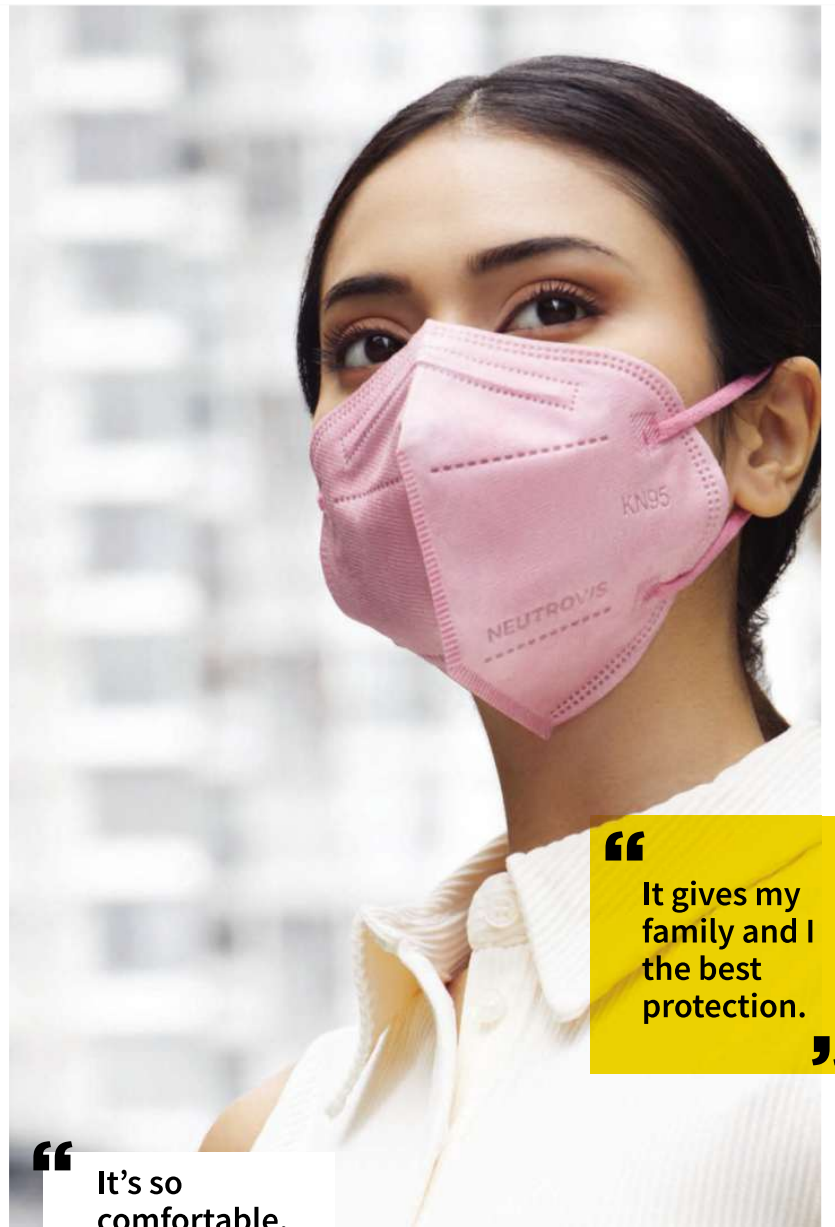
Most Medical Face Masks Sold in 2021

# WHY DO MILLIONS OF MALAYSIANS

“ I love the colours. ”



“ It's gentle on my face and I've stopped getting mask acne. ”



“ It gives my family and I the best protection. ”

“ It's so comfortable. ”



“ The earloop is soft and doesn't irritate the back of my ears. ”



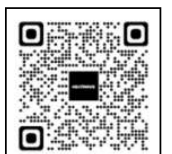
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(From left, front row) Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CGC) president and chief executive officer (CEO) Datuk Mohd Zamree Mohd Ishak, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation deputy CEO (exporters development) Abu Bakar Yusof, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Star Media Group Bhd (SMG) CEO Alex Yeow with (from left, back row) Maxis Business SME head Kevin Lee, RHB Bank Bhd group chief marketing officer Abdul Sani Abdul Murad, PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd group chief executive and managing director (MD) Datuk Seri Dr Michael Tio and SMG chief business officer Lydia Wang at the SOBA 2021 Gala Night, held at One World Hotel in Petaling Jaya.



RHB's Abdul Sani (left) with the RHB team during the gala night.



PKT Logistics Group's Tio (fourth from left) and his wife, Datin Seri May Tio (sixth from left) with the team during the SOBA 2021 Gala Night.

# Mark of honour for Malaysia's best businesses

Photos: AZHAR MAHFOF, AZMAN GHANI, FAIHAN GHANI, GLENN GUAN/The Star

The Star Outstanding Business Awards (SOBA) 2021 Gala Night served as a night of celebration, in recognition of the amazing milestones by the nation's best non-listed companies, as they rose against the odds to triumph against adversity. Moving forward, their achievements will serve as encouragement for them to continue growing their businesses to the next level – and as inspiration for their peers in the business community to continue pushing the envelope.



Maxis' Lee (fourth from left) with the Maxis team during the SOBA 2021 Gala Night.



CGC's Mohd Zamree Mohd Ishak (centre) with the team at the SOBA 2021 Gala Night.



Matrade exporters advisory unit deputy director Anisah Ali (second from left) interacting with guests at the SOBA 2021 Gala Night, with Matrade corporate communication senior manager Sadat Anak Foster Maad (left) looking on.



SMG's Yeow (right), Mustapa (centre) and Matrade's Abu Bakar (left) with Malaysian Business of the Year winners, Oasis Swiss Sdn Bhd director Datuk Jaden Teoh (second from left) for the up to RM25mil annual turnover tier and Alpro Alliance Sdn Bhd founder Hiew Fei Tsong for the RM25mil and above tier at the gala night.



(from left) Maxis Awards 2021 winners, Viva Odyssey founder and CEO Jerryson Abraham Doss take a commemorative photo with SEAD Industries Sdn Bhd founders Toh Hua-Jie and Lucas Loo at the SOBA 2021 Gala Night.



SMG's Yeow (third from left) with Female Entrepreneur of the Year (up to RM25mil) winners (from left) Cabe (M) Sdn Bhd business director Caryn Chan, Wide Tropism Trading Sdn Bhd chief of growth Natasha Mah, Star Light Flag Trading Sdn Bhd director Annie Chia, Inder Aesthetics Sdn Bhd CEO Datuk Dr Inderjit Kaur and Senz Marketing (M) Sdn Bhd MD Katherine Leong Hong at the gala night.



Abu Bakar (left) with Female Entrepreneur of the Year (RM25mil and above) Meritorious Achievement winner Cape EMS manufacturing (M) Sdn Bhd CEO Christina Tee at the SOBA 2021 Gala Night.



Yeow (fourth from left) and Abu Bakar (second from left) with Male Entrepreneur of the Year (RM25mil & above) winners (from left) The Makeover Guys Sdn Bhd founder Gavin Liew, Linaco Resources Sdn Bhd group CEO Joe Ling Hwa Ean and SEA Gamer Mall Sdn Bhd CEO Tommy Chieng at the gala night.



Yeow (second from left) with Male Entrepreneur of the Year (up to RM25mil) winners (from left) Delux Structural Works Sdn Bhd's Datuk Dylan Chui Saig Herg, Genesis Spectrum Sdn Bhd MD Ernest Yuen Lup Boon, Auto Count Sdn Bhd CEO Choo Yan Tiew and Neogenix Laboratoire Sdn Bhd MD Dr Kuan Chee Sian at the gala night.



Yeow (third from left) with Young Entrepreneur of the Year (up to RM25mil) winners (from left) Yeo Plumber Sdn Bhd executive director Jeff Ai Boon Chen, CTY Mary Resources Sdn Bhd representative, executive assistant Noorazlinda Ahmad, Abbe Group's group president and MD Dr Ho Wai Loon, Taka Cake Supplies Sdn Bhd MD Leong Kia Chun and G Daily Supply Sdn Bhd CEO Elva Koh Hui Shan at the SOBA 2021 Gala Night.



Yeow (fourth from left) and Abu Bakar (second from left) with Young Entrepreneur of the Year (RM25mil and above) winners (from left) Maystar Beauty Sdn Bhd managing director Zayn Pua, Syarikat Elektrik Siang Sdn Bhd's Tan Chee Jia and Markaids (M) Sdn Bhd marketing director Kasey Leong at the gala night.



# Expanding beyond Malaysia's borders

Waltree Industries leverages CGC's programmes and initiatives for business development and expansion

SURVIVING the 'valley of death' – 60% of all new micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) fail within five years of establishment – is tough. However, Waltree Industries (M) Sdn Bhd has emerged triumphant, as its business has thrived since it started in 2016.

Founded by Cheng Haw Kee, its chief executive officer, Waltree Industries plays a specialised role in providing quality halal food products not only for the domestic market, but also markets across the region.

Waltree Industries' humble beginnings started with the distribution of a single house brand halal coconut paste called Waltree Kerisik.

The company has since become an integrated grocery provider in Malaysia that has over 150 stock-keeping units (SKUs).

The success of the coconut paste product benchmarked the company's name as a quality brand among consumers.

This led to Waltree Industries enhancing its product portfolio and increasing its market share, as well as expanding its operations to offer original equipment manufacturing (OEM) to optimise capacity. Its OEM services include customised packing at different sizes and label designs from its house brand to Singaporean food distributors.

Today, Waltree Industries supplies its SKUs to over 7,000 sundry shops across Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. Its range of quality halal food products include kerisik kelapa, cili giling, bawang goreng, asam jawa, kerepek ubi sambal, rempah mee rebus, rempah mee bandung, rempah sup soto, rempah ratus, keropok ikan, gula Melaka and belacan.

Certified halal by the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (Jakim), Waltree Industries is also qualified under the Ministry of Health's food assurance programme, Makanan Selamat Tanggungjawab Industri (MeSTI) and is certified for Good Manufacturing Practice.

Driven with a passion for growth, Kee said, "The company is vigorously optimistic to see continuous growth to reach more markets in our expansion plan.

"Under the supervision of an experienced development team that focuses on maintaining product quality and halal compliance, the company has utmost confidence that it will grow steadily, in line with its mission and achieve its vision in due course."

## Accessing new markets

Waltree Industries is optimistic about its room for growth, with its success made possible by strong support from Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CGC).

For smaller businesses, especially MSMEs, financing can be challenging in their early years as they do not have a track record or sufficient documentation to meet the requirements to obtain financing from most financial institutions.

In 2018, Kee walked into CGC's Batu Pahat branch to find out more about its financing offerings.

This was instrumental in assisting him to establish a firm foundation for Waltree Industries.

He successfully obtained the BizMula-i financing, which is specifically offered to eligible registered businesses that have been in operation for less than four years.

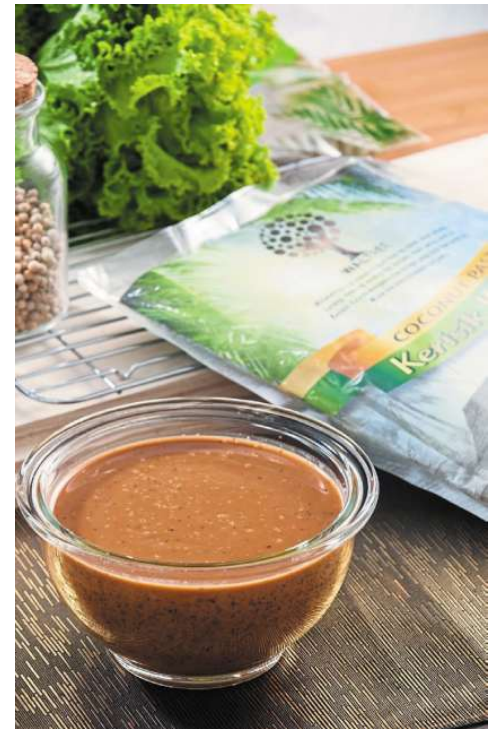
BizMula-i offers a financing amount of RM50,000 up to a maximum of RM300,000 for a tenure of up to five years. This is to be leveraged for working capital and/or asset acquisition, including for the purchase of machinery and equipment as well as business premises renovation.

CGC's assistance to Waltree Industries progressed beyond the provision of business financing. Kee was also introduced to the CGC Developmental Programme.

The CGC Developmental Programme provides comprehensive services for both financial and market access advisory, assisting MSMEs in need of assistance or



Waltree Industries was established in 2016 and seeks to specialise in providing quality halal food to Malaysians and customers in markets across the region.



The company has a range of quality halal food products that include kerisik kelapa.

advisory workshops – especially those with no collateral. CGC extends access to financing and finds potential markets for MSME products and services.

This helped boost Kee's capabilities as an entrepreneur via skills training and development, enabling business growth and access to new markets.

"The programme gave me many opportunities to enhance my business knowledge, especially the exposure to access a new market," said Kee.

Under the CGC Developmental Programme, Kee attended advisory workshops for e-commerce, digital marketing and branding that enabled him to bring Waltree Industries to the next level.

The biggest impact on the business from the programme, Kee mentioned, was the opportunity to access and gain exposure in a new market via the Hao Mart in Singapore in 2020.

Kee also highlighted that the CGC Developmental Programme can be further improved with more workshops related to business skills, as well as to provide more opportunities to access new markets.

## Plans for growth

Moving forward, Kee said that Waltree Industries aims to expand its business to other states in Malaysia, including Sabah and Sarawak, as well as overseas in Indonesia and Thailand.

"It is important for Waltree Industries to also focus on our key business strategies while executing our expansion plan. These strategies include ensuring good product quality, offering clients the best services, as well as maintaining a good working relationship with other business partners," said Kee.

"Short- and long-term plans always help to improve and make the business sustainable. Look out for every opportunity to improve the business and strategies. Listen to your consumers and client feedback, improvise and be better," he advised other entrepreneurs.

The CGC Developmental Programme has been successful in promoting the exponential growth and development of Malaysian MSMEs, both locally and internationally. Since its inception, it has assisted close to 49,600 MSMEs, as of December 31, 2021.

**Apply for CGC Financing today and step up your business momentum with CGC Developmental Programme. Find out more information through <https://imsme.com.my/portal/cgcdevelopmental-programme/>. Alternatively, call 03-7880 0088 (CGC Client Service Centre) or email [csc@cgc.com.my](mailto:csc@cgc.com.my).**

CGC provides comprehensive advisory services to develop the capabilities of MSMEs under the CGC Developmental Programme.



## &gt; FROM PAGE 3

This was in addition to the sterling performance of the winners in the categories of Male, Female and Young Entrepreneur of the Year for both tiers.

The winner of the Par Excellence Achievement for Male Entrepreneur of the Year (RM25mil and above annual turnover), Linaco Resources Sdn Bhd group CEO Joe Ling attributed the achievement to the group's resilience through tough times to not only survive, but also break into new markets and strengthen its position.

He thanked the team for their combined efforts, adding, "The team behind this is also the reason for the submission to emerge at the top. It's a whole package. Although it's an individual award, it takes a whole organisation to move together for a particular individual to be recognised.

"Entrepreneurs are made because of the organisation behind them, the people beside them and the society around them."

Further, Ling believed that a key differentiating factor was the culture of giving back to society, as he has a personal commitment to return at least 10% for every dollar that is made by the group to the community at large.

Linaco Manufacturing (M) Sdn Bhd also won platinum for the Best Innovation category under the same tier.

"We are already in progress in expanding our operations upstream. Internally, we will continue to groom successors, to prepare the leaders for our businesses as we expand locally and globally.

"The part of giving back has never been out of the equation of our business. As we grow in our business, we will also continue to grow our responsibilities in the community at large. This is forward planning for the generations to come," he said.

Meanwhile, CTYMary Resources Sdn Bhd CEO Siti Mariam Samad won the Par Excellence Achievement for the Young Entrepreneur of the Year (up to RM25mil annual turnover).

CTYMary, which owns the brands Faith

# Bringing success to the fore



Mustapa (back row, fifth from left) and SMG's Yeow (back row, sixth from left) with (from left) The Star business editor Jagdev Singh Sidhu, CGC's Mohd Zamree, RHB's Abdul Sani, Matrade's Abu Bakar, Maxis' Lee, PKT Logistics Group's Tio and SMG chief business officer Lydia Wang celebrate the victory of this year's SOBA winners at the SOBA 2021 Gala Night.

Fleur and Leaf, was started by Siti Mariam and her husband Mohamad Abdul Halim Bahadorisam in 2017 and has grown exponentially since then.

Today, it has a corporate headquarters, three warehouses in Shah Alam, Kota Kinabalu and Bintulu, as well as hire more than 60 permanent employees and close to 100,000 of network agents to date.

She said, "We define business success through the growth of our business and how our business brings values and benefits to the society and people, as well as strengthening our control in this business niche.

"As a form of measurement to our business success, we are a strong believer in business financial statements; the satisfaction of existing, new and potential customers; performance reviews of both our employees and distributors and staying relevant and current on market trends, as well as realistically assessing our own expecta-

tions from time to time."

The company's long term plan is to explore the development of a franchise network programme and international market expansion, beginning with Singapore, Indonesia and the rest of Southeast Asia, focusing on Greater China and Central Asia as well as the Middle East.

WF Machinery and Hardware Sdn Bhd, on the other hand, emerged as the grand winner of the Rising Star category.

Its director Eva Wong shared that while light machinery remains a rather traditional industry – including the range of issues faced from the supply chain to the end user – WF Machinery and Hardware worked out a new business model that focuses on a win-win strategy.

"For the light machinery industry, the turnover rate for workers is very high because they can't see a career path in this industry despite having good skills. This is

the pain point we want to settle in-house, in terms of the benefits or the leadership and succession 'family plans' for them to see three to five years into the future," she said.

On the customer's end, she said that to ensure a competitive advantage over those in the same industry, the key is to focus on the added value that the company can give to its customers, instead of being involved in a competitive pricing war.

She added, "We thus offer them additional services like repair and warranty, where we also extend that warranty, for example, to add value for them. It's to build trust and a strong relationship with the customer and help ease their issues in searching for replacement spare parts or repair services."

The same attention to detail is paid to every link on its supply chain to optimise resources and ensure smooth cash flow.

With its third outlet in Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan, Wong said that physical stores are very suitable for the industry to prevent the online price war, as customers need to experience the machinery on-the-ground.

Participating in SOBA gives great motivation to WF Machinery and Hardware, as she revealed, "Whichever industry you're in, you have the opportunity to grow. Don't underestimate the talent you have and awards like SOBA help give you that confidence."

SOBA 2021 is organised by SMG with CGC, Maxis, PKT Logistics Group and RHB as main sponsors and Matrade as official trade promotion partner. Supported by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and Bursa Malaysia, it is audited by BDO with 988 and Suria as official media partners.

**For more information on SOBA, call SMG Events at 017-231 1789 or visit [www.soba.com.my](http://www.soba.com.my)**

## Building M'sia's trade knowledge



The BIC is a one-stop trade information centre for Malaysian exporters.

THE Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) provides facilitation for Malaysian exporters to go global.

The access to wide collections of market information is available at the Business Information Centre (BIC), which is also known as the Matrade Business Library.

Ever since its establishment in 1993, BIC has been operating as a one-stop trade information centre to obtain data ranging from country profiles to tariffs and market intelligence.

According to Mitsubishi Corporation (Malaysia), as imports and exports are indispensable parts of a trading company, the trade statistics information from BIC helps Mitsubishi to coordinate and manage its global supply chains.

BIC offers up-to-date printed and digital business reference collections. It is also equipped with 12 online databases, namely Global Trade Atlas, Euromonitor Passport, EIU, EMIS, CEIC Data, Kompas

International, CTOS Basis, Mercosur Online, Lawsoft Pro, Nikkei Asia and ProQuest eBook Central.

These databases provide an in-depth analysis on markets and industries, which benefit the business communities.

"BIC unlocks access to reliable information from multiple sources, including reports generated by Matrade that helps my company in achieving its objectives.

"To add, a convenient and smooth process is guaranteed with the assistance of its resourceful officers," stated a representative from Adabi Consumer Industries Sdn Bhd.

Conducting market research is vital in developing marketing strategies.

Hence, BIC is furnished with various powerful trade information and other facilities, especially for the business communities in Malaysia.

**For more information, visit BIC at Level 2, Menara Matrade.**

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# Elevate your home and living experience

Oasis Swiss has developed a hybrid revenue model from offline to online

OASIS Swiss was founded in 2010 and supplies environmental-friendly, energy-saving, easy-to-use and healthy kitchenware and houseware, seeking to elevate home and living experience in the Malaysian market.

It is an exclusive distributor for twelve homegrown and international brands.

Oasis Swiss offers the largest number of more than 1,000 options in the kitchenware and household industry, including Cheflogy, Doshio, Glasslock, SU, Oasis, Vakkum and Amercook, among others.

The company provides a wide range of excellent quality and superior products, supported by good customer service.

Oasis Swiss has developed a hybrid revenue model from offline to online and has expanded to Singapore as well.

It is the first kitchenware and household company to adopt live broadcast in the social media as the key sales methodology since 2019.

With a daily live broadcast on its Facebook page Oasis Live Mall in line with the boom of the e-commerce trend in the world retail market, Oasis Swiss transformed its revenue model.

The web-based mobile shopping community Oasis Home provides a great shopping experience for a global community of more than 10,000 members and boosts customer lifetime value by improving customer satisfaction with embedded live commerce technology.

This includes launching a mobile app and giving 0% interest instalment plans to their customers.

As Datuk Jaden Teoh, its chief executive officer, always says: "Always be driven and go the extra mile".

## Live broadcasting team

To do so, it has set up comprehensive broadcasting facilities by investing in Oasis Home with a digitalised backend system to cater for the heavy demand from its live broadcasting channel.

To date, Oasis Swiss houses 14 live broadcasters.

Teoh revolutionised the traditional offline retail-oriented business through digital transformation and the use of technology, to be an e-commerce-oriented company boasting a business model with a strong broadcasting anchor team.

He is touted to be the first in the kitchenware industry to fully transform from traditional offline retail and distribution to leveraging broadcast and online platforms.

Since then, he has successfully created a six-figure online income



Always be driven and go the extra mile, says Teoh.



Growing from local to global, Oasis Swiss stands as a preferred partner for an inspiring home and living experience through a compelling digital shopping journey.

selling a portfolio of Oasis Swiss products during the movement control order period in September 2020.

## Malaysia Book of Records achievement

On Dec 31, Oasis Swiss was bestowed the *Malaysia Book of Records* achievement for the 'Highest Number of Cookware Sales Value in a Facebook Live Broadcasting in One Hour' with RM231,679 in sales value.

This is due to Oasis Swiss' revolutionising its hybrid revenue business model, offering kitchen and household products nationwide through more than 120 retail counters in various renowned departmental stores and also as a wholesale distributor for corporate clients.

Oasis Swiss' tactic brought their

sales from zero to an average monthly revenue of RM600,000 to RM700,000 after six months of consistent broadcasting.

Teoh started live broadcasting on social media such as Facebook and Instagram in March 2019 to sell cookware to the sea of unlimited online audience, instead of selling via live demonstration in malls.

By July 2020, Oasis Swiss was recording the highest sales of RM500,000 from a two-and-a-half hour broadcast.

In terms of the company's future direction, Teoh shares, "We plan to go for listing on the ACE Market by 2024.

"This would help expand the ability and vision of our company as what our slogan suggests - 'Elevate your home and living experience'."

Oasis Swiss is giving away free

membership worth RM68 to every customer who scans its QR and register, which is limited to the first 300 customers. As a member, you can order products from the website at member prices.

Scan the QR code to find out more and register today to be a part of the future of Oasis Home.



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# Delux offerings for your home

## DELUX<sup>®</sup>

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ALMOST two decades ago, Delux Holdings (M) Sdn Bhd opened its doors offering customised roofing, auto gates and doors services to Malaysians. As the company prospered, it expanded its product line to include window grilles, gates and fences, offering more convenience in the hopes of improving consumer lifestyles.

Founded in 2004 with only six people, Delux started its journey in a factory that was less than 2,000sq ft, specialised in customising and handcrafting auto gates and doors to enhance the ambience of residential spaces.

On top of that, Delux has expanded the materials it utilises from stainless steel to antique art gate materials, giving customers a wider range of product design options. This is now led by its own in-house design department that fulfils customised design specifications.

In 2007, Delux built its own design and developed a variety of design casts to fit the inspiration of nature, giving the door a 3D texture and helping it look less monotonous.

Meanwhile, it also successfully

launched its first trackless automatic folding gate in 2009 after three years of research and development, as well as product testing.

It also obtained the patent of the turning arm lock system, which passed the Sirim 50,000 switch test at the same time.

However, this did not come without its challenges.

After receiving customer feedback, Delux regrouped and went back to the drawing board to improve and reinforce its weak points, which was eventually well received by the market.

In 2014, it introduced a set of aluminium trackless automatic folding gates in Malaysia, where it developed copper bearing to address the problem of rusting and cracking from the traditional iron bearings, as well as achieving 80% of materials are machine-moulded so that the products made are standardised to reduce maintenance.

In the same year, it made its first expansion to major cities in South-East Asia, namely Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand as well as India and Iraq.

Now after 18 years of service,



Delux is among the top auto gate manufacturers in South-East Asia.

Delux has expanded to a 100,000sq ft operation with 130 employees from the production department to office building.

This award-winning company has earned its chops to number among the top auto gate manufacturers in South-East Asia and has registered copyright with more

than 1,000 product designs to protect their rights.

Delux has also developed its own in-house application to enhance user experience, where the sales consultants can get updates on the latest product information on-the-go and also use the app to illustrate the customers' desired products

installed in their homes before purchasing.

Moving forward, Delux's vision is to represent Malaysia as it expands worldwide in the next decade, by demonstrating its capability of producing high-quality products and improving the industry's standards.

## Making solar power accessible

OVER the years, Next Energy has identified the high capital expenditure of solar power as the biggest barrier to adopting this form of renewable energy despite its many benefits.

For instance, most consumers answer yes to the below questions:

> Do you want to generate your own electricity and save on your TNB bills? Yes.

> Do you want to save planet earth by adopting solar power? Yes.

> Do you want to make returns of 20% to 25% per annum over 25 years and more? Yes.

### BNPL and zero capex solution

But with the upfront cost of purchasing a solar system ranging from RM20,000 to RM50,000 for residential systems, most would shy away from taking the plunge.

While there are other solar companies that provide instalment plans that are charged to your credit card, most people would not have the high credit limit necessary to invest in solar power.

Therefore, the good folks at Next Energy took the initiative to go the extra mile and provide a Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) solar plan directly from the company, where you can enjoy interest as low as 0% for up to 60 months.

"After learning about our BNPL solar plan, some have shared that it's a big risk for Next Energy should anyone default.

"We say, well, we know where you live," co-founder and managing director Steven Chiew laughs.

He says that jokes aside, the company will conduct its own



Co-founders Lim (left) and Chiew are driven by passion for renewables.

credit checks of the customer but are confident that they will have no issues with collection.

After all, once the solar photovoltaic (PV) system is installed, you will immediately save on your electricity bills, which increases your cash flow to keep up with the monthly instalments.

Meanwhile, Next Energy also provides zero capex solutions for industrial customers.

This is done through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), where the solar PV system is installed for free, and customers only need to pay for the electricity generated by the system. Immediate savings are achieved as the PPA's electricity tariff will be cheaper than TNB's electricity tariff.

### Trusted solar power service provider

"We offer one of the most competitive PPA rates, but that's not what we're all about. In a time

when many want things cheap, we still focus on quality as the system is meant to last for 25 years and more," says Chiew.

Indeed, this is also reflected in Next Energy's mission to provide customers with top quality solar products and services at affordable prices – a mission that was born out of passion for renewables by Chiew and co-founder and technical director Lim Chze Hong.

They have also ensured that every team member emulates this passion and understands that with every sale and project, they will be leaving behind a greener planet.

It is this passion that has made them one of the most trusted solar PV installers in the country and also a testament to their recent Special Mention win under the Rising Star category in the Star Outstanding Business Awards.

For more information, visit [www.nextenergy.my](http://www.nextenergy.my)



Next Energy is a trusted solar PV installer for residential, commercial, and industrial systems.



Next Energy making solar power affordable with their BNPL solar plan.





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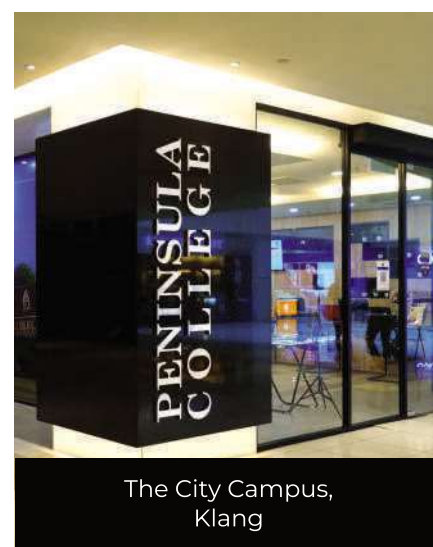
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