



FEATURE

TOWKAY TALK: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE TODAY

SINGAPORE 1000

SINGAPORE SME 1000

INTERNATIONAL 100

A Conversation with Xin Networks: Building Communications One Step at a Time



Xin Networks'
Executive Directors
Mr. Chai Yeong,
Ms. Lim Bee Suat
and Mr. Isaac Yeo

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We need to
plan for the
next
generation.

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KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE. Creating a sustainable business is what Xin Networks' Executive Directors, Mr. Chai Yeong, Ms. Lim Bee Suat and Mr. Isaac Yeo, are working towards while building the company. They recognise that their employees are the key collaborators to build this dream together. This has led to their focus on training all staff in both soft and technical skills.

Having staff with different language backgrounds other than English, the translation of learning materials from English to Mandarin was recognised. It was needed to facilitate the training session for the majority, which is exactly what they testament to the organisation's belief in reaching an extra mile in investing in their talent.

Discover what makes Xin Networks a high-achieving local company that entered the Singapore Small Medium Enterprise (SME) 1000 rankings in 2017. Let us follow their successful journey through their phases of transformation.

Q: Xin Networks has come a long way since its beginning. What was the journey like?

Chai: We first began in the 1990s by personally doing physical work such as laying cables on site. A team of employees have been with us since then, working side by side with us for more than 20 years. We were only able to get through those tough years thanks to this team of people.

As such, we have a deep appreciation for their loyalty and hence, always value them and put them first. We have their best interests at heart at all times. This further encourages us to continue our journey to build a long-term enterprise which will benefit all stakeholders, including our employees.

A key milestone in our journey is the completion the Marina Bay Sands project. As one of our largest projects to date, our employees worked day and night to pull through the tight work schedule. Other subsequent big projects include the Singapore Sports Hub and several sizable data centres.

The recent two years have been tough as business was slow, but thanks to our client base, we have managed to sustain our business and keep our staff employed.

The most important factor throughout our journey is having employees who have the right attitude and always do their best.

Q: What advice would you give to organisations like yours in terms of employee training and retainment?

Chai: In our trade, we think that employee retention is key. The challenge is in balancing employee training and employee retention.

We add value to our employees by investing time and effort in training them. To retain these trained employees who might leave in search of seemingly greener pastures, we have to instil a sense of belonging in them while creating a career path for these employees. So, there are career advancements and they can see a growing future with Xin Networks.

Q: Why do you think Xin Networks has managed to beat its competitors to clinch prestigious projects such as Marina Bay Sands?

Chai: There are many aspects which have led to us clinching the Marina Bay Sands project. However, there are a few key attributes to highlight. The primary and most important factor is

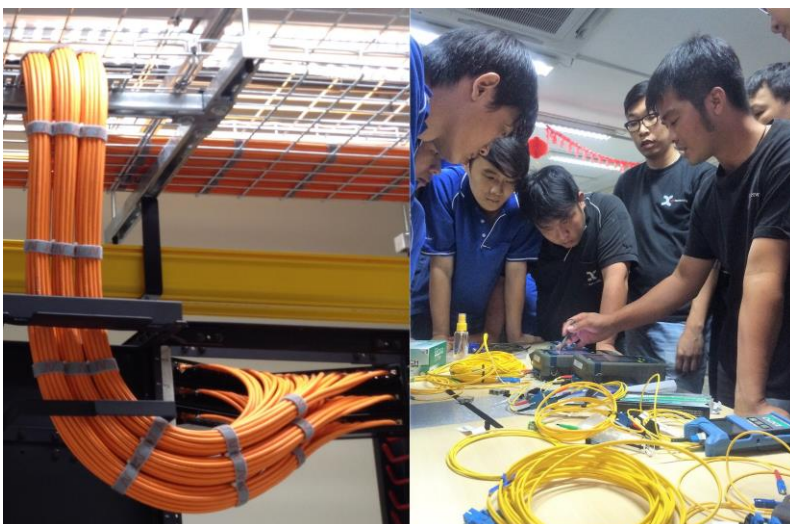
business. Further to this is also our conviction in our employees and their commitment to the company.

Next, our past experiences and capabilities to deliver sizable projects possibly gave us an edge over other competitors. Through previous projects, our team had demonstrated their ability to deliver quality work without fail. This could have certainly played a role in gaining our customer's confidence.

In addition, our products are not brand-specific but we do represent some of the best-known brands which provide warranties of 20-25 years that can meet the customer's requirements. We constantly stay relevant and updated with what is happening in the ICT industry. This helps us to propose a solution which can future-proof our clients' needs.

Beyond that, Xin Networks provides a contract to offer maintenance service after the project is completed. We also train the clients' IT staff on the operations and maintenance of their installed infrastructure and systems.

Thus, we think that the above factors have helped to assure our customers of what we can achieve, setting us apart from our competitors.



L: Cable installation by Xin Networks' dedicated team members

R: Xin Networks' staff in a training session

Xin Networks at the
30th Annual
Singapore 1000
Awards Gala 2017



Q: What are your thoughts on the Government's plans to re-skill and upskill the workforce?

Chai: We hold the same consensus that re-skilling and upskilling the workforce is of utmost importance.

A skilled workforce is essential in producing quality work. In line with this plan, we support both internal and external trainings to upgrade our employees with relevant skills and knowledge regarding infrastructure cabling.

For internal training purposes, we have translated the various training programmes into Mandarin to help our staff understand the curriculum better. We also have external training which includes sending our employees for certification courses such as RCDD, CFOT, PMP, CDCP, CDCD, etc.

Besides technical training, we also focus on business management skills and soft skills such as communications and presentation skills as they are equally important.

Q: What are your plans to expand into other cities?

Chai: Starting off as a local company, we have progressively brought the Singapore brand to other countries in the region over the years. Our valued

clients are in Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China.

Recognising that China is an important market in this current economy, we decided to venture into their market in 2012. After starting an office in Shanghai to support our core business, we went on to open a branch in Beijing. Our upcoming projects will subsequently allow us to have branches in either Chengdu or Chongqing. Besides expanding our core business into other countries, we have also diversified into other businesses. There were various business opportunities which have allowed us to establish joint ventures in new products and businesses overseas.

We look forward to widening our regional footprint by venturing into cities like Ho Chi Minh and Yangon in the near future.

Q: What can we anticipate from Xin Networks in the coming years?

Chai: In the coming years, Xin Networks will place emphasis on grooming the second generation to ensure their career stability and business continuity. We will continue to strive to be a preferred one-stop quality ICT solution provider in the

region, and a resourceful business partner for its clients in this technologically advanced world. Diversification under the same umbrella is always a top priority to ensure that we mitigate business risks. Suitable employees will also be deployed to helm new businesses so that they can grow together with the business successfully.

Q: What advice do you have for local entrepreneurs who want to start out on their own?

Chai: Any start-up local entrepreneur should find good partners to work with. People have commented that Isaac, Bee Suat and I have stayed as partners for a long time. There may be differences in ideas and work styles, but as long as you are honest with each other, you will reach a mutual understanding. Each individual possesses their unique strengths, so it is good to have partners you can work together and stay with.

It is also advisable to have a forward-looking vision which you continuously refer to. Some added advice is to manage a small and strong team of employees at the start, and be prudent with cash-flow. Do an honest job with what you have and let us all keep the dream alive.