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KIM CHUA & WILLIAM CHEW
Seacom Marine Engineering Pte Ltd

GETTING AHEAD, STAYING ON TOP

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KEEPING EVERYTHING SHIPSHAPE

MR WILLIAM CHEW & MR KIM CHUA
SEACOM MARINE ENGINEERING PTE LTD

Two of a kind in both character and outlook, Mr. William Chew and Mr. Kim Chua have captained Seacom Marine Engineering Pte Ltd into becoming a mainstay of the marine ship repair industry today. Their working relationship has been nothing short of a synergistic success, and the two men have enjoyed a close personal and professional relationship for over 30 years.

Their partnership in business had in fact begun long after they became acquainted with each other. Mr. Chua had been a long-time client of Mr. Chew, the latter at the time working at Axon Marine Engineering. In 1999, when the company's previous owner decided to retire, the two men recognized a unique opportunity to revitalize the business, which led to Mr. Chua's decision to join Mr. Chew.

"We do seismic ship repairs, and fabricate our own specialized parts," Mr. Chew explains, "We serve a niche that is the oil and gas industry." Whilst the bulk of their clients come from Europe and the US – mainly Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) such

as CGG (a French-based geophysical services company) and Western Geophysical (a US-based company) – they also serve local clients who require a trustworthy ship repair service. "We have a comfortable relationship with our clients, because they know that we have the necessary knowledge," remarks Mr. Chew. Indeed, his own extensive experience, coupled with Mr. Chua's prior employment at Western Geophysical, has given them a solid advantage upon which to leverage, with their combined expertise giving a steady sense of assurance to their customers.

"We started with just 4 or 5 staff members, and now we have 16, 17 permanent staff," continues Mr. Chew, also adding that the volume of work has been steadily increasing since their humble beginning. Citing their ability to deliver specialized equipment faster than their competitors, the duo explain that their customizable fabrication services, localized base, and emphasis on close working relationships have helped their appeal to numerous clients based in Singapore.

For whatever job you take on, do it to perfection, even if you lose more than you gain. You may not earn at all, but you will never lose the client's trust and respect.

"They give us a drawing, or sometimes we help them to design the equipment; then we fabricate it for them," Mr. Chua expounds, with Mr. Chew adding in that their intimate knowledge of such specialized systems puts them above other engineering firms who lack the crucial know-how and technical expertise.

"Our greatest business achievement?" remarks Mr. Chew when prompted, "Having built up a small company into the multi-million dollar success it is today." Despite the fact that they have never depended heavily on advertising and marketing, they have grown to the point where they are well-known in Europe and the US.

Now, with their keen business sensibilities tuned to future opportunities, they are confident of getting the company listed, improving even beyond what they have already achieved.

Together, the pair's energy is apparent in every project they take on; their synergy and mutual dedication to the perfect completion of every job making them a highly-favored choice amongst numerous shipping companies.

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

How do you approach problems in life?

William: For me, I am very positive minded. I believe that every problem can be solved. There is no issue that pops up and then it's the end of the world. We have to be very positive minded; when the opportunity comes, we grab it. Always look on the bright side.

Kim: It very much the same for me. Sometimes, we do come across a very big problem, but it can be easily solved by consulting the client and talking to them about the situation, so as to move forward. Usually the clients have only one idea and approach, so we help them to improve their situation with different ideas.

William: Basically, our men are on the ground to quickly solve problems that may arise. Our view is that, whatever is the clients' problem is also our problem. That's the kind of assurance that makes our clients happy.

What do you do when you aren't working?

Kim: I do some charity work, such as helping out in the old folks' home by buying food for them. During my off-time I also like to go swimming, as well as to gather with my friends for a few beers.

William: For me, I like to travel with my family, as well as charity work. I'm a Buddhist, so I help out at the temple whenever I can.

What would you like your legacy to be?

William: We are proud of what we have achieved. Basically, to be remembered by your staff and your clients, then I think you have done a good job.

Kim: The thing is that, with the right opportunity, we had started off with a very low budget and we worked very hard, so we really are quite proud of what we have achieved. Most of our staff have been with us since day one, so hopefully when the day comes that we cannot be active anymore, our staff will be able to take over the company and move it forward.

How do you measure success in life?

William: At the end of the day, it's about being contented and knowing that you have done something good. In the beginning it's difficult to imagine becoming so big. I'm sure in my younger days I didn't think it was possible that I could be a owner one day. So, I would say that I'm contented and proud of what I have achieved today.

Kim: And of course, we have been doing for so many years now; we don't owe anybody any money. Most of our equipment we bought was with our cash in hand.

