

## SPECIAL REPORT: SINGAPORE NATIONAL DAY

# Quality workmanship and client relations drive Grandwork's growth

Excellent workmanship and good customer relationships, built on trust and professionalism, have propelled Grandwork Interior into a leading high-end interior fit-out company in Singapore. With its newly built 120,000-square-foot manufacturing facility opening this year, Grandwork is fit to soar into greater heights as it develops more collaborations in Southeast Asia, and cultivates joint ventures and acquisitions in China.

Serving mostly luxury retail shops in top locations such as the Marina Bay Sands and Orchard Road, Grandwork builds and maintains store interiors including façade and fixtures. It produces custom-made furniture for upmarket commercial brands such as Prada, Cartier, Louis Vuitton and Dolce & Gabbana.

"Every project is different," says Jay

Chiu, managing director and the man behind Grandwork's success. "While we follow a consistent concept or look, every shop is custom-built."

Chiu, who won Singapore's Entrepreneur of the Year award in 2007, has applied the concept of a family unit within Grandwork to nurture excellent relationships with clients and employees. His dedication for delivering outstanding workmanship and the timely completion of projects extends to the whole company as each staff focuses on the well-being of clients.

"We treat our customers as family," Chiu says. "We value all our relationships and we fulfil their requirements by delivering quality work always, and on time. We spend a lot of time with clients so we know what they want even before they ask for it. Once we accept a project, we will surely deliver."

Grandwork's job scope is a mixture of off-site and on-site activities. Off-site, it hires its own carpenters to produce tailored furniture for its clients. Grandwork promotes the "Singapore" brand by keeping its manufacturing processes within the country. This allows the company to easily monitor production and to adjust its services quickly based on its clients' demands.

Highly qualified and safety-trained project managers and coordinators are then assigned to monitor construction on-site. With offices and factories in Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan and Indonesia, alongside partnerships in China supporting its headquarters in Singapore, Grandwork offers total fit-out solutions to clients wherever they are.

This agility was partly responsible for Grandwork's growth in Asia and worldwide.

Following its clients as they expanded into other markets, Grandwork has extended its reach to form a regional and global network spanning 41 cities in 18 countries. It bridges the gap between Western companies and local opportunities in Asia through its language proficiency and understanding of both cultures.

"The bigger powerhouses are China and the United States, and for us, that's not a problem in terms of communication," says Fion Ng, general manager. "We can speak Chinese and English so it is easier to deal with us."

Eyeing more partnerships on the mainland while augmenting its manufacturing facility in Singapore, Grandwork plans to increase its capacity fivefold to serve the burgeoning health care and hospitality sectors. Apart from retail shops, Grandwork has also penetrated the

health care sector with its environmentally friendly fit-out materials. As the only fit-out company in Singapore that produces formaldehyde-free products, Grandwork enjoys a strong competitive edge earning for it five consecutive Enterprise 50 (E50) awards. The E50 award recognises the 50 most enterprising local and privately owned companies who have contributed to economic development in Singapore and abroad.

Not one to rest on its laurels, Grandwork continues to innovate and apply its trademark efficiency to attract more clients.

"Southeast Asia is emerging as a strong retail and health care hub, and our geographical location allows us to serve the region better," Chiu says. "We are working hard to complete our factory so we can begin to take in orders and bring our business to another level."



Jay Chiu, managing director



A multi-award-winning custom interior fittings firm that specialises in interior fit-out works, restoration and custom-made furniture for both minor and large-scale projects.

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## MSC expands its growing presence in the region

Underpinned by growth in manufacturing activities and rising consumer demand, the Asian economic zone continues to flourish. This has created opportunities for many shipping companies to develop their regional portfolios by leveraging the business environment in countries well-positioned as international maritime centres such as Singapore.

With the inception of its Singapore-based Asia Regional Office (ARO) in 1996, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) has been steadily building its profile and presence across the region.

A privately owned global shipping company based in Geneva, MSC is one of the world's leading container shipping lines. It operates in over 450 offices across more than 150 countries worldwide with over 24,000 employees. MSC's shipping line sails on more than 200 trade routes, calling at over 315 ports.

"In addition to being a gateway to Southeast Asian markets, Singapore presents a favourable business environment and nurtures a great pool of human capital," says Tan Yock Juee, managing director of MSC ARO. Boasting extensive agency networks in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia under the group's



Tan Yock Juee, managing director, Asia Regional Office

subsidiary MSC South East Asia and drawing on the support of MSC ARO, MSC assures international freight forwarders and multinational corporations in Singapore that their needs will be catered to in the best and timely manner. The company's team of dedicated professionals constantly strive to enhance operational and technical efficiencies and service quality for its customers.

Recognising the growing importance of Singapore as a main transshipment hub to many long haul destinations, MSC has established a joint venture with PSA International

in Singapore to provide priority berthing in order to achieve schedule reliability.

A twice-weekly sailing frequency coupled with a dedicated feeder network coverage for Southeast Asian ports enables the company to provide customers with multiple sailing options. "Running our own feeder service helps us maintain our cost-competitive advantage and guarantees service frequencies," Tan says. MSC's feeder network spans Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

MSC seeks to further strengthen its regional position by expanding its networks and exploring untapped business frontiers. Through its existing agency networks in Asia, the company plans to extend its reach into east Malaysia and Myanmar, and add port calls to widen its feeder network coverage, focusing on specialised cargo business such as reefers, dangerous goods and out of gauge.

"We aim to be the pioneer in Asia's emerging markets by building global networks, harnessing local talents and capitalising on opportunities in a favourable business environment," Tan says. "Wherever goods need to be transported, we will make sure we are there."

## Latrade bridges trade and tourism with Indonesia

A 45-minute ferry ride away from Singapore's bustling business district, Batam offers more than a convenient location for some of the region's largest, most hi-tech industrial parks. Its proximity to Singapore enables it to emulate the country's best practices, systems and technologies while benefiting from Indonesia's cost efficiency, tax incentives and inexpensive labour.

Part of the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore Growth Triangle established to boost the economic links among the three countries, Batam is home to 17 industrial parks, each offering distinct advantages to different industries.

Latrade Industrial Park (LIP) stands out as the choice for modern industries seeking cost-effective expansion or relocation opportunities — with its integrated self-contained community backed by its own power plants, telecommunication lines, food courts, stores, health and banking facilities, among other infrastructure.



Teo Pea Ngo, managing director

"Foreign companies investing in Batam enjoy 100 per cent business ownership and an abundant supply of high-quality, cost-effective workforce," says Teo Pea Ngo, managing director of LIP developer Latrade Batam Indonesia. "Batam's established infrastructure has supported industries for more than 40 years. The strength of the institutions,

customs and modes of businesses, in turn, translates into a strong support system in LIP — creating a synergetic environment that is conducive for growth."

The industrial park has a total area of 700,000 square metres, about half of which is already sold out. Another 350,000 square metres are earmarked for future expansion.

Teo's vision, however, is not confined within the boundaries of LIP. With sustainability and green technologies in mind, Teo established Green Resources Material to provide smart, efficient building material alternatives. Breakthrough products include Biowood, a 100-per cent recyclable composite wood resistant to fire, water and termites.

"This is the kind of innovation and forward-thinking approach that we want to attract, cultivate, share and replicate," Teo says. "We aim to grow with our stakeholders — and help bridge trade and tourism between Indonesia and Singapore."

## AS-Schneider seals quality in tailored valve solutions

The industrial valves market is expecting a boost from the oil and gas sector as more oil and natural gas pipeline projects are being implemented on the mainland and across Southeast Asia. With demand for high-quality and customised valve technology on the upswing, AS-Schneider Asia-Pacific is firmly established to deliver the best-fit solutions to energy and industrial applications in the region.

A direct and wholly owned subsidiary of top German industrial valve manufacturer Armaturenfabrik Franz Schneider (AS-Schneider Group), AS-Schneider Asia-Pacific is backed by 140 years of experience in developing and manufacturing industrial valves. With a global team of research and development (R&D) specialists, AS-Schneider works closely with clients to develop customised valve solutions that continuously remove potential leak points and reduce emission rates.

"Our products are tailored to our customers' businesses," says Tim-



Tim-Frederik Kohler, managing director

Frederik Kohler, managing director of AS-Schneider Asia-Pacific. "We have full access to our R&D teams in Germany and in other countries, so if clients need a design done, they get full access to that global knowledge base too."

Applying lean practices that meet international standards,

AS-Schneider produces reduced fugitive emission valves stamped with the German seal of quality and innovation. Its broad production range, coupled with its speed and flexibility, allows it to handle efficiently all customer requirements in-house. Its Singapore plant can also modify designs and deliver the altered product to the client within the same day it was requested.

"We have very fast client response and delivery times," Kohler says. "Projects and instrumentations can become very complex, so we are also flexible. We produce whatever the client wants."

AS-Schneider provides valve technology edge to global companies such as Emerson, Sinopac and DOW Chemical. Intent on collaborating more closely with clients, it opened an office in Shanghai to reinforce its Singapore warehouse and assembly line.

"As we grow, we help our customers grow too," Kohler says.

MSC is a world leader in global container shipping and a company that prides itself on offering global service with local knowledge. To find out more, contact your local MSC Office:

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