



EMBARGOED TILL THURSDAY, 31 MARCH 2016, 8.00PM

**SINGAPORE BUSINESS AWARDS 2016
BUSINESSMAN OF THE YEAR 2015**

DR ROBERT YAP
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN
YCH GROUP PTE LTD

Personal background

Dr Robert Yap is Executive Chairman of the YCH Group, Singapore's leading end-to-end supply chain company with operations spanning across Asia Pacific. He has close to four decades of experience in the logistics and supply chain management (SCM) field.

Dr Yap has been widely recognised for his thought leadership and contribution to the SCM industry. He was conferred the NUS Business School Eminent Business (Senior) Alumni Award in 2014 and the Lifetime Achievement Award (Logistics) by the World Chinese Economic Forum in 2013. He also received the Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year award in 2007 and the Asia Logistics Hall of Fame award in 2003.

He is currently President of Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), Deputy Chairman of International Enterprise Singapore (IES), Chairman of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council Singapore, and Singapore Chairman of the Malaysia – Singapore Business Council (MSBC). He also advises various business and strategic committees such as the Singapore National Committee for Pacific Economic



Cooperation (SINCPEC), the ASEAN SME Advisory Board and the Singapore Management University's School of Information Systems.

Dr Yap contributes to various local government-related councils which include the Committee on the Future Economy, the SkillsFuture Council, the National Productivity Council (NPC), and Advisory Council on Community Relations in Defence – Employers & Business (ACCORD). Robert is also the Founding Chairman of *Supply Chain Asia* – a regional community of more than 30,000 supply chain professionals.

He has a Bachelor of Business Administration from the National University of Singapore and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D), honoris causa, in Business Administration from the Wisconsin International University. He has also completed the Harvard Business School Owner President Management program. From 2009 to 2012, he was also appointed as Honorary Adjunct Professor by the College of Business, City University of Hong Kong.

Company profile

Founded in 1955, YCH Group is Asia's leading end-to-end supply chain partner to some of the world's most prominent companies and well-loved brands such as Dell, ExxonMobil, Royal FrieslandCampina, Moet Hennessy, Samsung, LG, Amore Pacific, Carrefour, NCR, Volvo and Zalora. Focused on boosting productivity and sustainability for customers, YCH Group's proprietary suite of award-winning solutions are best-in-class across industry clusters from consumer and electronics to chemical and healthcare, and support both traditional and digital platforms.

A strong proponent of innovation, YCH Group is recognized for its 7PL™ approach in seamlessly integrating supply chain strategy with execution, and employing cutting edge technologies to deliver powerful competitive advantages for our customers. YCH Group was the recipient of Supply Chain Asia's 'Overall Partner of the Year' and 'Supply Chain Security' awards in 2014, demonstrating its strong commitment to developing symbiotic partnerships with world-class customers and in supply chain security.

YCH Group is founded on values that thrive on overcoming challenges. This is embodied in its corporate philosophy using the Chinese character – 升 (Sheng). Meaning RISE, it represents the company values of Reliability, Integrity, Sincerity and Enterprise, and was adopted as the company's corporate values, focusing on both career development as well as the level of service and confidence it provides to its clients. Known as an extended family enterprise, YCH Group was awarded the May Day Model Partnership Awards 2014 for embracing diversity, encouraging continuous learning and the creation of a productive, resilient and sustainable workforce.

Headquartered in Singapore, YCH Group has a presence in 12 countries across the Asia Pacific region, with an entrenched network strategically located in more than 100



locations in Greater China, India, and ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam as well as Australia and Korea.

Humble Beginnings

YCH's story began when Dr Yap's father, the late Mr Yap Chwee Hock, founded a passenger transport company in 1955 known as Yap Chwee Hock Transport and General Contractors. At that time, the company's main business was to provide transport for employees from the Public Utilities Board (PUB) and the British colonial government. The business expanded and it owned more than 100 trucks at one point, identifying the company in the government gazette as one of the largest lorry transportation companies in Singapore.

The firm encountered its first crisis in the 1970s. It faced the grim prospect of 103 empty trucks with virtually no passengers when it lost the main contract of transporting the PUB workers which constituted 80 per cent of its business. The British had recalled its troops back and the Singapore Bus Service (SBS) was also established at that same time.

Graduating from the University of Singapore in 1976, Dr Yap's father roped him into the business, hoping he could provide a new perspective as he had majored in Business Administration.

In the early 1980s, YCH ventured into the cargo transport business to seize opportunities in the growing trade activities of the Singapore ports. Dr Yap visited the ports, befriended the shipping officers, and learnt the ropes of the logistics transport business. It won a tender and this signalled the company's evolution from passenger transport into logistics transportation. This also ingrained in Dr Yap the constant need to innovate to stay ahead of the competition and along with industry developments, an attribute that drives the company to constantly strive to push the frontiers of Supply Chain Management.

Evolution from Logistics Transportation to Supply Chain Management

The mid-90s marked YCH's transformation into a supply chain management company. The business climate had burgeoned and it realised that cargo transportation was merely a segment of the supply chain process. Hence, it extended the business to incorporate warehousing as there were delays to cargo during transshipment. It also established a freight forwarding arm and provided insurance brokerage services.

With these extended services, YCH pioneered a partnership strategy by engaging its customers to find out what they wanted to achieve and how they could configure their supply chains. In 1981, it created Y3 Technologies to design and develop in-house award winning solutions for its clients, believing that this would grant the company more



flexibility in its operations as opposed to buying solutions off the shelf. A solution developed for one market could be adapted to fit the needs of another. Y3 Technologies has since expanded so successfully that it is a standalone company today, with YCH as one of its many MNC clients.

The company also developed proprietary IT applications to integrate various logistics services. Using the DistriPark at 30 Tuas Road as the flagship point of reference, it invested in state-of-the art Distriparks and in regional markets in the Asia Pacific, beginning with Malaysia and China. YCH is one of the pioneer Singaporean companies to enter the Chinese market in the early 1990s, having followed then Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew's advice during a trade mission the prior year.

Today, YCH is not just a logistics service provider, but also a supply chain solutions provider, offering customers its trademark 7PL™ strategy, a hybrid of 3PL (logistic services) and 4PL (consulting and solution services).

The YCH brand is already well entrenched in the Asia Pacific region, ranking alongside global logistics players. YCH's vision was to build the "logistics superhighway", or the integration of the three critical flows of the supply chain comprising the physical, information, and financial flows. The seamless integration of the three flows will streamline operations and push the boundaries of logistics and supply chain management, enabling the company to orchestrate the most complex of supply chains.

YCH is anticipating the completion of its new corporate headquarters, Supply Chain City™, located at the Wenya district of the bustling Jurong commercial hub. When completed in 2016, the facility will incorporate contemporary spaces, the world's first Fusionaris™, - a fusion of an Automated Storage and Retrieval System (ASRS) with ramp-up warehousing, research and training facilities, state-of-the art supply chain management technologies and equipment, and lifestyle amenities. As the next supply chain hot spot in Asia, Supply Chain City™ not only creates a melting pot for industry professionals to innovate and collaborate, but aims to change the image of the industry by portraying it as a desirable, exciting, and rewarding one.

A glimpse into YCH Group's strategies

YCH's mission is to be the leading supply chain solutions partner of choice, leveraging on its network and depth across the Asia Pacific region. Riding on its mission, YCH will continue to build depth into its network by expanding into the second-tier and third-tier cities of China and India. These are regions deemed to provide vast manufacturing and logistics opportunities following the increasing influence of these two Asian consumption giants. At the heart of the organisation's expansion strategy are process optimisation and innovation driven primarily through the use of IT.



Another competitive edge that YCH developed is called the “last-mile” partnership strategy. YCH works with local companies, albeit smaller last-mile partners, to optimise its distribution routes and advance YCH's presence across the region. In doing so, YCH imparts industry best practices and technology knowledge to help these smaller players scale the value chain.

YCH's organic organisational structure is effective in responding to market changes. By responding dynamically to the needs of its customers, suppliers and partners, YCH has never stopped executing a deeply rooted belief of “innovating to survive”. Continuous innovation steers the company towards breaking new SCM frontiers. Expansions are accomplished largely through organic ways rather than through mergers and acquisitions. The transformation into an independent entity enabled Y3 Technologies to fully focus on innovative solutions and thrive as an independent IT organisation, allowing it to license its technologies to other companies.

Dr Robert Yap firmly believes in long-term investment according to a common Chinese saying, “先苦后甜 (*xian ku hou tian*)” which means that one has to experience bitterness first in order to appreciate sweetness in life. In other words, in order to reap the potential returns in the long term, one is prepared to commit to a project that might seem difficult and unfavourable in the near term. This simple philosophy shapes YCH's investment strategy with a long-term view through symbiotic partnerships with its world-class customers. The “先苦后甜 (*xian ku hou tian*)” investment approach is illustrated by YCH's vision of building the logistics superhighway. YCH would need to endure the “bitterness” of overcoming the initial challenges in the areas of developing technological knowhow as well as convincing the key stakeholders that the logistic superhighway is indeed a realisable concept.

Key Drivers toward Vision

The three crucial areas that YCH could tap on in building the logistics superhighway are its organisational culture, leadership and core competencies.

Organisational Culture

One very distinctive feature of YCH's organisational culture is its concept of an extended family enterprise. According to Dr Yap: “*Once you are in (YCH), you are part of the YCH family. It's no more just a business. I want to add purpose to the whole equation*”. All members of the YCH extended family were passionately known as the YCHees. This extended family concept sets up a common value system that bonded employees together, including those from overseas who were of different cultures. The regional YCHees are empowered as though they are owners of the company. As such, these employees could act more entrepreneurially and innovatively.



A family enterprise like YCH faced unique challenges in riding out the unpredictable economic turmoil. A common core value of YCH's family business is a rooted belief in corporate social responsibility rather than simply making profits. As opposed to other firms, this changed the traditional dynamics of between employer and employee. The close relationship meant laying off a worker was akin to losing a family member. Therefore, management in YCH would find retrenchment as a cost-cutting measure to be a very difficult and heart-wrenching option.

Core Competencies

IT plays a very crucial and important role, in the logistics and SCM business. YCH is known for its network and infrastructure, and also for its quality and innovative solutions. For example, YCH is able to generate IT-enabled innovative processes and solutions across several industry verticals namely, electronics, chemical & healthcare, consumer goods and e-commerce. YCH offers customised end-to-end scalable solutions, each being able to work independently or be integrated comprehensively. YCH's solutions create values in many related value chains such as from manufacturers and brand owners to resellers and customers (for finished products); and from consumers back to original equipment manufacturers (for spares and returns).

YCH developed state-of-the-art logistics infrastructures and strategic networks of assets and expertise by leveraging on special economic zones (SEZs) – these included free trade zones, export processing zones, bonded logistics parks, airport logistics parks etc in countries that it operated in. It was able to create an in-depth network in each and every major market in the Asia Pacific region. As such, YCH optimises customers' SCM capabilities and enables its customers to gain competitive advantages.

YCH is committed to harnessing the best-in-class practices to achieve productivity and peace of mind for their clients and partners. Another core competency of YCH is in the area of talent and human capital management. Every YCHee is given equal opportunities to take on responsibilities and grow with the company. Senior positions are not confined to family members, and this had enabled YCH to attract the best industry talent and tap on their strengths, while sending a strong message that YCH values its employees and they could fulfil their career aspirations in the organisation. Various awards such as the prestigious "RISE Award" and other forms of recognition were given to deserving employees as a way to motivate the YCHees.

Dr Yap believed in the potential of people who had the passion in what they were doing. As such, he raises the performance bar whenever possible. At the same time, YCH gives each employee constant opportunities for learning and skills development through various OJT (on-the-job) trainings and external courses to enhance their job proficiency and productivity levels.



The push for R&D aims to scale business growth. Rather than innovate for the sake of innovation, innovation gives the company a sustainable and strategic approach in enhancing its value propositions and deliverables over the long term.

YCH Group's recent awards

- Supply Chain Asia – Asian 3PL of the Year 2015
- WWT Excellent Partner Award 2015
- Dell Global Service Parts, Best Global Configuration Services Partner 2015
- Supply Chain Asia 'Overall Partner of the Year' 2014
- May Day Model Partnership Awards 2014
- Supply Chain Asia – Security Excellence Award 2014

List of Personal Achievements

1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Became Chairman and CEO of YCH Group
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inducted into the Hall of Fame at the 2nd ASIA Logistics Award • Presented with the IT Leaders Award • Advising regional Heads of Government in the ASEAN-Business Advisory Council
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected as council member of the Singapore Business Federation Council • Became Chairman of the Supply Chain Asia Advisory Council
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed Chairman of the ASEAN-Business Advisory Council • Presented with the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of The Year Award
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed as Member of Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded Lifetime Achievement Award for Logistics
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honoured at NUS Business School Eminent Business Alumni Awards • Appointed to be one of the four vice-presidents of the Singapore National Employers Federation
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed Deputy Chairman of the International Enterprise (IE) Singapore board.