Alumni Presentation: How to Survive and Create Successful Businesses
Organised by EEE Alumni Association

This talk attracted a full house attendance to the first Entrepreneurship seminar organized by the NTU EEE Alumni Association on the evening of 16 April 2004 at the NUSS Suntec Guild House.

Mr Kenny Yap, The Fish, is the Executive Chairman and Managing Director of Qian Hu Corporation Ltd, the only integrated ornamental fish service provider listed on the Mainboard of the Singapore Exchange.

In this Fishy event, Kenny gave an honest account of how the Yap Family survived many setbacks, overcoming their problems together and became more united as one family. He shared his many experiences in running a family business that has spanned over 12 years. Through his leadership, vision and passion for the industry, Kenny The Fish has played a key role in establishing Singapore as the ornamental fish capital of the world, with Qian Hu accounting for more than 4% of the global fish market.

In Kenny’s talk, he brilliantly used different types of fishes and drew analogies to principle of doing business to survive and create successful businesses. His 10 candid and interesting Fishy Points made the event inspirational and enjoyable for the participants. He cleverly used Arapaima, Cardinal Tetra, Goldfish, Guppy, Fighting Fish, Arowana, Flower Horn, Rainbow Fish, High Fin Loach, and Kenny The Fish to describe some of his business principles, including:

- Why size matters,
- The way for small companies to survive,
- Adapting to change,
- The survival of family owned businesses,
- How to find your niche area, and
- The spirit of entrepreneurs who make it despite the tough times.

Kenny is a man who is very passionate about what he does. In his talk, he used simple yet powerful messages to drive his point home. More importantly, he spoke from his heart. People learn from one another in order to progress but we can learn from other species too, especially fishes. Most participants found that they had never been interested in the amazing world of fish until they heard The Fish talk about the correlation relationship between the different types of fishes and the ways of an entrepreneur.

In conclusion, Kenny parted with a quote to all entrepreneurs:

I always remind myself to be myself always. One cannot live a life by putting on a mask and be what others expect of us simply because of their perception of who we are. We live for ourselves, not others. It is tiring to put up an appearance and this cannot be sustained. Imitating other’s lifestyle will not move us ahead in the social arena. If you do not appreciate the taste of wine, do not pretend you do. It is all right to stick to your beer or fruit punch. The harder you try to be like others, the more you are going to lose your true self. The end result is misery. Everyone in this world is unique because there can be only one you in this world. Being you is the most unique thing a person can be.

The NTU EEE Alumni Association is organizing the second Entrepreneurship seminar on 25 June 2004. Look out for the announcement in the Association’s website www.ntu.edu.sg/eee/alumni/.

For participants who want to know more about this talk, you could refer to Kenny Yap’s recently published book entitled “The Makings of an Asian Entrepreneur” by Prentice Hall, ISBN 9812446834, April 2004.