

# Engineered to excel

With its experienced team and spirit of innovation, engineering solutions provider Total Facility Engineering has achieved significant growth in a short span of time

By Khoo Ming Hui, Neeshu Sarah Mathew, Neha Annie Mathew, and Wynn Koh Wei Yun

**C**REATING possibilities together among its various stakeholders is a common goal that has driven Total Facility Engineering (TFE) to excel in the less-than-a-decade that it has been established. As a promising player in Singapore's dynamic engineering industry, TFE provides innovative one-stop solutions for businesses operating in high-tech industries such as semiconductors and chemicals.

Despite being a young company, TFE has achieved significant growth since it was established by Ng Cheng Chuan in 2013. It started with a modest team of six and has since grown to over 200 employees. TFE's revenue climbed from S\$2.9 million in 2013 to S\$50 million in 2019.

TFE has been recognised among the best-performing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Singapore, being among the winners in the 2019 Enterprise 50 Awards.

Its success can be credited to its forward-looking business strategy and commitment to continuously innovate. "What we do today defines our future; we want to be the creator of possibilities and opportunities for our clients," said Mr Ng, who is also the company's director.

## Starting off small

Mr Ng is no newbie when it comes to setting up businesses. Before TFE, he started a successful engineering company in 1996, just a few years after getting his undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering. He has since sold the company.

Growing a business is no easy feat, and like many SMEs, TFE found it challenging to attract talent and build trust with stakeholders during its early years.

To overcome these challenges, Mr Ng, who knows the importance of building business networks, leveraged his industry contacts to source for customers, suppliers and experienced employees to give TFE a leg-up in the engineering industry. "What makes people give you a job is a good prior experience with you," he said.

In its fledgling days, TFE took on mainly small-scale projects such as low value piping installations. Its big break came in 2018 when it secured a project for a global leader in flavour and fragrances.

The project involved converting an existing factory space into a new



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production floor, and allowed TFE to expand its scope of services.

Another defining milestone was the opportunity to work with a world-leader in the manufacture of solar panels. In 2019, TFE was awarded the contract to build a new clean room with engineering systems. The project's complex nature, tight schedule, logistical and manpower challenges made it exceptionally challenging. Nevertheless, TFE completed it within six months, one week ahead of schedule.

The company's efforts to gain diverse project experience has enabled it to make a name for itself as a main contractor. Today, it caters to a wide spectrum of industries, ranging from semiconductors to manufacturing plants. TFE's key services include the design and construction of clean rooms and the implementation of engineering systems.

## Embracing continuous innovation

TFE is always looking out for opportunities to leverage the power of innovation to deliver more value to its clients.

One such example is an inventory management tool to help clients achieve efficient procurement of materials and gain better control over their inventory management cycles.

This tool also enables TFE to analyse the inventory schedules of its clients, allowing it to advise clients how to prevent any potential shortages while reaping the cost-saving benefits



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of a lean inventory.

In another instance, TFE noticed that PVC pipes used by previous contractors were not ideal for long-term use as the material was prone to leaks and were brittle.

To overcome this issue, the company introduced a design that involved the pre-fabrication of a more durable stainless steel pipe for the assembly. The design has a smaller footprint, is more compact and helps to save space.

## Nurturing employees and growth

To attract and retain talent in today's competitive labour market, TFE makes strategic investments in employee development. This includes sending employees for regular training and sponsoring those who want to pursue tertiary education in relevant fields.

Recognising that micro-management does not sit well with today's millennial employees, Mr Ng believes in giving them the autonomy to exer-

cise discretion in projects. As he put it: "If employees are ready to take on challenges, we are ready to give them the opportunity to challenge themselves."

In doing so, TFE seeks to nurture the personal and professional development of its employees.

To solidify its position as an engineering solutions provider, TFE has set its sights on expanding locally and globally. On the local front, the company plans to diversify its revenue streams by expanding its range of services and clientele.

As for venturing overseas, Mr Ng cited Malaysia and Vietnam as attractive destinations due to the increasing demand for engineering solutions from the buoyant high-tech industries in both countries.

Mr Ng said his formula for success is: "You have to be persistent and it is only a matter of time before success finds you."

Indeed, with his tenacity to never give up and to strive for excellence, he has put TFE on the path to a brighter future.



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