

ENTERPRISE 50

Search and deploy

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DURING the pandemic, safe distancing ambassadors (SDAs) spread out across Singapore to ensure that Covid guidelines were being followed – and behind many of these ubiquitous lanyard-wearing agents was local firm MCI Outsourcing.

The company secured a S\$6 million project from Enterprise Singapore to deploy SDAs, followed by another contract with the Singapore Food Agency for nearly 1,000 SDAs.

MCI Outsourcing is one of three companies under MCI Investment Holding, alongside MCI Career Services and MCI Consulting Services. As Singapore now emerges from the pandemic, the group is reviving its overseas ambitions, including expansion plans in China.

Apart from acquiring a recruitment agency in Qingdao, MCI Group intends to set up more local offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, said Ryan Ng, chief executive officer of MCI Career Services and MCI Outsourcing.

Within China, the group will focus both on meeting domestic demand and sending manpower abroad, with new operations to be set up by early 2024, he added.

An unexpected start

MCI's founder and group chairman, Ong Boon Huat, had not always intended to run his own business. From 1992 to 1995, he was a sales executive in a multinational manufacturing company. But after returning from a fortnight of medical leave, he found that his major sales accounts had been reassigned to others.

Ong, then 29, decided to become his own boss. He set up his first company, Sogo – an acronym for “small organisation, great output” – which he later sold.

After a few business ventures in



From far left: Ryan Ng, chief executive officer of MCI Career Services and MCI Outsourcing; Ong Boon Huat, chairman of MCI Investment Holding; Jo Ong, regional director of MCI Investment Holding; and Eunice Tan, business development manager of MCI Career Services.

PHOTO: MCI GROUP

other fields, he started recruitment firm MCI Career Services in 2007. This time, the acronym stood for “making companies interesting”.

From six employees at the start, MCI Career Services has grown to a staff strength of 90. Ong later founded MCI Consulting Services in 2013 and MCI Outsourcing in 2016.

At the Enterprise 50 Awards 2021, MCI Career Services was a second-time winner, while MCI Outsourcing won for the first time.

MCI Outsourcing provides a third-party solution for its clients' staffing and human resource management needs. It has more than 2,500 staff who are directly deployed to clients' premises.

Revenue has grown almost tenfold since the company was founded, from S\$2.8 million in 2016 to S\$27.3 million in 2021. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, profits grew 20 per cent each year.

Ong believes in nurturing talent and encouraging innovation. Experienced employees are encouraged to closely guide new hires, to ensure a smooth transition into the company. Regular feedback sessions ensure that employees' voices are respected and that the group

improves collectively.

Ong added: “Benefits such as overseas expenses and extended holiday leave not only serve as a motivation to work harder but are to encourage the employees to go see what the world offers.”

Heading overseas

The MCI Group itself began venturing overseas in 2009, with a partnership agreement in India. In the following decade, it expanded into Bangladesh, mainland China, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Taiwan.

These partnerships serve mainly as channels for bringing foreign talent to Singapore, though workers are also recruited for other destinations such as Australia and Japan.

Closer to home, MCI Group set up MCI Career Agensi Pekerjaan in Malaysia in 2021. There, the aim is to both serve the domestic market and recruit Malaysian talent who can be sent abroad.

MCI Group itself intends to shift some of its Singapore operations to Malaysia this year, as it can hire sales consultants and payroll staff there at a significantly lower cost.

The group has also set up TCF Global Placement India, which is

expected to be fully operational by early 2024. This unit will focus on the information technology industry, recruiting talent from India for various countries.

With its steady revenue and scalable operations, MCI Group has been exploring ways to raise funds for further expansion. The aim is to go further in markets such as China, India, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

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Celebrating Singapore's
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This series is part of the Enterprise 50 Educational Project between the E50 partners and the NUS Business School. MCI Outsourcing was among the winners in 2021. The annual E50 ranking is co-organised by The Business Times and KPMG, sponsored by OCBC Bank, and supported by Enterprise Singapore, Singapore Exchange and Singapore Business Federation.