

ENTERPRISE 50

Brewing success: How three brothers turned Brewerkz Group's fortunes around

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IN 2024, Brewerkz won an Enterprise 50 award, putting it among Singapore's local enterprises recognised for their innovation and grit.

It was definitely a turnaround from just a few years before, when the food and beverage group was contemplating closure.

Founded in 1997 as Singapore's first craft brewery, Brewerkz started out as an American-style sports bar serving burgers, ribs and beer.

But by 2020, amid tough competition, changing consumer preferences and declining business, the company was struggling to stay afloat.

"It was like a falling knife," recalled Tan Wee Tuck, managing director of the Brewerkz Group. "We had two options – to catch it and bleed but somehow turn it around, or sell the entire business."

He and his two brothers had bought over Brewerkz just a few years before. Believing the brand could be invigorated with a revamp, the brothers reinvested in it to give it another shot.

"We felt that it was a risk worth taking, given our combined expertise and experience. Looking back, we are so glad we made that choice," said Tan.



From far left: Brothers Tan Wee Tuck, Wee Lee and Wee Han in a photo from 2020, not long after they bought over Brewerkz.
PHOTO: BREWERKZ

He has a corporate background in business management and finance, having held C-level positions in large corporations across industries and geographies.

His two brothers were previously serial entrepreneurs in the F&B industry: Tan Wee Han, who was Brewerkz CEO until he retired in 2025, and Tan Wee Lee, managing director of Crystal Wines.

Today, the Brewerkz Group runs 12 restaurants and wine retail locations across the island, owning

brands such as Mexican restaurant Cafe Iguana and Japanese izakaya Shunjuu.

The group's business units started out as independent F&B ventures owned by the brothers.

Tan Wee Tuck noted that the small size of those individual operations and the lack of coordination resulted in inconsistent business strategies and missed opportunities for synergy.

External stakeholders also viewed these fragmented busi-

nesses less favourably, which made it challenging to secure financing or government subsidies.

Recognising the need for consolidation, he united them under the Brewerkz Group umbrella.

"It's more professional, and governance becomes a lot more straightforward since employees know exactly who they are working for," he said.

"The consolidated structure also makes it easier for us to get government grants and bank loans.

They don't have to see 10 separate small companies. They see just one big group."

But in doing this, he needed to strike a balance between maintaining a strong governance structure and agility.

Within the group, ideas were openly discussed, and internal stakeholders evaluated the various viewpoints presented, bypassing long reports and the need to get through layers of approval.

"We focus on what's practical versus what's performative. What's more important is getting the ideas across and deciding on their commercial viability."

Going green

Sustainability has been a key focus at Brewerkz. A key project that received much attention was NEW-Brew, a beer brewed using NEWater, in collaboration with national water agency PUB.

But other green initiatives have posed challenges. Food waste from restaurants, for instance, is generally non-recyclable due to contaminants such as salt and oil.

Decarbonisation of its stores and restaurants has also been difficult because, as tenants, they had no control over how the building's electricity was generated.

"Developing green products or using environmentally friendly components is expensive," noted Tan Wee Tuck.

"Customers are also not willing to pay a significant premium for a green product over a regular one. That's why it tends to come at the expense of our profits."

Nonetheless, Brewerkz strives

to do its part, he added: "Sometimes, it is more than just dollars and cents, and we try our best to be sustainable where possible."

Looking ahead

The vision for the Brewerkz Group is to keep creating and delivering high-quality concepts with strong storytelling and great hospitality.

"We will continuously find ways to innovate and improve, be it in our processes or product offerings," said Tan Wee Tuck.

He credited the company's success to the efforts of its staff.

"Excellent hospitality demands constant attention, from the big things to the smallest of details. Without our entire team running alongside us, it would have been impossible for us to have turned around the business."

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