



CITUS GROUP OF COMPANIES

Constructing A LEGACY

Citus Trading Pte Ltd



Citus Trading Pte Ltd (Citus) is the story of one man's determination and the triumph of principles over tremendous odds. The business was established in 1983, as a modest one-man operation, to supply building materials to Singapore's construction industry. Fast-forward 31 years and the company has been recognised as one of Singapore's 50 fastest-growing companies. Behind this impressive story of success lies John Cheng, founder of Citus

and true visionary. With unrelenting resilience and foresight, John grew his humble trade into the formidable and respected business that it is today. His is a tale of a man who turned glimpsed opportunities into the building of a dream.

Today, the business consists of three divisions - Citus Trading Pte Ltd, Citus Investments Pte Ltd and Citus Energy Pte Ltd - and spans various industries, including energy and agricultural

commodities, bulk materials and timber. The group recently registered a turnover exceeding half a billion US dollars, matching that of many SMEs listed on the Singapore stock exchange; a feat that John could hardly have imagined 30 years earlier. The company continues to look to a bright future with its ambitious plans for growth. But to truly appreciate Citus' current success, one needs to first look at its past.

John (left), together with a business associate, inspecting ethanol store tanks in Taiwan



Upon graduating from the Keller School of Management with a Masters of Business Administration (MBA), John began working with Phatra Thanakit Finance & Investment Co Ltd in Thailand. At this early stage in his career, he moved to Singapore, where he joined Bangkok Bank Singapore in the Credit Marketing Department. It was here that John gained much of his insights into trade finance, international trade and shipping laws. Unbeknown to him then, his experience with the bank would prove invaluable in the building of a business that still reflects much of John's early learnings. Today he still retains strong ties with the bank, which remains Citus' unfailing supporter.

It is this ability to foster long-term relationships with business partners and the genuine concern for their interests that earned John the trustworthy reputation on which Citus was built. It is this reputation that he continues to take the most pride in, in spite of all the company's other achievements. "In the last three decades of business, we have always delivered on our word," he reflects. His guiding principle has remained throughout the years: to deliver win-win results for clients and shareholders at all times. In the face of great success, John remains humble and maintains a deep appreciation for the support the business has received along the way from its partners, associates and bankers. These ideals of integrity, trust and gratitude have been the pillars of Citus over the years.



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However, principles could only take the business so far. It was this, combined with an unrelenting perseverance, that would eventually see Citus through its many challenges. The company proved its resilience time and again in its formative years, and throughout its decades of growth. Starting at a desk in John's home office, the company had few resources to work with. When the Siam Cement Group became a client of Citus, the young company possessed capital of only S\$20,000.

However, this was by no means discouraging to the fledgling corporation. The constraints of limited manpower and cash flow pushed the company's small but vibrant team to adapt and to learn to think on their feet, a skill that remains one of the company's key strengths today.

Much like the story of Singapore as a small but resilient nation that fought its way to the top, John transformed Citus from a small start-up to the company it is today. Foresight and the invaluable support of its partners and team have enabled the business to adapt quickly to rapidly changing economic environments over the years. And with a new generation that has been nurtured under the leadership of John Cheng, the future of Citus remains in good hands. ■



The Citus family at the JP Morgan Corporate Challenge