

# Faces of innovation

**I**N THE previous three articles in this series, we touched on a range of topics such as ideas, innovation, value, execution, team work, markets, and wealth creation. Though we may seek new ideas in the technologies being created, the real test always lies in mastering the human side of story.

So how about the local scene in Singapore with its pool of intellectuals on the one hand and those who just have this burning desire for enterprise on the other?

We can ask many more questions, pertinent ones. We keep all that on the back burner for now to return to them in due course.

Today, let us put a few faces and names to the enterprise scene in Singapore.

With the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), polytechnics and others stirring the pot of innovation, we certainly are spoilt for choice for the enterprise soup.

It can range from extreme technologies for data security (TenCube from NUS), energy, water, and waste management (Nano Sun from NTU, WaterOAM from NUS), healthcare (EndoMaster from NTU) and information and communications technology or ICT (Zopim from NUS),

to financial services, also called fintech (Milaap from NUS, Banker-bay Technologies from NTU). Even the author of this article has been involved in enterprise activities in ICT, having founded startups such as Fatte Telecom and YuViTime from NUS.

The list of companies founded by those affiliated with Singapore institutions in one way or another is long. The institutions themselves are well aware of technology creation, and its potential for value creation, happening in their backyards.

The mechanisms to harness this elusive value require extreme execution skills and we witness the formation of enterprise units within each institution and beyond in this shining red dot. In academic lingo, it is called 'translational research'.

E-commerce websites such as Carousell, Gumtree, and Qoo10 are Singapore household names. They use the cloud to make it easier to buy and sell anything under the sun and moon.

ST Engineering's Air+ Smart Mask is an innovation invented for the local environment and then exported globally. This is human ingenuity and creativity, essential to success in the marketplace.



Computer gaming, as a part of the entertainment industry, is larger than music. Razer, a local start-up now head-quartered in San Francisco, creates products focused on the gaming industry.

Mobile apps are popular for anything and everything. Chope, with origins in Singlish, says it all. Chope facilitates restaurant reservations in Singapore. If there are eBay like companies, then there must also be Uber-like companies. GoGoVan is an app to link users with logistics vehicle drivers for same day on-demand delivery.

So where do we go and get the next idea? Is it all done already?

The answers are simple.

No, not everything is done; it will never be. Look around yourself and observe the people. They are always sharing their problems with you. Can you come up with a solution that someone will pay for? Of course, can! The laws of economics are simple.

Demand and supply always need to be matched. Buying and selling will go on forever. People pay for security, physical as well as digital.

All this and much more needs to be done efficiently. The Internet does all that. Smart devices do that. Online services do too. You make 10 cents on every dollar you help someone save. Can you?

Of the many questions that one

can ask, the key ones are what, why, how, when, and where. The first three you need to answer for yourself. When and where have been answered for you.

To recap, there ain't no place better than home when it comes to realising dreams and living them among people you call your own. The time is NOW!

The question that I pose to you then is: Will you be seeing the face of an entrepreneur next time you look in the mirror?

You don't have to be the Stephen Curry of the game, being Klay Thompson is great too. The ultimate moral of the story: you are the author of your own story, so write one!

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