



Accepting awards yesterday for their companies are (from left) Mr Vincent Lim, operations manager of BreadTalk Group's Toast Box, Mr Poh, Dr Cheng and Ms Hoan. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

## Small, medium-sized...but winners all

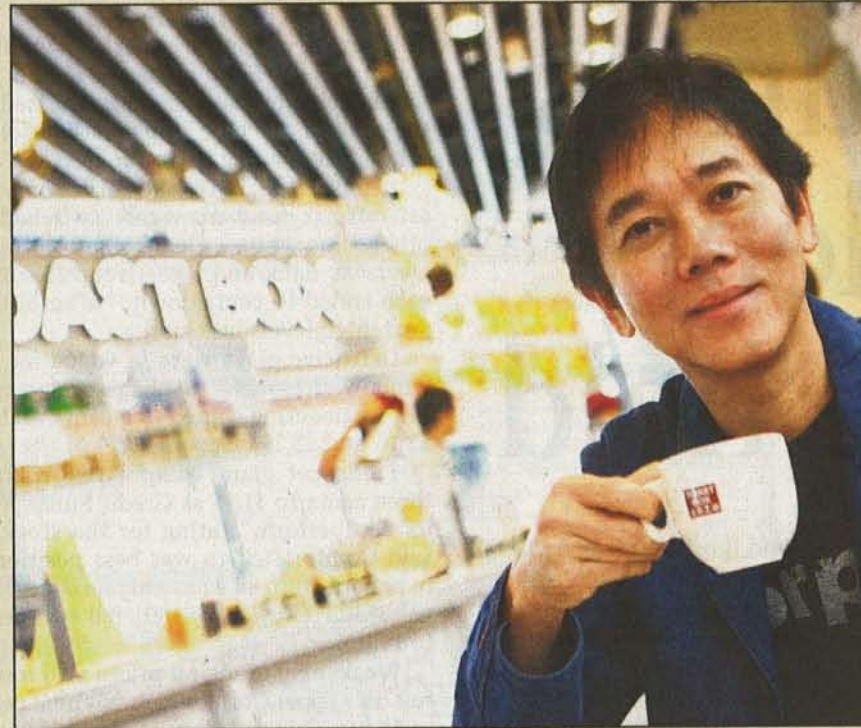
THE Singapore Prestige Brand Award, now in its 8th year, honours home-grown brands with excellent branding strategies.

This year's overall winners are:

- **Promising Brands:** Toast Box, a coffee-toast chain by BreadTalk Group
- **Established Brands:** Xpress Holdings, a printing services supplier
- **Heritage Brands & Hall of Fame:**

Thomson Medical Centre, a health-care provider

- **CitiBusiness Regional Brands:** Best World Lifestyle, a direct seller of lifestyle products
- **Most Popular Brand:** Bee Cheng Hiang, a barbecued meat (bak kwa) supplier
- **Special Merit:** Five government agencies/NGOs



Mr George Quek is founder and chairman of bakery chain BreadTalk. The group's subsidiary Toast Box won in the Promising Brands category. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

# Firms should 'draw on trust in S'pore brand'

## Minister urges local companies to build on edge with govt support

BY SYLVIA PAIK

HOME-GROWN brands have been urged to draw on the deep well of trust that exists around the world in the Singapore brand as these firms expand abroad.

Mrs Lim Hwee Hua, Minister in Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Finance and Transport, said the country should produce more global brands.

She said global investors are more willing to invest in Singapore firms as they trust the Government's policies.

"Where relevant, ride on your Singapore heritage, not just in form but also in

substance, so as to establish trust as early as possible."

Mrs Lim was speaking as the guest of honour at the Singapore Prestige Brand Award 2009 ceremony at the Ritz-Carlton Millennia yesterday evening.

She said Singapore companies will emerge from the recent recession with an opportunity to grow and expand their brands overseas - with help from the Government's pro-enterprise policies and branding support programmes.

The awards, organised by the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (Asme) and Chinese newspaper Lianhe Zaobao, honour home-grown firms with successful branding strategies.

Mrs Lim said: "Good brands will stand the test of time." Coca-Cola and Pepsi are examples of brands which have withstood the test of many economic cycles.

She highlighted a wide range of gov-

ernment support for branding and design through Spring and IE Singapore, like the "BrandPact programme" - an industry branding programme, and "Get Singapore" - a collective brand which acts as a focused marketing platform to showcase well-designed, high-quality Singapore brands both here and abroad.

Mrs Lim said it is critical for small and medium-sized enterprises to adapt to a rapidly changing global landscape. "We would like to see more Singapore brands emerge as global players and excel in the international arena.

"The recent Apec leaders and ministerial meetings held in Singapore have helped to open more doors to new markets for your products and services. Companies should also look at the upcoming Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games as a great opportunity to expand your brands overseas."

A total of 52 companies were given ac-

colades for their branding efforts at the award presentation ceremony yesterday.

Chairman George Quek of BreadTalk Group, which owns the Toast Box chain, said he hoped to attract customers with the brand name "Toast Box", as "to toast" means "to celebrate".

"So I hope that people can come to my outlets together with their friends to chit-chat and celebrate with a toast."

He said that his staff was vital to the firm's success. "The most important thing is making sure my staff feel valued, so that they put their heart and soul into working together to achieve our clearly set target of making Toast Box an internationally recognised name in the global market."

Best World Lifestyle's chief executive officer Dora Hoan said: "Winning this award really uplifts our standing in this industry and differentiates ourselves from our competitors. Our brand promise is to help our customers live life at its best."

Thomson Medical Centre executive chairman Cheng Wei Chen said: "Our win year after year gave us nationwide recognition and had even attracted the attention of the region."

Mr Poh Eng Seng, CEO of Xpress Holdings, said his brand is strong as it has been around for 30 years and is widely recognised as a one-stop shop for financial printing services.

sylvia@sph.com.sg

# Keppel O&M replenishes order book

BY ESTHER TEO

TWO units of Keppel Offshore & Marine (Keppel O&M) have clinched a series of deals totalling \$160 million in the last quarter of this year to end 2009 on a high note.

The contracts secured by Keppel Shipyard and Keppel FELS include converting a floating production, storage and offloading vessel from Emas Offshore Construction and Production and the life extension of a deepwater semi-submersible rig.

Keppel Shipyard has secured a job to complete the NorCE Endeavour, a derrick lay barge. It will install various equipment, furnish a new accommodation block and undertake painting.

The recent deals mean Keppel Offshore & Marine has secured contracts totalling \$1.5 billion this year.

Keppel Offshore & Marine chief executive Tong Chong Heong said the new contracts have helped to replenish the company's order book as it ends a peak year of deliveries.

High oil prices allowed the offshore industry to boom in the past few years but the good times have fallen away this year with the weakening global economy and plunging crude prices.

In May, Keppel Singmarine, the specialised shipbuilding arm of Keppel Offshore & Marine, was told to end the contract for a multi-purpose vessel for laying pipes and lifting heavy equipment by the ship's Romanian owner.

The owner had difficulty securing project financing as a result of the tight credit situation, said parent company Keppel Corp.

The net order book had been slowly shrinking, with the quiet offshore and marine market providing no significant new contracts in the third quarter.

However, Keppel Corp posted a 17.1 per cent rise in third-quarter net profit to \$319.6 million from \$272.9 million a year ago.

Higher margins from offshore and marine and improved gains from property and infrastructure offset flat growth in investments.

But revenue fell 5.5 per cent to \$3.04 billion due to lower sales by the offshore and marine and infrastructure units.

Keppel Corp shares fell nine cents to \$8.20 yesterday.