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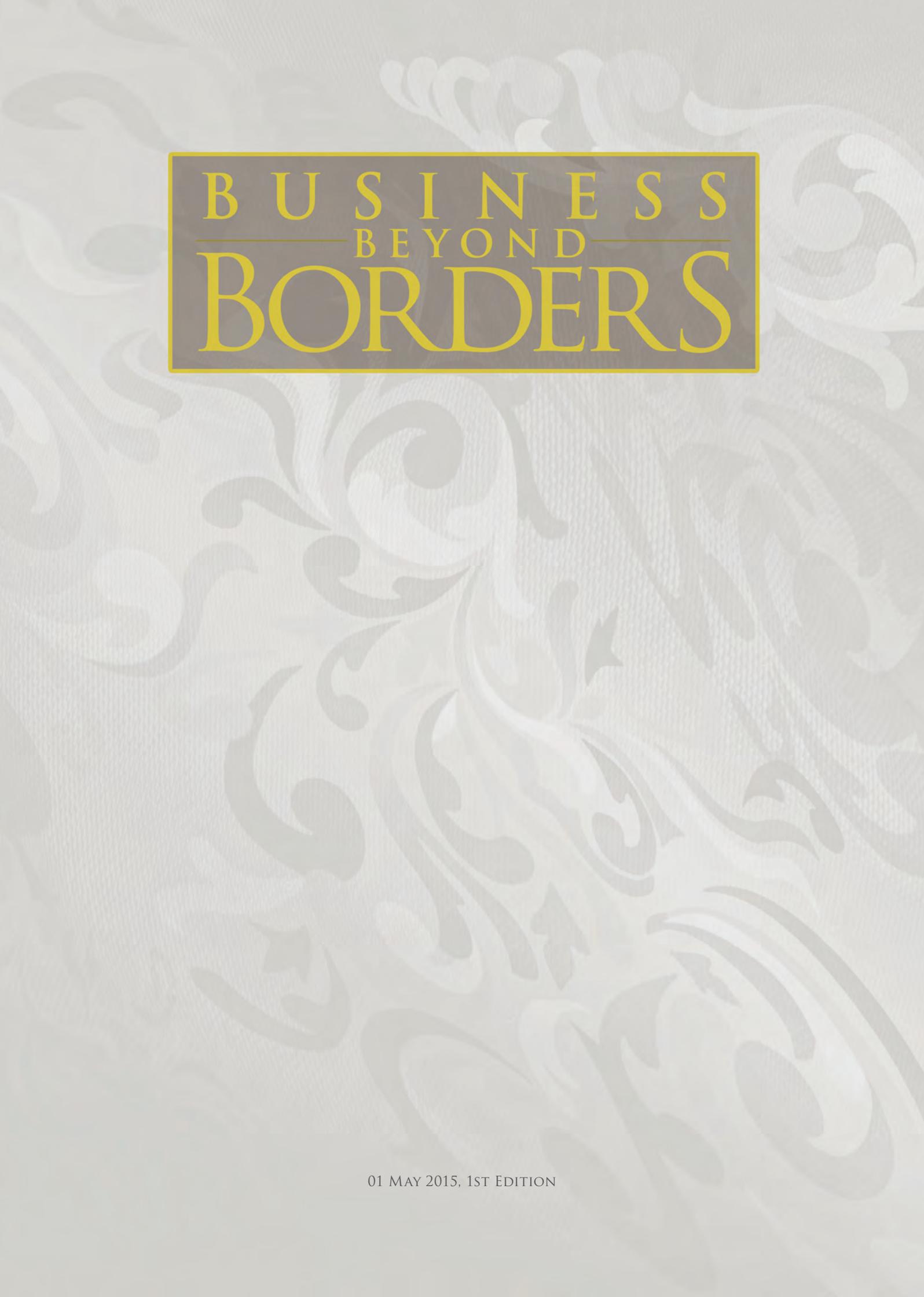
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BUSINESS
BEYOND
BORDERS

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BUSINESS BEYOND BORDERS:

INSPIRING STORIES OF FILIPINO COMPANIES IN ASEAN

10 THINGS THEIR STORIES TELL US

1 THERE IS GROWTH IN ASEAN

Filipino companies that have placed their bets on ASEAN, now reap the fruits of their foresight and courage. Jollibee, which began its international venture in Brunei in 1987 is now Asia's second biggest quick service restaurant. Aside from its over 2,000 local restaurants, it has 50 stores in Viet Nam, 12 in Brunei, 2 each in Singapore and Cambodia, and 402 in China, an ASEAN dialogue partner.

Liwayway Marketing Corporation, Universal Robina Corporation (URC) and International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI) invested facilities in ASEAN and enjoy growth. Liwayway has four manufacturing plants in the Philippines, four in Viet Nam, and one each in Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, and Cambodia. URC is present in all 10 ASEAN countries except Brunei. ICTSI operates seven ports in the Philippines, two ports in Indonesia, and one port in Brunei.

2 SMEs CAN DO IT!

SMEs only need a little push to maximize the opportunities that come their way. In 2012, Manila Catering got a chance to present its services to one of Asia's leading budget airline companies to provide in-flight catering service. It aced the food presentation and clinched the deal! Today, it provides the in-flight hot meals of three (3) airline companies that ply regional routes from the Philippines.

With a Php5,000 grant from the government, 15 locals from Bohol started weaving raffia and formed the Tubigon Loomweavers Multipurpose Cooperative (TLMPC). They now employ over 100 loomweavers and supply woven products to balikbayan stores, local resorts, and exporters from Manila and Cebu.

Two social enterprises, Human Nature and GREAT Women Brand, take pride in promoting local products as they successfully make inroads to ASEAN markets. Both have proven that SMEs can profit and sustain their businesses while empowering women and Filipino communities.

3 ASEAN SUPPLY CHAIN HELPS LOWER BUSINESS COSTS

The Philippines' ASEAN supply chain provides a viable platform for businessmen to take advantage of cheaper raw materials and supplies. Mr. Bernie Liu, CEO of clothing company Golden ABC, says that the 'circular movement of importing and exporting goods within ASEAN gives export clients the advantage of lower/preferential duty rates.'

HanCole, a global trading company, takes advantage of ASEAN free trade agreements. Their coconut-based products are locally sourced while the rest of their products come from other countries in the region such as Malaysia for palm based products; Indonesia for soap noodles and fatty acids; and, Thailand for fatty alcohols and palm fatty acid distillates.

4 FILIPINO PROFESSIONALS ARE WORLD CLASS

There is increased global recognition and demand for great Filipino talents and professionals. Two Information Technology (IT) companies - Fountainhead Technologies and Pointwest - show clients worldwide that Filipino IT professionals are some of the brightest and most reliable when it comes to information technology solutions.

EON, awarded as Southeast Asia's Consultancy of the Year in 2014, proves to the global PR industry that Filipinos are as brilliant public relations practitioners as those from multinational consultancy firms. GMA Worldwide, Inc., on the other hand, generates appreciation for Filipino artists through the GMA drama programs, game shows, and public affairs footages they sell in ASEAN, West Africa, and North America.



5 FILIPINOS OVERSEAS ARE GREAT TARGET MARKETS

Pursuit for new markets should never cease. Some companies did this by crossing borders and catering to Filipinos overseas. In 1985, LBC Express started to service the needs of Filipino migrants who wanted to send money back home. Splash, recognizing demand from OFWs, exported their products in 1993 through dealers in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. Likewise, Mama Sita's flavors have found their way abroad due to Filipinos longing for a taste of home.

6 TECHNOLOGY AND R&D ARE CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Companies attested to the role of technology and research and development in their businesses. KLT Fruits, an exporter of fruit purees and juices, proudly uses aseptic processing technology which makes it possible to sterilize fruit juices at a very short time without compromising the fruits' taste, color, texture, and nutrients. This process also allows them to keep their products for as long as 14 months without refrigeration, saving them power and shipping costs. Vitarich Inc., an animal feeds company, maintains its own research institute to explore and develop products that meet the unique needs of their markets.

7 ASEAN MEANS A WIDER MARKET

Growth means exploring new markets, including ASEAN. "The new age of sales is no longer confined within one country, it is global," says John Lee, President of Nito Seiki, an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) for vehicles. LBC Express, Vitarich and ICTSI look forward to tapping the 600-million ASEAN market - a huge opportunity for bigger business.

8 GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR SMES

Government programs are readily accessible to provide assistance to SMEs that encounter several challenges in various stages of growth. Tubigon Loomweavers Multipurpose Cooperative has benefitted from free skills training, lot donation, and DTI's Shared Services Facility which lent them 19 new metal handlooms for their new facility. Some of Nito Seiki's largest export orders came when it joined government-organized business missions and expos for potential buyers overseas.

9 NEVER LOSE HOPE

Each of the 20 companies encountered roadblocks in their journeys, but they did not give up. They rose above the challenges and found innovative solutions to their problems. They persevered, worked smart and relied on the resolute and steadfast Filipino spirit.

10 GO GLOBAL AND LOCAL

Companies need to understand the impact of economic integration on their businesses, explore possibilities for partnerships, new clients, and niche markets, and level up efforts to improve quality and meet international standards. However, Filipino companies uphold Filipino values, remain proud of Filipino products, and work towards global recognition.

As JFC Fonder and Chairman Tony Tan Caktiong says, "Believe in the strength of your products. Trust that it can go places and, through it, bring recognition to your fellowmen."

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INTRODUCTION



Business Beyond Borders is a collection of stories of 20 Filipino companies that have endured and succeeded in rising above the challenges of doing business here and abroad. This initial publication resonates with the vision, spirit, and passion of Filipino entrepreneurs and shines a light on their character, talents and skills.

Every company's journey is unique. Each journey viewed from a distinct perspective and insights that motivate the desire to succeed. All stories are testament to the resiliency, determination, and zeal of Filipino entrepreneurs – whether large, medium, small, or micro – proving that adversity only stimulates creativity and innovation.

Their journey continues.
Read their stories and be inspired.



the bee that keeps on churning jolly good food

Clad in red and white, a black bowtie and a white hat, Jollibee's cheerful and ever smiling bee is one of the most adored mascots in the Philippines and among Filipinos abroad.

The charming bee represents the characteristics of a typical working Filipino: optimistic, diligent, and jolly amid 'being busy.' As a symbol of Jollibee Foods Corporation (JFC), the mascot emulates the company's hardworking and happy employees.

Since its incorporation in 1978, JFC continues to provide good food for Filipinos, Asians, and other nationals. It is ready to serve everyone's favorite chicken, burgers, pizzas, pasta, cakes, congee, Chinese food, and hotpot dishes.

ICE CREAM PARLOR

JFC started as an ice cream parlor that was later converted into a burger restaurant to satisfy the demand for sandwiches and hot meals.

While in college, JFC Founder and Chairman Tony Tan Caktiong toured the facilities of Magnolia, where he saw a franchising advertisement for an ice cream parlor. He immediately decided to sign up for a franchise and the rest is history.

Jollibee Foods Corporation is now one of the leading companies in the quick service restaurant (QSR) industry. As of December 2014, JFC has 2,913 stores, 612 of which are located in China, United States, Middle East, and other ASEAN countries. JFC also has significant stakes in 150

restaurants abroad through partnerships with foreign restaurant chains such as Highlands Coffee, Pho24, 12 Sabu, and Dunkin Donuts in China.

"Dream big and put your dreams into action. When you believe in your dreams, coupled with perseverance and dedication, they will come true," advises Mr. Tan Caktiong to budding entrepreneurs.

FLAVORS AND TASTES

JFC proudly offers localized versions of favorite dishes around the world. Its spaghetti is sweet, its burger patties are uniquely Filipino in taste, its grilled chicken is marinated "Filipino" style, and its stir-fried noodles are either of the bihon or canton variety. It is no wonder then that Filipinos always look for Jollibee whether they are at home or abroad.



“Dream big and put your dreams into action. When you believe in your dreams, coupled with perseverance and dedication, they will come true.”

In doing business overseas, the fast food giant recognizes the need to cater to the locals’ tastes by either incorporating local flavors and favorites into the menu, or simply serving preferred local cuisine.

Years ago, JFC tried to introduce Jollibee and Filipino flavors in China but realized that the better strategy was to focus on restaurant acquisition. This move enabled them to grow their business without creating or experimenting on recipes that would meet the locals’ preferences. JFC now has 402 stores in China under the brands: Yonghe King, Hong Zhuang Yuan and San Pin Wang.

ASEAN SUPPLY CHAIN

JFC’s first overseas restaurant was established in Brunei in 1987. Since then, it has strengthened its presence in ASEAN with restaurants in Viet Nam, Brunei, Singapore, Indonesia, and Cambodia. It has plans to venture in Malaysia.

Through the ASEAN supply chain network, JFC is able to source its ingredients from the Philippines’ ASEAN neighbors at less cost due to zero tariff. In fact, their coffee is sourced from Viet Nam while some of their spices come from Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

TOWARDS GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

JFC’s vision is to become one of the leading QSR companies in the world, inspired by Mr. Tan Caktiong’s aphorism: “Believe in the strength of your products. Trust that it can go places and, through it, bring recognition to your fellowmen.”

The road to global leadership for Jollibee Foods Corporation has begun....it is now Asia’s second biggest QSR company.



FAST FACTS	
<i>Company</i>	Jollibee Foods Corporation
<i>Head Office</i>	Pasig City, Manila, Philippines
<i>Business</i>	Quick service restaurant
<i>Owned Brands</i>	Jollibee, Mang Inasal, Chowking, Greenwich, Red Ribbon, Burger King, Yonghe King, Hong Zhuang Yuan, San Pin Wang
<i>Partial stake through joint venture:</i>	Highlands Coffee, Pho 24, 12 Sabu, Dunkin Donuts (China)
<i>ASEAN Presence</i>	Philippines, China, Viet Nam, Brunei, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia (joint venture), Cambodia (joint venture)
<i>Website</i>	http://www.jollibee.com.ph

when business is as **sweet** as **fruits**

As a tropical archipelago, the Philippines prides itself on growing numerous fruit varieties like mango, dalandan, pineapple, guava, guyabano (soursop), calamansi, banana, and papaya.

Recognizing the opportunities from an abundance of tropical fruits, siblings Dr. Michael and Joseph Lao, experts in food science, established KLT Fruits in 1984; manufacturing tropical fruit purees, concentrates, jams and preserves for the overseas market.

As a pioneer in producing fruit purees, concentrates, pastes and jams, KLT Fruits introduced a novel way of producing fruit product variants; at the same time, contributing to and sustaining the growth of the agricultural sector.

KLT Fruits exports their products to major food and beverage companies in the United States, Europe, China, Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore.

FAST FACTS	
<i>Company</i>	KLT Fruits
<i>Manufacturing Plant</i>	First Cavite Industrial Estate, Dasmariñas, Cavite
<i>Products</i>	Fruit purees, concentrates, and pastes, jams
<i>No. of Employees</i>	400
<i>ASEAN Market</i>	Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia ASEAN dialogue partners including China, Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand
<i>Other International Markets</i>	United States, Europe
<i>Website</i>	http://www.kltfruits.com

SUPPLY CHAIN

KLT Fruits processes 200 tons of fruits daily to produce thousands of drums of purees and concentrates. To achieve this output, the company partners with small and large farmer groups across the Philippines for its requirements. The company recognizes the role of farmers in its operations.

“A strong backward supply chain is important to us. We take care of our farmers and partner with them. We organize farmers’ cooperatives, give them training for free, and we teach them new technology - from planting to harvesting,” says Dr. Michael Lao, KLT Fruits Executive Vice President.

“Building our relationships with the farmers, and small industry players is our way of helping strengthen the industry’s backward and forward supply chain integration,” adds Dr. Lao. KLT Fruits supplies to smaller players as well, and accommodates orders for as low as 5 to 10 drums.

INTRODUCING REVOLUTIONARY TECHNOLOGY

Technology has always been a critical driver of KLT Fruits’ success. In 1988, KLT Fruits introduced the aseptic processing technology in the Philippines and in Asia.

Aseptic fruit processing makes it possible to sterilize fruit purees, concentrates, and juices in a very short time without compromising the fruits’ taste, color, texture, and nutrients. This technology protects the products from food spoilers such as molds and yeast, and preserves the natural qualities of fruits. The shelf life of these products could last for as long as 14 months without refrigeration. This technology not only maintains the quality of the products, it also lowers power and shipping costs.

In addition to this, KLT Fruits sources packaging materials from Australia, Japan, and Thailand.

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY

KLT Fruits ensures the high quality of all their products. The company has obtained food safety certifications from ISO and cultural certifications such as Kosher and Halal; their suppliers are also required to comply with the same standards. Good agricultural practices are likewise instilled in their partner-farmers groups such as maintaining clean farm surroundings, proper disposal of waste and the acceptable use of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals.

ZERO TARIFF

The company experienced substantial growth with the lessening of trade barriers within ASEAN and with ASEAN’s dialogue partners. Reduced tariff lowered the cost of importing purees and concentrates from KLT Fruits, a benefit which the

company’s clients valued more over the same products offered by non-ASEAN based companies. Further, KLT Fruits enjoy tariff import holidays being a PEZA-registered company.

With the advent of the AEC, KLT Fruits emphasizes the importance of knowing and leveraging on what the Philippines and its industries can offer and do best.

“There is nothing that compares to the taste of Philippine fruits. Our fruits are some of the best tasting in the world. Let us take advantage of our natural resources and level up the quality of our products,” advises Dr. Lao.

KLT Fruits remains optimistic about the future of its business as it works towards ensuring the sustainability of its production process. For as long as the Philippine agriculture sector produces quality tropical fruits, opportunities for KLT Fruits will remain abundant and sweet.

“Building our relationships with the farmers, and small industry players is our way of helping strengthen the industry’s backward and forward supply chain integration.”



LIWAYWAY: THE TASTE OF SUCCESS IS 'oishi'

Oishi Prawn Crackers and Kirei Yummy Flakes are flagship snack foods of Liwayway Marketing Corporation, a business group whose history dates back to 1946.

Chan Lib, and his wife See Ying, first established Liwayway as a small family business engaged in repacking coffee and starch.

The family-owned company has reached greater heights, owing to its courage to explore beyond its borders.

FAST FACTS	
<i>Company Name</i>	Liwayway Marketing Corp.
<i>Head Office</i>	Pasay City
<i>Some Brands</i>	Oishi Prawn Crackers Marty's Vegetable Chicharon Gourmet Picks Pillows Smart C Fruit Juice Drinks Great Lakes Juices
<i>Business</i>	Snack food manufacturing Beverage manufacturing Corn Milling Cassava starch milling Cassava plant production
<i>Employees</i>	Over 12,000
<i>ASEAN Manufacturing Plants</i>	Manufacturing plants in the Philippines (4), Viet Nam (4), 1 each in Myanmar (1), Thailand (1), Indonesia (1), Cambodia (1) Other Partners: China (15), India (1)
<i>Website</i>	http://oishi.com.ph

BECAUSE LIWAYWAY DARED

In 1974, with almost three decades of experience in trading the company's starch (gawgaw), the owners — the second generation of the Chans — expanded their operations to include snack food manufacturing. The move, driven by the success of Oishi and Kirei, eventually paid off. In fact, Liwayway is now a major player in the Philippine snack food market, with Oishi as a patent brand for all product lines.

When China opened its market in 1993, Liwayway made another bold move and established two snack food plants in Shanghai at a time when almost no one wanted to go there. Back then, Shanghai was quite different from the 'mega city' the world sees today.

But why Shanghai? "May kasabihan sa Chinese: If you can penetrate the Shanghai market, you can succeed in China," explains Liwayway chairman emeritus Carlos Chan in one interview with the Philippine Star.

It seems that the saying is true. Currently, Liwayway operates more than 15 manufacturing plants across China. This achievement garnered the company the Shanghai Famous Brand Award in 2001 and the China Famous Brand Award in 2006, strengthening its brand position in the Chinese market.

Since venturing into China, the Group continues to challenge itself by expanding into markets where only a few, or no, Filipino companies have dared enter. In the succeeding years,



Liwayway established manufacturing plants in Viet Nam (1997), Myanmar (1999), Thailand (2006), Indonesia (2007), Cambodia (2012), and India (2013).

PROS AND CONS

Liwayway attributes its success to having the ‘first mover advantage’ – going international when other markets were just opening up their economies. Back then, costs of competing and barriers to entry were relatively lower.

The company eventually made its way through China, realizing the relatively modest amount of investment it needed to get in. Moreover, the Chinese government provided national infrastructure which created a more conducive environment for foreign investments to thrive.

International success did not come cheap. Aside from incurring investment costs, Liwayway had to deal with several other challenges. The company devoted time and attention to every target market and a core of Filipino expats and officers were deployed to every expansion effort to ensure that nothing was left to chance.

According to Liwayway, the key is to understand the way of doing business in China and navigate your way through it. To them, this meant prioritizing and maintaining personal relationships.

This also meant being more sensitive to local beliefs, practices, and lifestyles of local suppliers, partners, and employees.

Ultimately, maintaining the group’s corporate culture sustains Liwayway’s unique brand in its various overseas operations.

‘EXPAND AND MANAGE RISKS’

ASEAN is an important and huge market for Oishi and the entire Group. Aside from the Philippines, both Viet Nam and Indonesia have a large population count at 90 million and over 200 million, respectively. These markets also have steadily growing incomes.

Liwayway advises Filipino entrepreneurs to diversify and manage their risks by expanding into other markets such as ASEAN – where the sizeable presence of Filipinos are potential brand/product ambassadors and a natural market base of Filipino companies in terms of ready market and, where similarities in culture, weather and time zones are conditions that contribute to the ease of doing business as well.

THE DAWN OF DELICIOUS

“Liwayway” is the Filipino translation of the word ‘dawn’ and conveys the founders’ optimism of a new beginning for the Philippines after World War II. Its brand, “Oishi,” on the other hand, is the Japanese word for ‘delicious.’

As Liwayway soars high in the Philippines and overseas, it continues to bring the promise of a new dawn to more than 12,000 employees, partners, and suppliers, while offering millions of consumers everything “oishi.”

“May kasabihan sa Chinese: If you can penetrate the Shanghai market, you can succeed in China.”

Mama Sita's

mixes & sauces:

A taste of Filipino flavors around the WORLD

“ASEAN is closer and their tastes are closer to ours. We just have to introduce to them our products and teach them to appreciate it.”

They say that the quickest way to a Filipino's heart is through his/her stomach. Generations of cooks in the Philippines know this very well, including Mama Sita, the homemaker and cook whose kitchen offerings have not only delighted her family, but also Filipinos all over the world.

Passionate about cooking and always dreamt of bringing the flavors of the Philippine islands to the world, Teresita “Mama Sita” Reyes, traces her roots in the restaurant business to a young age, when she already knew how to choose the freshest produce and ingredients for every dish. As Mama Sita joined the family business, she led the procurement team of Aristocrat, an iconic Filipino restaurant, which her mother, Engracia Reyes, established.

In the past decades, Mama Sita and her family succeeded in spreading their kitchen secrets through an entrepreneurial venture called Marigold Manufacturing Corporation.

Starting as a cottage industry 34 years ago, Marigold began producing lechon sauce and Filipino food mixes in the Reyes' ancestral home in San Juan, Metro Manila. Today, its products, marketed under the brand Mama Sita's, include oyster sauce, marinades, vinegar, tropical fruit syrups, jams, pastes, sauces, porridge kits, and geli-coolers (samalamig) kits.

Mama Sita's Sinigang sa Sampaloc – a timeless whole-meal soup – contains that tangy sinigang flavor Filipinos love even if they do not use actual tamarinds. Mama Sita's marinades make expert cooks out of newbies when they prepare great Filipino dishes such as adobo, tapa, chicken inasal, and paksiw (ginger-spiced vinegar dish).

THE CULINARY ROUTE TO GLOBALIZATION

Knowing that Filipinos will always long for a taste of home, Marigold has managed to bring its food products into the global market. Using the culinary route, Marigold has successfully followed the Filipino diaspora around the world, conquering new territories and expanding its global footprint.



To date, Marigold produces 77 Mama Sita's food products and variants from natural ingredients, like real tamarind or fresh guava for its sinigang mix and 100% Authentic Tablea Cacao for its champorado. Through the years, Mama Sita's products enjoy strong domestic and overseas demand in the Philippines, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, Middle East, the United States, Canada, Europe, and Pakistan. Their products are found along with other Filipino food products in various supermarket chains, sari-sari stores, and wet markets.

To meet the growing demand, Mama Sita's brands are now produced at a modern facility in Pasig City yielding about 60,000 cases of products every month for its domestic and international consumers.

DOING BUSINESS IN ASEAN

Marigold believes that Filipino food products have the potential to gain headway within ASEAN but Filipino companies must be able to address the challenges of the export business - such as high transport costs and volatile foreign exchange rates.

The company works around an efficient and cost-effective procurement system for its raw materials. While most of its inputs come from well-chosen local producers, the company

also purchases raw materials from its ASEAN neighbors like Indonesia for its bottles, and Malaysia which offers a wide assortment of choices. Considering their geographical locations, ASEAN countries offer cheaper raw materials or ingredients compared to other markets in the world. Tariffs for ASEAN-made products have steadily decreased, further lowering costs.

Simon Rodrigo A. Pascual, Mama Sita's export sales manager, sees opportunities for new markets given the forthcoming economic integration. "ASEAN is closer and their tastes are closer to ours. We just have to introduce to them our products and teach them to appreciate it," says Mr. Pascual. It helps that the people of ASEAN share cultural roots, which means having certain similarities in their tastes.

Marketing support, of course, is critical. "When we held a food festival in Singapore, we were able to establish the confidence of Singaporean importers about our products," says Mr. Pascual.

Indeed, Mama Sita's Mixes and Sauces have come a long way. Thanks to the vision of Teresita Reyes, Filipino flavors are sure to reach more kitchens, restaurants, and marketplaces around the world.

FAST FACTS

<i>Company Name</i>	Marigold Manufacturing Corporation
<i>Head Office</i>	San Juan City
<i>Products</i>	Base ingredients Tropical syrups Pastes & sauces Spice mixes Oyster sauce Marinades Sauces Snacks & refreshment kits
<i>ASEAN Presence</i>	Markets and exports products in the region
<i>Market Reach</i>	Philippines, Singapore, Middle East, Pakistan, USA, Canada, Europe
<i>Website</i>	http://msita.com



URC

CONQUERS ASEAN AND THE WORLD

For many Filipinos, snack times are fun times. For Universal Robina Corporation (URC), the Philippine market leader in savory snacks, candies, chocolates and ready to drink tea, snack times are opportunities.

URC, the company behind Jack 'n Jill and C2 brands, is a recognized dominant player in the biscuits, cookies, pretzels, noodles, and coffee markets.

URC's well-loved snacks are found in the shelves of Filipino stores and stores in the Americas, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

Over the past 10 years, URC's Philippine branded food business has enjoyed double-digit growth supplemented by its international business endeavors. In 2014, URC's sales reached a record high of PhP92.4 billion, 14.1% higher than the previous year, and its operating income registered PhP14.1 billion.

Aside from consumer food products, URC has interests in flour and sugar and agro-industry (feeds, animal health products, and poultry and swine).

FROM TRADING TO MANUFACTURING

URC's beginnings can be traced back 50 years when Mr. John Gokongwei Jr. decided to set up a corn milling plant to produce glucose and cornstarch. He was doing well then as a trader/importer, but realized that venturing into manufacturing could be more profitable.

So URC started producing its first home run products: Blend 45 coffee, Nips chocolates, and salty snacks Chiz Curls, Chippy, and Potato Chips in the 1960s. The following years saw URC acquiring more businesses, diversifying, and expanding.

CONQUERING ASIA

URC envisions itself to be a leading pan-Asian company.

"URC has always looked to the future, and it has always set its eyes on becoming a major player in Asia. We saw that in order to establish significant growth, we would need to expand operations overseas. There is a larger addressable market in the ASEAN with the number of middle-income consumers expanding. It is a huge opportunity for URC to build



“Build your brand and customer loyalty by differentiating yourself from the competition. Optimize your supply chain to minimize costs and increase profitability.”

brands across the region,” says URC’s president and chief executive officer, Lance Gokongwei.

To expand their market base, URC established manufacturing facilities and sales offices in other countries. After its first overseas venture in Malaysia, where it established its own manufacturing facility, URC continued the momentum and built more plants. Today URC operates in Viet Nam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, China, New Zealand, and recently, Myanmar. It has sales offices in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Australia.

As URC increases its ASEAN footprint, it also faces some challenges with cutthroat competition in every new market.

Creativity, innovation and R&D provide the backbone for URC to ably compete in the regional arena. URC launches new products every year that adapt to the taste and lifestyle preferences of their markets, and making sure that these new products have a strong value proposition to the consumer. While Filipinos may prefer something salty, Thais usually prefer spicier snacks. When URC achieves localizing its product offerings, it then shifts to building its distribution network.

The company’s efforts have so far yielded excellent results: URC has taken a market leading position in biscuits and wafers in Thailand, and is now the top ready-to-drink tea brand in Viet Nam. It has built three strong regional brands: Jack ‘n Jill snack foods, C2 ready-to-drink tea, and Great Taste coffee.

COST-COMPETITIVENESS IN AEC

URC has been preparing for the opportunities and challenges that come with regional economic integration.

“Our investments in the past will give us a strong advantage and flexibility to optimize our supply chain from procurement, manufacturing, and product distribution. We will implement regional sourcing with an overall goal to align all of these capabilities,” says Mr. Gokongwei. “We want to make URC cost competitive which is imperative in a cutthroat environment without barriers,” he adds.

Being a regional player helps URC manage its risks. The business presence in various markets provides a wider source of growth, not limiting their revenue stream on a single country’s macroeconomic fundamentals.

Having operations across ASEAN allows URC to optimize its supply and manufacturing processes. It augments demand by manufacturing products in existing plants where production is most cost efficient. It sources raw materials from different suppliers in the region to produce the best products at most competitive prices.

To companies eager to begin operations in the ASEAN market, Mr. Gokongwei has this piece of advice: “Build your brand and customer loyalty by differentiating yourself from the competition. Optimize your supply chain to minimize costs and increase profitability.”



FAST FACTS

<i>Company Name</i>	Universal Robina Corporation
<i>Locations</i>	Head Office Quezon City Manufacturing plants and sales offices – Philippines, Viet Nam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, China, New Zealand Sales offices – Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia
<i>Industry</i>	FMCG, agribusiness, commodity food
<i>Brands</i>	Jack ‘n Jill and Granny Goose snacks such as Chippy, Chiz Curls, Mr. Chips, Taquitos, Tortillos, Potato Chips, V-Cut, Nova, etc. Biscuits such as Presto, Cream-O, Dewberry, Magic Flakes, etc. Candies and chocolates, i.e., X.O., Maxx, Nips, Beverages like C2, Blend 45, Great Taste, Hidden Spring, etc. Noodles such as Payless and Nissin
<i>Market reach</i>	Present in about 46 countries, including ASEAN member states (except Brunei) and ASEAN+6 member states (except India)
<i>Website</i>	http://www2.urc.com.ph



for GWI, selling is more than just closing a DEAL

“Credibility and trust are key. Never promise what you cannot deliver and always negotiate from a position of honesty.”

If the world of free and cable television habitués can learn more about the winter season in Seoul, Korean Kings and their grand palaces, kimchi, and K-Pop from Korean novelas, then it is most certain that the this same world is open to discovering the rich Filipino culture through our own content.

GMA Worldwide, Inc. (GWI) dreams of the day when Philippine shows create a “Philippine wave” overseas. “We want to promote our culture. We want to distribute content that will not just be a big hit abroad, but one which will create a positive impact on how the world sees us,” says Ms. Roxanne J. Barcelona, GWI Vice President.

GWI, a subsidiary of GMA Network, sells GMA’s library of original content including drama, fantasy and horror series, game show and reality formats, and public affairs programs. It also buys foreign content for telecast on GMA 7 and GMA News TV.

FROM BUYING FOREIGN TO SELLING LOCAL

GWI was created 19 years ago to lead the acquisition of foreign programming for GMA Network, which at that time aired a number of American content. Through the years, GMA Network grew, increasing its capability to produce and air more local programs. In 2006, GWI’s responsibility expanded from foreign program acquisition to program distribution as well.

GWI’s years of experience in buying content eased this shift from content acquisition to marketing content. “As a buyer, we know what the foreign TV market wants and buys. Story is important to them. The lead actors or actresses are only secondary,” says Ms. Barcelona.

The first program GWI sold was the Pinoy version of the Mexican hit soap opera “Marimar” – a universally appealing rags to riches story and characters with whom people around the world could empathize.



IMPROVING CONTENT

GWI provides inputs to the production team on what will sell in both domestic and international markets. “Quality is important if you wish to penetrate the international market. You will notice how our content is now leveling up in production quality, scripting, and acting,” says Ms. Barcelona.

As the Network’s local content grows, so does GMA Worldwide’s library of available titles for worldwide distribution. To date, GWI has an estimated 5,400 hours of programming in its catalogue. In 2014 alone, the company sold at least 2,250 hours of programming consisting of 42 drama programs, 8 fantasy series, and 13 news and public affairs footage. Their products are sold mostly in West Africa and in ASEAN countries, particularly in Cambodia, Viet Nam, and Malaysia.

EXPANDING WITHIN ASEAN

Southeast Asia is GWI’s biggest market and is likely to remain as such. The company looks forward to further increasing its presence in ASEAN countries like Myanmar, Brunei, and Singapore. It recently closed its first sale in Thailand.

Buying content from the Philippines is cost-efficient for TV networks in the ASEAN region. Producing content is more expensive than acquiring it, particularly if the show is meant for the network’s non-prime time slots. Given the similarities among ASEAN cultures, the Malaysian, Vietnamese, and Cambodian viewers can also relate better with Philippine content.

The free movement of people within the region is another advantage GMA Worldwide recognizes. In partnership with its clients abroad, GMA Worldwide arranges, with ease, promotional celebrity tours in ASEAN. The no-visa policy for visiting ASEAN nationals helps make the travel of talents and sales staff effortless.

PHILIPPINE BRAND

The early stages of GMA Worldwide’s overseas venture in selling Filipino content were not easy. “It was a challenge to sell our shows. Almost no one in the global TV market was aware of Filipino content. The Philippine brand, especially for our TV programs, was not strong enough,” Ms. Barcelona explains.

To bridge this gap, the task entailed showcasing the Filipino culture - Filipino life, people, the Philippine economic

situation, current events, and products - in the programs produced by GMA and participating in global TV events such as the Asia TV Forum in Singapore, MIPTV in Cannes, DISCOP Africa, and the Shanghai TV Festival.

Patience is key. GWI stayed “in the loop even if the buyers were not yet interested or convinced about the idea of acquiring a GMA drama.” At the time when it was not yet viable for GWI to exhibit in international TV markets, the company still attended, albeit without a booth, and conducted one-on-one meetings with prospective clients. “We have to be consistently present in important markets so buyers will know us and remember us when they are ready to acquire alternative content,” adds Ms. Barcelona.

RELATIONSHIP FACTOR

GWI also underscores the role of after-sales service and the importance of servicing the needs of its clients even after a deal is finalized.

Ms. Barcelona’s advice to sellers and entrepreneurs: “In any negotiation, always try to finalize an agreement where both parties are happy. Never just aim to close a big deal. Aim for a long-term business relationship with clients so that you are assured of repeat sales. Credibility and trust is key. Never promise what you cannot deliver and always negotiate from a position of honesty.”

Ms. Barcelona’s advice does work; entrepreneurs only have to look at GWI to believe that.

FAST FACTS	
<i>Company</i>	GMA Worldwide, Inc.
<i>Head Office</i>	GMA Network Center, Quezon City, Philippines
<i>Business</i>	Content acquisition and distribution
<i>Content Portfolio</i>	Drama, fantasy, horror series News and public affairs Game and reality show formats Sitcoms Infotainment like travel, food, fashion
<i>ASEAN Presence</i>	Malaysia, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Myanmar, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand
<i>Other International Presence</i>	Western Africa including Kenya, Ghana, Guinea, and Uganda North America
<i>Website</i>	http://www.gmaworldwide.tv





LOOKING FORWARD TO GOLDEN

Penshoppe, Oxygen, ForMe, Memo, Regatta, and Tyler are brands with which fashion-forward Filipinos are surely familiar.

Golden ABC, the company behind these brands, has always been proud of its deep understanding of its customers' fashion preferences, which have been shaped by influences from all over the world. Its clothes beautifully complement the lifestyle of their target market, be it the free-spirited youth who wear Penshoppe; the dynamic executives who go for modern casual clothing such as Memo; or style-conscious women who adore the fresh and fun outfits of ForMe.

A testament to the popularity of Golden ABC brands among Filipinos is the ease with which it was able to build more than 600 stores across the Philippines and abroad. Since fashion-savvy Filipinos are known to be loyal to their preferred brands wherever they may travel, Golden ABC was able to build and expand its international presence, initially with the overseas Pinoy as its thriving market.

ASEAN START

Golden ABC opened in Cambodia, with two stores in Phnom Penh and more branches are in the pipeline. Penshoppe, the flagship brand of the company, opened its doors in Indonesia

in 2012 and expects to open 150 more in same country within the next few years. Prior to this, Penshoppe opened several stores in Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia. Plans are afoot to open more stores globally.

WORKING WITH ASEAN SUPPLIERS

Given its global push, ASEAN integration presents Golden ABC with exciting growth opportunities. The ASEAN region is a haven for exporters and manufacturers of basic necessities and raw materials, and Golden ABC is maximizing this benefit. Since apparel is labor intensive, the company is sourcing more suppliers within ASEAN who can offer competitive costs and faster delivery time.

The company's CEO, Mr. Bernie Liu, explains the advantages of working with ASEAN suppliers: "Whether goods are produced locally or sourced from any ASEAN country or China, the circular movement of importing and exporting them to another ASEAN country gives export clients the advantage of lower/preferential duty rates. The proximity of suppliers also leads to the fast turnaround of goods and services. This provides employment to our ASEAN neighbors, the same way that orders for our international stores provide employment for Philippine manufacturers of goods and services."

“We shouldn't fear economic integration but instead accept the challenge to raise our standards of excellence.”



FASHION AND RETAIL'S YEARS

A FIRST LOOK AT PHILIPPINE BRANDS

Golden ABC is all set for its globalization drive. In recent years, while a lot of local retailers were bringing global brands into the Philippine market, Golden ABC took a different route by going international to bring the best of the Philippines to the world.

Mr. Liu is confident that the global market will continue to embrace Philippine brands.

SUCCEEDING IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

Golden ABC's global expansion came about after it hurdled internal challenges - professionalizing the organization, modernizing systems and processes, and leveling up its fashion marketing campaigns and store visuals, merchandising, and product offerings.

The company has institutionalized the practice of regularly consulting professionals and experts to remain on track. The consultations identify and address challenges specific to entering new markets, particularly those pertaining to cultural differences and merchandise assortment. These initiatives support the strategy to become a truly international brand.

Golden ABC also invests in brand marketing. The company works with popular international celebrities in fashion, music, and movies as brand endorsers such as Hollywood celebrities Zac Efron, Ian Somerhalder, Nina Dobrev, Leighton Meester, and London-based boy-band One Direction. Its current brand ambassadors are supermodel and British IT-girl Cara Delevigne and international male model, Sean O'Pry.

FAST FACTS	
<i>Company Name</i>	Golden ABC
<i>Locations</i>	Head Office - Mandaue City, Cebu Corporate Office - Quezon City
<i>Industry</i>	Fashion Retail and Direct Selling
<i>Brands</i>	Penshoppe Oxygen ForMe Memo Regatta Tyler
<i>ASEAN Presence</i>	Has business offices in ASEAN Markets and exports products in the region
<i>Market Reach</i>	Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates
<i>Website</i>	http://goldenabc.com

Mr. Liu recognizes the importance of having "an open mindset" in taking the company's brands to ASEAN and the rest of the world - "We shouldn't fear economic integration but instead accept the challenge to raise our standards of excellence. We have to realize that we are now competing with regional players; we have to think global and act local as guided by our own set of values."

Penshoppe was recently awarded the Global Retailer of the Year by the Philippine Retailers Association and the Department of Trade and Industry.





The Big and Small of it:
NITO SEIKI
 and the small parts
 that make
 vehicles work

“The new age of sales is no longer confined within one country, but is already global.”

Nito Seiki’s road to success is anything but easy. Notwithstanding, challenges and two decades after it was established, the company remains as strong as the materials with which it works: steel, aluminum, titanium, and alloys.

Nito Seiki Manufacturing Corp. started in 1994 as a parts supplier to local jeepneys and commercial vehicles. Today, it is an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) supplier for most Japanese

motorcycle companies, trucks and bus assemblers, food equipment companies, electronics and semi-conductor enterprises, and recently, aerospace assemblers. It employs 230 people.

Ironically, one of Nito Seiki’s greatest opportunities happened during the 1997 Asian financial crisis. The domestic market was tough amid concerns about smuggling and price dumping. But as fate would have it, the company met Kawasaki Motor Philippines, Inc. (KMPI) and became its OEM supplier. Since then, several companies have looked to Nito Seiki for their CNC (computer-numerical control)-machining and auto parts requirements. The company grew beyond expectations.

INTERNATIONALIZATION AND FREE TRADE
 It took years for Nito Seiki to reach the overseas market. The company had to overcome several challenges such as marketing, a non-existent overseas network, huge capital requirement, and demand volume deficiency.

Nito Seiki responded to these challenges by joining government-organized business missions abroad to search for potential buyers and focused on high value-low volume markets with high accuracy and quality requirements.

Hard work and persistence paid off. Nito Seiki now competes overseas for its exported machined parts and components. Its market expanded to include Japan, Australia, China, Taiwan,

FAST FACTS

- Company* Nito Seiki Manufacturing Corporation
- Head Office* Quezon City, Philippines
- Business* OEM supplier for motorcycle, truck, bus, and aerospace assemblers, as well as food equipment companies
- Employees* 230
- ASEAN Presence* Exports products in ASEAN and ASEAN+6 countries
 Sub-contracted by a company that supplies products in the region
- Market Reach* United States, United Kingdom, Canada, China, Japan, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and some ASEAN countries
- Website* <http://www.nitoseiki.com>



Hong Kong, Canada, the United States, and United Kingdom. One of its biggest breaks came when the racing market in Australia placed orders for their auto part requirements.

ASEAN Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) provided a substantive boost to Nito Seiki's internationalization. When the FTAs took effect, Nito Seiki benefited from importing steel materials from China and Japan at reduced or zero tariff rates and eased the company's export initiatives to Australia and New Zealand.

ADVICE TO SMES

John Lee, Nito Seiki President, advises Filipino SMEs to leverage on tariff reduction and the AEC through niche market products. He believes ASEAN and ASEAN+6 is a huge potential market for different goods and services.

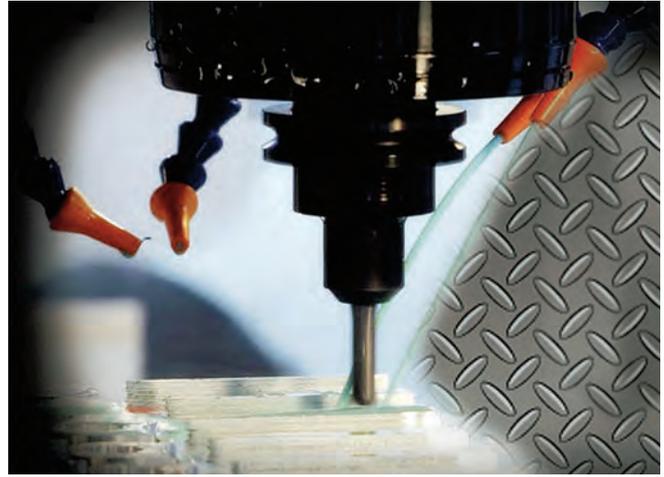
“Do research and create products that add value. Be innovative and sell directly to the customer,” Mr. Lee suggests. “The new age of sales is no longer confined within one country, but is already global. Technology and online marketing make it easier for smaller companies to market and sell products despite little advertising and travel budget.”

AEROSPACE: THE FUTURE IS UP ABOVE

In 2011, Nito Seiki established Applied Machining Corporation, a separate manufacturing facility dedicated to aerospace production, to cater to the industry's high demand. “It's (aerospace) our biggest growth factor to date,” Lee shared.

By 2020, the company hopes to have a stronger footing to venture into other investments in ASEAN. It is upbeat about opportunities in aerospace, saying it is an industry that ‘will boom in the next few decades.’

For Nito Seiki, the future is up above, and beyond 2015.





Splash:

from local salons to balikbayan boxes to global stores

Breaking into the global market was farthest from the minds of spouses Drs. Rolando and Rosalinda Hortaleza when they started their business of repackaging and selling acetone, cold wave lotion, and cuticle remover to beauty salons. The young doctors had no inkling that their decision to invest their PHP12,000 wedding cash gift would permanently change the Philippine personal care industry.

In the 1990s, Splash Corporation jolted long-entrenched multinationals dominating the personal care segment with its homegrown beauty products. Today, Splash Corporation is the largest Filipino owned firm in the personal care industry. Its products enjoy leadership or dominant positions in the Philippines, and sit alongside global brands in store shelves around the world.

FOLLOWING OFWs

Splash gained a strong following among Filipino consumers who realized that its products were formulated specifically for the Filipina's needs. These clients have since remained loyal to Splash even as they migrated overseas. Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) would ask friends to send them Splash

products wherever they were. When a kababayan went back to Manila, she would purchase a bottle or two of Splash beauty products for her compatriots.

“Hiyang ako rito,” (it works for me), most Splash users would say.

Recognizing the huge demand from OFWs, Splash then shipped its products overseas in 1993 through dealers in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. Since good news travels fast, local dealers got wind of Splash products and brought these to additional markets such as Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain. In the process, Splash was able to introduce its homegrown brands Extraderm, Maxi-Peel, SkinWhite, Vitress, and Hygienix globally and gained the acceptance even of non-Filipino consumers.

ESTABLISHING REGIONAL OPERATIONS

In 2009, Splash launched PT Splash Indonesia (later renamed PT Splash Cahaya) in the Indonesian business community. A year later, it established its subsidiaries in Malaysia, Nigeria, and Singapore and opened a representative office in Viet Nam. In 2011, it expanded its market reach to Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia.





“Innovation has been the main growth driver of Splash Corporation throughout the years. We invest a lot in research.”

For Splash, going international is the ‘next transformative phase’ in its history, and is a ‘competitive necessity.’ Dr. Rolando Hortaleza remarks that “globalization is inevitable given the millions of Filipinos all over the world. We are not waiting for competitors to come to us, we are going after them.”

GOING BEYOND PERSONAL CARE

Splash went beyond personal care and thought of bringing in what overseas Filipinos longed for – a taste of home. It forayed into the food business with the acquisition of Barrio Fiesta Manufacturing Corporation and Moondish Foods Corporation. Today, its products consisting of sauces and condiments are available in various countries around the world.

The Splash Research Institute develops products that meet the unique needs of the Filipino market. “Innovation has been the main growth driver of Splash Corporation throughout the years. We strive to exploit market gaps and develop products that will satisfy consumer needs. We invest a lot in research,” says Dr. Hortaleza.

THE AEC FACTOR

To gain headway in the wider ASEAN market, Splash has intensified its marketing programs using different communication channels. It also strengthens its distribution and co-marketing programs with local partners in the region.

Splash is hopeful the ASEAN integration will help in the realization of increased efficiencies in raw materials

procurement. It looks forward to taking advantage of duty free transfer of goods and raw materials across ASEAN. A majority of its raw materials are sourced locally while some are imported such as soap noodles from Indonesia, as well as from Malaysia, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

At the same time, Splash looks forward to offering the services, extensive reach, and advanced sales technology of its distribution company to international companies that are planning to bring their products to the Philippines.

COMPETE WITH THE WORLD

In penetrating overseas markets, Splash recognizes the importance of localizing its value proposition, choosing a suitable distribution partner, and adapting to cultural norms. Trade restrictions, registration procedures, and local product regulations need to be fully understood, and careful research must be undertaken prior to entering new markets. But with determination and courage, Splash has consistently proven that these challenges can be conquered.

Splash proves that it is a world-class company offering globally competitive Filipino products. The Splash credo, which employees regularly recite, sums it up perfectly: “Bagong Pilipino, Maka-Pilipino, kayang tumapat sa buong mundo!” (New Filipinos, for the Filipinos, we can compete with the world!).

FAST FACTS	
Company Name	Splash Corporation
Locations	Head Office - Taguig City Manufacturing plants - Philippines Sales & marketing - Indonesia and Nigeria Holding company - Singapore
Employees	400
Industry	FMCG
ASEAN/ASEAN+6 Presence	Business offices Exports products
Market reach	Personal Care: Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Nigeria, Sudan, United States, Saudi Arabia and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Food: Singapore, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, United States, Canada, Saudi Arabia, UK, Italy, GCC
Website	http://www.splash.com.ph

Tubigon Cooperative Weaves to Succeed

At the break of dawn, a woman prepares her family’s breakfast, cleans the house, and washes the laundry. She cooks lunch before noon, completes her chores after, then readies the dinner fare as the sun sets.

In between these tasks, the woman weaves fabrics. She does this at home to earn additional income while accomplishing her household chores. She gets paid for every piece she finishes.

Multiply this woman by 15, add a handful of men, and you get the picture of how Tubigon Loomweavers Multipurpose Cooperative (TLMPC) started in 1990. The venture kicked off after the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) offered loomweaving skills training to residents of Tubigon. At that time, Tubigon’s fishing industry, a livelihood source for most residents, was not doing very well.

The trainees established a cooperative and, using a PhP5,000 grant from DTI-CAR, bought raw materials and distributed these to interested weavers. It wasn’t smooth sailing but the Tubignons’ perseverance and determination prevailed.

Today, TLMPC has 55 plant-based loom weavers working from 8am to 5pm, and 100 weavers acting as subcontractors within the town. The cooperative set up its own weaving facility, improved its processes, and leveled-up its products. It now caters to institutional clients and participates in major trade fairs and expos in Cebu and Metro Manila.

PRODUCT OF BOHOL

TLMPC’s initial offering was selling rolls of fabric. Today, the cooperative produces bags and wallets, placemats, coasters, table runners, and other home accessories—a remarkable step in moving up the value chain.



FAST FACTS

- Cooperative Name* Tubigon Loomweavers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (TLMPC)
- Office* Tubigon, Bohol
- Industry* Textile (loom weaving)
- Products* Abaca, raffia fabrics
Bags and wallets, placemats, coasters, table runners, other home accessories
- Market Reach* Local residents and tourists in Bohol, Cebu, Metro Manila
- Supply Chain Global Participation* Exporters from Cebu and Manila
Sub-contracted by an exporter that supplies products to a hotel in Malaysia
- Website* <https://www.facebook.com/./Tubigon-Loomweavers-Multi-Purpose-Cooperative>

TLMPC sources most of its raw materials from its hometown, Tubigon, and neighboring towns in Bohol. They are proud of their 'raffia,' a natural fiber made from palm trees and mostly sourced from local farmers. They also use abaca, buntal fiber (also from buri palms), and polyester threads. The fibers are woven in their natural colors or dyed in various colors before being woven.

BIGGEST PROJECT TO DATE

TLMPC supplies woven products to local resorts in Bohol, major balikbayan or souvenir shops in Cebu and Manila. Supplying rolls of fabric or finished products to exporters, the cooperative has established its place in the global supply chain since their products are eventually shipped to Europe, Japan, and the United States.

Ms. Ma. Trina Sumayang, TLMPC's Marketing Manager, enthused that a recent big break came when a French exporter based in Cebu ordered 661 rolls of poly-raffia fabric - a total of 13,887 meters – to be used in the products that will be exported to a hotel chain in Malaysia.

This major opportunity has further inspired TLMPC to become future exporters in the ASEAN region. Hope is high that it ushers in the start of their ASEAN venture, particularly in light of the AEC. Ms. Sumayang expressed interest to learn more about AEC and hopes that it will present bigger opportunities for SMEs.

“We are proud of this project and we commit to fulfilling our delivery schedules. Our wish is to directly export our products soon. We see this project not only for the profit it will yield but also as a learning platform for exporting,” says Ms. Sumayang added.

SUCCESS FACTORS

TLMPC is one of the few cooperatives with a success story to share, thanks to the help of government, non-government groups, and the private sector.

The cooperative owns its facility, built through the efforts of the Bohol Provincial Government on a lot donated by the Municipal Government of Tubigon. This facility is utilized to manufacture high-end products and houses 15 2-harness new metal handlooms and 5 4-harness new metal handlooms secured through DTT's Shared Service Facilities Program. The cooperative has allocated a space for its mechanical dryer to fast-dry the raffia fibers.

Key officers of TLMPC had to learn basic management principles, such as costing and negotiating as well as effective customer service to engage and maintain more clients. “We've stepped up our product development and availed ourselves of free skills training. We learned about colors, design, and quality standards,” says Ms. Sumayang.

Ms. Sumayang explains that some NGOs make it possible for them to participate in trade fairs and expos by paying for their booths and the shipping cost of sample products.

LOOM WEAVERS

Tubigon's success is made possible because of its people. Ms. Sumayang cites the loomweavers' willingness to embrace change. “We had to go through a lot of changes, some of which aren't easy, to improve our crafts. We are glad that almost everyone cooperated in the process,” she says.

The loomweavers happily work to produce artisan fabrics inspired with the hope of success. They value their work and appreciate its contribution to sustaining their families. With this attitude and mindset, the loomweavers deserve all opportunities and assistance that come their way.

“We've stepped up our product development and availed ourselves of free skills training. We learned about colors, design, and quality standards.”





Feeding animals to feed a nation

Broilers, layers, breeders, and fowls are all chickens, although they are not completely the same. Most would likely have a difficult time distinguishing these, but the Vitarich community is replete with experts who have mastered the skill of differentiating these livestock. Vitarich, after all, is in the business of producing animal feeds. The Vitarich family possesses extensive knowledge on certain animals for daily operations and for product research and development as well.

Vitarich produces and distributes hog, poultry, aqua, and other specialty feed requirements; various poultry products; and recently, dory fish. Its subsidiary, Gromax, manufactures and offers animal health products, feed additives, and other related commodities.



Vitarich recognizes the role of livestock farmers in feeding the country and advancing agribusiness. The company helps farmers grow and produce lean and quality livestock by ensuring that its feeds, and other animal products, contain the required nutrients and germ-preventing ingredients.

FEED CHICKENS, FEED A NATION

The story of Vitarich can be traced back to 1950 when the Sarmiento brothers built the Philippines' first commercial feed company. Siblings Feliciano, Lorenzo, and Pablo experienced the havoc caused by World War II - loss, illness, and hunger - and were determined to recover

and rise from these tragedies. Their dream was to build a company that would “feed chickens, feed a nation, and feed progress into a developing economy.”

In 1957, the Philippine American Milling Co. was renamed Vitarich and brought into the country the latest technology in animal feeds — from milling and processing machineries, to R&D and nutritional formulation.

A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE

In the 1960s, Vitarich ventured into feeds and poultry. It started raising chickens and decided to establish its own dressing plant facilities. Two decades later, the company expanded its operations to the Visayas and Mindanao. And in 1995, Vitarich peaked with more than 1,000 people in its employ. This opened doors to new partners through an Initial Public Offering (IPO).

However, the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the avian flu outbreak in 2003 created major setbacks for the company. Vitarich's debts reached PhP3.2 billion and the listed company found itself under corporate rehabilitation in 2006.

TO RISE AGAIN

Vitarich Executive Vice President and COO Ricardo Manuel Sarmiento says that the company's rehabilitation period was one of the greatest challenges they had ever faced. During that period, they had to continue operations and survive without appropriate working capital.



“We should not be afraid to show who we are through our products. Let’s maximize local resources.”

The situation only drove them to be more creative in finding solutions to their problems. Since they could not produce large volumes, they decided to focus on a few customers and maintain that revenue stream without renege on their commitments. They found alternative inputs and ingredients not regularly used locally but globally accepted through research. To keep afloat, they sold one of their facilities in Marilao to pay off a large chunk of their debts. They then launched the 3Ps Program -- Professionalism, Proactivity, and Prudence -- to inculcate the right mindset in their employees.

The good news is that, as of this writing, Vitarich is almost rehabilitated, a few years ahead of the initial timeline. “We are happy to say that in a few months, we are getting out of rehabilitation. We have significantly reduced our debt from PhP3.2 billion to only about PhP400 million. Yes, we’ve bounced back and are looking forward to the next few years with optimism,” says Mr. Sarmiento.

PROMOTING LOCAL IN AEC

Amid foreseen competition, Vitarich is confident that it will thrive since the domestic market, in general, still prefers local products. It advises entrepreneurs to promote local products and not fear economic integration.

“We should not be afraid to show who we are through our products. Let’s maximize local resources. More people are starting to appreciate and patronize home-grown and local products,” Mr. Sarmiento says. “Recently, we proudly launched our latest product, the Golden Dory, a locally-bred fish that could serve as alternative to imported cream dory products,” he adds.



Vitarich sees lots of possibilities in an integrated ASEAN economy. It is closely studying its options. “We want to see how it goes. We are looking at its pros and cons. We think it could be a good platform for partnerships locally or abroad,” says Mr. Sarmiento, who believes the Philippines is in a good position to take advantage of AEC and that businessmen could benefit from it. “With AEC, I have a bigger market to serve,” he says.

KEY TO SUCCESS

Vitarich believes that in a regional integrated economy, it is important that companies commit even more to quality. In the face of present challenges, Vitarich continues to invest in R&D to discover new technologies for operations efficiency and improvement. Food safety is a primordial consideration, securing all required certifications such as ISO 22000:2005.

For Mr. Sarmiento, amid competition, only “the best company wins.” Indeed, the road to success is competitiveness.



FAST FACTS

<i>Company</i>	Vitarich Corporation
<i>Head Office</i>	Marilao, Bulacan
<i>Business</i>	Agribusiness - livestock feed operations, poultry, and food
<i>Products</i>	Animal feeds Chicken products Fish products
<i>Plants</i>	Dressing facilities in Marilao and Davao Feed mills in Iloilo and Davao Hatcheries in Bulacan, Laguna, and Tarlac
<i>Market Reach</i>	Domestic market Animal feeds exporters
<i>Website</i>	http://vitarich.com



COMBINING nature & heart to produce local products

Twin passions - love for organic and natural products, and the commitment to help the poor - led to the birth of a Filipino business that rapidly grew into one of the nation's leading Filipino social enterprises.

The moving force behind Human Nature - husband and wife Anna Meloto-Wilk and Dylan Wilk, and Anna's sister, Camille Meloto - are volunteers of Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, Inc. (GK), a Philippine-based movement that aims to end poverty for 5 million families, by first restoring the dignity of the poor.

At the heart of GK's community transformation is giving back the poor's capacity to dream and work towards the fulfillment of their dreams. This is where Human Nature thought it best to contribute, by providing livelihood opportunities to help pave the way out of poverty.

As spanking new parents, the Wilks' preference for a green and sustainable lifestyle was reinforced with the desire to use

non-toxic personal care products for their first born child. Their research revealed that organic products were present in mainstream markets, particularly in the United States. They thought of introducing this concept in the Philippines to provide consumers alternative products and at the same time, provide livelihood to GK communities.

LOCAL PRODUCTS, LOCAL INGREDIENTS

Human Nature launched its initial product offerings in November 2008.

Their products are manufactured and sold by Gandang Kalikasan, Inc. which range from facial care, body care, mineral make up, hair shampoo, soaps, insect repellents, home care, and pet care. Initially offered through online platforms,



FAST FACTS

<i>Company</i>	Gandang Kalikasan, Inc.
<i>Brand Name</i>	Human Nature
<i>Head Office</i>	Quezon City
<i>Products</i>	Facial and skin care Shampoos and soaps Mineral make-up Body care Insect repellent Home care Pet care
<i>ASEAN Presence</i>	Manufactures and sells products in the Philippines Sells products in Malaysia and Singapore through partner dealers
<i>Other International Presence</i>	United States of America, United Arab Emirates
<i>Website</i>	https://www.humanheartnature.com

“Human Nature proves that it is possible to profit and sustain business, while taking care of people and communities.”



Human Nature products are now distributed to major retailers, 30 franchisees, and 40,000 dealers.

Human Nature’s products are 100% manufactured in the Philippines. The company uses local herbs and ingredients such as citronella, lemon grass, pili nut, and coconut, among others. While the ingredients and raw materials are cheaper overseas, Human Nature only sources these when there are no alternatives locally available. They also import raw materials that can be eventually cultivated in the Philippines.

Human Nature is present in 20 communities in Metro Manila, in the provinces of Bukidnon and Bulacan, and in the Visayas and Bicol regions as well. Human Nature teaches farming communities and cooperatives to grow and process ingredients such as citronella oil from Camarines Norte and lemongrass oil from a community in Negros Occidental.

Human Nature has also offered its distribution channels to other social enterprises selling non-personal care brands. “We want communities to tap larger markets so we offered our own distribution channels for their products,” said Anna Meloto-Wilk. One of these enterprises is the Bayani Brew Tea produced from a Gawad Kalinga farm in Bulacan. Bayani Brew Tea was producing 5,000 bottles a month before it utilized Human Nature’s distribution channels. Today, the monthly production of Bayani Brew Tea is 50,000 bottles.

“We do not wish wealth to be concentrated to a few. We tap local resources and partner with communities because it open channels for increased wealth distribution,” Meloto-Wilk added.

MANUFACTURING WITH A HEART

Human Nature built its own manufacturing plant in Laguna to continue helping Filipino workers and at the same time ensure product quality.

“We believe there is a better way of manufacturing. We provide our people security of tenure and pay them 67% above the daily minimum wage. We know Filipino families need more to afford decent food and shelter, so we target to provide our staff twice the amount of minimum wage as soon as our financial health would allow it,” explained Ms. Meloto-Wilk.

FROM FARMS TO ASEAN

Human Nature’s international sales constitute 5% of its earnings, and this number will grow as interest abroad increases.

Human Nature products found their way into the global market when in 2009, GK volunteers from the United States brought Human Nature products back home, making them the first dealers abroad.

A few years later, dealers from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore and Malaysia followed suit. This year, Human Nature expects to finalize its entry into Indonesia.

“It is easier to export personal care products like ours within the ASEAN region, thanks to the ASEAN Cosmetic Harmonization,” said Meloto-Wilk. The ASEAN Harmonized Cosmetic Regulatory Scheme facilitates trading products through the adoption of mutual recognition of product registration and product notification.

ADVICE TO ENTREPRENEURS

Anna Meloto-Wilk tells aspiring entrepreneurs to ‘tap into local resources, partner with communities, and do business with a heart.’

“Human Nature proves that it is possible to profit and sustain business, while taking care of people and communities,” she concluded.



Heeding a call for great brands and empowered women



For the GREAT Women Brand, every product they create moves them closer to empowering women by helping them move up in the supply and value chain.

The brand is the innovative input of the ECHOsi Foundation, the non-profit arm of ECHOstore Sustainable Lifestyle, to the GREAT Women Philippine Gender Platform. The foundation, along with the Philippine Commission for Women (PCW) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), runs the integrated platform as the lead private sector partner in charge of organizing the development outreach.

GREAT Women, also known as Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women, is a pioneering Philippine-wide gender platform that addresses gender issues in both micro and social enterprises development.

“Our goal is to help women micro and social entrepreneurs to be market-ready. We check their supply chain processes, assess their capacities, test their products for market viability, add design and provide them access to wider and segmented markets,” said Jeannie Javelosa, President of ECHOsi Foundation and one of the co-founders of ECHOstore Sustainable Lifestyle.

ECHOSTORE SELLS GREAT WOMEN BRAND

Phase 1 of GREAT Women started with several product design clinics and skills training for about 20-30 women microentrepreneurs across six (6) provinces. GREAT Women Phase 2, on the other hand, was an expanded platform that provided additional support to beneficiaries and extended assistance to social entrepreneurs.

ECHOstore embraces, promotes, and sells GREAT Women Brand products. These include ready-to-eat food items such as peanuts, cassava chips, and herbs, as well as recycled, native and indigenous textiles woven into bags, pouches, scarves and shawls, and home accessories. Other local retailer outlets provide space for products created under the brand and platform.



VIVENCIA, A BAGOBO WEAVER

The GREAT Women Brand overflows with inspiring stories of women microentrepreneurs.

One of these microentrepreneurs is Vivencia, a Bagobo weaver from the foothills of Mount Apo. Despite Vivencia's shy, quiet, and, at times, nervous demeanor, she is considered a remarkable traditional weaver. This distinction facilitated her integration into the supply chain of Great Women Brands.

Vivencia's growth was remarkable. Barely a year after, she blossomed into an empowered and confident microentrepreneur, rising to the challenge of organizing and leading a group of women weavers in Mount Apo. She bridges the Bagobo weavers with various markets, helping them obtain and fulfill orders for traditional textiles woven with great passion and creativity.

TRADITIONAL TEXTILES IN MODERN NEW YORK

In August 2014, ECHOstore joined the New York Now Artisan Resource trade show to showcase textile products from four Southern tribes. These were hand woven bags, jewelry, and home and fashion accessories made by indigenous entrepreneurs under the Great Women Brand. International buyers were amazed at the skills and talent poured into each product. They listened with keen interest on the history of the crafted products.

"There is now an unprecedented demand for unique, limited, handmade and artisan products everywhere, with conscious consumers looking at the stories of people's lives and social impact behind the products they buy. These elements enhance the quality and beauty of the products," Ms. Javelosa remarked.

Vivencia's group is in various stages of supplying hand-crafted and naturally-dyed *inabel* textiles to two major home retail stores in the United States - an ideal illustration of how community production steers its way into the global market.

"Our goal is to help women micro and social entrepreneurs to be market-ready."

GREAT WOMEN IN ASEAN

GREAT Women has officially been approved for replication in the ASEAN region to support the region's supply chain and trade. In line with the Philippines' initiative under the ECHOsi Foundation, Malaysia is set to host the first GREAT Women ASEAN Collection and development workshops. Myanmar and Viet Nam have been identified as future hosts of the program.

Last year, GREAT Women began exporting its products to the ASEAN Region through a pop-up store during a Global Women's Summit in Kuala Lumpur. Singapore likewise expressed interest to sell GREAT Women products through online retail. Ms. Javelosa explained that while they are not in a hurry to conquer ASEAN, they want GREAT Women microentrepreneurs to be prepared.

"Our little producers would lose if we do not prepare and make them more aware about the integration," Ms. Javelosa remarked. "We are slowly, but surely, tapping the international stage for GREAT Women Brand products—with ASEAN as our first stop so we can understand the details involved in the supply chain, profile of the markets per country, and familiarize ourselves with export standard and regulations. Slow, but sure, collaboration as well as sharing and business matching between entrepreneurs, their products and companies under the criteria set by the GREAT Women Brand are what we will focus on as ASEAN becomes one economy," she added.

FAST FACTS	
<i>Brand / Product Line</i>	GREAT Women Brand
<i>Retailer</i>	ECHOstore Sustainable Lifestyle
<i>Head Office</i>	Serendra, Taguig City
<i>Products</i>	Textile-based products such as bags, jewelry, fashion accessories, and home accessories Ready-to-eat food items such as peanuts, chips, and herbs with more being developed
<i>Distributes</i>	Great Women brand products through retailers in the Philippines
<i>ASEAN Presence</i>	Started to sell products in Malaysia through a pop-up store Singapore online retailer
<i>Other International Presence</i>	Supplies textile-based home accessories to the United States of America
<i>Website</i>	http://www.echostore.ph/index.php/great-women-brand





A storyteller tells its story

“As we further integrate ourselves in the ASEAN region, country branding becomes more compelling than ever.”

If EON’s recent milestones are to serve as yardsticks of the company’s performance, EON, it appears, is doing its job well.

In 2014, EON was named Southeast Asia’s Consultancy of the Year at the SABRE Awards in Beijing, China. A year before, the company was conferred the ASEAN Business Awards for Growth and Employment during the ASEAN Business Summit in Brunei. In 2013 and 2014, EON made the Holmes WORLD PR REPORT of top 250 PR firms in the world. It was the only Filipino PR Firm in the list.

These awards are testaments to the company’s growth, excellence, and hard work. But what EON is most happy about with these recognitions is that they help bring the word ‘Filipino’ into the global PR industry.

“EON is proudly Filipino. When we receive awards abroad, we are glad that in our own little way, we carry with us the name of the Philippines. We want the global PR industry to know that Filipinos could be effective communication strategists and creative storytellers,” says Mr. del Mundo.

A NEW CAREER

Sixteen years ago, Mr. del Mundo wrapped up his career as a diplomat and decided to become an entrepreneur. He led the establishment of EON with a staff of only 3, including

his driver. Initially known as Events Organizer Network, EON specialized in organizing corporate events.

In the beginning, the company struggled. Mr. del Mundo recalled having sleepless nights worrying about the company’s cash flow and sustainability. He wondered: “Could I afford my staff’s pay for the coming month?”

Finally, an opportunity arose. EON was tasked by a multinational company to organize the activities for the global CEO’s business mission in the Philippines. “The project’s fees sustained our operations for almost a year. I was able to concentrate on selling and improving our services,” Mr. del Mundo says.



In 2006, the company rebranded itself as EON The Stakeholder Relations Firm. By doing so, the company created its own niche in the PR industry and introduced a different approach to communications – one that is based on trust and mutually beneficial outcomes.

The move bore fruit. Today, EON is the largest PR firm in the country with top global and local brands from various sectors and industries as clients. From a 3-man team, its staff has

expanded to over 75 full-time experts. And, with project hires and consultants, EON now employs a total of 88 people. As far as Uzbekistan

While a great majority of its clients are Philippine-based, EON also services companies and brands overseas, proving that

FILIPINO PR PROFESSIONALS ARE WORLD-CLASS

In 2006, EON sent a 7-person team to Urumqi, China to help the Asian Development Bank (ADB) organize and manage the Business Sector Forum of the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC). Three years later, EON helped tell Uzbekistan’s story around the world. It provided content development and conference secretariat services for the Navoi Investment Forum that sought to attract foreign investments to Uzbekistan.

As the official Philippine affiliate of Edelman, the largest PR firm in the world, EON provides support to communication campaigns and media events of multinational companies based in Asia, especially in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan.

The upcoming ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) makes EON more upbeat about serving clients in the ASEAN region. “As the world becomes more connected by digital technology and regional integration, we see a greater need for brands and organizations to differentiate themselves and find more creative ways of communicating with their stakeholders,” Mr. del Mundo says.

ABC TO AEC

When asked how SMEs can maximize the benefits of the economic integration, Mr. del Mundo shares EON’s formula called the ‘ABC to AEC’. A stands for “audit your environment,” B means “build your brand,” while C refers to “communicate with your audience.”

“Audit is about understanding the threats and opportunities locally and in neighboring countries. Map your business’ strengths and weaknesses and benchmark it against possible competitors,” Mr. del Mundo explains.

He emphasizes the need for branding and communication: “Once you have established who you are as a brand and identified your niche, use the right channels to introduce and communicate your business to different stakeholders.”

THE PHILIPPINE COUNTRY BRAND

EON has been a staunch advocate of the Philippine Country Brand. Its leaders have worked hard to engage the Philippines’ thinkers and doers into seeing how the Philippine Country Brand — a set of intangibles and values that are unique to the country — can be its competitive advantage, especially with the dawning of the AEC.

“As we further integrate ourselves in the ASEAN region, country branding becomes more compelling than ever. The Philippine road to competitiveness will not be complete if we are not going to seriously look into establishing and promoting our country brand,” says Mr. del Mundo.



FAST FACTS

<i>Company Name</i>	EON, The Stakeholder Relations Firm
<i>Head Office</i>	Legaspi Village, Makati City
<i>Industry</i>	Public Relations
<i>Service Clusters</i>	Brand Communications Public Affairs and Government Relations Special Integrated Services such as Research, International Conference Management, etc. Exports PR services
<i>Cross-border activities</i>	Sends PR professionals overseas to support clients’ communication needs
<i>Website</i>	http://www.eon.com.ph



FOUNTAINHEAD: when SMEs are founded by geniuses



What does it take to start an enterprise? Fountainhead Technologies, Inc. required the brains, skills, and guts of its three founders – Pargad “Jack” Biteng, Teddy Reyes, and Jojo Salvador - who combined their expertise to provide an inclusive set of information technology (IT) project execution services.

Mr. Biteng, a BS Mathematics and an MBA degree holder from the University of Chicago, provided the technical knowledge and ability backed by his vast experience across industry; Mr. Reyes, a developer and database administrator, took care of database requirements and information management practices; while Mr. Salvador complemented the team by handling the project’s functional requirements and providing leadership as the CEO.

Fountainhead is an IT service company that specializes in implementing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) business management software. ERP systems or applications help companies improve their operations and activities in terms of procurement, accounting and finance, shipping, and inventory, among others.

PROUDLY FILIPINO

“Our people, whom we all source from the Philippines, are our greatest assets. Filipino IT professionals are among the brightest and most reliable when it comes to IT solutions. We are proud to serve and show different clients here and abroad what Filipinos can do,” says Mr. Biteng, the Fountainhead founder and chairman. To date, the company employs 130 seasoned Oracle and IBM Certified Professionals across different industries, and more than 30 CPAs who form part of the company’s functional team for various IT projects.

Fountainhead also benefits from its managerial and sales teams in other countries. “They allow us to reach out to our target markets and help lessen the challenges we face abroad,” says Mr. Biteng.

Fountainhead has been operating a sales office in Singapore for a year now - serving clients from the Philippines, United States, and Europe - and will soon engage new clients from Malaysia and Indonesia.

14 YEARS (AND COUNTING) OF OPPORTUNITIES

Founded in 2001, Fountainhead started by servicing the IT requirements of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As young as it was, the company became famous for its topnotch services, competitively valued offerings, and a 100% success rate. This track record brought them several clients from small, medium, and large companies as clients.

One of the company’s biggest breaks was its IT consulting project for one of the biggest retail companies in the Philippines, Suyen Corporation, known for various popular Filipino clothing brands. Subsequent projects came after including data warehousing for SM and financial systems consolidation for the Yuchengco Group of Companies.

Fountainhead was recognized by the Oracle Corporation as one of its trusted partners in the Philippines, and in recognition of its top skills in rescuing failed projects and delivering complex engagements; Oracle Corporation endorsed Fountainhead to its clients. The company was recently named one of IBM’s Advanced Business Partners.

As the leading player in ERP systems in the Philippines, Fountainhead services clients from various industries, including banking, insurance, retail, food, and construction. Over the past 2 to 3 years, the company’s registered a 25% annual growth.

SMEs IN THE PHILIPPINES

Fountainhead advocates for SME empowerment and is determined to provide ERP services to the country’s underserved SMEs, most of which are located in the provinces.



The company was recently conferred the Best SME Award by the ASEAN Business Award Philippines; a recognition of its ability to stand out while being a role model for thousands of enterprises in the Philippines and in the ASEAN region.

“95% of companies in the Philippines are classified as SMEs, and we believe they should share in the productivity gains. To be more productive, they should have access to advanced technology; they should enjoy and exhaust this, the way larger companies do,” says Mr. Biteng.

EXPORTING SERVICES TO ASEAN

“We are upbeat about the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). We see a lot of potential for us to expand our services to other ASEAN Member States. We understand that the integration may provide stiffer competition, but we take it as a challenge for us to improve our operations,” says Mr. Biteng.

“Our services are scalable and our operations can be done and duplicated in other ASEAN countries. We can take advantage of the unique Filipino attitude towards professional services,” he adds.

Mr. Biteng advises Filipino companies to understand and prepare for the impact of AEC on their businesses. For him, unprepared companies will not be able to take advantage of AEC opportunities, or “worse, will find themselves getting the short end of its stick.”

“We are proud to serve and show different clients here and abroad what Filipinos can do.”

FAST FACTS

<i>Company Name</i>	Fountainhead Technologies
<i>Head Office</i>	Salcedo Village, Makati City
<i>Industry</i>	IT
<i>Employees</i>	160
<i>ASEAN presence</i>	Operates in the Philippines Exports IT services to Singapore Looking to expand to Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia
<i>Market reach</i>	Philippines, Singapore, Europe, North America
<i>Website</i>	http://www.fountainheadtechnologies.com

HanCole:

The world is their market

HanCole, a global trading company, believes that doing business beyond the Philippines is the 'blue ocean' for SMEs.

Marco Reyes, President of HanCole, explains that when they were starting, they saw that the local business environment was already "filled to the brim" by big players. "For start-up businesses like us, it's crazy to compete with domestic conglomerates which have economies of scale, leverage, reach, and resources," he says.

To grow and thrive, HanCole realized they needed to find a larger market beyond the Philippines and today, HanCole's market is the entire world.

Founded by veterans in the oleochemical industry, HanCole exports oils and fats, oleochemicals, surfactants, cosmetic raw materials, and food ingredients. Its products are used by companies around the world to produce pharmaceuticals, paint, lubricants, makeups, plastics, detergents, food, and other product variants.

YOUNG BUT RUNNING FAST

Five-year old HanCole is spreading its wings across the globe and growing fast. Operating with only 13 people, HanCole trades around 10,000 MT of products globally. At any time of day, HanCole's shipments crisscross oceans around the world, reaching institutional customers in ASEAN, Americas, Europe, Middle East, India and Southern Asia, Africa, and Oceania including Australia and New Zealand.

"Our strategy is to leverage on information technology, the Internet, free trade agreements, relationships with our partners, and our people's competence," says Mr. Reyes.

Except for its main office in Hong Kong (HanCole does not have satellite offices abroad), the company is still able to communicate with and visit its clients through its distributors and agents based in their markets. The company is not in the manufacturing business; its main activity is sourcing products from trusted producers within ASEAN. HanCole nurtures relationships with credible manufacturing plants, shipping companies and freight forwarders to facilitate distribution of the company's products. It has trusted 3rd party inspectors who ensure that the quality and quantity of products bought abroad meet HanCole's standards.

"Our strategy is to leverage on information technology, the Internet, free trade agreements, relationships with our partners, and our people's competence."

FAST FACTS

Company HanCole Corporation
Philippine Office Quezon City
Business Trading oleochemicals, oils and fats, coconut products, surfactants, cosmetic raw materials, and food ingredients
ASEAN Presence Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Singapore
Other International Presence Americas (USA, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Columbia)
 Europe (Germany, Spain, Poland, Russia, Azerbaijan)
 Middle East (Iran, Jordan, Egypt, UAE, Qatar)
 Africa (South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria)
 Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh)
 Australia and New Zealand

Website www.hancolegroup.com

This business model, says Mr. Reyes, allows HanCole to “leverage on the strengths of our partners, and focus on our core competence of global trading.”

FREE FLOW OF GOODS

Most of HanCole products are sourced within ASEAN. Their coconut-based products come from the Philippines; they source palm-based products such as palm oils, surfactants, fatty alcohols, glycerine, soap noodles, fatty acids and residues from Malaysia; soap noodles and fatty acids are imported from Indonesia; and, some fatty alcohols and palm fatty acid distillates are brought in from Thailand.

The company uses and takes advantage of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) of ASEAN member states and the Philippines. They use Certificates of Origins (in various forms) in shipping their products within ASEAN, and from ASEAN, to importing countries.

GROWTH IN ASEAN

HanCole sees limitless possibilities for its business in ASEAN, especially since palm oil, coconut oil, and related products are abundant in the region. It has positioned itself as a key partner and supplier in ASEAN for these products, offering the best quality at competitive prices.

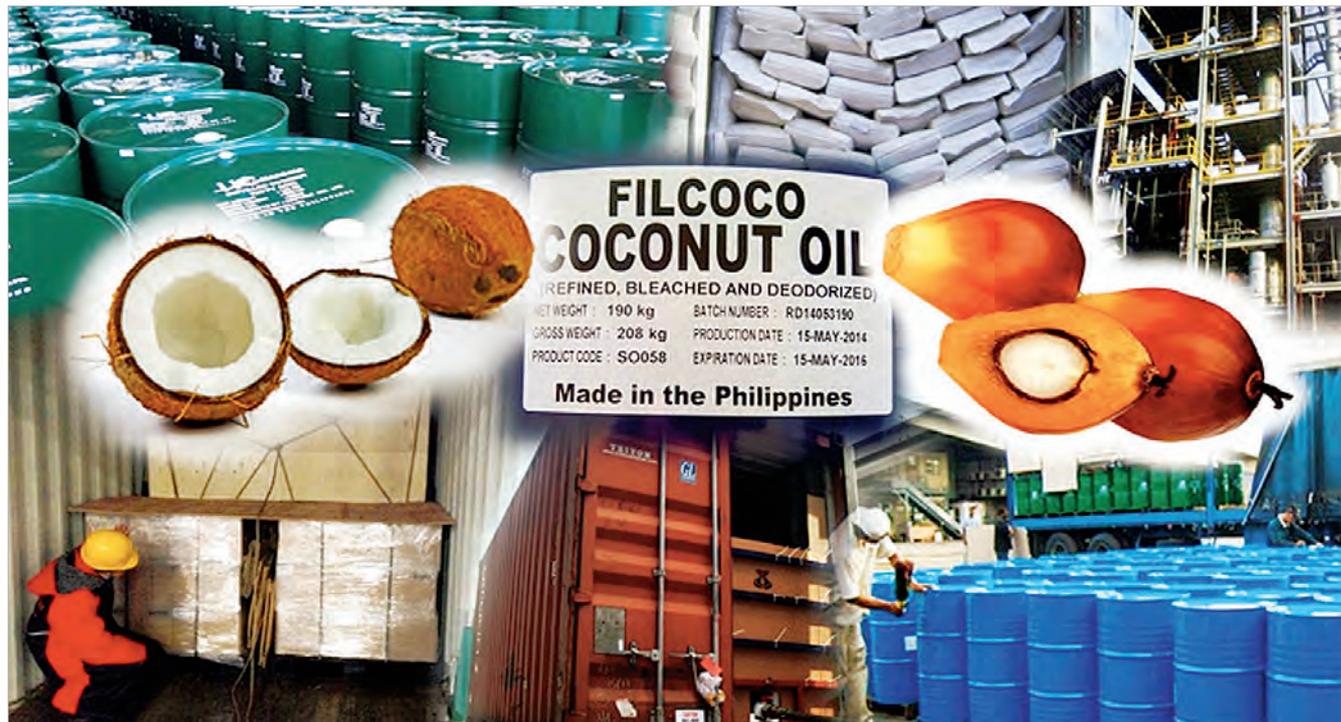
“AEC has doubly strengthened our position. Now, we are not only sourcing from ASEAN, but we have also increased intra-ASEAN trade. For example, we supply Philippine coconut-based crude glycerine to Malaysia, while we source refined glycerine, stearic acid, soap noodles, and palm olein from Malaysia for customers in the Philippines,” Mr. Reyes says.

ADVICE TO SMES

Mr. Reyes advises the new entrepreneurs to carry on and not to be discouraged by challenges, to have the discipline and confidence in exploring opportunities in the international market through the AEC, adding that one must “not expect others to hand (them what they need) on a silver plate.”

Emphasizing the importance of customers over money, Mr. Reyes says: “Do not cheat on your customers and think this is your shortcut to success,” Mr. Reyes says. “If asked to choose between a loss (e.g., if currency appreciates) or keeping our customers, our choice is very clear. We stick to our commitments to our customers even if it means we will lose money on that transaction.”

HanCole believes satisfied customers build better business and with the world as their market, HanCole is most certain in engaging more satisfied and happy customers in the years to come.





ICTSI TERMINALS: GATEWAYS FOR OPPORTUNITIES

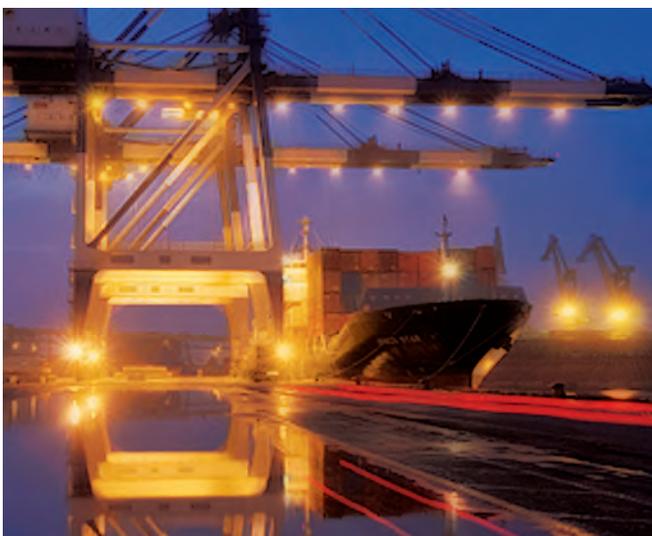
Whenever Filipinos import goods into the country, chances are they are availing themselves of the services of International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI), the Philippines’ largest port operator that is fast expanding its global presence.

Established in December 1987, ICTSI was awarded the concession to run the Manila International Container Terminal (MICT)— the country’s first port privatization effort. The MICT processes 65% of containers in the Port of Manila. Beyond operating the then decrepit port, ICTSI embarked on an ambitious development program to transform MICT into the country’s premier international gateway, one that meets the highest global management and operational standards.

This learning experience paved the way for ICTSI as a pioneering international port operator - a route never before explored by Filipino firms. The ICTSI has succeeded in establishing operations across the globe through meticulous preparation, dedication, and hard work.

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION

Transforming MICT required foresight, innovation and infusing modern technology.



“Back then, all we had was an undeveloped port with two dilapidated quay cranes. But ICTSI’s executives then knew that we could transform the container port and make it part of the world’s best,” says Christian R. Gonzalez, ICTSI Head of the Asia Pacific Region.

ICTSI initiated the computerization of port operations in the Philippines — and converted the manual terminal operations control system into an integrated real-time IT system.

CONQUERING THE WORLD

ICTSI saw opportunities around the world for an independent international terminal operator. After consolidating and strengthening its base and flagship operations in the Philippines, it launched an aggressive international and domestic expansion program in 1994.

MILESTONES

2008

Listed in the UNCTAD World Investment Report as among the top infrastructure transnational corporations in developing and transition economies. ICTSI is the only Philippine company in the list.

2009

Listed in Stern Stewart & Co.’s top companies in the ASEAN Relative Wealth Added Index. ICTSI still made profit during global economic crisis.

2012

Philippine Capital Market’s Deal of the Year – for the US\$200 million hybrid it issued (several bodies)

Best Investor Relations Company in the Philippines (Corporate Governance Asia)

Best Managed Company in Asia in transpo/ shipping industry (Euromoney)

2014

Corporate Excellence Awards – Large Enterprise (ASEAN Business Awards – Philippines)

Today, ICTSI has a portfolio of 29 container terminal operations across six continents, eight of which are in the Philippines. It is present in 21 countries worldwide,

including the largest economies: United States, China, and Japan. Closer to home, it has operations in Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam.

In addition to its global and Asia-Pacific regional headquarters in Manila, it has regional offices in Dubai for Europe and the Middle East; Cape Town for Africa; and Miami for the Americas.

WEATHERING UPHEAVALS

Through the years, ICTSI has established an impressive track record with its ability to adapt to changes brought about by domestic and global disruptions.

ICTSI’s infancy stage was during the post-EDSA Revolution period. Fresh from securing a 25 + 25-year concession for the Manila port, ICTSI was tasked to transform an undeveloped terminal port amid uncertainty about the newly instituted democracy, political dynamics and power shifts, and a cautious business environment. Given all these conditions, ICTSI managed to accomplish its task in roughly a decade.

However, ICTSI was not spared from the Asian financial crisis of the 1990s and was forced sell off some of its foreign operations. A few years after, ICTSI regained its foothold and expanded its foreign presence.

During the most recent global financial crisis, ICTSI’s management drive for debt refinancing and fund-raising made it one of the few Southeast Asian companies that continued to generate revenues. In fact, New York-based management consulting firm Stern & Stewart cited ICTSI for its resilience.

ICTSI now continues to aggressively seek port privatization opportunities and port asset sales across the globe, particularly with governments looking to divest or monetize port assets.

‘BIGGER ARENA’

ICTSI’s venture in ASEAN began in May 2006 when its subsidiary bought 95% shares from a foreign investor in PT Makassar Terminal Services, a cargo handler in South Sulawesi. Six years later, ICTSI started its 2nd operations in Indonesia, this time in Jakarta. ICTSI operations are present in Brunei through the Muara Port, the country’s main trade gateway.

ICTSI looks forward to regional integration. “ICTSI is prepared for the ASEAN Economic Community. Other ASEAN countries are also in our radar as we constantly look at port privatization opportunities in the region. ASEAN is our home region, and we are committed to continuously grow our business here,” says Mr. Gonzalez.

For Filipino companies looking at overseas expansion, Mr. Gonzalez advises them to work hard to pursue their dreams: “Do not rest on your laurels once you’ve achieved your goals. Do not be complacent. There is a bigger arena out there.”

With a population of 600 million people, ASEAN is certainly one of these bigger arenas with gateways for opportunities.

“Do not rest on your laurels once you’ve achieved your goals. Do not be complacent. There is a bigger arena out there.”

FAST FACTS	
Company Name	International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI)
Head Office	Port of Manila
Related industries	Port operations management and development Stevedoring/ port services Transportation/ logistics
Years in ASEAN	26 years in the Philippines 8 years in Indonesia 5 years in Brunei
Business Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manila, Subic, Batangas, Davao, Gen. Santos, Misamis Oriental, and Tagum City in the Philippines Jakarta and Makassar, South Sulawesi, in Indonesia Muara, Brunei Okinawa, Japan Shandong, China Melbourne, Australia Oregon, USA Karachi, Pakistan Umm Qasr, Iraq Mexico, Honduras, Ecuador, Brazil, Colombia, and Argentina in Latin America Poland, Georgia, Croatia in Europe Madagascar, Nigeria, and Congo in Africa
No. of Employees in ASEAN	Philippines (1,800) Indonesia (282) Brunei (75)
Website	http://www.ictsi.com





LBC:

Moving in ASEAN, moving towards growth

We like to move it," is LBC's brand promise.

LBC will ship for you or to you almost anything – from remittance to bills payment; personal effects to corporate documents; and, many other items – whether in balikbayan boxes, parcels, or cargo containers.

LBC is a wholly owned Filipino company providing courier and freight forwarding services, payment solutions, and money remittance services. Its original name, Luzon Brokerage Corporation, takes after the Philippines' largest island, Luzon.

Since its establishment in 1945, LBC has moved beyond Luzon and beyond the Philippine borders; operating anywhere in the country and in over 200 destinations worldwide.

ALWAYS THE PIONEER

LBC's success is driven by its pioneering spirit.

In 1950, LBC became the first Filipino-owned courier company that introduced the time sensitive cargo delivery system. Two decades later, it was the first to offer 24-hour, door-to-door delivery services.

In 1985, LBC was among the first Filipino companies to cross borders when it began servicing the needs of Filipinos overseas. In 1999, the bill payment collection service was included in its roster of services which provided Filipinos an easier way of settling their bills. In less than a decade, LBC started to service corporate clients.

In almost 60 years of being in the business, LBC opened over 2,500 branches and partner-agents, established a 1,500-vehicle fleet, employed over 6,000 customer service associates, and services over 18 countries.

THE 'BALIKBAYAN' BOX

Who hasn't used the *balikbayan* box?

LBC's overseas venture is famous for its 'balikbayan' box, serving Filipinos overseas and their families as well. In 1985, expecting the exponential growth of Filipinos working abroad, LBC established its first overseas branch in San Francisco, California. Today, LBC is present in countries with a large concentration of Filipinos such as Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Middle East, Canada, USA, and Europe.



“From where we stand, AEC can bring immense possibilities. For the service sector, we see lots of promises.”



“We are proud to serve the global Filipino community. We are happy that our brand offerings help bring Filipinos around the world closer,” says Mr. Santiago Araneta, LBC Express President.

LBC focuses on serving the needs of Filipino families and Filipino entrepreneurs. “Our retail business model has allowed us to spring board into corporate business in a seamless way. We hope our new service offerings could help SMEs grow their businesses,” says Mr. Araneta.

MOVING BETTER IN ASEAN

Expanding outside the Philippines was a challenge for LBC – from understanding the local landscape of each ASEAN member state, including laws and regulations, as well as business practices.

After years of operations within the region and doing business across the globe, LBC has learned to manage these challenges through business mandatories and standard operating procedures that include, among others, due diligence and research.

LBC is ready to seize the opportunities presented by AEC and is optimistic about the region’s future. “From where we stand, AEC can bring immense possibilities. For the service sector, we see lots of promises. The 600 million-market is, in itself, already a huge opportunity,” Mr. Araneta explains.

LBC recognizes that there will be more challenges but is confident about its capacity and capability to thrive and succeed. It anticipates strategic partnerships - adding that several businesses will consolidate best practices and share knowledge.

When asked what his advice would be to SMEs who wish to gain from the AEC, Mr. Araneta had this to say : “Choose the right partners, learn best practices, innovate and improve.”

With confidence and optimism, LBC is ready to move towards growth and success in ASEAN.

FAST FACTS

<i>Company</i>	LBC Express, Inc.
<i>Head Office</i>	Pasay City
<i>Business</i>	Logistics and money transfer services
<i>Service Offerings</i>	Retail: courier, balikbayan boxes, and air cargo Corporate: specialized corporate solutions, freight forwarding, and print and mail solutions
<i>ASEAN Presence</i>	Domestic and international remittance Bill payments and corporate remittance payouts
<i>Other International Presence</i>	ASEAN: Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei ASEAN+6: Japan and Australia Hong Kong SAR, Taiwan, Guam, Saipan, Middle East, USA, Canada, UK, Spain, Italy, and Germany
<i>Website</i>	www.lbcexpress.com



Rising up to Challenges

Some people may steer clear of challenges, but not Milit Baron, the President of Manila Catering. “I love challenges. I don’t like to be complacent. When clients ask me to do something out of my comfort zone, I accept the challenge with courage and conviction,” says Ms. Baron.

With this mindset, Manila Catering was able to bag their biggest airline client to date.

One late afternoon in 2012, Ms. Baron met AirAsia Group CEO Tony Fernandez who asked her to make a food presentation the following morning. She and her staff spent the entire night preparing and at 8:00 AM the following day, the team pitched and aced the account.

CLIENTELE

Manila Catering now provides the hot meals in all domestic and regional flights of AirAsia Zest Philippines. It also operates the airline’s mobile food kiosk at NAIA Terminal 4, and handles the warehouse operations for AirAsia Zest for Manila and Kalibo hubs. Its airline client portfolio eventually grew to include Tiger Air Philippines and Cebu Pacific’s in-flight hot meals and crew meals.

Manila Catering Corporation carries three official brands: Manila Catering Services (which handles their airline and institutional accounts, banquets and catering), F.I.S.H (Fiesta Island Seafood Hub -a Filipino specialty restaurant with branches in Tarlac and Quezon City), and Our Kitchen (which offers freshly-cooked home favorites in ready to heat packages for retail clients; the ingredients are blast frozen and do not contain preservatives).

FAST FACTS

<i>Company Name</i>	Manila Catering Corporation
<i>Head Office</i>	Quezon City
<i>Employees</i>	126
<i>Service Offering</i>	Airline catering Banquet catering Commissary operations F&B concession operations Ready-to-heat meals Restaurants
<i>ASEAN presence</i>	Airline catering for Cebu Pacific, and Tiger Air Phils., Air Asia Zest’s domestic and regional flights to Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Indonesia, etc..
<i>Website</i>	http://manilacatering.com.ph

“Companies must invest in technologies, level-up their standards, and manage their reputation and credibility if they wish to take advantage of the AEC opportunities.”



SMALL BURGER JOINT

In 1988, Ms. Baron survived a tragic car accident and the prognosis was unfavorable. She was told that she had to undergo therapy and use a wheelchair for mobility. Remaining optimistic and hopeful, Ms. Baron took her husband’s advice - to do what she loved most while undergoing therapy. So she started a small burger joint in Malabon called Mr. Spoon. The burger joint became a hit and started accepting orders to cater for small groups.

After months of therapy, Ms. Baron’s doctor was surprised to see her walking. “The burger joint inspired me and motivated me to walk again,” says Ms. Baron.

Mr. Spoon provided catering services for the neighbourhood’s private parties and corporate events. In the 90s, Mr. Spoon was renamed Manila Catering, symbolizing the goodness and flavors of old Manila cooking.

QUALITY ABOVE ALL

What the company considers the most difficult aspect in running their business is ‘sustaining quality to ensure that Manila Catering is kept as a supplier.’ Ms. Baron explains, “We have to be 10 steps ahead. We need to anticipate our clients’ growing requirements. We must invest in our people and facilities to meet our customers’ high standards.”

While other regular banquet caterings serve 15-20 events a day, Manila Catering caters an average of 3-5 events a day to a maximum of 8. “We keep it to that number to ensure quality. I’d rather have 5 clients and get 5 excellent ratings than have 20 with only half of them fully satisfied,” says Ms. Baron.

Since 2010, Manila Catering regularly enrolls its employees to the Department of Trade and Industry’s (DTI’s) Total Quality Management Program in line with its efforts to cultivate a culture of quality within the company. The company has become one of the few SMEs in the Philippines conferred with the DTI’s Philippine Quality Challenge (PQC) award – a recognition well deserved for a small self-starting Tarlac-based Company.

10 NOTCHES HIGHER

Airline catering provided the impetus for the company to elevate their standards by 10 notches, hiring personnel with specific airline catering competencies from microbiologists to food consultants. The infusion of new blood helped the company conform with technical and food safety standards

of airline companies. Manila Catering recognized the need for new technology and invested in blast freezing equipment, walk-in chillers, and even a laboratory. The company’s Manila operations facility recently transferred to a bigger commissary in Pasig City and is equipped with a Halal kitchen and a Halal warehouse. This move will provide better quality and more efficient services to the clients of Manila Catering.

Manila Catering is Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) accredited through the Department of Health’s Bureau of Quarantine. It is one of the few Halal Certified food providers in the Philippines. Ms. Baron explains that getting a Halal Certification and a bigger commissary are part of their preparation for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). “Companies must invest in technologies, level-up their standards, and manage their reputation and credibility if they wish to take advantage of the AEC opportunities.”

Manila Catering underscores the importance of getting the ‘right people on the bus’ – whether they are employees, partners or suppliers – as the economic integration draws near. Ms. Baron advises SMEs to work with people who have the passion for excellence, be open to alliances or partnerships, and build resilient relationships with their suppliers.

PEOPLE AND VISION

Manila Catering credits its leadership and its people for its sustained success. “We have a north star. Our CEO, Deogracias Baron, is a visionary. He is the first among us to see opportunities and provides us strategic guidance. Plus, of course, we are lucky to have a dedicated team behind us,” says Ms. Baron.

With visionary leadership and exceptional people, Manila Catering sets its sights on a better and brighter future in the Philippines and in ASEAN.





Going global, keeping Filipino talents home

Over the past decade, the Philippines has become one of the world's most dynamic business process outsourcing (BPO) destinations. The marquee buildings across the metropolis with names of foreign-owned and -run BPO firms prove that these companies trust the Filipinos to do just about everything that can be outsourced.

It is a little known fact that, even before many of these foreign BPOs headed for the Philippines, or even before the term business process outsourcing became a buzzword, a visionary Filipino firm was already offering these services.

In January 2003, the founders of Pointwest were faced with the challenge of growing their zero client- zero project- start-up firm of 9 people. Through talent and hard work, they became profitable at the end of their first year and from then on grew exponentially.

Today, Pointwest is the largest fully Filipino-owned information technology and business process management (IT-BPM) company in the Philippines. It services local and Fortune 500 firms from its base of operations in three locations: Makati, Quezon City, and Minnesota, USA. It has 1,128 employees, 100 of whom operate abroad.

'RETAINING THE FILIPINO TALENT'

From the beginning, and throughout its history, the Filipino talent has always been a part of the company's DNA. Pointwest believes that with proper technology, tools, and infrastructure, it could bring the market to where the talents are, specifically, in the Philippines.

In its formative years, Pointwest's principals saw the opportunities in the global market and witnessed the migration of Filipino IT talents to all parts of the world. "Believing that we can have a stronger Philippines, if we are able to create employment and retain the Filipino talent within the country,

we implemented a business model where we bring the work to where we have abundant talent," says Cristina Coronel, Pointwest President and CEO. "We have proven through our US experience that we can grow our business without necessarily separating people from their families."

Bringing in foreign clients to the Philippines was just the first step of the process. The more important part was keeping these clients satisfied. To achieve this, Pointwest's game plan was clear: "We must become the partner of choice of clients through excellent services and innovative solutions. We strive to become the employer of choice of talented individuals and inspiring leaders," explains Ms. Coronel.

GROWTH AND GLOBAL STANDARDS

In the next few years, Pointwest's pioneers offered innovative IT/BPM solutions and maintained global standards. Actively seeking accreditation for its methodologies and using tools such as Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO),

FAST FACTS

<i>Company Name</i>	Pointwest Technologies Corp.
<i>Head Office</i>	Paseo De Roxas, Makati City
<i>Employees</i>	1,128
<i>Service offerings</i>	Application Development and Management Independent Quality Assurance and Software Testing Business Process Service Business Consulting and Systems Conversion Cloud Computing Mobile Application Development
<i>Market Reach</i>	USA, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Japan

Website www.pointwest.com.ph

Pointwest became the first ASEAN organization to achieve “twin” appraisals for CMMI Maturity Level 3.

Pointwest continued its growth in the past decade and posted positive numbers even during the global financial crisis by relying on its management team to bring in new accounts and projects while satisfied clients gave several excellent referrals.

“Growing Pointwest involved sticking to the company’s core values: Lead, Excel, and Innovate. We believe that when you consistently live by these core values, success follows. We continuously invest on learning new technologies, creating new service lines, implementing new business models in order to sustain our growth into the future,” says Ms. Coronel.

Ever the trailblazer, Pointwest was recently recognized as winner of the 2014 ASEAN Business Awards – Philippines for being best in innovation.

BUILDING AN ASEAN FOOTPRINT

With ASEAN integration, Pointwest looks forward to expanding its footprint in the region. It leverages on the capabilities that it has developed from serving other markets and builds on its initial forays in the ASEAN.

It recently completed a pioneering IT project involving cloud solutions with a partner in Singapore. “Doing business in the ASEAN region offers the advantage of being able to send our resources to the client or partner’s site, for face to face meetings and application system deployments, without strict visa restrictions,” Ms. Coronel says.

Pointwest is also exploring new projects and partnerships in other ASEAN countries and in Japan, which is a leading ASEAN trade partner.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK

Pointwest recognizes that there will be operational challenges in an integrated marketplace, among them, cultural differences, language barriers, varying legal and regulatory frameworks, and different operational methodologies. This is why Pointwest believes working with partners is the way to go.

It plans to partner and collaborate with companies and organizations in other ASEAN countries to expand its resource base and take advantage of the core strengths of its ASEAN neighbors. Ms. Coronel adds that complementation through collaboration is the key to capturing a bigger slice of the global market.

“The opening of any new market is an exciting time, probably close to how pioneers during the Age of Exploration felt when seeing land not yet trod by any of their fellows,” Ms. Coronel concludes.



“Believing that we can have a stronger Philippines, if we are able to create employment and retain the Filipino talent within the country, we implemented a business model where we bring the work to where we have abundant talent.”

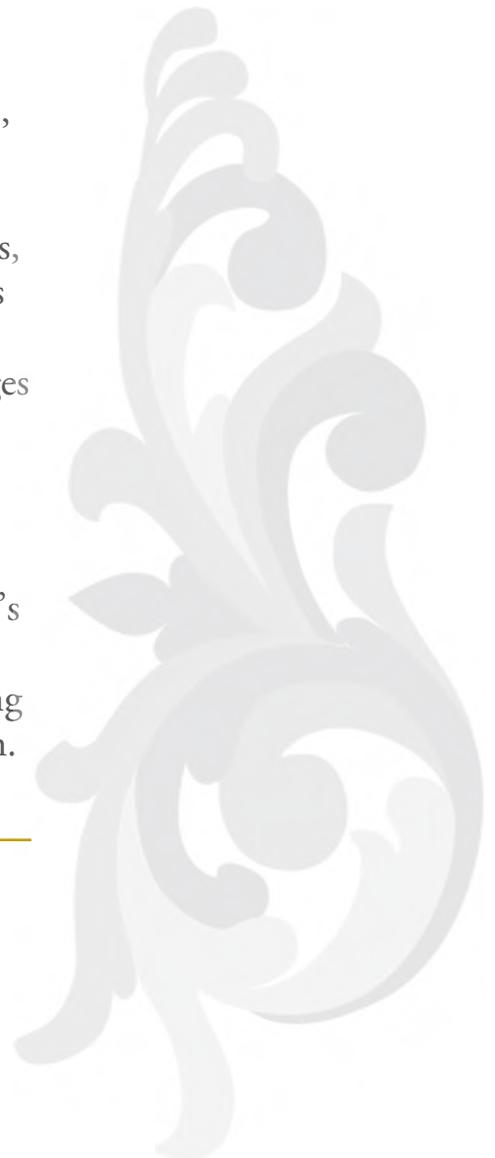
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Business Beyond Borders is a fulfillment of what was, a few years back, an aspiration to capture and impart the essence of Philippine MSMEs – paradigms of innovation, wisdom, inspiration and hope.

The Department of Trade and Industry extends its gratitude to the exceptional companies featured in this publication and to the individuals who graciously accommodated our request, taking time off from their busy workday to relive their journeys and travails with us, and granting us the privilege of writing their stories, experiences and insights, as well.

We thank all the other organizations, bureaus, offices and individuals who helped make this publication possible – their guidance and assistance steered us through to the final stages of this work.

DTI's initiatives will remain focused on intensifying its advocacy to integrate our MSMEs into the mainstream of our country's economy and into the global marketplace where they can flourish and succeed, attaining our ideal of meaningful and inclusive growth.





<http://www.dti.gov.ph>

<http://www.boi.gov.ph>

<http://industrytradephilippines.com>

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