

COMPANY: STRIKE PETROLEUM PTE LTD
RECIPIENT: ANDREW WONG

Affectionately known as the “oily man” by his friends and peers, Andrew is a skilled professional specializing in the field of marketing and delivery of marine petroleum products and services.

What many may not know is that Andrew started his working life as an educator in 1967. While working as an educator, Andrew discovered his intrinsic value is in the areas of marketing and business development. Armed with a zest for life, Andrew decided to pursue a career doing marketing and business development in the marine petroleum distribution.

He says: “I love the marine petroleum business because it is a highly service-oriented activity, rather than just buying and selling.” The services include technical visits on board vessels at shipyards, anchorages and even as far as Outside Port Limit (OPL), interpreting of oil analysis reports and recommending the right oils to be used for the various equipments.

In year 1972, Andrew started his work with BP Singapore as an executive in the marine marketing division, handling bunkering and marine lubricants. Then in the year 1978, Andrew was head-hunted to become a Petroleum Consultant, for French petroleum company, ELF South East Asia Pte Ltd.

A bigger breakthrough came when ELF merged with Total S.A. With this merger Andrew was promoted to the position of Deputy Managing Director cum General Manager. With his new role, Andrew was tasked with developing ELF’s marine lubricant activities in the wider ASEAN markets. Andrew is extremely proud of the fact that, under his charge, Total S.A. secured the lubrication of 45 MISC (Malaysian state-owned shipping company) vessels. He was also instrumental in initiating and appointing Petrolimex, Vietnam’s biggest petroleum import-export company, to become a Total’s LubMarine partner.

A go-getter and firm advocate of lifelong learning, Andrew completed his MBA with University of South Australia at the turn of the century. Andrew says: “After completing my MBA, I had the itch to start my own company, thus Strike Petroleum Pte Ltd was incorporated on 3rd January 2000.”

Strike Petroleum markets all kinds of marine lubricants. Strike has also branched out to market other ranges of lubricants, chemicals and inland diesel products. Currently, their core division handles sales and deliveries of marine lubricants in bulk, as well as packed grades.

Andrew says: “I feel very proud to be able to say that we have been able to pull through, in spite of, some difficulties in delivery operations. For example, a delivery of 30,000-L of marine lubricants was supplied to a vessel on schedule at Batam shipyard, Indonesia, by 20-footer containers from Singapore. According to Andrew, he has “neither seen nor experienced” such a big delivery at Batam, even while he was working with several major oil companies.

Take another instance, Strike Petroleum recently supplied 128 drums of marine lubricants to a customer's vessel in Darwin. Andrew says: "It was tedious as there were a lot of strict guidelines to follow beside the fact that there are only 3 to 4 container ships sailing to Darwin per month."

Through sheer hard work and resilience, Strike Petroleum has gained more confidence from its customers for long-term support and rapport.

Another major breakthrough was in the year 2009. It was a period of world-wide economic downturn for all businesses involving air, land and sea sectors. Yet it was the year Strike Petroleum was able to purchase its own office property fully-paid up!

"Entrepreneurs are not born, but made. One must have the desire to work hard, to enjoy business networking, and to enjoy traveling," says Andrew. He goes on to highlight the importance of having a clear direction in doing a business; he says, "Do First Things Right The First Time". Strike Petroleum's passion or motto in mind is "to provide the best services at all times."

When asked about the necessary qualities required for entrepreneurship, Andrew says: "I believe in the qualities of integrity, drive, and being forward-thinking."

Moving forward, Strike Petroleum is now sourcing for good entities to become its exclusive distributors to market its trade-mark "UNITEXAS" range of lubricants.

Andrew also adds that he hopes to be able to encourage and inspire SME owners to be "focused and devoted" to their core businesses and to acquire a "never give up" attitude when the going gets tough. He goes on to underline the importance that, though entrepreneurship can "challenging at times", but no matter what the circumstances can be, an entrepreneur must be reliable to deliver top-notch services.

Finishing off the interview, Andrew says: "Strike Petroleum would want to say a special "Thank You" to all our associates, customers, and suppliers. We want to thank them for their continuous support all these years for, without them, this award would not have been possible."

It seems more than clear that the sixty-six year old Andrew shows no signs of stopping and will continue in his path toward excellence. His journey from an educator to a self-made man "oily man" is awe-inspiring, and will undoubtedly inspire generations of entrepreneurs to come.

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