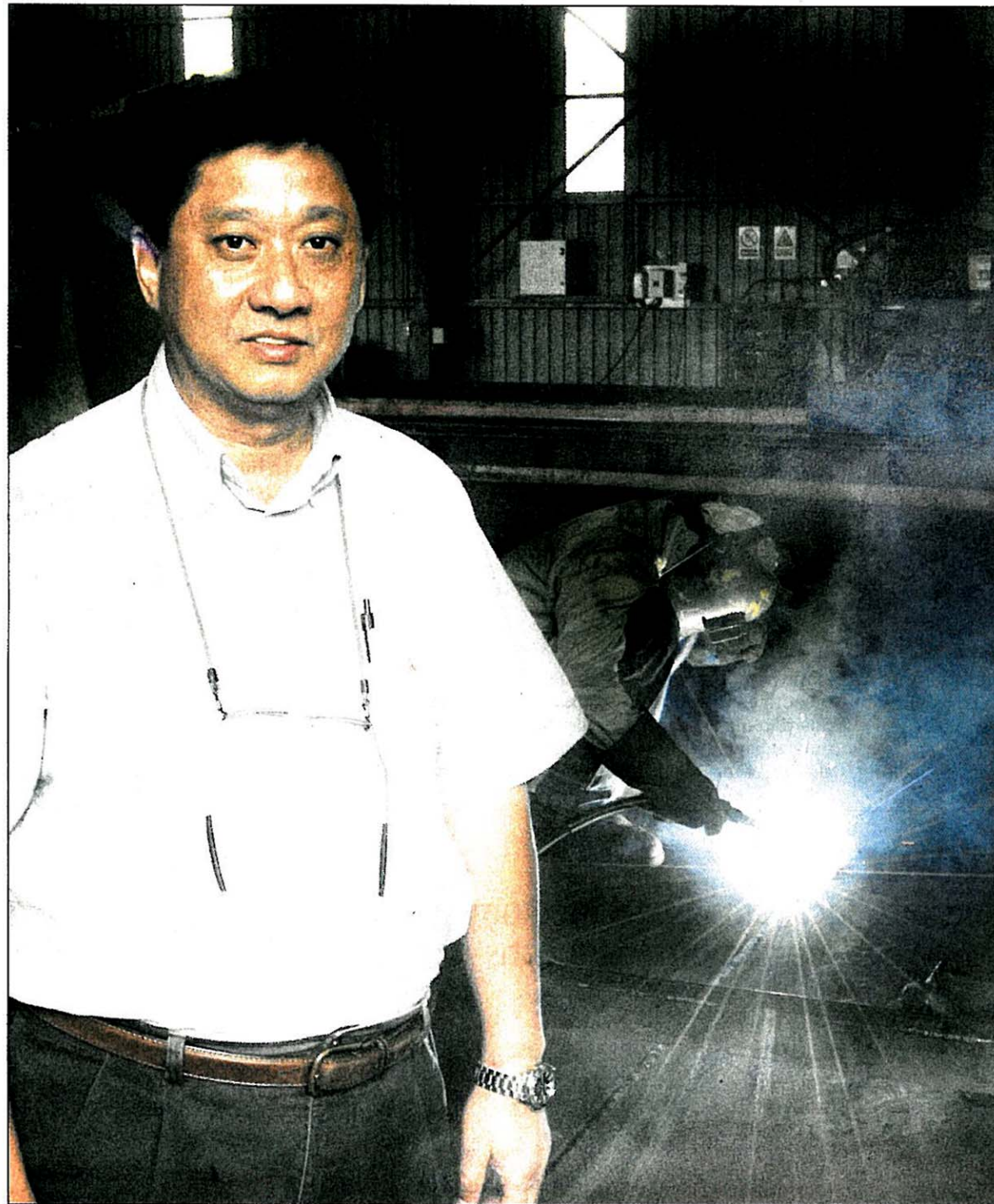


'You must have the passion in this. If you don't have the passion, you will find it difficult to wake up early to come to work. And I don't want to live like that.'

— Mooreast managing director Sim Koon Lam



ARTHUR LEE

Anchored on firm foundations

Mooreast lives up to its brand promise of delivering quality products and value-added services to achieve customer satisfaction

By LOUIS CHIN, STACEY JANINE CHONG and LEMOUSHMI DEVI

Having an oil rig or any offshore platforms moored with inferior anchors is akin to having a house built on sand. When the rains come, the house will collapse. So sailors and oil rig workers understand the need for good anchors, and place their lives in the hands of Mooreast on a daily basis.

Established in 1993, Mooreast is a fully operational marketing, sales and service company providing mooring expertise internationally. Based in Singapore, the company's operations cover South-east Asia, East Asia, and the Oceania region with a network of local agents and representatives assuring direct contact with the market.

With an exclusive licence to manufacture Vryhof's superior Stevin, Stevpris, Stevshark and Stevmata anchors in the Eastern Hemisphere, Mooreast has seen tremendous growth since 1993.

In addition, increasing sophistication in the anchoring industry has also led to a rise in customisation as demanded by the customers while still maintaining high quality. Mooreast has thus expanded their services to include fabrication of various offshore mooring components such as steel cylindrical foam-filled buoys and chain stoppers.

In an industry known for its pervasive and strict regulatory enforcement, Mooreast needs to ensure that quality is the heartbeat of the company.

"Do not cut corners" is managing director of Mooreast Sim Koon Lam's constant reminder to his staff. Iso 9001:2008, Iso 14001:2004, and OHSAS 18001:2007, are just some of the many internationally recognised certifications and awards received by Mooreast as a proud testament of its operational excellence. In addition, Mooreast became one of the earliest companies to obtain the ISO/TS 29001:2007, which is the certification for the petroleum, petrochemical and natural gas industries – sector-specific quality management systems, certified by Det Norske Veritas in July 2009.

Anchored by a quality culture and fine business practices, Mooreast has remained steady despite the recent economic storms. With 90 per cent of existing customers returning for repeat purchases and a 97.5 per cent customer satisfaction rating, Mooreast has managed to live up to its brand promise of delivering quality products and value-added services to achieve maximum customer satisfaction.

Caltex Refineries, Australia, even noted that "(Mooreast) responds rapidly to all enquiries. Provides well thought out, informed, leading edge and 'best practice' responses".

When asked about how he led Mooreast to its current standing, Mr Sim remarked that, "You must have the passion in this. If you don't have the passion, you will find it difficult to wake up early to come to work. And I don't want to live like that." Truly, passion drives the individuals in Mooreast.

Being relatively smaller in size than other players in the industry, Mooreast faces challenges both in the human resources aspect as well as being rocked by the economic storm.

Although the marine and offshore industry is of strategic importance to Singapore, it is still perceived as labour intensive and dangerous, leading to constraints in employment in the industry. For an SME like Mooreast, not only is it difficult to attract talent, the recent hike in foreign worker levies is set to deal another blow as the cost to retain current workers increases.

Though it may be tempting to decrease hiring standards, Mooreast insists on keeping the same rigour arising from its quality mindset to assess potential candidates. Current employees are also challenged to improve productivity through Mooreast's knowledge initiatives like on-the-job training to encourage knowledge development, sharing and retention.

The recent economic storm with fluctuating oil prices and currency rates affects Mooreast directly on both the supply and demand side. The increasing costs of raw materials coupled with decreasing orders add pressure on the already constricted

margins. Despite this, Mooreast said it would not sacrifice quality for margins, but would rather sacrifice margins for quality.

As a proud recipient of the Enterprise 50 awards for 2008 and 2009, Mr Sim noted that "many people these days are looking for an easy way out and (are) unwilling to put in the effort to achieve the standards". These words from the leader of a leading SME in Singapore serves as a reminder for many – a reminder to stay anchored in a company's core values despite surrounding challenges.

Looking ahead, as the economy begins to recover, Mooreast is looking to become more flexible and adaptable to changes by diversifying its product range as well as executing its regional expansion plans.

The writers are students of NUS Business School



Celebrating Singapore's Enterprising Spirit 2010

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