

Spirit of Enterprise Awards Ceremony 2006

October 23, 2006 in Events, by admin



Today, under the invitation of one of the 41 honourees, Samill Nanavati, I attended the Spirit of Enterprise Awards Ceremony 2006. For the first time, I also met up face to face with Lim Der Shing, our resident contributor and also one of the 41 honourees who received the Spirit of Enterprise Award. (Imagine that we have conversed over email over the past year). We report about this event held in Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel and also talk about some of the lessons drawn by the speech given by Ron Sim, CEO of OSIM.

For the past two years, I have attended the Spirit of Enterprise (SOE) Awards Ceremony. Both events are well-organized and they honoured a lot of unsung heroes from the small and medium enterprises who contributed to our economy. This year, the Guest of Honour, is Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Minister of State for Trade and Industry and Minister in charge of entrepreneur (ACC, Chairman). The most interesting aspect of the SOE awards is that the number of awards increase with the age of Singapore. For example, Singapore is 41 this year and we have 41 honourees (see the list of winners in SOE website).

For this year, the speech is given by Ron Sim, CEO of OSIM, who told his story of how he started his entrepreneurial journey with S\$1500. He told of the days in the 1980s recession where he learned from his career that in order to succeed in life, you have to be an entrepreneur and create a product of value, instead of trading stocks under a well-cushioned banking job. His humble background tells a story of how he goes from rags to riches. He also cautioned that even though one can be entrepreneurial and smart, the entrepreneur must exercise prudence and not recklessness in his business. I thought that the most interesting lesson I heard from his talk is the answer to the old aged question, "Can entrepreneurship be taught?" He gave a diplomatic answer by saying that some entrepreneurs are cultivated through environment and some are borne with the talent of being one. In any case, it does not matter but whether the entrepreneur can create value for the society.

After his speech, Mr Lee gave out the awards to the winners of Spirit of Enterprise. Also, awards are given to the student interviewers and also organizations who help to promote the spirit of enterprise. At the end, they also gave out the annual publication which SOE published. This year, the book is "In the Boss: 24 real-life success stories". The three main lessons from this book is (i) find a niche, (ii) help is available and (iii) anyone can be an entrepreneur. We will do a book review in SGE once we have digested the stories inside.

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