

# Winning designs

A client-centric approach has helped Grandwork Interior stay ahead of the competition

by lai yi ming

LOCAL interior firm Grandwork Interior has grown progressively since it started out as an eight-man team in Orchard Plaza in 1996. Today, it has 350 staff and has branch offices in Malaysia, Jakarta, Tokyo, Dubai and the United Arab Emirates.

This year, it opened its branch in Taiwan and will be working on 20 outlets there for Spanish brand Zara.

Some of the high-profile projects it has worked on in Singapore in the past year include the Marina Bay Sands integrated resorts, with a contract value of \$6 million, Salvatore Ferragamo store at Paragon Orchard and Ku Dé Ta restaurant at the Marina Bay Sands Skypark.

The multiple award-winning company enters the prestigious Enterprise 50 (E50) Awards list for the fifth consecutive year this year. The Awards recognise local and privately owned companies across all industry sectors who have contributed to the economic development in Singapore and abroad.

“The E50 award has provided Grandwork with a good evaluation on the current outlook of the business. And in winning the award for the fifth year running, it has given the organisation confidence and assurance of its quality standards in expanding into new territories locally and abroad,” says Mr Jay Chiu, the company’s founder and managing director.

“This has empowered Grandwork to work towards contributing further to the economic and interior design developments in Singapore and abroad through penetrating the health-care and education sector with its environmentally friendly fit-out materials. This is in addition to marketing the ‘made-in-Singapore’ name in new regions abroad such as South America, China and India.”

Grandwork’s successes can be attributed to its business practices that include a relatively flat business structure consisting of well-run departments that are agile, adaptable to change and a strong international presence, says Mr Chiu. This allows Grandwork to weather various economic conditions locally and regionally.

One of the company’s strengths, he adds, is its commitment to creating healthy and environmentally friendly working and living spaces. The company uses materials that have been graded to be free of formaldehyde, a carcinogen, by the Japan Plywood Inspection Corporation. Mr Chiu explains that this puts Grandwork among a handful of companies in South-east Asia authorised to export their products and services to Japan, which has strict product quality standards.

Prioritising clients is another winning strategy.

“Grandwork’s business model for servicing clients is to provide an unparalleled level of support both during and after the project. For clients in the retail sector, any delay in the project would mean a loss in revenue,” he says.

“Working overtime and on weekends is a norm for the staff at Grandwork in completing their client’s projects.”



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This customer-oriented approach has enabled the company to secure a loyal pool of clients from various sectors and also effectively minimises industry-

related risks incurred due to cyclical demand and changes in the economy, Mr Chiu says.

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Mr Jay Chiu, founder and managing director, Grandwork Interior

In line with this year’s E50 Awards which emphasise “structuring for optimal growth”, Grandwork diversified its business to include the supply of environmentally friendly building materials and expanding into the construction industry. Earlier this year, Grandwork worked in partnership with SV Builders to develop its construction arm, Grandwork SV Builders.

“As such, Grandwork ventured into large-scale construction projects such as the erection and interior decoration works to the Civic, Cultural, Retail & Commercial building at Buona Vista, with a total contract value of \$17 million,” says Mr Chiu.

For the first time last year, Grandwork ventured into the health-care sector with projects such as the Alteration and Addition works at St Andrews Community Hospital. This year, it completed fit-out contracts for National Heart Centre and Woodlands Polyclinic. Currently, the company is in the middle of an interior renovation project at KK Women’s & Children’s hospital, which will be completed in April next year. The health-care sector is an area it is looking to penetrate further.

Mr Chiu says that Grandwork Interior plans to be listed in two to three years’ time and he expects growth to be about 30 per cent year on year, hitting \$150 million by 2016.