



50 SWEET GOLDEN YEARS

LONGEST-SERVING EMPLOYEE: Senior manager Chuah joined company in 1964

MUHAMMED AHMAD HAMDAN

IN 1964, when Chuah Hoe Peng joined Malayan Sugar Manufacturing Co Bhd (MSM Co), now known as MSM Prai Bhd, a subsidiary of MSM Malaysia Holdings Bhd, little did he know that he would become the company's longest-serving employee 50 years later.

His five decades at MSM Co spanned from the reign of founder, who is also Malaysia's richest man Tan Sri Robert Kuok, to the new leadership of Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV).

Chuah, 69, who spent almost his entire stint with MSM Co working in the sales and marketing division as senior manager of customer relationship, said establishing strong customer relationships for the company for decades has boldened his sense of belonging towards the company, which he now thinks of like his own family.

"I have taken care of the company's customer base since the first generation of their family, right to the third generation. It is a satisfaction for myself and my team to be able to maintain the strong relationships despite the changes in the management.

"If there is any other thing that I must owe to my long service in MSM Co, it would be the company's great concern towards employee welfare," he said.

Chuah said MSM Co has always given strong emphasis to employee welfare since Kuok's era as the company sees human capital as the most valuable asset to the organisation.

This tradition continues into the new management and leadership of FGV, as evident in the fact that he was offered to extend his service multiple

times after reaching his retirement age 14 years ago.

"Most of MSM's former employees stayed in the company until retirement. This is simply because, despite being strict about its business, the company treats its employees like a family member and provides them with various benefits to boost their motivation," he said.

Reminiscing on the good old days MSM had gone through over the years, Chuah said things were naturally not always as sweet as sugar, especially when the country was hit by the sugar crisis.

One event that is still vivid in his mind is when a sugar crisis befell Sabah in 2006, where Chuah and his team had to embark on a mission to help resolve the crisis — acute shortage of sugar supply.

"We had to ship 600 tonnes of sugar to Sabah within three days, when the normal process would take about 10 to 30 days. We had to use naval ships for the delivery and managed to get it done, although it seemed almost impossible at first.

"We had to work around the clock to make sure the delivery process runs smoothly from our refinery (at Prai, Penang) right to the unloading of the sugar at Sabah port. The situation could not have been more critical given that it was just days before Hari Raya celebrations," Chuah recalled.

"There were also cases of shops getting burnt by consumers in Penang during the sugar crisis in the country. Sugar is one of the essential food ingredients in the country. Hence, it is very important for the company to ensure there's ample and

continuous supply to the consumers," he added.

Meanwhile, two other long-serving employees of MSM, Chuah Kean Huat and Tan Siew Tong, who have been in the company for 35 and 25 years, respectively, describe the company as a place in which they wouldn't mind spending their golden years.

"Like what the Chinese philosopher Confucius said, 'Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life,'" Tan said.

"The company is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, we would love to see it continue growing, so it will never have to stop celebrating anniversaries for many decades more," he added.



*MSM senior manager of customer relationship **Chuah Hoe Peng** says the company has always given strong emphasis on employees welfare since Kuok's era. Pic by Azhar Ramli*

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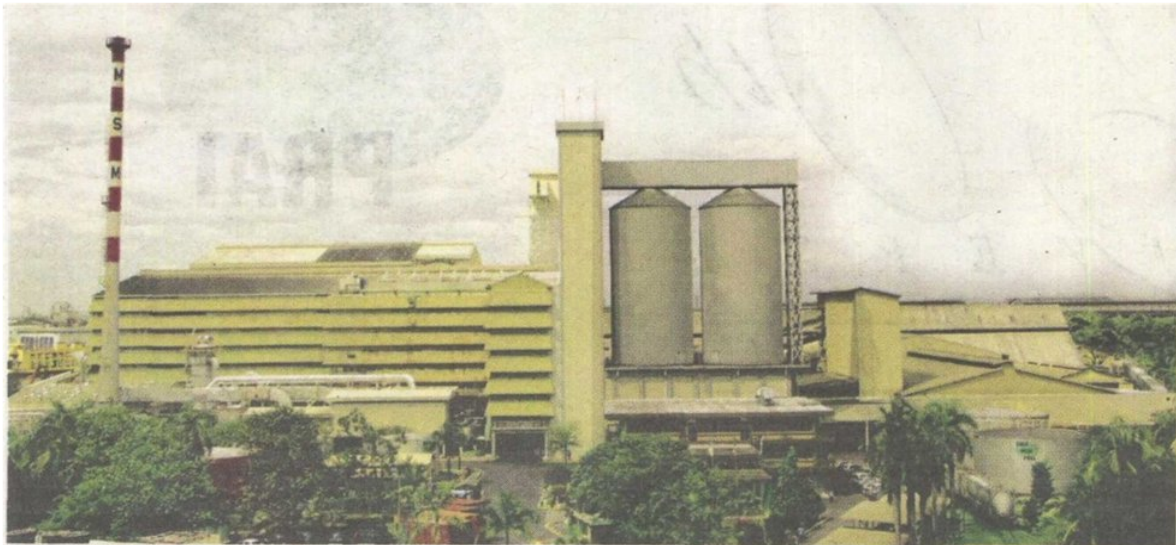


Malaysia's first Prime Minister **Tunku Abdul Rahman** officiating at the launch of MSM's first sugar refinery in Prai, Penang, accompanied by MSM founder Robert Kuok, the first milestone in MSM's 50-year journey.



In 1964, the opening of the **Prai sugar refinery** was greeted with much fanfare.

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*In 1976, the automation and computerisation were introduced on a large scale to modernise factory operations. This resulted in MSM having the **world's first computerised boiler in a sugar refinery.***