

The Man Behind HomeSuccess

in Front of



Simon Goh is the man behind – or rather, in front of – HomeSuccess. We say ‘in front’ because, in every sense of the word, he is the company’s front man. Celebrity designer to the stars, he is a star in his own right.

WHAT'S IN A NAME, WHAT'S ON A NAME CARD

Simon Goh looks familiar. Very familiar. Suddenly it clicks. You've seen his likeable smiling face on the front of his two showrooms at Beauty World and Balestier. You've seen him on TV. You've seen him in the newspapers, in both English and Chinese dailies. You've seen him with high-profile business associates, MediaCorp artistes and even MPs. This is one well-connected fellow.

When we ask Simon about the strategy of using his face to front his company's communications, he explained: "When you invest in people, you never know when they're going to leave. Chances are, the good ones will learn what they can then start a business of their own, or use their experience to get more money somewhere else. You cannot deny them that right. I promote myself because I know I'm not going to leave the company any time soon. Using my face, my name and my personality as selling tools is a good long-term investment."

Given that his company started as a three-man team in 1995, Simon is clearly doing many things right. In 2000, his company was the first interior design firm to be awarded the internationally recognised ISO 9001 certification. Others soon followed, clinching HomeSuccess' status as a leader in the competitive interior design and renovations industry.

SIMON GOH, CELEBRITY DESIGNER...



Simon's personal philosophy of design is simple. It's based on two-way respect. "As designers, we must respect our customers. Every customer is a designer, with an idea and a picture in their head of what they want. It's up to the designer to execute, but not just 'follow and do'. It's our responsibility to point out any practical objections, and make suggestions to improve on the original idea. The customer must also respect the designer, or what are they paying us for?" Simon said.

Simon also emphasised the importance of matching the designer to the customer. "You have a right to check out the background of your designer. A big company can send you a junior designer with no experience in your type of project, and you may never know. At HomeSuccess, we go to great lengths to make sure that every customer gets the right designer."



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Simon's customers include MPs, CEOs and MediaCorp artistes. Chen Han Wei, Pornsak and Lynn Poh number among them. He has created show flats for stars like Zoe Tay and Phua Chu Kang in the popular reality TV series, Celebrity Dream Homes, and at the 5th and 6th Spring Home Exhibition. MediaCorp also regularly engages his company to design sets.

... ENTREPRENEUR-HOST-MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER...

Simon's design business is only one string to his bow. He is also a director of BioApex and G Skin, the companies he owns and runs with his lovely wife and partners, with outlets in Beauty World and at premium locations in the town area.

And that's not all. Simon is also a sought-after bi-lingual host and motivational speaker. He was recently invited by Philips to speak about LED lighting in Hong Kong, and

was a Singapore representative at China's Overseas Experts Advisory Committee. He also trains ERA and other property agents in sales. In return, he reaps not only his fees, but tens of thousands of dollars in referrals from property agents whose confidence and trust he has earned.

... TRAINER-MENTOR-BOSS-FRIEND...

When we chatted with Simon in his Beauty World showroom, the easy camaraderie he shared with his staff was obvious. We wondered out loud how he managed to strike a balance between being both boss and friend to his employees.

Simon explained: "The world has changed. The boss used to fire the staff. Now the staff 'fire' the boss. It's so easy to find another job with another company, with a slightly better title and a slightly bigger paycheck. It's not the pay that will keep a good employee, it's the culture of love, care and concern." Simon added: "Every Tuesday we conduct staff training. It covers grooming, talking and presentation skills. I foster a culture of teaching and learning. Old staff teach new staff, and new staff teach old staff. And I'm not selfish with my knowledge and experience, because it's in my best interests to share it with my staff. Whenever I see an opportunity to teach, I will teach."

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... COMMUNITY LEADER-PHILANTHROPIST-FITNESS FANATIC...

As if all that designing, networking, speaking and training wasn't enough to keep Simon busy, he is also a former member of the Bukit Timah Residents' Committee, a contributor to the Straits Times Pocket Money Fund, and a sponsor

of the Lee Hsien Loong National Street Soccer League (NSSL).

When we asked him where he gets his energy from, Simon replied: "I must start every day with exercise, be it in the pool, at the gym or hiking in Bukit Timah. For me, it's a must."

What about any special diet tips? He volunteered: "Lately I've been eating lots of cheese and drinking red wine at midnight with my wife. I know it's probably not good for me, but so far so good. I also like sushi and sashimi, and my wife and I enjoy Japanese food in general."

... FAMILY MAN...

When the conversation turned to his wife, Simon was quick to sing her praises. "She's my true partner in every sense of the word, and helps me enormously in my businesses," he said. When we enquired about his children, he half-jokingly said: "My three kids are my toughest business to manage. They're very high maintenance



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and I get no returns on my investment. All that unconditional love and no guarantees they're going to love me back."

When he saw the shocked expressions on our faces, he added: "My kids are a great motivator. I make it clear that they don't have to excel academically, but they must have confidence. I also encourage openness. I'd rather they tell me where they are than sneak out. I give them a lot of freedom."

WHAT NEXT?

It's hard to imagine what other hats Simon could possibly wear. Watch this space. Or rather, look out for his face!

HomeSuccess Pte Ltd
Simon Goh, HP: 9833 8888

Main Showroom:
Beauty World Centre #01-05/06/12/13
144, Upper Bukit Timah Road,
Singapore 588177
T: 6468 9559

Balestier Showroom:
619 Balestier Road
Singapore 329912
T: 6252 9559

E: sales@homesuccess.com.sg
www.homesuccess.com.sg