



HOME › EXECUTIVE-INTERVIEWS › ENGINEERING › ENGINEERED FOR SUCCESS: JEREMY FONG

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Engineered for success: Jeremy Fong

Jeremy Fong, CEO of Fong's Engineering & Manufacturing, doesn't want to be world number one. he wants to be his customers' number one.



Jeremy Fong

CEO, Fong's Engineering & Manufacturing

Words - **Julie Cooper**

Images - **Rob Waller**

Reduced waste, increased quality, lower labour costs and higher productivity – it's easy to see why Industry 4.0 is being heralded as the future of manufacturing. With a heavy focus on interconnectivity, automation, machine learning and real-



While high-end luxury labels like Ralph Lauren and Louis Vuitton are riding this innovation wave to help protect against counterfeits, elevate customer experience and become more efficient, high-end medical device manufacturer Fong's Engineering & Manufacturing is harnessing the power of Industry 4.0 to save more lives.

And that's an initiative that will always be in fashion. Fong's is rolling out a smart factory powered by advanced robotics and autonomous robots with Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) capabilities for collecting data over the next three to five years.

Introduced in stages, these measures will allow the company to run its production round the clock with minimal human intervention – a feat that not many other SMEs in Singapore are even capable of.

One of its production lines has already been upgraded, and the results speak for themselves. "Productivity has increased



Through innovation, we are able to keep creating values for our customers.

"We can run 24/7 with an automated production line. And our people are very happy because they now have new opportunities. They have a real chance to learn new things." Fong's is a strong advocate of training and reskilling its employees.

The company has a training road map catering to its workers' needs and supporting them as they go through this transition. "We keep mentoring and coaching our people," he says.

"We continue to tell them, 'No quality, no customers, no business.' And, especially in the medical sector, this is key. The devices we make affect a human's life."

It wasn't always this way though. This privately held company has completely transformed since its inception in 1982. Fong's went from being a manufacturer of many things to a specialised manufacturer of medical devices.

This focus has been key to making the company future-proofed. "We have transformed over the years," he says.

"We transformed from a parts manufacturer to a medical device manufacturer because, regardless if the economy is good or bad, people still require health care and medical treatment. It's always sunshine for us now, and we are glad we put our focus here. We can definitely see the growth of our business."



innovation alone or innovating for the sake of innovating that's brought the company such success.

Instead, it's Fong's customer-centric approach that's made all the difference. "Through innovation, we are able to keep creating value for our customers," he says.



"Since we have built a strong base of relationships with our customers over the years, we know what they want. Our products are designed based on their needs. It's not easy for newcomers to come in and compete with us."

And that's the way Jeremy likes it. This way, Fong's can continue focusing on what truly matters – being its customers' preferred choice. "There are so many companies that used to be the number one in the world, but now they're gone," he says.

"We strive to be our customers' number one. That really makes a difference. If I understand my customers'



the only source in Asia to supply this device to them.

However, Fong's couldn't do it all alone, and that's where its long-term partnerships with its suppliers come into play.

"Qingdao NovelBeam Technology supplies optics for our devices," Jeremy explains.

"We have a very close relationship with them. We work together developing products according to our customers' specific requirements. Through these collaborations, we are able to work together for a win-win partnership."

According to Jeremy, the root of all of this transformation can be attributed to three words: believe, firm and persistence.

"You have to believe you're doing the right thing," he says.

"Then, you have to be very firm and focused. Finally, whatever you do, you're bound to face a lot of challenges, so you must be persistent. Be at peace with where you are, never give up and, one day, you will get there."

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