

HEAVY METAL INDUSTRY

**Toh Tiau Lai & Toh Tian Sze –
Lian Bee Metal Pte Ltd**

Lian Bee Metal Pte Ltd is a leading metal works company in Singapore specializing in the fabrication of steels, reinforcement bars, scrap metal and supplying them to construction industries. Under Managing Director Mr Toh Tiau Lai's leadership and his brother Mr Toh Tian Sze's three decades of unparalleled expertise, Lian Bee Metal has steadily forged a name for themselves over the years as an industry champion.

The company was established in 1988 as a metal works specialist. In 2006, Lian Bee diversified into property development by investing \$5 million in a joint venture with Oxley Group, a major client of Lian Bee with seven construction sites across Singapore today. With the promising Oxley partnership and a steady financial outlook, Lian Bee's \$4.5 million factory was also constructed that very same year, solidifying the company's position as a formidable force within the industry.

The company has grown tremendously from the 15 workers it had at the beginning to a 100-strong workforce today. Still it has not grown as quickly as desired. As with many labour intensive industries, Lian Bee constantly wrestles with manpower issues as one of its main obstacles to further and faster expansion.

With great success comes great responsibilities - and keeping a thriving family business alive and healthy is certainly no meagre feat. The father of four practices Yoga almost daily to keep fit. It may not be an easy work environment, but with a healthy body and mind, and nerves of steel to boot, Mr Toh Tiau Lai is set for even greater achievements ahead.



"There is no other way to find out unless you seize the opportunity."

The Heritage of an empire, a history of regal excellence and a romantic time of splendor and magnificence have never been lost to this nation amongst the growth and changes we encounter. Whilst architecture, trends and the economy is fast evolving to reflect the modernity of a global city, the spirit of nobility and dignity is very much still at the core of its people.

Up Close & Personal

Why metal works?

Singapore is a tiny country, and most fabrication of metal is not allowed to be situated at the construction site, so there is considerable opportunity in doing this off-site for the construction companies.

Any expansion plans for the company?

Due to the situation now it is better to stay put for the time being until another opportunity comes along. Waiting for the right time to expand is extremely important and also the best strategy. Mistakes can be very costly in our line of work because of the huge capital involved.

How do you motivate your staff?

I am pretty flexible with my employees. I also trust them to fulfill their jobs well. I'm a pretty open person. Anything can be negotiated as long as it is reasonable. In fact, my general manager has served the company for 24 years now. For my foreign workers, I organize catering parties for them at least two to three times a year. Transportation and food allowance is provided, and many of them live at the factory for convenience. Welfare is very important.

What is most important in entrepreneurship?

Learning through experience, because education and theories can only tell you so much. The relationships you get with customers is important as well. Treasure them and build up a good reputation.