

FEATURE



# TOWKAY TALK: THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD IS IN ITS CLASSROOM OF TODAY

SINGAPORE 1000  
SINGAPORE SME 1000  
INTERNATIONAL 100

*A Conversation with Training Vision Institute*



Mr David Kwee, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Training Vision Institute

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**To Live, To Learn and To Make A Difference.**

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**LIVE YOUR PASSION AND BELIEF.** People are the strongest assets any company can have and Mr David Kwee, CEO and Founder of TRAINING VISION INSTITUTE can certainly attest to that. His belief in people and their potential has enabled him to make a life out of training and developing them to realise their fullest potential. Always ready to invest and experiment, David leads a team of people who have made a difference in every single person who has stepped through the doors of Training Vision Institute.

Find out what has made Training Vision Institute enjoy the success that has made it the recipient of the 2017 Singapore SME 1000 Net Profit Growth Excellence for Services winner. Journey through his eyes and discover the strength and tenacity of belief.

**Q: What inspired Training Vision Institute's start?**

**David:** A belief in human potential. Training Vision Institute started out of a commitment to help individuals realise and maximise their human potential through applied knowledge, best practices and an innovative mindset. My team and I knew that we could live and be the leader in Human and Organisational Development.

I started the company in 1991 because I felt this passion for helping people grow. I was a keen observer of people and over time, it showed me that each and every person has tremendous innate strengths and virtues. However, I also realise that many may never truly reach their potential and frequently are too saddled down by constraints and limitations that bring up their weaknesses instead. I decided I could help change that. And so, came the calling of a lifetime - help people realize their full potential!

**Q: Beyond a training company, what vision drives everyone to enjoy their journey with Training Vision?**

**David:** Belief is everything and this links back to our core purpose which is To Live, To Learn and To Make A Difference. We are successful when our learners succeed and we can celebrate them as role models where learning has made a difference in their lives as well as in the lives of others.

Different people in different stages of their life learn differently and this is the "What" and "How" of learning. At Training Vision Institute, we seek to become the 21st century learning ground. This is underpinned by research and development into Educational Leadership and Educational Technology (EdTech). Hence from rank and file, older learners, young learners, executives to senior leaders, we are constantly experimenting with EdTech to enable the different applications of learning for these different groups.

**Q: What challenges has Training Vision faced in recent years? How are you learning from them?**

**David:** The education and learning space is undergoing significant changes in Singapore. Private education institutes are seen as having a weaker ability to create good and strong programs and deliver outcomes of employment for graduates. Even the national press compares us with the public institutions in a rather negative light. However, rather than dispute such negative perceptions, I am focused on the positives – how Training Vision can raise our own bar and prove our value in innovative new learning products and pedagogies.

As with all organisations, when we grow larger, we experience the difficulty of sustaining high growth while maintaining costs. But because we believe in the value of human capital; we retain people and/or redeploy and redevelop them. But potential takes time to realize while performance is at a specific point in time.



The leadership team of Training Vision Institute alongside Mr David Kwee, CEO and Founder

Mr David Kwee, CEO and Founder of Training Vision Institute awarded the 2017 Singapore SME 1000 Net Profit Growth Excellence (Services) recognition by Mr S Iswaran, Minister of Trade & Industry (Industry)



The challenge for me is how to stay the course in realizing human potential while waiting for the business to achieve its next level of growth.

As any other business, we had a few years of very low profits but we kept our course and finally turned around to become the Singapore 1000 2017 Profit Growth Excellence winner for the services sector. This was without having to cut costs through manpower reduction or dispensing with key infrastructure.

**Q: In this year's S1000 and SME1000 rankings, Training Vision Institute was awarded the 2017 Singapore SME1000 - Profit Growth Excellence (Services). What do you think was the key factor that contributed to this success?**

**David:** First of all, I will say what it is *not*. It is definitely not one of engineering the financial performance for maximizing profits to shareholders i.e. cost cutting as the first means of restructuring. What it is is persistence, patience and willing to invest for the longer term on the people and infrastructure. Every cloud will pass and the sun must rise, it is whether we are still out there to catch the sunrise.

As a business though, it is key to watch the balance sheet so that you will not go below the waterline and do not have the capacity to weather through the storm. Profits are not everything for us but knowing the nett tangible value of the organisation at significant points in time is a marker we need to watch.

**Q: Training Vision Institute adopts the latest technologies in your training curriculum. With the technology advancing rapidly every day, how does Training Vision Institute stay relevant in its business model?**

**David:** Digital disruption through EdTech in education and learning is very real and does afford significant opportunities as well as threats. We encourage our key leaders to find new business models. These could be slow cook cauldrons in terms of delivering back top line and bottom line but very key to ensuring our kitchen is always ahead of its competitors in terms of currency, relevancy and impact of how technology can enable learning. We also try to move fast, move first, ahead of others and iterate our "experiments" as we go. For example we could have first gone into learning on the tablet with E-Book but as we iterate, we begin to test out mobile,

micro (byte size) learning. We think this is the future of learning.

**Q: Where do you see Training Vision Institute in the next few years?**

**David:** We are making our regional footprints and have identified Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Vietnam as first countries to explore and investigate. We see the shift to skills education in Singapore i.e. the SkillsFuture Singapore movement. The rich learning and strategic assets developed as a lead player in the Singapore market will be a strong calling card and value proposition that we can bring to the regional markets.

**Q: What is your personal business philosophy?**

**David:** People first and the business will follow. In the past the business with all its structure, systems and fixed assets can outlive its people (when people leave, retire etc.). In the 21st century, these assets are actually your intangible assets i.e. ideas, culture, innovation etc. and all these spring from your people.