



**Douglas Foo**

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Sakae Sushi, a flagship brand of Apex-Pal International Ltd, is the brainchild of Mr Douglas Foo. At a time when people had to pay top dollar for Japanese food, Douglas, who also loves the healthy Asian cuisine, saw a gap for good quality and affordable Japanese food. So, he decided to venture into the food and beverage business even though he had no prior experience in running an F&B business.

Armed with his vision of building Sakae Sushi into a global brand, he opened his first outlet in OUB Plaza, in the midst of the Asian Financial Crisis. At a time when many saw nothing but doom and gloom, Douglas saw opportunities. And he has never looked back since.

Within a decade, Douglas grew Sakae Sushi from one outlet in Singapore to about 90 outlets in seven countries covering 9 cities including Singapore, Jakarta, Chiangmai, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Selangor, Manila, and Ho Chi Minh City. Indeed, the brand has transcended all barriers and is at the start of a marathon as it races on a long journey to become the Starbucks of sushi. From one flagship brand, the Group now manages over 90 restaurants including 10 other brands including Sakae Teppanyaki, Sakae Izakaya, Sakae Delivery, Hei Sushi, Hibiki, Senjyu, The Pasta Shop, Crepes & Cream and Nouvelle Events.

Needless to say, these achievements did not happen overnight as Apex-Pal faced many challenges including intense competition, manpower constraints and escalating costs just to name a few. That's not all. There were also major external threats such as the Financial Crisis, SARS, Bali bombing, 9-11 which affected the tourism sector and economy severely. Not one to give up easily, Douglas and his team persevered and weathered these forces. They went on to refine and build a proven business model which has contributed to its success.

Its commitment to excellence has paid off with the Group bagging more than 30 awards and accolades over the years. These include the CitiBusiness-SPBA Regional Brand Award 2006, Singapore Service Class 2004 and Singapore Innovation Award 2003 (Innovation of the Year) for its portable conveyor belt.

Douglas has also been conferred awards such as the Singapore Youth Award 2008 – Medal of Commendation, International Management Award 2007, the Singapore Youth Award 2003 and the Entrepreneur of the Year 2002 by the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME) amongst many others.

Moving forward, Apex-Pal will continue to be a young, dynamic and innovative solutions provider, constantly breaking new grounds to offer quality and healthy food catering to the varied needs of its customers.