

Charles and Keith enterprise award



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

SBA 2009 Enterprise of the Year Award Charles & Keith (International) Pte Ltd Background From young, both Mr Charles Wong and Mr Keith Wong worked in their parents' shoe shop at Ang Mo Kio Central. Realising that foreign shoes were expensive and ill-fitting for the small feet of Asian women, and armed with some savings, they started their eponymous shoe label - Charles & Keith where fashionable and trendy shoes are sold at affordable prices. The very first Charles & Keith store opened in Amara Shopping Centre in 1996. Four more stores were added within two years.

Charles & Keith saw the opportunities in overseas markets and expanded its global network. To date, there are 160 Charles & Keith stores are located in the prominent shopping districts across the world in 22 major cities like Cairo, Jakarta, Dubai, Manila, Kuala Lumpur and Ho Chi Minh. The overseas business interests of Charles & Keith worldwide is managed by the Charles & Keith International division and guided by its franchise model while Japan and Taiwan are served by the distributors. Dedicated to the young and trendy, Charles & Keith develops and produces a distinctive line of designs that caters to market sentiments.

The R&D team regularly travels to fashion cities such as Milan, Paris and London to study and understand the latest fashion trends, designs and merchandising. To keep prices affordable, Charles & Keith uses polyurethane and other synthetic materials. The manufacturing plants are stationed in Malaysia and China. The company planned to hit \$96 million in year 2008, though actual sales was above \$97 million. Achievements Charles & Keith provides fashionable footwear and accessories for consumer who takes pride

in their appearance and appreciate anything that is fresh and fashionable. Today it is a major household name in Singapore.

With the success of Charles & Keith in Singapore, the company embarked on its international venture in 2000 and now has a presence in 22 countries. A year later, it built its presence in Japan and Thailand through distribution. It also opened its first Philippines concept store. In 2002, it opened its second franchise store in Australia. It also began to distribute its shoes in Mauritius. In 2003, Brunei joined the list of countries in its franchise network. 1 The brand further expanded with other countries such as Turkey, New Zealand and Greece that added to its distribution network in 2004.

It also marked Charles & Keith's first store in Dubai, Middle East. That same year, Charles & Keith pioneered the online store business through the launch of its e-store at charleskeith.com and was the first ladies footwear and accessories retailer to launch an online shop in Singapore. Before the year ends, Charles & Keith will be the first ladies footwear retailer to operate in Singapore Changi Airport and successfully introduced its handbags collection. During the following year, the Egyptian store started its operations. In total, Charles & Keith has expanded with 12 outlets in the Middle East region.

It also extended its brand line Pedro that was successfully introduced in Singapore. 2006 marks the 10th year of Charles & Keith operations. Its franchise network now includes Pakistan, Thailand and East Malaysia, with Pedro introduced into Indonesia and Philippines. In 2007, Charles & Keith launched its accessories collection, comprising of shades and belts. The brand also launched a product line extension, The Signature Label, in

Singapore and Indonesia. At the same time, it also welcomes Iran, Turkey, Vietnam, Jordan and Turkey into its international business portfolio.

Pedro continues its presence in Egypt and Dubai. At the same time, Pedro has also successfully introduced its accessories collection comprising carry wear and belts into the market. Last year, Pedro welcomed West Malaysia into its franchise network and started retail operations in Singapore Changi Airport. Pedro also made its first debut for the ties and wallets collections, signaling new signs for its trendy accessories collections. The brands, Charles & Keith and Pedro are today well- recognised internationally. Accolades Over the years, Mr. Charles Wong was conferred with several awards.

In recognition for Mr. Charles's entrepreneurial spirit, he was awarded as nominee for the Spirit of Enterprise in 2003, awarded Entrepreneur of the Year Award by the National Youth Council - Outstanding Entrepreneur in Year 2004 and the winner for the Asean Youth Awards in 2005. In 2006, Mr. Charles was honored and appointed as the Membership Chair for the Entrepreneur Organisation Singapore Charter. In year 2007, he has been appointed as a council member of the 10th National Youth Council and was featured in the Young Southeast Asia 40 Inspiring Youths Publication.