

# SOBA JOURNEY

## Eight years on and the journey continues

As we celebrate the achievements of our past winners, SOBA aims to inspire more home-grown businesses to benchmark themselves and aim for excellence.







A panel of industry experts addressing concerns of SMEs at a forum in the early days of SOBA.



Judges for SOBA entries are made up of representatives from various industry trade associations.



Ng says Mega Fortris has garnered a lot of interest after its big win at SOBA 2016.



Acestar Sdn Bhd CEO Natalie Sit won Female Entrepreneur of the Year (Up to RM25mil) in 2016 after being one of the Most Promising Award recipient the previous year.



(from left) Wong, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai and Star Media Group Bhd chairman Datuk Fu Ah Kiow lauded the achievements of SMEs and encouraged them to go further.

## Eight years of supporting SMEs

Star Media Group will continue efforts to support emerging businesses

REALISING the potential and growth of the SME market and its contribution to the country's economy, The Star Outstanding Business Awards (SOBA) came into the picture. First held in 2010, SOBA is now into its eighth year.

This award has been a strategic platform to acknowledge the achievements of SMEs and to groom them for even greater success.

In line with the Government's commitment to develop homegrown enterprises, SOBA also seeks to inspire and encourage local businesses to promote the country and showcase its products and services not just within Malaysia, but also globally.

The awards presented to local enterprises recognise their performance in various aspects of business including categories such as branding, CSR, green initiatives, innovation and global markets.

This means not only looking at businesses that do well within their bottom lines, but that are at the forefront in anticipating the future needs not only of the companies, but also of the economic sector in which they operate.

On many occasions, companies have used SOBA as a benchmark to gauge their strengths in the industry and as a guideline to look at ways to improve and innovate.

An enterprise that knows how to adjust its operational procedures to meet environmental concerns, and in the process grow its profits, will stand out.

Star Media Group Bhd group managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai said the establishment

of SOBA in 2010 was to promote business excellence and stimulate positive competition whilst showcasing the achievements attained by outstanding businesses.

"We always hope that more entrepreneurs and enterprises recognise that SOBA is a fantastic opportunity to elevate their business position while simultaneously taking a clearer look into their business processes. SOBA understands the important role of local businesses in contributing to the economic development of Malaysia."

"We are glad that SOBA has managed to identify the contributions by remarkable SMEs towards the country's economic growth and also to put them through the mill to achieve greater accomplishments. Awards and events such as SOBA enrich our nation by inspiring and challenging Malaysians to go forth and grab a chance in making their dreams a reality," said Wong.

He added that Star Media Group remained committed to playing a part in supporting the growth and development of the country's emerging businesses.

Apart from the awards, Star Media Group also organises various workshops and conferences under SOBA such as the Learning Series and the Star SMEBiz Think Tank throughout the year to educate, equip, engage and connect SMEs.

Over the years, SOBA has also received support from various companies, organisations and agencies such as PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd, Exim Bank, Citron, The Main Place, AmBank, Credit Guarantee





Gintell group managing director Datuk Goh Cheh Yak (eighth from left) strikes a pose with his team after their impressive win at SOBA 2015.



Star Media Group Bhd group chief operating officer Calvin Kan (middle of front row) with long-time partners of SOBA (Back row, from left) Malaysia Entrepreneurs' Development Association honorary treasurer Datuk Billy Goh, SME Association of Malaysia president Datuk Michael Kang, Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers council member Datuk Mizanur Rahman Ghani, Federation of Federation of Malaysia Chinese Guilds Association deputy president Lum Kim Soong and Branding Association of Malaysia president Datuk Eric Chong. (Front row, from left) BDO executive director Mok Chew Yin, Kuala Lumpur Malay Chamber of Commerce president Don Nazwim Don Najib, Agensi Inovasi Malaysia chief executive officer Datuk Mark Rozario, Malaysia Retail Chain Association deputy president Valerie Choo and Malaysian Associated Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry representative Viknesvaran.



Datuk Calvin Khui (second from right) receives his Young Entrepreneur of the Year award in the Above RM25mil category from Liow (second from left) at SOBA 2016 as Wong (left) and Fu look on.



SOBA 2015 Male Entrepreneur of the Year grand winner Plaza Premium Lounge Malaysia Sdn Bhd chief executive officer and founder Song Hoi See (second from left), special mention winners Feruni Ceramiche Sdn Bhd managing director Ngei Chee Chau (left) and MTS Fibromat (M) Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Danny Ng Kian Boon (second from right) with Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong (centre) and Wong.

**Star SOBA**  
STAR OUTSTANDING BUSINESS AWARDS  
2017

To participate visit [soba.com.my](http://soba.com.my)  
or call: **03-7967 1388**  
Ext: 1432 / 1436 / 1657

**The Star Outstanding Business Awards**

**Submission Deadline 13 October 2017**

Logos for Star, MCA, MMD, and other partners.

efforts.

"SOBA helped us increase our company profile and our marketability has gone to a different level. Our company and industry was previously under the radar. Now, we are getting more interest from investors."

"It is nice to be able to share how a Malaysian brand can be on par with international brands," said Ng.

Mega Fortris provides security seals solutions to various industry globally including the gaming and logistics industries.

Last year, the company also bagged Malaysian Business of the Year (Above RM25mil category), Gold for Best Global Market, Gold for Best Innovation and Silver for Best Brand in the Above RM25mil category.

Meanwhile, SecureMetric Technology Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Edward Law Seeh Key noted that SOBA has garnered a strong brand for credibility.

"Our first submission was in 2015 and we won one award. We found that it was neutral and the award was not available for sale. So we submitted entries for four categories in 2016 and won three."

"Most of the awards in the market can be easily bought. But not SOBA. It's a real competition. We feel honoured that we won on merit," said Law.

SecureMetric won Platinum for Best in Marketing, Gold for Best Innovation and Silver for Best Global Market in the Up to RM25mil category at SOBA 2016.

SMEs looking to benchmark themselves are welcome to submit their entry forms for SOBA 2017. Submission kits can be downloaded from [www.soba.com.my](http://www.soba.com.my).

Deadline for this year's submission is October 13.

SOBA is open to all local enterprises not part of a multinational or listed group incorporated in Malaysia with foreign equity not exceeding 50%.

Corp Malaysia Bhd, Digi.com Bhd, Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade) and Human Resources Development Fund as it strives to boost small businesses in Malaysia.

Matrade deputy chief executive officer Sharimahton Mat Saleh noted that the agency has had a good engagement with The Star as SOBA provides it with a good platform to reach out to SMEs.

"There is good synergy there. Through this, we can have a larger pool of companies to export Malaysian products," she said.

To further recognise the achievements of upcoming small-and-medium businesses and start-ups as well as the more established SMEs, SOBA was sub-categorised into two tiers in 2016: enterprises with sales turnover of up to RM25mil and companies with turnover above RM25mil.

Mega Fortris (M) Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Adrian Ng, winner of the Male Entrepreneur of the Year award in the Above RM25mil revenue category at SOBA 2016, is appreciative of Star Media Group's



SOBA also enables past winners, such as 3R Quest Sdn Bhd director Jerome Heah, to share their experiences at Learning Series.



## Past years' outstanding achievement awards winners

2010	SME of the Year	Platinum	N/A
		Gold	Smart Reader Worldwide Sdn Bhd
		Silver	Webse Sdn Bhd
	Entrepreneur of the Year	Platinum	Datuk Peter Ng Tong Se (UCSI Education Sdn Bhd)
		Gold	Dr. Wang Kim Ha (Smart Reader Worldwide Sdn Bhd)
		Silver	Dr. Nehemiah Lee Chee Hai (Nehemiah Rainforced Soil Sdn Bhd)
2011	Business of the Year	Platinum	Vista Laser Eye Center Sdn Bhd
		Gold	KK Supermart & Superstore Sdn Bhd
		Silver	PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd
	Entrepreneur of the Year	Platinum	Dr. Nehemiah Lee Chee Hai (Managing Director, Nehemiah Rainforced Soil Sdn Bhd)
		Gold	Datuk Michael Tio Boon Yaw (Group Chief Executive & MD, PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd)
		Silver	Dang Tai Luk (Managing Director, Bison Stores Sdn Bhd)
	Rising Star	Platinum	KK Supermart & Superstore Sdn Bhd
	Gold	Starkiss Food Corporation Sdn Bhd	
	Silver	Public Find Gold International Sdn Bhd	
2012	Malaysian Business of the Year	Grand Winner	PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd
	Entrepreneur of the Year	Grand Winner	Datuk Michael Tio Boon Yaw (Group Chief Executive & MD, PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd)
		Special Mention	Datuk Neoh Soo Keat (Managing Director, Trinity Group Sdn Bhd)
		Special Mention	Dr. Mary Quah Chai Ha (Chief Executive Officer, Loh Guan Lye & Sons Sdn Bhd)
	Rising Star	Grand Winner	Cleanpro Express Sdn Bhd
2013	Malaysian Business of the Year	Grand Winner	Secret Recipe Cakes & Cafe Sdn Bhd
	Entrepreneur of the Year	Grand Winner	Serba Dinamik Sdn Bhd
		Special Mention	Sydney Cake House Sdn Bhd
	Rising Star	Grand Winner	Cleanpro Express Sdn Bhd
2014	Malaysian Business of the Year	Grand Winner	Feruni Ceramiche Sdn Bhd
	Entrepreneur of the Year	Grand Winner	Jenny Chuang (Managing Director, Sydney Cake House Sdn Bhd)
		Special Mention	Datuk Khairul Anuar bin Mohamad Tawi (Executive Chairman, KAT Technologies Sdn Bhd)
		Special Mention	Chan Kee Siak (Chief Executive Officer & Co-founder, Exabytes Network Sdn Bhd)
	Rising Star	Grand Winner	Sky Thomas Food Industries Sdn Bhd
2015	Malaysian Business of the Year	Grand Winner	Gintell (M) Sdn Bhd
	Male Entrepreneur of the Year	Grand Winner	Song Hoi See (Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Plaza Premium Lounge Malaysia Sdn Bhd)
		Special Mention	Ngei Chee Chau (Managing Director, Feruni Ceramiche Sdn Bhd)
		Special Mention	Danny Ng Kian Boon (Chief Executive Officer, MTS Fibromat (M) Sdn Bhd)
	Young Entrepreneur of the Year	Grand Winner	Steve Low Wey Heng (Chief Executive Officer, Tandop Hotel Sdn Bhd)
		Special Mention	Lee Ti Chou (Executive Director, New Yew Seng (KL) Sdn Bhd)
	Rising Star	Grand Winner	Plus Solar Systems Sdn Bhd
2016	Above RM25mil		
	Malaysian Business of the Year		Mega Fortris (M) Sdn Bhd
	Male Entrepreneur of the Year		Ng Meng Poh (Group Chief Executive Officer, Mega Fortris (M) Sdn Bhd)
		Special Mention	Datuk Henry Yip Choong Hung (Chief Executive Officer, Dragon-i Restaurant Sdn Bhd)
		Special Mention	Teh Beng Hock (Chief Sales Officer, RedOne Network Sdn Bhd)
	Female Entrepreneur of the Year		N/A
	Young Entrepreneur of the Year		Datuk Calvin Khui (Founder & Group Managing Director, MK Wedding Sdn Bhd)
	Up to RM25mil		
	Malaysian Business of the Year		Maxvue Vision Sdn Bhd
	Male Entrepreneur of the Year		Low Pooi Choon (Managing Director, Sunship (M) Sdn Bhd)
	Special Mention	Datuk Tony Looi Chee Hong (Chief Executive Officer, Ban Lee Hin Engineering & Construction Sdn Bhd)	
	Special Mention	Darien Mah Chon Sheng (Director & Chief Executive Officer, Forefront Studio Sdn Bhd)	
Female Entrepreneur of the Year		Natalie Sit (Chief Executive Officer, Acestar Sdn Bhd)	
Young Entrepreneur of the Year		N/A	
Rising Star		ExcelVite Sdn Bhd	
	Special Mention	Paradise Builders Holding Sdn Bhd	

### Eight years at a glance

2010

> Launch of the first SOBA



UCSI Education Sdn Bhd group president Datuk Peter Ng was the first Entrepreneur of the Year for the SOBA Awards.

2011

> Added two new categories: 'Innovation' and 'Rising Star'  
> 'SME of the Year' Award changed to 'Business of the Year' Award

2012

> 'Business of the Year' Award modified to the coveted 'Malaysian Business of the Year' Award  
> Change in 'Entrepreneur of the Year' Award from 3 winners previously to a Grand Winner  
> 'Rising Star' Award was also changed from 3 winners previously to a Grand Winner



PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd group chief executive and managing director Datuk Michael Tio had a resounding victory with five awards.

2014

> Introduction of 'Most Promising' Award

2015

> SOBA logo gets a refresher  
> Introduction of 'Male Entrepreneur of the Year', 'Female Entrepreneur of the Year' and 'Young Entrepreneur of the Year' Awards

2016

> Introduction of two-tiers of awards: 'Up to RM25mil' and 'Above RM25mil' revenue categories



Mega Fortris (M) Sdn Bhd group chief executive officer Adrian Ng (fifth from left) was the big winner in the Above RM25mil category with five awards.