

Synergy from diversity

By [Chuah Bee Kim](#) - July 13, 2022 @ 12:10am



(From left) Warren Chan, Eric Tan and Winnie Mah

PERSONALITY clashes in the workplace are common. When company leaders lack the skills to resolve disagreements among one another, discord will arise and tear the company in opposite directions.

However, this is not the case at Pixelbyte Sdn Bhd, the startup co-founded by Warren Chan, Eric Tan and Winnie Mah that developed the ParkEasy app in 2014.

Chief executive officer Chan met chief technology officer Tan and chief engineer Mah at the 4th Global Entrepreneurship Summit Kuala Lumpur 2013 that was spearheaded by the Finance Ministry.

The trio discovered that they shared the same idea for developing a parking app, and that was how ParkEasy was born a year later.

"I was with another company at the time, and would only come to join Pixelbyte in January 2015, about five months after Tan and Mah had founded it. For me, the idea for ParkEasy came about because of a movie date. I had booked movie tickets on an app and had arrived early at the cinema. However, I could not find a parking space and ended up facing an angry date and being late for the movie," said Chan.

"It was this incident that gave me the idea for a parking reservation app. One month later, I met Tan and Mah at GES and was about to pitched the idea to him them. To my surprise, at the end of my pitch, Tan whisked out his handphone to show me a slide presentation he had made of the same idea."

Chan graduated from the University of Melbourne in Australia in 2011 with a bachelor degree in commerce and a double major in finance and economics.

He joked that unlike his co-founders, his only experience in computers was being an avid computer gamer.

Tan graduated from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) in 2013 with a bachelor degree in mechatronics engineering.

He specialises in electronic system design and software-hardware integration. He is a Full Stack developer, and self-taught in Android development.

Tan also led a team to create scan2verify.org, a portal for public donations that reportedly puts an end to scams. He is also the winner of various hackathons.

In 2012, he was in the Top 5 of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp Ltd (HSBC) Young Entrepreneurs Award 2012, and had lead a team of engineers into the Top 10 in the James Dyson Innovation Award 2013.

Mah is the "computer person" in the team. A UTAR graduate, too, she holds a Master's in engineering and science, and a bachelor degree in biomedical engineering.

Mah, whose passion in computer science started when her teacher encouraged her to take up a computer software subject, had built a communication system that helped the company secure a RM2 million research grant from the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry.

"Each of us has our own role to play, and although we have differing viewpoints, that only result in fresh perspectives that produce better solutions. This magic only happens because of a great respect for one another.

"When someone disagrees with another, we do not block them out, instead we try to understand what they're seeing that we have not," said Chan.

He added that Mah's coding prowess and structured thinking was the cornerstone of the app, while Tan's grasp of the app's architecture coupled with his own resourcefulness enabled the team to tackle challenges well above its weight class.

"To be an entrepreneur, one should have the resilience to push on even when things look bleak and success is uncertain," said Chan.

With a human staff strength of five and more than 1,200 "robotic minions" set up at parking bays, Pixelbyte also has more than 60 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across the Klang Valley, and one each in Johor and Penang.

As for the parking app, Chan said plans were afoot to integrate its EV charging service through collaborations in Singapore and Thailand to enable cross-border connectivity in the near future.

Chan said Shell Malaysia Trading had approached the company in 2018 as Shell was looking for an automated solution to manage EV chargers.

"In the market, there are solution providers that manage chargers by controlling the flow of electricity but they do not manage access to the parking bay itself. Issues that arise include people parking in the bay but not to charge their vehicle, or people will charge their car but leave it parked there even after it has been fully charged.

"ParkEasy's solution is that we can manage access to the bay itself and the issues mentioned above are eliminated. We can guarantee that a charger will be available for use, when needed," he said.

Chan added that the focus was to expand its EV charging network by offering attractive packages to commercial properties such as shopping malls, hospitals, hotels and office buildings.

Aside from EV charging, and parking reservations, Chan said the company also had experience creating custom smart-parking solutions, adding that the company had recently won the contract for the smart parking system of the newly-opened Menara KWSP at Kwasa Damansara.

The writer was a journalist with the New Straits Times before joining a Fortune Global 500 real estate company. This article is a collaboration between the New Straits Times and Tradeview, the author of 'Once Upon A Time In Bursa'.