

THE SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

For Review Only

RONALD TAY

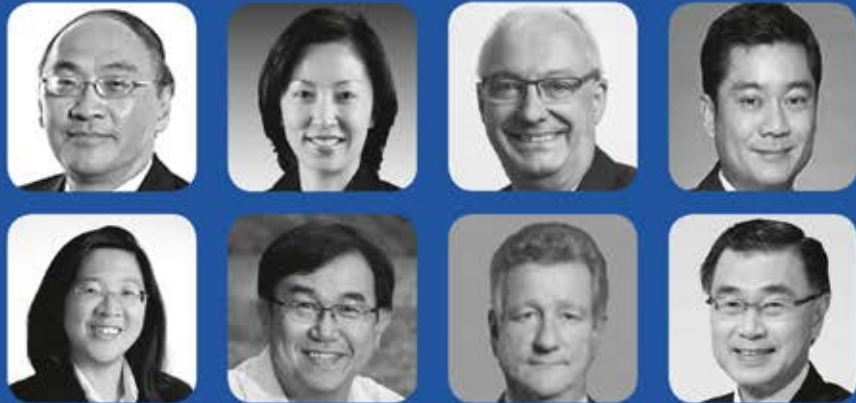
LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS

Marshall Cavendish Editions



"A masterclass of rich insights into how great leaders lead themselves, others and their organisations - a must read!"

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Leadership Conversations presents the personal experiences and insights of 16 leading professionals from a wide range of fields and industries - from banking, business and finance, to consumer products, politics and more. These unique journeys of self-discovery, adversity and career success will enlighten and inspire readers.



Drawing on his interviews with these remarkable individuals, author **Ronald Tay** has distilled their collective wisdom into clear, practical ideas that readers can put into action to find fulfilment in their careers and become successful leaders too.



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# LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS

16 leading professionals share the secrets of their success

JACK SIM - SYLVIA LIM - TAN CHUAN JIN - ARNOUD DE MEYER - KWEK KOK KWONG - ALAN CHAN - JONATHAN ASHERSON - WILLIAM WAN - PHYLLIS CHEUNG - KOH POH TIONG - ALICIA YI - BERNARD TAN - CAROL FONG - MAX LOH - MATTHEW LANG - ROD LEAVER - JACK SIM - SYLVIA LIM - TAN CHUAN JIN - ARNOUD DE MEYER - KWEK KOK KWONG - ALAN CHAN - JONATHAN ASHERSON - WILLIAM WAN - PHYLLIS CHEUNG - KOH POH TIONG - ALICIA YI - BERNARD TAN - CAROL FONG - MAX LOH - MATTHEW LANG - ROD LEAVER - JACK SIM - SYLVIA LIM - TAN CHUAN JIN - ARNOUD DE MEYER - KWEK KOK KWONG - ALAN CHAN

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## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT *LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS*

"What makes a leader? Is it a compilation of certain behaviours? Is it style? Is it a certain way of communicating? What do leaders do that makes people perceive them as leaders?"

If you are a leader of a company or aspire to be one – this book is a 'must have'. Ronald Tay has written an important book with inspiring leadership stories that provides a unique overview of what it takes to be a leader. This is easy to read, insightful and informative for any leader, drawing on unprecedented personal access and a keen sense of the dynamics of leaders' institutions and their personal lives. It also shows how to create the conditions for inspiring future generations of leaders to seek passion and purpose."

### **PROF SATTAR BAWANY**

CEO & C-Suite Master Executive Coach  
Centre for Executive Education (CEE)

"What I like most about *Leadership Conversations* is that these are dialogues with experienced leaders rather than academics, which Ronald Tay has skilfully consolidated into a valuable learning tool.

Their comments and advice stem from being in the real leadership 'hot seat' and not from abstract theories. While the perspectives are varied, some key common leadership themes emerge. I especially like the way in which 'ideas' have been captured at intervals, to reinforce the messages. A novel approach to leadership learning, based on genuine in-depth experiences."

### **IAIN MARTIN**

Chairman, I.J. Martin & Co Ltd  
Author of *Looking Down on Leaders: a bird's eye view of business and bosses*

"Three things make this book unique. First, it offers a perspective that truly reflects leadership in Asia, and all of the business and cultural nuances that this entails. Second, within the context of Asia, it has excellent diversity in terms of the people and organisations featured to provide a broad perspective. Finally, it doesn't just focus on what successful people currently do but how they got to where they are. Overall, a very compelling and practical guide to becoming a successful leader in Asia."

### **PATRICK FEI**

Managing Director, BTS Asia Pacific

"There is no one recipe for inspirational leadership, Ronald's second book is a fantastic insight into how real leaders make it happen and the journey and lessons they go through. This is a must read if you like to learn through stories and you are positioning yourself as a future leader or you need some extra incentive to get your leadership role back on track."

**MOIRA ROBERTS**

Head of Human Resources, UBS Singapore

"This book is an excellent collection of impactful and practical ideas for leading oneself, others and an organisation. The insights shared here are deeply relevant for leaders across levels and professional fields. I would recommend it to any existing or aspiring leader."

**RAJIV VIJ**

Leadership Coach & author of *Discovering Your Sweet Spot*

"This book is quite simply a game-changing 'Tour de Force' in our understanding of Universal Leadership – a remarkable achievement and essential reading for anyone with an interest in or a role as a leader.

Ronald Tay's excellent insights through his conversations with real leaders show how universal is the principle that leaders are defined by their actions, not by their geography, culture, upbringing or education. Gone are the clichés and laboured attempts to label leadership styles as geographically dependent. As Matthew Lang says in the book, and I agree: 'the fundamentals of leading a team here are no different to leading a team in Africa, Europe, America or anywhere else in the world.'

Ronald's sensitive questioning and listening style reveal how important the leader's actions are in helping people become superheroes by creating role clarity and showing value for everyone."

**JIM HICK**

Singapore Country Manager, Impact International

"In *Leadership Conversations*, Ronald Tay has compiled an outstanding collection of interviews with 16 smart, interesting, and experienced leaders. Every page is filled with the kind of rare wisdom that can only come from years of leading at the front lines of organisations. A must-read for anyone aspiring to, or already in, a position of leadership!"

**BRENDA BENICE**

Senior Executive Coach and award-winning author of eight books, including *Would YOU Want to Work for YOU?*

For Review Only

# ***LEADERSHIP*** **CONVERSATIONS**

16 leading professionals  
share the secrets of  
their success

**RONALD TAY**

**mc** Marshall Cavendish  
Editions

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## FOREWORD

Few would argue that the environment we operate in today is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (or VUCA, a term first coined by the US Army War College to describe the unpredictable security environment of the late 1990s). Coupled with the technology revolution that has changed our way of life and impacted how organisations are run, the leader today faces a whole new set of challenges. The leader is constantly faced with a deluge of data, connected with both internal and external stakeholders 24/7, faces unrelenting public scrutiny, and yet is required to exhibit the right behaviours and make the right decisions each time, all the time. Leading an organisation today, regardless of whether it is a private corporation, the public sector, a non-profit organisation, or an academic institution, has become so much more challenging.

That said, from the interviews in the book, it is heartening to see that there are powerful leadership principles and behaviours that are timeless, that leaders cannot succeed without their teams, that leaders still need to spend time to engage and motivate their people, perhaps even more so in this digital era. It is also interesting to note that many of these leaders were shaped by crucible experiences in their youth, and very often, had to deal with adversity at a very young age. In the early stages of their career, many were given opportunities to take on stretched roles/overseas assignments, which gave them a head start in their careers and subsequently helped shape their leadership philosophy. Another common trend is that these leaders have lived and worked across

various countries and cultures, which greatly contributed to their ability to balance progressive Western leadership practices with the traditional wisdom of Asian leadership principles.

In the same vein, our research at the Human Capital Leadership Institute highlights a number of common strategies that successful leaders employed to get to where they are. First, successful leaders make long-term career plans but remain open to possibilities. They appreciate that the path to the top is not necessarily straightforward and what drove them was an impetus to grow in their profession by constantly stretching their talents and expanding their frames of reference. Secondly, we found that successful leaders actively looked for international assignments early in their careers. The third developmental strategy that was common to successful leaders was their exposure to cross-functional experiences and taking on risky/tough assignments in the early stages of their career. At the same time, these leaders proactively build a wide and deep support network. These networks are both within and external to their organisation, and these are people whom they can turn to for advice, who provide input as coaches and mentors. The last aspect we found common to many successful leaders was their humility and openness, to readily admit when they were wrong, to be upfront when they do not have the answer, to be authentic, and to constantly seek feedback from their team.

In *Leadership Conversations*, Ronald has put together 16 very personal and powerful stories of leaders representing a cross section of the corporate world, academia, non-profit organisations and even from the political arena to showcase the endearing values that anchor these leaders' actions, and a multitude of effective leadership practices. These stories and experiences truly resonate with the work that HCLI does, and the more we have these stories documented and shared with the wider community, the more we learn about effective leadership in our part of the world.

I believe each and every reader would find something in this book that truly resonates, and more importantly, be motivated to want to be a better leader of a team, an organisation or a community.

**Kwan Chee Wei**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Human Capital Leadership Institute**  
**May 2015**

## INTRODUCTION

As you pick up this book, you are probably thinking to yourself, "why would we need another book talking about leadership?" Indeed, a quick search on Google for the word "leadership" generates over 476 million hits within 0.38 seconds. Anyone that is interested in the topic of leadership would not have to take too much effort to find leadership conferences taking place in their city, watch videos of leadership gurus expounding their theories, or even certify themselves as a leadership coach!

With such prevalence of leadership resources out there, it may seem surprising why a startling 86% of respondents to the Survey on the Global Agenda agree that we have a leadership crisis in the world today. As there are many more leaders appointed each day, you will also hear of more incidences of failing leaders who are involved in some form of scandal, inept in managing themselves and their organisations, or plain nasty ones who place their own interests ahead of those they are meant to be leading. We passionately love or hate our leaders simply because of one fact: that people want to be led. We want leaders with human values and respect for people's unique talents and the contributions they can make. Employees want leaders who will create an environment that nurtures excellence, risk taking and creativity. We do not need leaders because society tells us we do, and we do not need leaders because our employers enforce it upon us, we need leaders simply because we are born with a natural desire to be led. We are predisposed with a need to be guided, nurtured and supported throughout our lives at all levels and in all situations. And when we are fortunate enough to find a leader that encompass these traits, our lives and behaviors can literally be changed forever.

My first life-changing experience with such a leader was my Primary Four form teacher Mrs Peggy Ang. Back then I was a 10-year old coping with the angst of puberty, struggling to keep up with my grades and had no clue what my strengths and weaknesses were. Mrs Ang had the unique ability of seeing beyond my insecurities, asked me to take over the class as class monitor and encouraged me to excel first in the subjects that I was good at, then to work on the ones I was weaker in. She spent extra hours coaching and encouraging me as well as even inviting me to her family for occasional meals. Gradually I found myself gaining self-esteem, improving my grades to advance to the top class in Primary Five and eventually becoming a "leader" myself as class monitor and school prefect. That is the unique distinguishing trait about great leaders: the ability to look beyond what we are capable of and inspire us to work towards a better version of ourselves.

Through the years, I have been blessed by many other leaders and mentors that have taught me valuable lessons of leadership – many of which I have learnt either through observing them in action, or the experiences they have been generous enough to share with me to shortcut my learning process. In my first book entitled *Career Conversations*, I interviewed 20 professionals on their insights to a successful career in their respective industry fields. In this second publication on *Leadership Conversations*, it is my ardent wish that through the insights of these 16 CEOs that you will find practical advice (that will also shortcut your learning process) towards leading yourself, others and your organisation to excellence as well as stirring action towards becoming a better version of yourself as a leader today.

Godspeed on your own leadership journey – I know I am still very much working on my own better version everyday!

**Ronald Tay**



**JONATHAN ASHERSON**

Regional Director, ASEAN and Pacific  
Rolls-Royce

## LEADING WITH PATIENCE & DRIVE

JONATHAN ASHERSON is a Chartered Engineer with a BSc (Hons) degree in Mechanical Engineering. Before moving to Singapore in March 1999, he was the Regional Executive for Rolls-Royce in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and was appointed Regional Director on 29 November 2012.

He joined Rolls-Royce from Siemens AG in 1995, where he was Head of the Regional Competence Centre for Industrial Power, Asia Pacific and based in Kuala Lumpur after having worked in Germany, the USA, China and Malaysia for 15 years.

Jonathan currently sits on a range of advisory committees for various educational and research institutions in Singapore, is a board member of the Singapore International Chamber of Commercial (SICC) and a past president of the Singapore British Chamber of Commerce. He was a board member of the

Economic Development Board of Singapore (EDB) from 2007 to 2011, as well as an advisor to the Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA). He sits on the Steering Committee of the Applied Study in Polytechnic and ITE Review (ASPIRE).

Jonathan received an OBE in 2007 and was conferred the Public Service Medal (Friends of Singapore) Award under the Singapore National Day Awards 2010.

He was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Science from Kingston University in 2010.

## LEADING YOURSELF

### **What is your career history and what led to your being appointed as the regional CEO of Rolls-Royce?**

I first started working for Siemens in Germany. I've worked for large multinational companies throughout my life – 15 years for Siemens and 20 years for Rolls-Royce. At the Siemens headquarters, I received good grounding for a few years. I was in a technical sales role, and held a completely global portfolio with almost no domestic activity. I was then sent to solve a particular market related issue in America for a year. Although it was a large company, I was pioneering for a small division in the company, and enjoyed that very much. The company then wanted to do something similar in China, and so I put my hand up and they sent me to China in the 1980s. I was there for three years and later identified that I wanted to continue working in Asia, despite not knowing much about the region.

### **How did your stint in Asia begin?**

I first proposed that my division begin looking at Asia as a market from within Asia itself. The proposal was accepted and I was sent to Singapore in the early 1990s. I then established Asia-Pacific sales

marketing and related services activity for that division and we later moved marketing for the division to Kuala Lumpur, where I worked to expand our business. I was then recruited by Rolls-Royce to open their first office in Malaysia. I went from an organisation with 7,800 people in Siemens Malaysia to just one manager in Rolls-Royce. After a few years in Malaysia, I moved to Singapore to head the representative office. There were seven people here handling various activities and we had previously secured the Singapore Airlines account. We then looked at what we do from a Singapore-based viewpoint and expanded it to be progressively regional in terms of our industrial strategy, in partnership with joint ventures established in maintenance and repair with the airline and technology. In the process, we've grown over the last 15 years to over 2,500 people and are serving one of our biggest customers in the world.

I've had the same business card since I joined the company in 1995 in Malaysia, but they've added various countries to form a region now. I first started here as a regional director with seven people, but now I am the regional director with a substantial team established in Singapore across sectors with activity ranging from technical services, manufacturing, customer support, technology acquisition and operational and corporate functions.

**Did you have any leadership role models who inspired you?  
What are some of the lessons you've learnt from them?**

My starting point is a cliché. My father led an electricity state organisation in Africa then and I was looking for an easy way to get a holiday job. I thought that surely my father could get me one in his organisation. He replied that he does not believe in nepotism. I asked what it meant, and he told me to look it up. I did and I've never forgotten that.

My father progressed from being a chief engineer to heading the entire electricity state organisation. Witnessing that was quite



inspiring and I am sure I became an engineer because I was looking up to my dad.

In terms of internationally-known role models, Ratan Tata is a good choice. He chose a different route to grow and run an empire, and the company's management training and ethics training is world-class. I've met him a few times and he was inspiring.

I've also had great mentors in both companies I've worked for. Perhaps because it was during the division's formative business years, I was especially lucky with three mentors in a hierarchy during the early part of my career – my boss, his boss and his boss in turn. For some reason, I felt especially guided by my mentors. I think taking the time for people is an important part of leadership.

**THE IDEA:** Nepotism and overt favouritism can be the bane of growth and independence and can also discourage other staff from performing at their best.

## **What did they mentor you in that in turn became the foundations for you as a leader?**

I think they exercised discipline, transparency and clarity. They were very humorous and very human despite being highly respected. They knew their staff and I think that was the key. Although it was not always necessary, they knew a lot about the business. They also took the time to engage with people directly. When the opportunity in China emerged, I was actually supposed to head to the UK, which I wasn't particularly pleased about. Because of the engagement I had with my boss' boss, he remembered that I had an interest in Asia. He came to me directly and asked me if I would take on the role in China. That was very impressive to me – not because I was flattered, but because of his knowledge and awareness of the people in his team.

**THE IDEA:** Having step-level (i.e. going beyond your direct subordinates) meetings with junior talents will not only help to inspire them, but also give you new insights that you may not get from direct subordinates.

## **What are some guiding principles that you live by?**

I tend to focus on three year horizons. Obviously it is important to recognise longer timeframes when developing broader strategies. I first look at myself – what I can influence and what I'm paid to do, and then determine where the company needs to be in three years, and what is needed from the team to get to that point. I tend to have a goal, and then go into more details as I move into shorter term or specific goal. I think in three-year chunks, have a clear goal, and look at how my behaviour can drive the company and our people towards this goal.

Our company focuses on three themes from a behavioural perspective – winning right, communicating often and simply, and focusing together on the result. They're fairly specific and not all-encompassing. These match with what I believe drives success and with what has driven success. Things like personal engagement and walking around are important – if I'm in the office, I do not use the telephone to call someone, I walk over to their office. If they're not there, I benefit from just walking there and meeting other people along the way.

**THE IDEA:** Change curves are getting shorter. Think in three-year chunks, formulate clear goals and look for behaviours that would drive the company and your people towards these goals.

## **Do you have advice on how to manage one's energy and work-life balance?**

When entering a career, it is important to recognise that it is a long-haul journey and that work-life balance is important, although you have to be flexible in managing that balance. Things tend to happen in cycles or phases. Sometimes the work side of things needs extended focus, for example during strategic sales campaigns. It is never going to be an equal distribution all the time and there will be times when the balance consists of only work. Be aware of this and make choices that allow for it. I think technology today allows for greater work-life balance and society also has an expectation of work-life balance that did not exist in the past when priorities were different. How do you manage this balance while pursuing the leadership aspirations, success, drive, productivity and bandwidth you need to succeed and to rise to the top?

I made a decision very early on in my life not to work on the weekends. Of course I've worked during the weekends sometimes, but I generally don't, even during the early part of my career. I've tried not to bring work home. I try to be disciplined with respect to downtime.

**THE IDEA:** There is no clear rule on how to achieve work-life balance albeit it clearly being important. Recognise the periods where you have to focus on the 'work' without the 'life', but ensure that you make up for it after the busy period is over.

## LEADING OTHERS

### **In your opinion, is there a difference between managing and leading?**

Managing is a subset of leading – I see management as an experience and skillset that allows you to lead, and think management training is important. If you are not a good manager, you would have less time to be a leader. As you progress, I think the management portion decreases and the leadership component increases. I admire companies that progressively place less emphasis on senior executives meeting business goals and instead focusing on them meeting leadership competencies. For organisations to groom better leaders, remuneration systems should be different. Leaders should be rewarded based on whether they have met competencies such as whether they have been a good leader, how many other leaders they have identified and supported within the organisation, and the morale level of the team.

**THE IDEA:** If you do not manage well, you will have less time to lead.

### **What makes a good leader?**

Having the ability to communicate and inspire, with a clear vision of an achievable yet challenging goal and being able to communicate it well. In addition, beyond managing in the administrative sense, being able to engage your team and coaching are important skills. Choosing the right people is also an important attribute. A good leader's role is more akin to being 'first among equals' than adhering to a hierarchical structure, although clear structures are always helpful.

## **How do you choose people in your team? What do you look for and how do you groom them?**

You can list some essential competencies, experience and success measures, which lowers the risk when choosing a person. When we select and interview someone, we have a process that allows us to bring out the key attributes we need to ascertain, the thinking we need to be aware of, the type of person that we are employing and the cultural fit in both directions. Cultural fit is most important for our customers, as well as for our company. Instinct also plays a big role when it comes to choosing a person, I don't know how to describe it otherwise.

**THE IDEA:** When choosing new members for your team, beyond listing the necessary competencies, experience and success measures, listening to your instincts and determining cultural fit are also important criteria.

## **What sort of questions will you ask to test your instincts?**

I ask completely irrelevant questions that are not necessarily personal. An example would be "how do you see the development of Singapore?" without explaining what I mean. Another example would be "what do you think about what's going on in Venezuela?" Some people might ask for guidance with the question and some might say that they do not know much about Venezuela, and that could be an absolutely perfect answer! These questions are less relevant to the role and often unexpected but they allow me to get to know the person because there are a lot of ways to say you don't know.

**THE IDEA:** Throwing a curve ball during the interview session can be a good way of testing your instincts and assessing the candidate based on their responses.

## LEADING THE ORGANISATION

### **Is there a leadership story in which you actualised your leadership philosophy by overcoming a business challenge?**

We've grown tremendously in Singapore and added a lot of breadth and depth to what we do, which required considerable change management. We have shifted some important decision-making to this region, which was previously seen as a challenge to the existing management at the company headquarters. Through these transitions, I had to constantly communicate the leadership path we had to take as a company and manage difficult decisions such as those concerning restructuring. One of the most challenging management skills for me was getting the team to agree on a consistent approach in a complex situation.

The process of establishing our Seletar campus from a spark of an idea to convincing the decision-makers to take it seriously, to partnering the government and finally driving that through was an amazing experience. When I visit the Seletar Campus now, I'm still struck by how far we've come.

### **What else is in your leadership remit?**

A big part of my job is identifying a particular geographical region's strategy, capability and intent over a long period of time, and what the decision will be in the future. These would then be mapped against any gaps in our capability and against our own challenges

as a company. We also have to get the right people together to recognise these challenges and then decide how to tackle them. In short, getting the right people together to do the right thing.

## **What kind of challenges do you foresee in the future?**

There is always the challenge of cost that goes hand in hand with the challenge to innovate and improve. Where the aerospace component of our industry is concerned, we invest a big chunk of our revenue in technology and capability, which drives efficiency and emission reductions every year. The nature of our business requires constant innovation and improvement in the efficiency of our equipment. In tangible terms, for example, this represents an improvement of about a percentage point in efficiency for each year of investment in technical development of our aero gas turbines. The challenge is to do that while reducing costs for our customer and we do so by increasingly identifying new opportunities where we can do that more effectively.

We expect to grow strongly over the next decade based on our substantial firm orderbook. As we continue to expand and as decision-making transfers from global to local networks, the search for talent and the right people continues to be one of the key challenge we face.

## **How are you tackling these challenges?**

One of the approaches is to find new geographies to support our cost reduction programmes, such as looking at production in non-traditional locations. In terms of being able to deliver, it's an everyday focus on productivity, compliance and work ethics, driven by good leadership.

Another approach is to constantly fuel the talent pipeline. Long-term careers in our business are the norm, which can sometimes be a challenge to sell to young engineers in Asia. Hence

we focus very strongly on raising the awareness of the benefits of the career, as well as all levels of people training and development. Our recruitment and selection process involves ensuring that our candidates understand that they have to gain experience before progressing to the next level of responsibility and authority.

## **Do you think there's a difference in leading a global organisation in Asia versus doing global work outside of Asia?**

Cultural awareness is a key factor to succeeding in global organisations, and we're looking for local leaders that bring that with them, who do not think that it is necessary to adopt the "mother ship" culture in order to succeed in our company. Challenge is healthy and we encourage it. It takes courage not to emulate the cultures that are perceived as embedded in an MNC that has a non-Asian heritage. It is sometimes essential to recognise aspects of culture while not being a slave to it. Some of those cultures are essential, some are positive no matter where you are in the world, some of them belong in the geography that they are in and others do not belong at all. When operating in other cultures, such as in Asia, we want to infuse Asian culture with our core values and, at the same time, de-emphasize parts of our existing culture that are redundant. One of the most positive aspects of our company culture is our engineering discipline, which is universal regardless of the geographies we operate in.

**THE IDEA:** To lead in global organisations, respecting diversity and being able to adopt new disciplines and cultural behaviours in the way you work bodes well for success. Never feel that you need to fully adopt "mother ship" culture in order to blend in with the majority.



## **When you moved to Asia, how did you have to adapt in terms of your leadership style to be an effective leader?**

I underwent the best training course I have ever experienced very early on in my career. It was a sales course, but it was really about people. One of the major facets of this was the importance of listening. In ones' own culture, it's easy to make assumptions and you are normally right. This is dangerous because your assumptions may not be right, but you take shortcuts because you know the culture and the way communication is understood in general. The way we communicate in another culture often needs to be different, not only because of possible language barriers. Listen to the last "drop" and make sure you really understand, and repeat it with clarity.

**THE IDEA:** Listening is a fundamental leadership skill that builds understanding and trust. Always check for understanding and paraphrase to make sure that both parties see the same side of the story.

## **What is your advice for young leaders who are looking to work in other geographies?**

I think you have to want it. We expect all leaders to want this kind of exposure to new geographies. If you want it, you need the drive to do it.

The economies of the world have evolved such that more Western organisations have ventured abroad in as compared to in the other direction. Historically, when Asian businesses have ventured overseas, as in the case of the Japanese, they have been extremely successful but may not have adapted in the way that some of their Western counterparts have. There is a difference in approach and the level of experience. In Asia there seems to be some level of inertia with regards to venturing abroad but we

encourage people to work in different places. This experience is essential to becoming a global leader.

**THE IDEA:** Do not wait for management to tap you on the shoulder to consider moving to new work geographies.

### **What legacy do you want to leave behind in Rolls-Royce?**

For the first time, we now have a main board member from Asia, and it happens to be someone from Singapore. In addition I would expect to see at least two more representatives from Asia among the top leadership team of around ten. That would represent success in my book. Seats at the decision table from within this vibrant and fast growing region.

**THE IDEA:** Aside from building the business, senior leaders should also focus on efforts to build the talent pipeline and help their leaders progress.

### **What final advice do you have for young leaders who want to succeed in the aerospace industry?**

The complexity of what we do in the aerospace industry and the intricacy of the products that we produce and support are fascinating. They are entering an industry linked to GDP growth and especially growth of the middle class in the air travel segment. The growth in this region will be the highest and there is certainly a future in it. It's an industry to be proud of; I can't think of a person who would not feel pride at building part of an aeroplane or providing services related to it.

My advice for young leaders wanting to be a part of the industry would be to study hard because we choose the best. I understand that the entry requirement for aerospace degrees in Singapore is higher than for medicine. That tells you something about the industry and Singapore's focus on it. Learn about the industry, meet people in it and identify mentors. Understand that patience will be required and make that a virtue – drive with patience. Once you get to the senior positions, you are extremely valuable. We "force" our top graduate entrants to change their roles over the first few years, but they should then stick to one substantive role for three to five years in order to have real delivery experience and add value to themselves.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ronald Tay is an experienced international organisational development consultant, consummate speaker, author, coach and educator.

He is currently Executive Director at Nomura International (based in Hong Kong) with a leadership role that oversees a gamut of talent initiatives ranging from leadership development, talent management, learning as well as diversity and inclusion in the Asia-ex Japan region. Previously he was Executive Director with the UBS Business University where his nine years with the firm have seen him through significant career transitions spanning local, regional and global responsibilities. His contributions within the leadership and talent development field have helped UBS win the HRM Best Training and Development Award three years in a row from 2012 to 2014 as well as Employer of Choice in 2014.

A well sought-after facilitator and keynote speaker, he most recently was keynote speaker at the 2015 Training & Development Asia Conference on "Developing Training and Development Professionals", 2014 Future Leader's Summit on the topic of "Career Evolution: Differentiation, Leadership and Success" and at Learning World 2013 on "Developing Effective Leaders – re-examining Leadership Programs and Processes". Ronald also lectures on career management and organisational development at the Singapore Management University and the National University of Singapore and continues to actively mentor ex-students from both universities.

In 2014, he published his first book *Career Conversations*, showcasing the career journeys and advice from 20 leading professionals which was a bestseller in local bookstores.

Ronald's other career transitions have included strategic planning for the Singapore government, taking on the role of Senior Consultant at a regional consulting firm, and serving as the ASEAN Head of Learning for the global cosmetics giant L'Oréal.

Ronald completed his Executive MBA at the University of Southern Illinois with distinctions in all his 11 course modules, earning him the Valedictorian award for best results in his cohort. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours – Upper Division) degree from the National University of Singapore.