



Innovation and Reinvention

BreadTalk Group's Rise to Global Culinary Sensation

From its legendary Flosss bun to thematic food courts, Singapore-based distinctive food company BreadTalk Group has become an international sensation. We chatted with Founder and Chairman George Quek to discover his recipe for continued growth.

GEORGE QUEK

Founder and Chairman@BreadTalk Group

Since the inception of the first BreadTalk outlet at Bugis Junction, Singapore, in July 2000, the company's success has been nothing short of remarkable. With over 250 million Signature Flosss buns sold worldwide, the iconic bakery has forged a strong foothold for the Group's diverse portfolio in the global arena, obtaining a steady growth across 16 international markets in Asia, Middle East and

the European region, with over 700 stores worldwide.

The Group's value proposition lies in its commitment to revolutionize the culinary landscape with a combination of creativity, innovation, and a growth mindset. "We are a pioneer in building successful brands, adapting quickly to consumers' changing palates and embracing new emerging trends in the current and new markets which gave rise to the Group's success in capturing the global palates," Mr Quek says. →

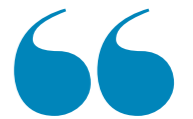


A rising star

As the winner of multiple prestigious business awards, George Quek shares his humble beginnings before venturing into BreadTalk Group's other award-winning brands, which includes Toast Box, a Singaporean contemporary Nanyang coffee chain which recreates the 1960s and '70s Nanyang coffee and toast culture; Din Tai Fung, an internationally acclaimed restaurant chain that has been ranked as one of the Top 10 Restaurants in the world by the *New York Times*; Food Junction, one of the food court pioneers in Singapore offering



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mixed cuisine with quality dining experience at affordable pricing; Food Republic, a thematic food court offering local and international delights; and Thye Moh Chan, an 80-year-old heritage brand offering traditional handcrafted Teochew pastries, among others.

He began his foray into the food and beverage industry in Taiwan and his native Singapore before hitting on his winning formula with BreadTalk. "Based on my prior experience, which was all related to the food and beverage industry, I developed more confidence," Mr Quek explains. "I realised that in Taiwan →



and Japan, the food and beverage industries were pretty advanced, but I saw room for improvement and opportunities in Singapore. It felt like the time was right for something new, and that's how BreadTalk was conceived."

Breaking the mould

While most bakeries adopt the simplistic approach, BreadTalk finds new ways in making bread fashionable by introducing new shapes coupled with innovative ingredients, artisanal techniques and an immersive in-store experience that intrigues customers.

"It was an instant hit," Mr Quek recalls. "In particular, we ran an 'open kitchen' concept that generated a lot of hype as we are the first boutique bakery in Singapore to adopt such a concept, showcasing the artisanal craftsmanship behind the scenes."

"Boutique is very much the right word," Mr Quek confirms. "As I was launching BreadTalk, I thought of it almost as a fashion brand. I would pick a few signature items and create a story behind each of them. This was what helped us create such a buzz. I believe each bread has its own story to tell, which is why I named it 'BreadTalk'."



From the very first day, Mr Quek envisioned BreadTalk to be a trend-setter, elevating the art of bread-making with innovative creations, fine ingredients and precise craftsmanship that resonated with many and created something irresistible for the people of Singapore. This impressive start was the launch pad for BreadTalk Group's meteoric rise to international recognition.

"I always promised myself I will make it big!" Mr Quek remarks. "Certainly before COVID, I took a very aggressive approach to the business, always exploring, innovating and reinventing ourselves. During COVID, we were forced to close twenty percent of our stores globally, and I think I have learned a lesson from this. You know, doing good is more important than doing big. Having said that, we would be steering our focus in deepening our roots at existing locations before we continue expanding into the other countries or continents." Top of this agenda, it seems, is a process of consolidation.

With an impressive record of growth throughout the last two decades, BreadTalk Group continues to reach for greater heights. Central to any future expansion plans is an already existing franchise model. BreadTalk

Group has used this model to expand successfully since its inception. "We always aim to upkeep integrity in every aspect of our life and business dealings before we can be recognized and be respected. In this way, it creates longevity and makes everything more sustainable. Selecting like-minded partners who are aligned with our values is equally important in ensuring the business can continue to prosper under the franchise framework."

"What has proven successful for us is to have the right team to manage the specific city or location where they are based," Mr Quek explains. "For us, I believe 'people' determine the success and failure of a business. We must make sure the structure and framework can be easily replicated for these teams to continue growing with the company. In this way, the real challenge for us is finding and guiding the right people to make this work. Not the market or other factors."

The importance of people

Like his concept, Mr Quek's business philosophy is an essentially simple one. He acknowledges the people-centred nature of his

"It has been a rewarding journey with BreadTalk – their commitment to innovation and quality aligns seamlessly with our goals. This dynamic partnership combines passion, creativity and a shared dedication to delivering exceptional experiences."

SHELDON YEN

National Sales Manager, Anchor Food Professionals Singapore

business and has established a model which empowers employees. BreadTalk Group is a company which values the well-being of its people as much as their contribution, recognising that those two variables are inextricably linked.

"I always think of the happiness index," Mr Quek says. "I want people who are happy to work for the Group because then they will have the willingness to learn, to improve and to grow with the Group. How much can they benefit from the process? This is an important question because I want them to derive a sense of satisfaction and achievement from what they do."

With this people-centred approach at the heart of its 23 years of success, it appears the phenomenon of BreadTalk Group is set to continue, delighting even more people with its innovative recipes.

"This is BreadTalk Group's way, and this is how we will continue to nurture our brands and our people," Mr Quek concludes.

For establishments who wish to embark on this journey with BreadTalk Group, you may reach the team at franchise@breadtalk.com.



Great food feeds great business

Where your customers see impeccably decorated cakes and perfect pastries, we see business performance and success. We're passionate about finding ways to make our fit-for-purpose dairy ingredients and solutions work for you, so that every selling serves your business. As experts in dairy, we understand how it unlocks your business potential because we're food professionals too.

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