

Featured Entrepreneur



Mr Hugh Chan

Director, Hao Solar Pte Ltd



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Can you tell us about your entrepreneurial journey? What inspired you to start your business?

Back when I was studying at Singapore Polytechnic (SP), I majored in electrical and was very interested in solar panels and renewable energy.

When I worked as an engineer after my studies, I felt that I wasn't doing enough to give back. I noticed a gap in the market—many landed property owners weren't installing solar panels on their homes. Driven by a passion to make a difference in sustainability, I decided to start my own business to advocate for green solutions and promote the adoption of solar panels.

What was the biggest challenge you faced when starting out, and how did you overcome it?

One of the challenges I faced when starting out was my age – I was only 29.

When I met potential clients, many of whom were in their 50s, I could sense their hesitation. The look on their faces often said, "Are you sure you can handle this?" or "Can I really trust you with this project?" It felt like I was being underestimated.

I overcame this by leading with my passion. People were often curious about why I chose to enter this line of work. So I would share my mission with them—to advocate for sustainability and promote the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy. This resulted in them being more open-minded and even referred me to their friends.

Another challenge was the fact that my company was new. A common concern was, "What if your company goes bankrupt in two or three years?" I had to prove not just my capability, but my commitment. I focused on building genuine relationships and showing them that I was here for the long haul—not just to sell a product.

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Who has been your biggest inspiration or mentor, and why?

My first and biggest inspiration goes quite a way back — and while it may not be a popular opinion today, it's Elon Musk.

Elon was the pioneer of the electric vehicle (EV) movement. What truly inspired me was his decision to release all of Tesla's EV patents to the public. He wasn't chasing profits — he genuinely wanted the world to adopt sustainable energy.

That bold move helped accelerate the growth of the EV industry, especially in markets like China.

It was inspirational to me as most people would want to monetise their technology, but Elon gave his away for the sake of progress.

At one point, he was even on the verge of bankruptcy, as the oil and gas industry in the U.S. tried to suppress EV adoption. Then came SpaceX, where he again revolutionised the industry by creating reusable rockets, tackling the issue of space debris and waste.

Both Tesla and SpaceX show how committed he is to sustainability and long-term impact.



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How do you see the future of your industry evolving?

I envision every building to be self-sustaining. Imagine a world where every building is equipped with solar panels and battery systems, storing energy during the day and using it at night. We'd no longer have to rely on the central grid or burn fossil fuels.

Of course, questions about waste and sustainability arise—like what happens when panel or batteries need replacing. But technology is constantly improving. Today, we're already seeing progress in the recycling of solar panels and the upcycling of batteries.

For example, solar panels contain silicon and metals that can be reused to make new materials. As for EV batteries, while they typically last 8 to 10 years, they can have a second life as energy storage units.



One of my goals is to build a circular ecosystem. Right now, we install brand-new solar panels for Singapore homeowners. Typically, even after 30 years, most solar panels still retain around 85% efficiency. But when those panels are eventually replaced, I want to redirect them for use in third-world countries—places where power often comes from diesel generators, which are harmful to the environment.

By creating a secondhand solar market, we can offer more affordable solutions to communities in need, helping them transition to cleaner energy.

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What's one piece of advice you wish you had received earlier in your entrepreneurial journey?

If I could turn back time, the advice I wish I had received earlier is: Don't doubt yourself and just go for it.

When I was first considering to start my business, I faced a lot of resistance, mostly in the form of "what ifs" from others and from within myself. There was fear, uncertainty, and hesitation. I self-doubted for many years.

But someone once asked me a question that shifted my mindset: "What's the worst that could happen if you fail?"

The truth is, I would just go back to square one. But if I never tried, I'd never know what was possible.

For me, the first step of registering the company was crucial. It gave me the push I needed to resign from my job. Once I made that decision, I went all in.

I believe that to succeed, you have to give 100%. Many people hold onto a Plan B "just in case," but the danger with that is, you won't give your all to Plan A.

For more information on Hugh's business, visit <https://haosolar.com.sg/>



I didn't allow myself a backup plan, and that pushed me to do whatever it took—even door-knocking in the early months when I had no sales.

Another advice I live by is to trust yourself. Trust that you'll find a way, even in the face of challenges.

Lastly, I'd say, be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

In the beginning, networking was something I dreaded. But I forced myself into those situations, knowing growth only happens outside your comfort zone. Every uncomfortable experience became a chance to learn and level up.