

SUCCESS:  
THE INSIGHT STORY

## Build people first, then the company

## HOW has your life experience made you the leader you are today?

It is a question that forces me to look back at the wires, the late nights, and the incredible people who have been on this journey with me. I have always believed that leadership isn't something you study in a textbook; it's something you forge in the trenches.

My leadership today is the result of three core experiences, beginning with the "Underdog Mentality". In the early days of Extreme Broadband, we didn't have the deep pockets or the massive scale of our competitors; what we had was a shared dream and a lot of grit. That taught me that true leadership isn't about having the most resources, but having the most heart. I've learned that you don't build a company; you build people, and then the people build the company. Today, as we grow Open DC and expand our footprint, I keep that "Day 1" hunger alive, reminding my team that we don't just follow the industry—we redefine it.

This path also taught me the Strength Found in Silence. My work in data centres and internet exchanges involves the "invisible" backbone of our digital lives—infrastructure that most people never see. This has shaped my philosophy that the most important work is often what happens when no one is watching. It has taught me the value of quiet consistency and the humility of being a steward for something much larger than myself. I don't need to be the loudest voice in the room; I just want to ensure that the foundation we build for Malaysia is unshakable.

Ultimately, I have learned the importance of embracing the "Hard Problems." Our greatest growth occurs when we step into the spaces others might avoid—whether it's pioneering an internet exchange ecosystem or building world-class infrastructure in untested territories. This has shaped my belief in "calculated audacity": the courage to push boundaries while remaining deeply grounded in purpose. My goal is for my team to feel that they are not merely coming to an office; they are architects of a digital foundation for the next generation. I want them to look back 20 years from now and tell their children with pride, "We were the ones who paved the way."

That's what gets me out of bed every morning.

## How do you think the industry you are in will evolve in the future?

For years I have been pondering the same question. When you work in infrastructure—the cables under the sea and the halls filled with servers—you realize you aren't just building for the next quarter; you are building for a generation you may never meet.

As I look towards the horizon, I see our industry evolving in three quiet but powerful ways:

## ➤ From streaming/social connectivity to intelligence exchange

For years, our Peering Exchanges (IXs) served as the vital meeting points for business and social media—the places where people connected and commerce happened. But we are entering a profound new era. The IX of



## ➤ Extreme Broadband and Open DC Sdn Bhd founder and managing director Wong Weng Yew (pix) shares with SunBiz why growth comes from stepping into spaces others avoid

the future is shifting from transiting data for human interaction to facilitating massive flows of AI machine traffic. We are becoming the nervous system for distributed intelligence, where data doesn't just flow to a person's device, but between neural networks. The wisdom I have gathered is that the value of a network is not just in its speed, but in its ability to facilitate collaboration. We are evolving from being the "pipe" for streaming short media to being the essential fabric that allows AI to learn, think, and respond in real-time.

## ➤ AI as the invisible foundation

We talk a lot about AI as a trend, but it is quickly becoming the baseline of how we design everything. We are not just building data centre for AI; AI is becoming the silent architect of our infrastructure. This evolution brings a heavy responsibility. As power needs skyrocket, our role shifts from being engineers to being stewards of resources. We have to find ways to be more efficient, more sustainable, and more modular. It's no longer enough to be powerful; we have to be responsible. The future belongs to those who can balance high-performance computing with a low-impact footprint.

## ➤ Malaysia as the regional hub

I see a shift where Malaysia is not just a participant in the global digital economy, but its heart in Southeast Asia. We are seeing a move towards "Sovereignty-First" infrastructure, where nations want to anchor their own digital destinies. My hope is that we don't just build "big"—we build "smart". I see an industry that is more inclusive, where the benefits of high-speed connectivity and world-class data computation reach every corner

of our region. It is a transition from being a transit point to being a destination for innovation.

I often think of us as the "invisible" part of the internet. If we do our job well, no one notices we are there—and there is a certain beauty in that silent service. Knowing that we are laying the groundwork for the next young entrepreneur or the next breakthrough in machine learning to happen right here in Malaysia.

## What advice can you offer those looking to start their career/own business?

## ➤ The wisdom of the long game

In a world that often measures success by the speed of an exit or a quick win, I have learned the value of patience. My advice is to build something that is meant to last, rather than something meant to be sold. When we started, we were not looking for a shortcut; we were looking to build a foundation. If you focus on creating real value and solving the "hard problems" that others avoid—like building world-class infrastructure in untested territories—you create a legacy that outlasts any trend.

## ➤ Defending your vision with dignity

There will be moments in your journey where you are pressured to compromise your vision or "sell out" early for a comfortable gain. My experience has taught me that your vision is your most sacred asset. Defend it with dignity. This does not mean being stubborn for the sake of ego; it means having the "calculated audacity" to stand your ground when you know your work serves a larger purpose.

True leadership is staying the course when others are looking for the exit, ensuring that the integrity of what you have built

remains unshaken.

## ➤ Leadership as a human connection

We often talk about the technicality of the wires and the data, but the most resilient systems are the ones built on human trust. I have come to see myself not as a figurehead, but as a steward. Success is a byproduct of how many people you empower to succeed. If you treat your team and your customers as stakeholders in a shared dream, you create an ecosystem that can survive any storm. Your greatest competitive advantage is never just your technology; it is the quality of the connections you nurture.

## We all know about the industrial revolution, are we in for a technological revolution? Your thoughts.

When we look at the history of human progress, we see the steam engine and the assembly line as the markers of the industrial revolution. But what we are entering now is fundamentally different; I believe we are moving towards an era of "autonomous intelligence." This is a revolution where the physical and digital are no longer separate, and the infrastructure we build must think and adapt as fast as the society it supports. From my perspective, we aren't just "in for" a revolution—we are already living it.

In Malaysia, there is a clear and powerful signal from the top that we are ready to lead. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has laid out the AI Nation 2030 vision, backed by concrete steps like the Budget 2026 allocations and the establishment of the National AI Office under the MyDigital framework. To me, this isn't just talk; it is a deliberate, synchronized effort to position artificial intelligence as the primary engine for our economic growth and job creation over the next decade.

We see this commitment echoed by the Digital Ministry, which has been very clear that 2026 is our critical turning point. That alignment between policy, funding, and execution is what gives the private sector—and Open DC—the confidence to invest and build

for the long term.

Beyond our borders, the broader picture across Southeast Asia is equally compelling. The regional outlook remains incredibly positive, driven by national digitalisation agendas and accelerating cloud adoption. But as I often tell my team, ambition alone won't get us there. To fully realize this opportunity, we need serious investment in robust, scalable, and sustainable digital infrastructure. Data centres and connectivity networks form the silent, unshakable backbone of this technological shift.

Malaysia has the potential to become the true data hub for Southeast Asia, and at Open DC, we are committed to playing our part in turning that vision into reality through responsible, future-focused growth.

## What do you want to accomplish in the next five years?

Open DC's vision is to position Malaysia as a leading regional digital hub by enabling sovereign AI, cloud services and data interconnectivity through sustainable, world-class infrastructure that supports both local and international partners.

A key milestone in this journey is the development of D8-1, our hyperscale-ready data centre in Kedah, which forms part of Open DC's broader expansion strategy across Malaysia. Designed as a hyperscale-ready green data centre, D8-1 places energy efficiency and sustainability at its core and is slated for completion by 2028.

Open DC is purpose-built to support Southeast Asia's next phase of digital growth. Strategically positioned between Thailand and Singapore, our location creates a new north-south digital corridor that enhances regional resilience, performance, and scalability.

By enabling alternative routing beyond traditional maritime paths, Open DC strengthens network diversity and future-proofs connectivity as regional traffic continues to scale. D8-1 is directly connected to JB1 and JB2 through CJ1, anchoring it into Malaysia's core digital infrastructure.

With its northern geography, D8-1 also serves as a natural convergence point for traffic between Southeast Asia, China, and Hong Kong. Proximity to key submarine cable systems enables more efficient routing compared to southern hubs, supporting lower latency and high-performance cross-regional connectivity.

Together, these positions Open DC not just as a data centre - but as a strategic gateway shaping Southeast Asia's digital future.

Beyond infrastructure development, we are actively pursuing strategic partnerships with regional and international players to strengthen connectivity within Malaysia and across Southeast Asia. These collaborations reinforce our ambition to position Malaysia as a digital gateway for the region, bridging global networks through sustainable, carrier-neutral infrastructure.

Ultimately, our goal is to establish Open DC as Malaysia's leading interconnected, AI-ready data centre operator, seamlessly connecting domestic and regional digital ecosystems from enterprise deployments to hyperscale infrastructure.