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41 entrepreneurs honoured at Spirit of Enterprise Awards

By Priya Paramajothi, Channel NewsAsia | Posted: 23 October 2006 2152 hrs

SINGAPORE: 41 local entrepreneurs were honoured on Monday with the Spirit of Enterprise Awards.

The annual awards ceremony - now in its fourth year - seeks to inspire the entrepreneurial spirit in Singapore.

This year's winners were selected from a pool of over 200 nominees, almost double the number from last year.

A love for in-line skating and a desire to share the sport with others inspired one of the winners, Felix Yeo, to start his company - Skateline.

The man, who learnt to skate at age 40, now manages a skate school in Bishan Park and 5 retail outlets.



Photos 1 of 1



He says: "I believe my passion for skating and wanting to teach people how to skate and get them skating as well, I think that's what really drove the business."

It is the same drive that identifies the other award recipients - which include companies like Fact Software International and Edu21 Consultants.

Steven Fang, President of Spirit of Enterprise, says: "I don't wish for us to be just a nation of employees. I think we are at a stage of development where we can build great companies, and in order to do that, we need great leaders."

The 41 honourees own mostly small and medium-sized enterprises, and they are engaged in a wide range of businesses, from beauty to education, IT and communications.

What these businesses have in common is the drive to turn their passion into a successful business.

It is this mentality that the award organisers hope to pass on to the country's youths.

Students from local institutions were given the opportunity to interview the award nominees, and learn more about the entrepreneurial spirit.

Alvand Gosal, Student at the Singapore Institute of Management and Winner of the Best Student Interviewer Award, says: "If you venture outside to ask the experience of the real entrepreneurs you can get a lot of insights. Like Akyweb, he said we have to pursue, we have to be strong as an entrepreneur. You have to strike as hard as possible. And for Saxon Woon, he gave a lot of insight into how to maintain a long term relationship with the customer."

Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Minister of State for Trade and Industry, says: "Who knows one day we may have YouTube from Singapore that's worth billions of dollars. So I think we want to create the environment where young and new businesses can start up easily."

"They can try and experiment and if they fail, it's not painful for them to start again," he says.

This year's awards incorporated online voting from the general public for the first time - with over 38,000 votes cast. - CNA/so

