

Wise Words with Jack Ng



We've covered a number of urban farming projects over recent years, and as demand for space grows near cities across the world such schemes have become increasingly crucial. Sky Greens is a low-water and low-energy vertical farm that is intended for urban areas.

Managing Director, Jack Ng, has over 27 years of experience in construction and engineering industry. He has developed building facades, glass curtain walls, aluminum cladding systems, skylight canopies and automated mechanical systems for the building industry. Jack invented and patented Singapore's first vertical soil-based rotating planting system using a water pulley system, and established Sky Greens with the aim of being Singapore's first commercially viable vertical farm. We put our questions to Jack to find out how his urban farming project is coming along.

1. Where did the idea for Sky Greens come from?

The idea for Sky Greens was born as Singapore become more and more urbanised. In land scarce Singapore, competition for land from industrialisation, housing, recreations will reduce the availability of farm land even further in the future, thereby increasing Singapore's dependence on imported food. I feel the need to employ the knowledge and experience that I have gathered during my 28 years of engineering life to invent a farming method that minimise use of resources (land, energy, water) and have low carbon foot print, have very high yield to create a solution for sustainable urban living. Although the idea of vertical farming has been around for the past 50 years, it has largely remained as a concept with no commercialization until Sky Greens. I took the risk to take the first step to build this vertical farming concept, using low energy and low water usage. In 4 years Sky Greens go commercial.

2. Can you describe a typical working day?

Every day gives rise to different challenges. My day starts with a cup of Tea-O (black tea) and I will reflect on what are the challenges and prioritise the tasks to be done for the day and set my heart to find answers to the challenges.



3. How do you unwind or relax when you're not working on Sky Greens?

I relax when I learn through keen observation. Paying attention to all the small details of life and the environment. Drawing parallels from these observations to our life, for example, by looking at how ants work together to collect food, build their nest and work together with other insects. I learn more about working together, effective communication and the importance of symbiotic relationships. I feel happy when these observations trigger my enquiring mind and link them to overcome any challenges I may face.

4. What's the secret ingredient to success as an entrepreneur?

Persevere in your tasks. Always employ a multi-angled approach in problem solving. And remember that there is always more than one choice, never be overcome by greed and continuously collaborating to achieve a win-win situation.

5. What drove you crazy when building your business?

Difficulty in changing people's mind-set. A large amount of time and energy is needed to prove to others before any mindset change can take place. However once this is achieved, we will be able to move faster, as alignment of mind-set has taken place.

6. What motivates you to keep going?

Passionate belief in my vision.

7. If you were to start again, what would you do differently?

No, I would not do anything differently if I were to start again, because if you don't take that first step, you will never know how you can progress. What is important is we pick up ourselves from our failures, accumulating valuable lessons learnt along the way. Though we have learnt many things, there are more lessons to be learnt.

8. Where do you see your business in five years, and how will you get there?

I think Sky Greens will be a global company in five years' time. We intend to work with the right partners, with similar values and vision. I welcome all potential partners or companies who will be able to value-add to this vision of sustainable urban living.



9. If you weren't working on Sky Greens, what would you be doing?

I will probably be retired and employing the knowledge and experience that I have accumulated in my 28 years of engineering life to create new solutions for a sustainable living, for the good of the environment and our earth.

10. Tell Springwise a secret...

There is no secret. Every day brings about new learning. What you have learnt cannot be taken away from you. It will only serve to enrich your life.

11. Any final words for aspiring entrepreneurs?

Keep it simple. Just do it! And enjoy whatever you do.

Thanks Jack!

You can read more about Sky Greens [here](#), or visit the Sky Greens website [here](#).