



**Message from Mr. Simon Wong, JP, Chairman of the Hong Kong Brand Development Council at the Presentation Ceremony of the 2015 Hong Kong Top Brand Awards, Hong Kong Top Service Brand Awards, and Hong Kong Emerging Brand Awards & Hong Kong Emerging Service Brand Awards**

The beginning of 2016 has brought with it the promise of a fresh start. With excitement and pride, we gather together here to acclaim the “sparkling debut” of the winners of 2015 Brand Awards. Not only is today’s Ceremony a proud occasion for us to look back on the enviable achievements of local brands, but also a window to unfold the vibrant future of Hong Kong’s brand development and the immense prospects of “branding to win”.

Indeed, albeit in a time of uncertainty when lingering economic slowdown and drastic changes in both international and domestic markets have imposed escalating pressure on our industries, Hong Kong brands have actually ushered in an unprecedented “golden age” with ample room to grow and thrive, as conventional wisdom has it said that “With every challenge always comes an opportunity.”

On the one hand, leveraging on an “advantage portfolio” including unrivalled geographical location, well-established market connections, first-class business infrastructure and sound intellectual property regime, Hong Kong is gracefully rebuilding its position as a “brands hub”, providing a benign environment that could foster original branding and add values to worldwide brands. Meanwhile, “Hong Kong Brand” has nowadays become a symbol of quality, trendiness, credibility, value for money and outstanding service, earning the trust of both local and overseas consumers; and this positive “country of origin effect” has translated into an edge for our local brands, enabling them to have a good start when making ways into the international arena.

On the other hand, now that China has embarked on a “new normal” with the key driving forces of its economic growth shifting towards innovation and domestic demand, the Mainland market is bound to make a “quantum leap” in terms of capacity, quality, growth potential and the level of openness as well; and the hinterland of Hong Kong brands is getting wider, deeper and even dynamic. Furthermore, China’s ambitious “One Belt One Road” initiative has heralded a new direction for Hong Kong brands to expand their footsteps in the emerging markets.

With the advent of “Internet Plus” era, the tidal wave of e-commerce notably online shopping has swept across the economic landscape, giving rise to brand-new business patterns. While the modus operandi of brand engagement, management and promotion is undergoing revolutionary transformations, there are plenty of success stories where SMEs and “Makers” swiftly cut a fine figure by dint of thrilling technology, creativity and responsiveness or snatch up market share through the tactic of “using a small gadget to jack up a heavy load”. For Hong Kong’s small and medium brand operators, the rise of Internet Economy has unlocked the door to “infinite possibilities”.

When it comes to numerating the “push factors” and “pull factors” for Hong Kong brand development, one should not neglect the SAR Government’s pivotal role and especially the kind of “thoughtful and powerful” supports it has rendered to us. For example,

the “Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales” (BUD Fund) has not only provided an additional impetus for local enterprises to gear towards brand-building, but also served as a strong catalyst for the improvement of local supporting facilities and even the whole ecosystem for brand development. As a matter of fact, thanks to the sponsorship provided by BUD Fund, the Hong Kong Brand Development Council has been able to implement “Hong Kong Brand Festival” Projects in a number of Mainland’s major cities, in an effort to uplift the collective image of Hong Kong brands while building up a multifunctional platform to facilitate our industries’ expansion in the Mainland market.

The business community in Hong Kong has always been agile and adaptive; they are not only good at overcoming adversities, but also adept in seizing new opportunities based on sagacity and far-sightedness. Because of that, although the Hong Kong economy has been facing a challenging environment in the recent years, the “branding for excellence” culture has firmly taken root here, flourishing to the fullest. And it also comes as no surprise that the 2015 Brand Awards have turned out to be another success, with 43 outstanding brands selected as the new batch of laureates through rigorous selection and intense competition.

Among this year’s winners, there are up-and-coming stars standing on the cutting-edge of e-business as well as emerging global players striving to establish a leading position in the Mainland and overseas markets. Alongside household names that have made brave attempt to lead the industry’s reinvention and embrace state-of-the-art management techniques to sustain their decade-long legends, we also see a couple of young and innovative “brand entrepreneurs” inducted into this Hall of Fame. The 2015 Awardees have exhibited remarkable performance in respect of Reputation, Distinctiveness, Innovation, Quality, Image, as well as Environmental Performance and Social Responsibility. As you would agree, the winners have showcased the latest developments of the industries, adding another inspiring chapter to the splendid epic of Hong Kong brand development.

On behalf of the Organisers, let me pay tribute to today’s officiated guest, the Financial Secretary Hon. John Tsang. I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all Government departments, organisations and individuals that have contributed enormously to the 2015 Awards. In particular, our thanks go to the Judging Panels respectively led by Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Mr. Philip Yung, Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Mr. Godfrey Leung, and Director-General of Trade and Industry Mr. Kenneth Mak; the Official Honorary Auditor-cum-Event Sponsor KPMG; and the Trophy Sponsor Lukfook Jewellery. Likewise, we sincerely thank the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the media, for their valuable assistance in promoting the Awards.

Please join me in congratulating all winners of the 2015 Awards.