



# THE GLOBAL JOURNEY OF AN ASIAN

*The entrepreneurial journey of a complete outsider*

R. Palan PhD



PERDANA  
LEADERSHIP  
FOUNDATION  
YAYASAN  
KEPIMPINAN  
PERDANA

The Global Journey of an Asian is a fascinating story of hope, courage, and determination and learning the lessons of entrepreneurial life! Dr. Palan explores for us the lessons and gifts of his extraordinary entrepreneurial journey in his inspiring book *The Global Journey of an Asian!*

**Marshall Goldsmith**

*2 million-selling author of the New York Times bestsellers, MOJO and What Got You Here Won't Get You There and the Thinkers 50 Award Winner (sponsored by Harvard Business Review) for Most-Influential Leadership Thinker in the World*

Based on personal experiences, examples from business and politics, and written with passion and humility, this book is about defining your own success, knowing where you want to go but also being flexible and allowing life to take you in unexpected directions, connecting passion to purpose, truly understanding yourself and your strengths, being resilient, and the importance of continuing to learn. Dr. R. Palan takes everyone on his personal journey of learning, helping others to find their own practical individual applications.

**Professor Boris Groysberg**

*Richard P. Chapman Professor of Business Administration  
Harvard Business School*

The way Dr Palan speaks, writes and acts are consistently the same - passionate, highly intelligent and always value adding. His understanding of human psychology and how best people can significantly up their game, is the distinct reason why he continues to thrive in the tempestuous arena of entrepreneurship.

**Tee Lin Say**

*Author of Faces of Fortune: The Twenty Tycoons To Bet On Over the Next 10 Years.*



# Testimonials

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## **Professor Boris Groysberg**

*Richard P. Chapman Professor of Business Administration  
Harvard Business School*

"Once you pick up this book, you live the UNLIVED potential of a human's heart and mind.. Once hard work is blended with a drive for GIVING, then all falls into place and one achieves. Palan's journey

shared in these pages, sets any human's mind into a spree of daring plans for the future...HOPE is at the heart of the book but what is more important is the diligence behind this man's amazing life and the humility and simplicity that enabled him to REACH!"

**Amal Ishaq Kooheji**

*Tamkeen, Manama, Bahrain*

Palan was a source of inspiration for me to start my own Training business. As an executive in the corporate world, watching him in action, delivering workshops in a fun and impactful way was amazing. What also struck me was his ability to grow his business and people, combining passion and compassion! Combining one's passion with work, heart and fun became a distinct possibility for me after seeing Palan as an embodiment. I marvel at his ability to evolve and grow into different roles over the years allowing space for others. His personal example was a crucial factor that motivated me to take the leap into starting on my own.

**Uday Khedkhar**

*Partner, LifeLong Learning Solutions India*

*Formerly with ICICI Bank, India*

"Palan complements valuable lessons from his personal experiences with observations from an impressive range of academics, businessmen, and artists. His book is a must-read for anyone who hopes to become a successful entrepreneur, or who dares to grow in his personal and professional life."

**Professor Ranjay Gulati**

*Jaime and Josefina Chua Tiampo Professor of Business Administration,*

*Harvard Business School*

Entrepreneurship is a unique combination of human courage, imagination, adventure, self belief and sacrifice. It is always an inspiring story of human spirit succeeding in the face of multiple struggles. The outcome of such a journey is not just the economic success of a few individuals but also the creation of institutions that carries the imprint of the individuals' deep values and unparalleled efforts. It also creates an inspiring body of lessons for others who want to undertake a similar journey of human creativity.

Dr Palan's story captured in this book captures all the excitement of such a journey and more. It is also the story of a global citizen who broke through the barriers of culture, multiple regulatory environments and many other challenges. Dr Palan in writing the book has brought to the fore another facet of his entrepreneurship.

**Santrupt Misra**

*Chief Executive Officer, Carbon Black,  
Aditya Birla Group*

“Palan's journey is not only a growth story based on bringing FUN into education but also a great guidebook on how to remain humble, keep your self-discipline and differentiate yourself from the crowd. Thank you Palan, I will be happy to apply several of your ideas in my own life.”

**Guido Kaelin**

*New Entrepreneur,  
Former Vice President Marketing, Emmi of Switzerland*

I have been fortunate to bear witness to Dr. Palan's journey of entrepreneurship and the enduring legacies resulting from his

endeavor, as the SMR Group attests. As visionary and leader, Dr. Palan founded the Group on innovation and best practice principles, with his sight set firmly on achieving goals, despite the complex business and social climate in operation. His entrepreneurial spark has been fueled by his integrity, intellect, passion and creativity - a potent combination which has proved to be phenomenally successful.

**Sally Rylatt**

*New Entrepreneur,  
People and Organisational Development Professional  
Formerly Project Manager, NAB Wealth, Australia*

One of my favorite songs of all time is the late, great American singer Billie Holliday's, "God Bless the Child." It speaks to personal power, purposefulness and individuality - three amazing qualities that entrepreneurs must have. These are also qualities that Dr. R. Palan has benefitted from during his indefatigable entrepreneurial journey. Palan has lived a "no excuses" life and has turned that mindset and spirit into an incredible organisation that has touched thousands around the world!

**Jim "Mr. Energy" Smith, Jr.**

*President & CEO (Jim Smith Jr. International)  
Author (The No Excuse Guide to Success: No Matter What Your Boss  
or Life Throws at You)*

At my first meeting with Dato Palan, about six years ago, in my office in Singapore, I was taken in by his humility, for a man of his stature both as a professional and an entrepreneur. Why would he bother to visit me especially when I was just starting my journey as a L&D professional. This book truly reflects his philosophy &

a true blue Asian professional embarking on his Global journey of entrepreneurship. There are many learning points in book that will unleash the passion of young and aspiring professionals who will be future entrepreneurs in a very connected world. A book written by an Asian for not only Asian readers but for the world to understand the complexities of the world today across generations and cultures. Great insights and an inspiring book.”

**Robert Yeo**

*Executive Director & CEO,  
Singapore Training and Development Association*

“This book is built around a unique personality. Palan exemplifies individuals with a unique vision. He is an extraordinary high performing individual , ever willing to share and one who has created rainbows for others. A truly important book that will help readers to feel, touch and achieve their dreams.”

**Dr. Ebrahim Al Dossary,**

*Prime Minister’s Court, Kingdom of Bahrain  
Past Chairman, International Federation for Training And  
Development Organization (IFTDO)*

The way Dr Palan speaks, writes and acts are consistently the same - passionate, highly intelligent and always value adding. His understanding of human psychology and how best people can significantly up their game, is the distinct reason why he continues to thrive in the tempestuous arena of entrepreneurship.

**Tee Lin Say**

*Author of Faces of Fortune: The Twenty Tycoons To Bet On Over  
the Next 10 Years.*

In *The Global Journey of an Asian*, Palan shows how a journey can begin with a dream and you can grow by putting people first and profits second. He puts together the message of entrepreneurship with delightful personal anecdotes and lessons from great authors. A delightful book to read.

**Datuk Seri Mohd Nadzmi Bin Mohd Salleh**  
*Chairman, NADICORP Holdings Sdn Bhd*  
*President Badminton Asia Confederation*

“Palan crosses cultures effortlessly and this book will inspire others to imagine a world that celebrates diversity rather than try to accommodate it. Palan keeps himself abreast of latest practices in education and innovates to make learning a joy. “

**Jugal Choudhary,**  
*Director, MWH Global Inc*

“For all those with the entrepreneurial fire, *The Global Journey of an Asian*, is a must read. Palan’s *Journey* is a story about not being afraid to dream big and to passionately pursue those dreams without sacrificing your values. He provides excellent advice on how to successfully navigate the entrepreneurial waters.”

**Doug Murdock**  
*President - Engineered Products Division.*  
*Mueller Industries, Inc., USA*

# **The Global Journey of an Asian**





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*The Entrepreneurial Journey of a Complete Outsider*

R. Palan Ph.D.

PUSTAKA PERDANA



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Published by Advantage, Charleston, South Carolina.  
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ISBN: 978-159932-487-6

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# *Dedicated to*

My Family

my mum, Sethu Ramayee Achi

my wife, Kamu

my children, Maha, Subu and Shriceya

*who taught me that*

*no one is on a journey all alone.*

And the best journey

is the one within yourself; one where you need to

let go of yesterday, be focused on the moment,

while looking forward to tomorrow.



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# Foreword



His Excellency Honourable  
**Fidel V. Ramos**  
*President of the Republic of  
Philippines, 1992 - 1998*

**E**ntrepreneurship is tough; it is one of the hardest things to do. Being on your own and starting a business can be intimidating as any career plan. It involves tremendous personal commitment and determination. Yet, over 90% of businesses in Asia are in the small-and-medium category that includes informal ventures. Those who overcome the intense pressure have found success and some among them have gone on to reinvent the future. The challenge is always to sustain and grow the enterprise to the next higher level.

This is what drives entrepreneurial success. Because governments try to generate livelihood and employment for their people on a sustainable basis and adapt to meet challenges that arise, the future success of nations is bound to be rooted