



An interview with

## AMBOSE LINN

*Ushering a New Era in the Construction Materials Industry*

This issue INSIGHT talks to Ambose Linn, chief executive (CE) of the Hong Kong Construction Materials Association (HKCMA), to find out more about what drives him and the association forward and what his plans are for the future.

### When was HKCMA established?

It was established in 1999 and was founded by a group of industry professionals. It is a non-profit organisation that serves the construction materials (CM) industry through its wealth of knowledge and expertise.

HKCMA's membership base currently comprises companies engaged in diverse core building products such as cement aggregate, asphalt, ready-mix concrete, river sand and precast concrete, etc. When it started there was no full-time salaried management staff devoted to overseeing the daily operations until I was recruited to join as CE in May 2014. I see my role as a spokesperson and bridge to reach the government on behalf of the building materials industry. Before that there wasn't a spokesperson for the CM industry. So I have taken the responsibility to raise the awareness of this sector.

### Could you share the mission and core values of the association with us?

Our mission is to promote, enhance and protect the interests of the CM industry, acting as a unified voice and as liaison with relevant HKSAR government departments. This is to be accomplished through active engagement in social, environmental, education and charitable CSR activities.

Some of our core values include striving for sustainable products and processes to optimise and gain respect and recognition as one of Hong Kong's major economic growth drivers.

In order to accomplish our mission and garner success, I need to do tremendous lobbying work among governmental authorities and business communities such as establishing a functional constituency under the legislative council, i.e., an individual one for the CM industry. This is so as to represent voices solely from the construction industry. Over the past years we feel that the voices expressing our stance and interests are not loud and clear enough;



*Directors and Members of HKCMA & Top Management of Competition Commission*



hence, we need a more solid and definitive representation for the CM industry and related sectors.

**How does one qualify to be a member of the association?  
Is there any membership fee?**

Any CM company will be welcomed. Currently our membership covers key heavyweight core construction products (such as those mentioned above). Our ultimate aim is to broaden our membership base and to increase diversity to incorporate all other building material players, including but not limited to iron, steel, glass, aluminium, etc. That variably encompasses whatever is needed for construction projects, all the way from exterior to interior CM items. Yes, membership fee is based on company size, trading volume, revenue, financial status, and production capacity.

**What is the plan for the year 2015?**

In terms of strategic direction, it is to reinforce relationship with government authorities and all business counterparts in the industry through close management, rapport, and intensive relationship build-up as well as media publicity. We will engage with BCI Asia and do more marketing for the association to build up brand awareness in order to recruit more members. Throughout the year, we will consistently engage in publicity campaigns to increase the association's member size.

Another focus will be technological innovation such as new technologies for the CM industry to produce more eco-friendly products. Investing in education is very important, in terms of providing training for people in the construction sectors. I believe that the trend for product certification will be more essential; therefore more training on market demand is needed.

**What trends do you see in the construction development in Asia? What do you think the association will be like in the future?**

Based on the government statistics there is more than 10-percent growth in the construction industry; therefore the demand for construction services will increase the need for building materials. I believe that there will be more public housing development, which will 'export' many services to Asia and China. The CM industry performance record is a very good growth driver for the Hong Kong economy to collaborate with the government.

I do personally envisage Asia's construction market continually trending towards Green building concept, from architectural design to deployment of more eco-friendly building materials and even renewable energy sources.

There is massive market potential in the region's Green building and construction market. Looking wider into the Asia-Pacific region, Global Intelligence Alliance (GIA) expects the 2010-2015 compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for the whole building and

construction market to grow at a healthy 11 percent, well supplemented with a strong 31 percent growth in the Green building and construction market. In potential dollar terms for capitalisation, Green building and construction transactions for the Asia-Pacific (APAC) market is expected to hit US\$670 billion in 2015, equivalent to 40 percent (i.e., almost half) of the region's total building and construction market of US\$1,666 billion, signalling high receptivity and market trending towards Green building.

Focusing on Southeast Asia, the region is expected to contribute at least US\$40 billion of the APAC's value for Green building and construction contracts. In this, Singapore sits at the frontier of the region's Green building community, with 1,600 buildings already certified in the country. Green building certification in Southeast Asian markets adopts relatively similar requirements and



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*(left: Ambrose Linn, Chief Executive of HKCMA; David Hogan, Director of HKCMA; Rose Webb, Senior Executive Director of Competition Commission; Jing Jing Zhao, Senior Manager (General Counsel) of Competition Commission; Diana Pang, Senior Manager (Competition Affairs) of Competition Commission*