

WISE UP AT LUNCH WITH LWC

02 May 2021 / 12:05



Core values: Lim believes in the 5 Wells, which is a big part of his life philosophy to do good, stay healthy and to better serve the society.

LEVEL 9 of Top Glove Tower in Shah Alam houses a special VIP dining room, equipped with a large wall-mounted computer screen, where Tan Sri Dr Lim Wee Chai (LWC) normally takes lunch with his key senior managers. On April 20, I was invited to this room to meet Lim's senior managers – led by Top Glove's managing director Datuk Lee Kim Meow – after I conducted an interview with the self-made tycoon, whose wealth has ballooned with the emergence of Covid-19 virus.

The nutritious vegetarian lunch was to be a continuation of the office interview. However, staring at me over lunch were not his corporate lieutenants but various plastic stands (at the centre of the table) carrying inspirational advice and slogans, painstakingly crafted by Lim – Top Glove's 63-year old founder and executive chairman. These have become mobile fixtures on the VIP lunch table. And every senior manager invited to this room is expected to memorise and put into practice these personal and corporate principles. They represent Top Glove's core

corporate values in emphasising quality, transparency and integrity to propel the group forward.

They also reflect the founder's beliefs to do good, stay healthy to better serve society. Among the plastic listings is one stating the seven principles of life by Lim's father, which include "accumulate good deeds, be accountable and trustworthy, remember your roots and base". One good-read authored and preached by Lim is the "Five-Wells": clean well, eat well, work well, exercise well and sleep well. Throughout the lunch, Lim emphasised the importance of "doing good". He walks the talk through Top Glove Foundation, set up to carry out corporate social responsibility (CSR) and provides funds for charities, education, environment and community. "Over the years, I have given back to society from my own pocket and through the Foundation.

It could be in the form of cash or kind. For example last year, Top Glove donated three million pieces of medical gloves to hospitals and the police, and three million to China to fight the Covid-19 virus. "I always believe we should use our wealth to support worthy causes. I am a Tzu Chi commissioner and volunteer, and I believe in karma." Among the donations Lim has given to education include RM2mil to Kuan Cheng High School's building fund in 2018, over RM600,000 to TAR University College and millions to trade and Chinese associations. Some of these charitable works can be read at Level One of Top Glove Tower. Apart from the "forced labour" issue, Lim was also in the news lately because of a stake buy in Minda Global Bhd, a listed education group. But he says he will not raise his stake "for the time being." He explains: "Friends invited me to take up Minda's private placement. Due to the pandemic, many private institutions are suffering.

Minda is doing good for society by nurturing talents. With this purchase, I am helping others to do good things." His purchase of 10% stake in property group Tropicana Corporation Bhd several years back was done with similar intention to help a friend. Later, he was invited by owner Tan

Sri Danny Tan to take up the chairmanship to steer the firm according to Top Glove principles. Although Lim is the public face of Top Glove, the company was jointly founded in 1991 by him and his wife Puan Sri Tong Siew Bee – a board member of Top Glove and a full-time Tzu Chi volunteer.

The AIDS scare and tremendous demand for rubber gloves in the 1980s prompted him to plunge into this healthcare sector as he contemplated setting up his own enterprise. He has not looked back since. With emphasis on good management, marketing and efficient technology, this graduate of Physics from University of Malaya – also armed with an MBA and a PhD – has built Top Glove into the world's largest rubber glove maker and a leading foreign exchange earner for Malaysia.

What started as an SME with one factory and one glove production line, Top Glove has today captured 26% of the world market share for rubber gloves, according to Top Glove's official website. With 50 factories, Top Glove has an annual production capacity of 100 billion gloves. While the company's manufacturing operations are mainly in Malaysia, it also has factories in Thailand, Vietnam and China. Its gloves are sold to 2,000 customers in 195 countries worldwide.