

My Story, My Brand - Mr. Sirivat



"SIRIVAT SANDWICH" was founded in April 1997 when Mr. Sirivat and his wife, Mrs. Vilailuck, started making and selling the first 20 sandwiches on April 20, 1997. It took them 6 1/2 hours to sell them. Mr. SIRIVAT VORAVETVUTHIKUN, 58 years old, was a famous local stockbroker and investor. He had made his fortunes in the local stock market until the stock market crashed as well as his luxurious condominium project in early 1997. His 20 employees showed their intention to stay with Mr. Sirivat who had lost financial credibility and fortunes. He and his wife decided to cut down all expenses, except employees' salaries, in order to survive e.g. they gave in a ฿100,000 office rental per month to rent an old townhouse for ฿15,000 a month. His wife suggested making and selling sandwiches.

Today, Mr. Sirivat is still selling sandwiches to keep his employees (although some had left) survived as well as some unemployed people whom he thoroughly understands their plights. For him, he is still struggling with hopes since Thai people are supporting him. More than 140 local medias have been continuously making his 'fighting spirits' known to the public since the 1997 economic crisis. In addition, CNN, CNBC, BBC WORLD, NHK, and more than other 99 international medias have made his logo (Baht floating with a balloon) known all over the world and called him 'The Sandwich Man' and 'Mr. Sandwich of Thailand'. BBC WORLD has also added 'Sirivat Sandwich' in their ASIAN INNOVATORS in 2003.

- In life, we failed many times. Failing is part of life journey. When we fall, we have great opportunity to grow.
- In 1997 July 2, our country was forced to devalued our currency, I became bankrupt over night. I owed people more than 100 million ringgit.
- In 1997, at age 48, I, an ex-multi-millionaire, stood on the street in Bangkok selling sandwich.
- Before this, I own a stock broking firm, making more than your currency 10 million ringgit a c street to sell a RM3 sandwich package. I did this with the support of my wife. We got up sandwich.
- In 6 ½ hours, I sold only 20 sandwiches on April 20, 1997, now everyday we sell over 100,000 sandwiches a day. I am today 58 years of age.
- All this was possible on the encouragement of my wife.
- I did this through mere perseverance and determination.



- RM3 sandwich is relatively more expensive than that of other vendors. We use bread to make sandwich, our sandwich has a life span of only 24 hours, the remains were given to staff or on charity to help up the needy. We sell fresh sandwich.
- Initially I thought that people will look down upon me and curse me for what I am now. I remembered once there was this poor flower vendor asked me the price of my sandwich. When I told her RM3 and she commented “very expensive. She then asked for 2 packages of sandwich which cost her RM6, which was equivalent to 2 days of her meals. I asked her why she wanted to buy from me when it was so expensive to her. She told me she saw my news on the media and she wanted to support me. I was greatly touched and in fact tear fell from eyes.
- The poor in Thailand know only bread and not sandwich. It was certainly tough to sell sandwich.
- I was arrested twice by police in pick-up truck for selling sandwich – you laugh when you see my picture and I cried. Now I can laugh.
- At an interview on July 2, 1997 and I was interviewed and interviewer said this to me, “In 10 years, you will be riches that what you were because you got the gut.”
- Now 10 years had gone, I am still not as rich as I was. 5 years from now, I will.
- My bread supplier, Yamasaki, was not able to give me the support I wanted.
- 3 years later, they give what I want without my request even. I am now their biggest bread buyer. Credit and respect need to be earned.
- Today my success is a reality. I invested 10 years in building the foundation. My company will be going for IPO in 5 years.
- Even Unilever, the best food Brand wanted to leverage on my sandwich brand.
- Never forget the other half that supported you when you are successful.
- I listen to my employees for their suggestions. Their ideas sell.
- Learn to capitalize on crisis.
- Expect the unexpected. How he started his Sushi business. He now owned 3 patented right on Brown Rice Sushi.
- I was given an opportunity to open coffee corner. I was told to sit at Starbuck and see how they operate. They are using RM80,000 coffee making machine. I could only afford a RM3,000 coffee making machine. My 2nd Coffee Corner now using a RM40,000 coffee making machine. In years to come, we will use the RM80,000 machine and make better if not the same grade coffee at 20 to 30% cheaper in price.
- I started the Coffee Catering Business
- I then started the Thai Drink Business
- In 1963, McDonald spent lot of money to get advertise in Reader Digest and I got publicity in Reader Digest in many countries without paying a cent.
- My new occupation now is to motivate people. Informing them life comes with all the ups and downs, filled with frustrations and happiness. It is how we direct our destiny.
- We cannot change where to be born but we can choose what we want to be.
- I am helping our young people, helping my country men to be entrepreneurs. Teach them how to value money and show gratitude to what they have.
- Today’s children are spoilt. I would like to pass on my experience.
- We all have the power to excel.
- Go through the tough time with our children; make them stronger and better than we were.

- No one believes in me except me.
- My roles now are to manage the expectations of my shareholders, my customers, my suppliers and my employees.
- www.srivatsandwich.com
- Your company is behind you, and no one is behind me. If you cannot do it, shame on you.
- Decide your destiny, move on step by step. If too big a step, make it smaller.
- It is us, it is mankind that make the world go round.

A summary of learning points from the Talk on 8th August 2007

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