

25 YEARS OF NTCC

The history of the NTCC, the biggest Dutch Chamber in ASEAN, reads like a gripping tale of adventure. Here are just a few highlights from 25 years of NTCC's entrepreneurial spirit.

1991

On the initiative of a group of Dutch businessmen, the Netherlands-Thai Chamber of Commerce is founded. Dutch investments in Thailand are increasing rapidly and it is felt that a more formal representation of the Dutch private sector is necessary. Among the Founding Fathers are Dutch multinationals such as FrieslandCampina, ING, KLM, Philips, Shell and Unilever.



1992

On the 28th of January the NTCC is officially inaugurated at the Regent Hotel, currently known as the Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel. This first event is immediately a huge success with over 150 guests.



Jan Boeles gives a lecture on historical trade relations between the Netherlands and Thailand. Mr. Boeles arrived as early as 1935 in Bangkok and was an active and highly regarded member of the Dutch community in Thailand. Later he was appointed as officer of the Royal Order of Orange-Nassau for promoting deep and lasting ties between Thailand and the Netherlands.

1993

Jan de Kam becomes President. He leads the Chamber through the turbulent 1990s and the Asian Crisis for more than 10 years.



In February an excellent luncheon is organized and Guest of Honor is former Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mr. Ruud Lubbers.

1995

The first seminar in Chiang Mai is organized and it is a great happening with over 100 participants.



The Chamber goes international and organizes a trade mission to Myanmar with 36 participants.

1996

The Chamber enters into an operational agreement with the Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber of Commerce, where BeLuThai makes use of NTCC's operational facilities.

1999

The first Netherlands-Thai Business Excellence Awards Dinner is organized at the Grand Hyatt Erawan Hotel. Companies can participate in two categories; overall business excellence and overall excellence in importing/exporting between the Netherlands and Thailand. Siam Makro wins the first category and Siam Modified Search, a Dutch-Thai-Japanese joint venture, wins the latter. This was the beginning of a long-standing tradition still attracting over 500 guests annually.



2000

After 8 years of publishing our magazine in the same style and format a face-lift is needed. We redesign our magazine from NTCC Magazine into NTCC News.



2001

Together with BeLuThai a new magazine is designed and we pick up the current name Commerce Magazine.



Charles Swietert (former Executive Director):

“The magazine must become a sound and state-of-the-art medium, accessible for Thai and BeNeLux businessmen, bankers, governmental decision makers, journalists and academics”

2002

The Chamber goes digital and launches its first website!



2003

Former President Jan de Kam receives knighthood of the Royal Order of Orange-Nassau. He receives this royal decoration to honor his work as a Founding Father and his decade-long presidency of the Chamber.



2004

We celebrate 400 years of trade relations between the Netherlands and Thailand. A state visit by Queen Beatrix and Prince Willem-Alexander is a central part in the festivities.



We welcome a new Executive Director, Bert Cesar.

2006

In April we elect a new President: Dr. Pisit Leaahtam, former deputy minister at the Ministry of Finance.



2007

Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont addresses the Foreign Chambers of Commerce about the important amendments to the Foreign Business Act of 1999 which were passed by the Thai Cabinet in January this year.



2010

Former Prime Minister Wim Kok of the Netherlands participates in the traditional Welcome Back cocktail party.



2015

By diversifying our events and expanding to upcountry regions such as Chiang Mai and the Eastern Seaboard, Bert Cesar manages to double the membership base during his period as Executive Director. For the first time we reach a membership base of 300 members!



2016

After 12 years, Bert passes the baton to Hans van den Born and Hans becomes the new Executive Director. At the same time Stefan van der Sluys is elected as the new President.



AN ASIAN EXPERIENCE OF OVER 30 YEARS: GERARD GERAETS

Starting as a door-to-door salesman and supervisor in a wine production facility, eventually becoming the Vice President of Dumex and Managing Director of Danone Dumex Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore. Mr. Geraets is not your typical kind of guy, but he can be characterized as the embodiment of the NTCC's entrepreneurial spirit. With over 30 years of marketing experience in the Netherlands, France, England, Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore, Gerard is a true global citizen. Like many of us, before Gerard came to Thailand he had his doubts, but upon his first visit he was immediately captivated by the charm of this lovely country.

As a close friend of our former President Jan de Kam, Gerard witnessed a lot of positive noise and activity around the NTCC since its inception. Gerard appreciates the excellent leadership that guided the Chamber into becoming a fully-fledged representative of the Dutch community in Thailand, also leading to much respect from expats outside the Dutch community in Thailand. Besides that, he saw Thailand change from a family-centered society to a society which becomes more and more digitalized. However, Thai stay Thai and family still plays a fundamental role in the current society.

In 1984 Gerard turned down a fantastic offer to lead a multinational company in the Benelux in order to come to Thailand and work for Foremost. Now, 32 years later, he is still going strong and has collected many fantastic stories all over Asia. In the 1980s Gerard introduced (school) milk in Thailand which started off troublesome but later became a huge success. Gerard made the impossible happen when, by continuous product innovation, he managed to double Foremost's market share during the Asian crisis in the 1990s.

Despite being at the 'end' of his career, Gerard is still very busy, living in Bangkok and running his own one-man strategy and marketing consultancy GG BizSolutions based in Singapore.

