

by hazel tan

SMILE Inc. Dental Surgeons has every reason to smile. The dental clinic was the first dental practice in Singapore to be awarded the Singapore Brand Prestige Brand Award (SPBA) — Established Brands in 2010 and is now the only medical/dental institution to have gone on to win it for five consecutive years.

Smile Inc.'s co-founder and managing director, Mrs Grace Chong-Tan (seated, extreme left), says its success has brought about change for both customers and the dental practice landscape in Singapore by re-shaping people's perception of getting into that much dreaded black dentist chair.

"The success of Smile Inc. and its focus have changed many people's perception of the dental industry — from one associated with pain and fear of visiting the dentist to one associated with enhancing one's self-esteem and confidence through an improved smile," says Mrs Chong-Tan, who founded the practice with her husband Dr Ernest Rex Tan (standing, extreme right) in 1997.

Dr Tan, a prosthodontist, is the first and only dental surgeon in Singapore to perform the revolutionary Britesmile Laser Teeth Whitening procedure since 1997.

## Premier positioning

Smile Inc. is positioned as the premier dental practice with strengths in multi-disciplinary specialist skill sets to manage complex dental conditions, reconstructive and cosmetic dentistry, dental implants and smile makeovers, as well as a pioneer in laser teeth whitening.

"We always strive to be a leader in our field, not only in dental techniques and technologies, but also in the design elements of our facilities — from being the first to introduce chair-side teeth whitening procedures in Singapore, which is today a regular dental procedure, to being the earliest to fully computerise all our operations from front office to back room," says Mrs Chong-Tan.

Smile Inc. is a household name and a premier provider of high quality dental services in Singapore and the region, with key strengths in reconstructive and cosmetic dentistry, she adds.

The clinic is also known for its The Smile Inc. Makeover — a series of customised cosmetic dental techniques to align, reshape and brighten one's smile in one to two visits.

With clinics in Marina Bay, Orchard Road and Raffles Place, Smile Inc.'s clientele ranges from families to chief executive officers and includes a good proportion of international customers.

Mrs Chong-Tan attributes Smile Inc.'s branding success to consistency and tenacity.

"Throughout history, it has been clear that only brands with quality, reliability and more importantly, sustainability, have lasted through the test of time, over and again. The sustainability of a brand is key," she notes.

She believes Smile Inc.'s efforts in pitching it-

# Something to grin about

Smile Inc. has succeeded in changing people's perception of the dental industry



Branding has been fundamental in establishing Smile Inc.'s identity and positioning in the minds of consumers. PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

self as "the quality service patients desire" have been more than successful, both in Singapore and the region.

## Regional dental hub

The dental practice serves as a dental hub in the region, bringing in patients from Asia, Europe and Americas into Singapore to seek dental treatments.

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— Mrs Grace Chong-Tan, co-founder and managing director, Smile Inc.

Winning the SPBA will further strengthen its brand.

"The SPBA has certainly provided Smile Inc. an enriching and memorable journey with valuable lessons not only on how our brand has grown but the directions ahead as well.

"Our win again is a reaffirmation and validation of a branding strategy that has been well thought out and is sustainable in the years ahead," she says.