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Former Managing Director of O'Connor's Malaysia Lee Geok Tian says the company was a small one in the early days and only took off after Wearnes came into the picture.

When he started his career in 1974, he says he had to report to his bosses in London. "Because of the distance, different time zones and different cultures, our operations were very restricted. That meant we couldn't expand quickly, so we remained a small company for many years."

After Wearnes took over in 1987, things started to change rapidly. "We were given the leeway to expand our business and in a mere five years, we made it to the mainboard of the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange in 1992." He sees this as his biggest achievement – turning the company into an entity that could be listed.

When Wearnes acquired the company from the Rank Organisation in UK, Lee was its General Manager. A year later, he was promoted to Managing Director, in charge of its entire Malaysian operations. "That was the best moment of my life and the pinnacle of my career with Wearnes," he says.

O'Connor's Malaysia is involved in systems integration

of voice, data and radio telecommunications, electronics and instrumentation, professional sound, lighting and video surveillance systems. In the years he was heading it, turnover jumped from about RM1 million to its peak in the 1990s of more than RM250 million.

Although he worked for two other organisations for a decade before joining Wearnes, Lee says his years at Wearnes gave him the greatest satisfaction. "Without the understanding and great support of a good employer like Wearnes, I don't think I would ever have succeeded." He credits his success to hard work, honesty, integrity and ethics. "These are of paramount importance." wThere were problems too but he saw them as human problems. "How a head of an organisation manages its workers usually had a strong impact on the performance of his organisation," he says.

Lee, who has four children, retired in 2003 on his 65th birthday, after 29 years with Wearnes. He is enjoying his retirement travelling and reading – mostly newspapers and financial journals. And, no doubt, following with interest, O'Connor's progress.