



Chris Wong

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
HONG KONG & SOUTH CHINA
G4S SECURE SOLUTIONS (HONG KONG)**

From management trainee to director of manned security services

It is hardly surprising that when he graduated, with a degree in Business Administration from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1995, Chris Wong sought employment with the Jardine Matheson Group.

After all, Jardines – as it is known – remains one of Hong Kong's largest conglomerates with a 180-year involvement in this new region of China. Indeed, the company played a key role in shaping and developing Hong Kong into the exciting and thriving area that it is today.

More important, for a young man eager to embark on a worthwhile career, Jardines offered an opportunity to work in an almost bewildering range of businesses to those who successfully completed its executive trainee scheme, as Chris Wong did in 1996 a year after joining the group.

It is a leader in the fields of engineering and construction, transport services, retailing, restaurants and luxury hotels, to name just a few of its activities. Chris decided to join Jardine Securicor, its 50/50 joint venture with the British-based security company, where he began as a marketing executive.

Why security? "Because I thought commercial security would be a straightforward business to understand and work with."

It did not take him long to realise, however, that "it's seldom simple and easy to get the basics right in any business." Simple or not, it was clearly a good decision because in 1997, having been promoted to assistant marketing manager, Chris was selected to join Jardines' executive development programme.

By 1999 he was sales and marketing manager of its cash services business for six months, before being moved up the ladder again to become business development manager of Jardine Securicor's Hong Kong operations.

This was followed, from 2000, by a three-year involvement in the company's manned security services as senior manager, Sales and Marketing – a role that expanded in September 2003 to include cash services as well.

During that period, Securicor bought Jardines shares in the business and in 2004 the new owners merged with Group 4 Falck to form the world's largest security organisation – G4S.

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That year was also a momentous one for Chris Wong, for within six months of the merger he was appointed general manager of what is now G4S Secure Solutions (Hong Kong), including the prestigious G4S Gurkha Services. Then in mid-2009 that role expanded and he became executive director, Hong Kong & South China, managing around 3,000 security personnel in Hong Kong and the Guangdong Province of South China.

His progress on the management ladder is, by anyone's standards, impressive and it has undoubtedly been helped by his participation on the G4S leadership programme between 2005 and 2007.

“It took me to four other countries – United Kingdom, Austria, South Africa and the United States – enabling me to mix with people from various continents, cultures and disciplines,” Chris recalls. “I learned much from them, as well as from the development programme itself, and I got to meet a number of the Group's top level executives. It also gave me the room and the stimulus to think about how we did things back in our own business, and it helped me decide how I should shape the business and take it forward.”

The last module, which took place in Vienna, was about change management. “One of the things that impressed me was about the kaleidoscope of change: whether an organisation is prepared to change. That certainly stimulated me to think about how those concepts applied to or were relevant to our business.”

He decided they were and has since reorganised the security solutions business which was regionally or geographically-based but has now been restructured into customer and sector-based divisions.

“Of course, not everyone shared my views about the need to change and during the process it was sometimes very difficult. However, after one or two years, during which time the organisation consolidated and adapted to the new structure, people started to see the benefits.

“In the past, the business was more about the provision of labour and there was not a very clear focus on the different responsibilities and roles of security officers, or on the way in which one type of job differs from another, depending on the customer or the industry. A bank needs our personnel to provide more of a customer service role, for example, whereas a supermarket is interested in prevention of theft or the apprehension of shoplifters.”

Just as he has been enormously helped by the training and development programmes which he has attended, Chris Wong is equally committed to helping others in the organisation fulfill their potential.

“The better the people we have the more we can grow the business,” he explains. “If we can do our jobs better, individually and as a team, our efforts will be recognised by our customers.

As one of the most densely populated areas of the world, Hong Kong is not short of people. That said, there is still a lot of competition for talented people. One focus of Chris Wong's efforts is for G4S to become the preferred employer for those seeking jobs. We have to satisfy potential recruits that by joining G4S they get more than just a job, they get a career.”

What better example of that than Chris Wong, whose rapid rise to executive management should be an inspiration to all those who seek to follow in his footsteps.