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开始访问前，沈文德挺了挺身子，表示要做个自我介绍，他笑说“最近已经练习过很多次”。

过去半年多，他一次又一次向投资人讲起他的故事。从一个稻农家庭讲起，插秧种水稻，稻米供家人吃，糙米喂鸡鸭和猪，卖钱换来衣食，余钱勉强缴学费。

43年来，他一直在出走，从村到镇、到县城、城市、首都，再出国。他做农活、考学、休学、留学、工作、辞职及创业。如今，他集团旗下的世凯联亚太（Skylink APAC）在新加坡上市。

这样的经历放在这个年龄的创业者身上，不算寻常。它的确打动了一些投资人，沈文德的上市筹资目标是800万元，路演后收到的意向投资金额超过1200万元，最终他决定接受920万元拓展业务。

沈文德在2016年创办世凯联，那时，他来到新加坡已13年。理工学院毕业后，他做过五年多飞机检修学徒和工程师，又卖了四年卡车。

目前，世凯联已发展为本地第三大租车公司，拥有超过1200辆商用车，并管理约6600万元汽车贷款业务，去年获得新加坡金字品牌奖潜质品牌奖。

本周，世凯联亚太对新开集团（Sincap Group）的反向收购交易完成。

过去一年，抱着上市念头的沈文德，密集地和财务顾问见面，找保荐人、说服投资人、完成合规。内外部的财务审计、风控审计、做估值、尽职调查……这个过程更多是兴奋还是消耗？他说都有。但最重要的是，很多事只要去了解试，会发现没什么不可能。

回顾一路走来历程，他恍然想到20多年前，连护照都不知为何物的自己，走进留学机构，试探留学道路。

“当时留学好像也是遥不可及的。我连国内学费都交不起，怎么敢去想出国留学呢？但是去问了之后，你会发现，总有契机的。”这是他总结的人生经验。

**出身桂林稻农之家  
为薪学费休学打工**

1982年，沈文德生于广西桂林。桂林之于他，不是“山水甲天下”的旅游胜地，而是稻田无垠、生计艰难的故乡。

距离桂林市15公里，有一个县城：距离县城25公里，有一个镇；从镇上再走五公里，才是沈文德的村庄。

他回忆，四岁开始帮家里做家务，扒菜叶、拔草、喂鸡、喂鸭、喂猪，家里有一头耕田牛，他牵着绳子到山坡上放牛，要时刻小心牛吃了别人家种的菜，踩进别人的稻田。

七岁时，沈文德上乡村小学，只会从1数到10，放到现在很难想象。沈文德有两个弟弟。家里生活拮据，仅读过小学的母亲从小叮嘱他们，出身无法改变，唯有通过知识改变命运。2001年，沈文德从县城中学毕业，想去看远方，报考了近3000公里外位于中国东北的长春大学。

遥远模糊的大学记忆中，他对一个场景印象深刻。在零下20摄氏度飘着雪的夜里，20岁的沈文德在空旷的操场上练声，他对着一个本正音书，跟着指示，努力使舌头、牙齿、嘴唇、上颚，在冻得有些僵硬的脸上，找到各自恰当的位置，发出尽可能标准的爆破音、摩擦音。

他说，自己当时受了个刺激。入学不久，为了赚生活费，他去应聘家教，面试一开口，孩子母亲豪不客气地说：“连普通话都说不利索，还想教英文和数学，你不要把小孩教到连普通话都讲不好。”

之前几乎没走出过县城的沈文德，自尊心第一次受了极大打击。他去买了一本正音书，一本汉语拼音，一本英语，刻苦练习一段时间，终于找到兼职家教工作。

**从200平方英尺房间做起 创业初期一人“包山包海”**

2016年，沈文德成立世凯联。说是公司，其实只有一个200平方英尺的小房间，摆了两张桌子，一台打印机。他没有员工，从开拓客户、谈判成交、到文书工作，再到算账、接洽车辆维修和改装事宜，一人“包山包海”。

2017年，沈文德雇了近10名员工，在卓源东路租了个像样的办公室，剪影开业。

再过几天，一家名叫世凯联亚太（Skylink APAC）的公司，将在新交所上市交易。这是公司创办人沈文德的人生大事。43年前，沈文德出生在广西桂林一户贫穷的稻农家庭；20多年前，不知道护照是什么的他，突发奇想出国留学；10多年前，因为一道“成为百万富翁需要多久”的算术题，他放弃稳定工作，奠定创业基础。他说，一路走来的每一步，都是为了生计，不知不觉走到这里，孕育出一家上市公司。

**早人物**

## 从最低起点一路逆袭 桂林穷家儿喂猪放牛 世凯联创办人沈文德



▲ 沈文德（右）儿时与弟弟在家乡的稻田玩耍。（受访者提供）

▼ 沈文德在2016年创办世凯联，目前，公司拥有超过1200辆商用车，是新加坡第三大租车公司。（陈斌拍摄）



▲ 2022年，沈文德（右）在新加坡管理大学拿到执行工商管理硕士学位。（受访者提供）



▲ 2001年，沈文德离家到长春上大学，这是他第一次出远门。（受访者提供）

如今在永远盛夏的新加坡，沈文德再回忆那些难捱的夜晚，已经想不起当初那股“狠劲”是因为什么。“可能是好胜心吧。被否定时会问自己，为什么别人可以，我不行？”

离家的第二个冬天，他再次感受到北方的冷，是在北京。

大一结束，沈文德没能靠兼职攒够第二年学费，又不愿让家人为难，向学校申请休学一年，只身去北京打零工等学费。

北京入冬，沈文德租住在北京胡同的小杂楼上。狂风吹得玻璃窗作响，他说，自己像样的厚外套只有一件，穿脏了，洗了只能躲家里，等晒干才能出门。

他在北京先做酒楼服务员，后来做空调和家具销售，自己也进货向游客兜售过小玩意。一番折腾，并没赚到什么钱。筋疲力尽的他坐上巴士，漫无目的在城里晃，看过酒吧包厢里的“山珍海味”，也看过夜店门口挥霍享乐的城市男女。

在北京的几个月，经历了很多内心挣扎。那时有一种很强烈的欲望，我以后要成功，要创造财富，要成为这样的人。可眼下，得先生存下来。”

机缘巧合，沈文德关注到了留学广告。他好像看到了人生转机，把各个国家的留学信息了解一遍，决定退学，到新加坡留学。

“拼了命发了疯一样”打工。先是在香格里拉拉会厅，后到克拉码头的日本餐馆，一小时6块。

**辞飞机工程师转当销售  
毅然追逐百万富翁梦想**

毕业后，沈文德在新航工程（SIA Engineering）从学徒做到飞机检修工程师。第一年拿到近七个月花红，他有生以来第一次感到“生活终于有了眉目”。

2011年，马上进入而立之年的沈文德，又一次选择“退出”。原因听起来有些草率。“当时同事们在讨论投资理财，说如何成为百万富翁，我在心里默算，我一年存三四万，成为百万富翁需要30年。”

这再次刺激了他。“甘愿一辈子踏踏实实走这条路吗？我开始重新审视自己。”

他辞职转行去做销售。

但他并不知道自己是否擅长做销售。“我只是想，要真正掌握主动权，而做销售有无限的上升空间。”

辞掉飞机工程师工作后，沈文德进入丰田的商用车部门（Hino），销售重型卡车。日野当时在本地市占率不高，整整四个月，他没卖出一辆。

他回忆那时的辛苦，顶着烈日，冒着暴雨，去工业区敲开一扇扇门发传单。他也时常站在马路边、天桥上，用手机拍下经过的车辆，记下车牌号印着的公司名字，回家之后搜索地址和电话，再一一拜访推销。

“去慢慢推销，无所不用其极，有一天，电话慢慢响起来了。”一年后，他做销售的收入，终于稳定超过之前当工程师收入。

卖了四年重型卡车后，沈文德在按揭客户、谈判、成交、售后等方面胸有成竹，也积累了相当多的客户和品牌商资源。他觉得是时候开始创业。

租了近三分之一，却没能按期交租金，资金链险些断裂。沈文德从这次经历中学到的教训是：要做好风险管理。

为追求更高增长，筹集资金，得到更多资源，沈文德决定以世凯联亚太为主体，将商用车租赁、汽车信贷和汽车工程三大业务板块上市。2025财年，世凯联亚太收入同比增长76%至2637万元，净利润同比增长35%至274万元。

## 成功关键品质 勤奋学习蜕变

沈文德起初和公司的首席财务官郑征晖谈起上市想法时，后者对他“冷处理”。后来才知，是在测试他的决心。上市是一场不小的战役，意志不坚定很难做成。

沈文德崇拜马云和马斯克，他们个性鲜明、有野心、敢冒险，甚至有些天马行空。

对他影响很大的两本书，一本是马云的传记，一本是《世界上最伟大的推销员》。

回看过去20多年的那些转折，似乎“不走寻常路”成就了他今天的事，但不可忽视的是，每步都有百折不挠。

他认为成功很关键的品质，一是勤奋和纪律，二是持续不断的学习和蜕变。

年轻时未受过精英教育，沈文德在创业后，开始学习如何管理一家公司。2019年至2022年，他在新加坡管理大学攻读执行工商管理硕士（EMBA）。2024年，为配合公司发展规划，他又报读了复旦大学的并购相关课程。

他说，最近听到一个很有意思的词——“incidental entrepreneurship”（偶然创业）。自己就是如此，由于出身卑微，好像一路以来的每一步，都是为了生存，不知不觉地走到这里，竟生出一家上市公司。

偶然中当然有深藏的必然。他不避讳对财富的渴望，那是从生下来就刻在骨子里的。他剖析自己，贫穷带来的自卑，加上极强的自尊心，让他从小装出一副高傲的姿态，好像可以漠视一切。这后来转变成一种自信。“就是心里有股劲儿，不管发生什么，都告诉自己：我能解决。”

对于贫寒的出身，他不觉得幸运，也不认为是不幸，他说“既来之，则安之”。西装革履的他，端起面前精致的茶杯，讲起童年，门口的小河汩汩流动，淤泥一扒都是泥鳅，还有水塘里的小鱼。农田里的青蛙、儿时最怕的田螺，运气有些兴奋。

他说，这是自己感性的一面。他感慨那个曾经躺在山坡上的放牛郎，抬头看到飞机飞过，飞机太遥远以至于和鸟一样，他想象不出它究竟是什么样子。

采访尾声，他分享了一个儿时的插曲。沈文德并不是他的本名，小学三年级的时候，他突然和母亲说他要改名叫沈文德。在他的再三要求下，母亲带着他去登记改名。他说，自己就是一个“自我”（ego）很大的人。说来奇怪，在那之后，沈文德的学习成绩进步飞快。命运的齿轮开始转动。

English translation:

## Skylink Founder Wesley Shen – From Poor Guilin Farm Boy Feeding Pigs and Herding Cattle, to Building a Listed Company from the Ground Up

By Li Yanning – [liyanning@spH.com.sg](mailto:liyanning@spH.com.sg)



Shen Wende founded Skylink in 2016. Today, the company owns more than 1,200 commercial vehicles and is Singapore's third-largest vehicle leasing company. (Photo by Chen Binqin)



Shen Wende (right) playing by the rice fields in his hometown with his younger brother during childhood. (Photo courtesy of interviewee)



In 2022, Shen Wende (right) received his Executive MBA degree from Singapore Management University. (Photo courtesy of interviewee)



In 2001, Shen Wende left home to attend university in Changchun — his first time traveling far from home. (Photo courtesy of interviewee)

In just a few days, a company called Skylink APAC will be listed on the Singapore Exchange (SGX). For the company's founder, Wesley Shen Wende, this is a milestone moment in his life.

Forty-three years ago, Shen was born into a poor rice-farming family in Guilin, Guangxi. More than 20 years ago, he didn't even know what a passport was when he suddenly had the idea of going abroad to study. Over 10 years ago, after thinking about a simple arithmetic question — "How long would it take to become a millionaire?" — he left a stable job and laid the foundation for his entrepreneurial journey.

He says that every step he has taken was simply to make a living, and almost without realising it, he has nurtured a company that is now going public.

Before our interview began, Shen straightened his back and said he wanted to introduce himself. He laughed, saying: "I've been practising this a lot lately."

For the past six months, he has been telling his story over and over to investors: how he grew up in a rice-farming family, planting rice seedlings, harvesting rice, feeding the chickens, ducks, and pigs with brown rice, selling what they could for clothes and food, and scraping together enough money for school fees.

For 43 years, he has been moving forward — from village to town, town to county, county to city, city to the capital, and then abroad. He worked in the fields, studied, took time off from school to work, studied overseas, worked jobs, resigned, and started a business. Now, under his group, Skylink APAC is listed on the SGX.

Such a background is unusual for an entrepreneur of his age — and it has indeed moved investors. Shen's IPO fundraising target was SGD 8 million, but after the roadshow, he received indications of interest totalling more than SGD 12 million. In the end, he decided to raise SGD 9.2 million to expand the business.

Shen founded Skylink in 2016, by which time he had already been in Singapore for 13 years. After completing polytechnic, he worked for more than five years as an aircraft maintenance apprentice and engineer, then sold trucks for four years.

Today, Skylink has grown to become Singapore's third-largest commercial vehicle leasing company, with over 1,200 vehicles and a managed auto loan portfolio of around S\$66 million. Last year, the company won the Singapore Prestige Brand Award (Promising Brand).

This week, Skylink APAC completed a reverse takeover of Sincap Group.

Over the past year, with listing in mind, Shen met intensively with financial advisers, sought out sponsors, convinced investors, passed compliance checks, underwent internal and external audits, risk audits, valuation, due diligence.

Was this process more exciting or exhausting? "Both," he says. "But the most important thing is this: once you take the time to understand and try, you realise there's very little that's truly impossible."

Reflecting on his journey, Shen recalls the day over 20 years ago when, not even knowing what a passport was, he walked into a study-abroad agency to explore opportunities.

"At that time, studying abroad felt completely out of reach. I couldn't even afford domestic tuition, how could I think about going overseas?"

"But when you go and ask, you find that there are always opportunities." That, he says, is one of his life lessons.

### **Growing Up in a Poor Rice-Farming Family**

Shen was born in Guilin in 1982. To him, Guilin was not the picturesque tourist spot of "the world's best scenery," but endless rice fields and a difficult struggle for survival.

His village was 5 km from the nearest town, 25 km from the county seat, and 15 km from Guilin city.

He recalls doing chores from age four: picking vegetables, weeding, feeding the livestock, and taking the family's plow ox to graze in the hills — always careful not to let it trample a neighbour's rice field.

At seven, he started village primary school, knowing only how to count from one to ten — something hard to imagine today.

Shen has two younger brothers. Their life was tough, and his mother, who had only a primary school education, constantly reminded them that though they could not change their birth, they could change their fate through knowledge.

In 2001, Shen graduated from a county high school and wanted to see the wider world. He applied to Changchun University, nearly 3,000 km away in northeast China.

One scene from university remains vivid in his memory: on a snowy night at  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ , 20-year-old Shen stood on an empty sports field practising pronunciation with a phonetics book, forcing his tongue, teeth, lips, and palate — frozen stiff — to make the correct plosives and fricatives.

He had been humiliated when, early in school, he applied for a tutoring job and the child's mother told him bluntly:

"You can't even speak standard Mandarin properly — and you want to teach English and math? You'll ruin my child's Mandarin!"

That was a blow to his self-esteem. He bought two phonetics books — one for Mandarin, one for English — and drilled himself until he found a tutoring job.

Years later, under Singapore's eternal summer, he can no longer recall what drove him with such intensity.

"Maybe it was pride. When someone denies you, you ask yourself, why can they do it but not me?"

After his first year of college, he couldn't save enough for the second year's tuition and didn't want to burden his family. He applied for a one-year leave and went alone to Beijing to work.

He rented a tiny loft in a hutong, with the winter wind rattling the window panes. His only warm coat had to be washed indoors and air-dried before he could go out again.

He worked as a restaurant waiter, then in air-conditioner and furniture sales, and even bought small goods to resell to tourists — but made little money. Exhausted, he would ride the bus aimlessly, watching the city's opulence — lavish banquets in private dining rooms, carefree men and women outside nightclubs.

"In those months, I struggled inside. I had this powerful desire: I want to succeed, to create wealth, to be like those people. But first, I had to survive."

By chance, he saw advertisements for overseas study. Sensing an opportunity, he researched various countries and decided to drop out and go to Singapore.

"Growing up and the setbacks in Beijing taught me how hard it is to climb up in life. I didn't know if Singapore would be better, but the unknown felt like an opportunity."

The key factor: student visas in Singapore allowed part-time work — so he could pay his own tuition.

In 2003, Shen told his parents of his decision, borrowed RMB 50,000 from relatives (about S\$10,000), and enrolled in Temasek Polytechnic to study mechatronics.

For three years, aside from classes, he worked relentlessly — first at the Shangri-La banquet hall, then at a Japanese restaurant in Clarke Quay, earning S\$6 an hour.

### **From Aircraft Engineer to Salesman – Chasing the Millionaire Dream**

After graduation, Shen joined SIA Engineering, rising from apprentice to aircraft maintenance engineer. In his first year, he received a bonus worth nearly seven months of pay — the first time in his life he felt "life was finally on track."

But in 2011, as he turned 30, Shen "quit" again.

The reason? "My colleagues were talking about investments and how to become a millionaire. I calculated in my head: if I save SGD 30–40k a year, it'll take 30 years to reach a million."

That thought jolted him. "Was I willing to stay on this path my whole life? I had to re-evaluate myself."

He switched to sales — though he didn't even know if he would be good at it. "I just thought: sales gives you control and unlimited upside."

He joined Toyota's Hino commercial vehicle division, selling heavy trucks. Hino's market share was small, and for four months, he didn't sell a single truck.

He recalls trudging through industrial estates under scorching sun and heavy rain, knocking on doors to hand out flyers. He would stand on roads and bridges, taking photos of passing trucks, noting company names on the vehicles, then going home to find their addresses and cold-calling them one by one.

"Planting seeds slowly — until one day, the phone started ringing."

Within a year, his income from sales exceeded his engineering salary.

After four years of selling trucks, Shen had mastered client prospecting, negotiation, deal closing, and after-sales service, and had built up a customer and brand network. He felt it was time to start a business.

### **Starting from a 200 sq ft Room – Doing Everything Himself**

In 2016, Shen founded Skylink — just a 200 sq ft room with two desks and a printer. He had no staff, handling everything from business development and contracts to accounting and vehicle servicing himself.

By 2017, he hired nearly 10 employees and opened a proper office on Jalan Tukang.

The first big challenge came in 2018: a weak economy and fierce competition caused sales to plummet.

Shen pivoted: he bought over 30 vehicles for rental, secured bank credit lines, and launched vehicle financing services.

In 2019, as vehicle sales recovered, he expanded the rental fleet further and opened a workshop — creating an ecosystem around commercial vehicles.

When COVID-19 hit in 2020, he doubled down on leasing. Within two years, he borrowed from banks to expand the fleet from 100 to 600 vehicles.

"People said I was crazy."

But he believed in his bet: the price of Certificates of Entitlement (COE) had fallen from nearly SGD 60k in 2018 to just SGD 20k in 2020 — a rare opportunity to expand.

Though running a "small company," Shen was unafraid of leverage. In 2023, when COE prices hit a peak, he sold half the fleet, pledged the cash to the bank, and leveraged up to acquire three fleets in six months — rapidly reaching a record-high fleet size.

But he had close calls too: in 2019, a single customer who had rented nearly one-third of his 100-vehicle fleet defaulted on payments, almost breaking his cash flow. Lesson learned: risk management is essential.

To pursue faster growth, Shen decided to take Skylink APAC public, combining its three pillars — vehicle rental, vehicle financing, and automotive engineering — under a listed entity.

In FY2025, Skylink APAC's revenue grew 76% year-on-year to S\$26.37 million, while net profit grew 35% to SGD 2.74 million.

### **Keys to Success – Diligence and Continuous Growth**

When Shen first mentioned listing to CFO Leonard Teh, the latter "cold-shouldered" him — as a test of determination. "IPO is a big battle — without firm resolve, it's hard to see through."

Shen admires Jack Ma and Elon Musk — their boldness, ambition, and willingness to take risks.

Two books deeply influenced him: Jack Ma's biography and *The Greatest Salesman in the World*.

Looking back at the turning points of his life, it seems "taking the road less travelled" made him who he is today — but behind each step was relentless effort.

He believes the key qualities for success are diligence, discipline, and continuous learning and transformation.

Having not received an elite education when young, Shen began learning management only after starting his business. From 2019 to 2022, he earned an EMBA from Singapore Management University. In 2024, he enrolled in M&A courses at Fudan University to align with the company's growth plans.

Recently, he came across a phrase that resonated with him — "incidental entrepreneurship." That, he says, describes him perfectly: each step he took was for survival, and before he knew it, he had built a listed company.

Of course, there was inevitability within this "coincidence." He doesn't shy away from acknowledging his desire for wealth — "etched into his bones since birth." Poverty gave him inferiority, but pride made him put on a façade of arrogance, which later became confidence. "There's this voice inside me: no matter what happens, I can solve it."

He doesn't see his poor background as fortunate or unfortunate — "It just is."

Wearing a suit and sipping fine tea, Shen talks about childhood memories with excitement — the creek by his house with loaches in the mud, small fish in the pond, frogs in the fields, and the lizards he feared most.

He recalls lying on a hillside as a boy, looking at planes flying overhead — so small they seemed no bigger than birds — unable to imagine what they really looked like.

At the end of the interview, Shen shared one last story: "Shen Wende" was not his birth name. In third grade, he suddenly told his mother he wanted to change his name. After much insistence, she took him to register the new name.

"I guess I've always had a big ego," he laughs. Strangely enough, after that, his grades improved dramatically — as if the gears of destiny had begun to turn.