

*Alson Teo started small and worked hard. Today, his cafeteria company has grown into a \$20 million business*

## Against ALL ODDS

By Gary Lim

**THE** odds were stacked against Alson Teo when he decided to start his food business in late 1997.

All he had was \$20,000 in his savings account, a food and beverage trade certificate and seven years' experience working for a food caterer.

To make matters worse, there was a recession then.

But he was determined to venture forth.

At 27, he felt he was going nowhere as a business development manager in a food catering company.

He started small, setting up a staff cafeteria in an Ang Mo Kio factory.

Today, Mr Teo, 33, is the director of Stamflex Food Management, which runs 30 staff

don't think I have a definite answer on the key to my success but I believe it's my sincerity.

"Till today, I don't have a single salesman as I handle all sales personally."

Sheer perseverance and hard work, Mr Teo added, ensured him a relatively smooth passage over six years marked by recessions, the 9/11 attacks, and now, the war in Iraq.

As he ate his late lunch of fried rice in a staff cafeteria in Changi, he said:

"I'm quite used to all these ups and downs, but they are getting tougher and tougher."

"However, you're not out in the business world to



**Young  
entrepreneurs**