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**Headline: Venture investing is not simply injecting money into a firm hoping to multiply it: Benedict Tan of Vertex Ventures**

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Associate at Vertex Ventures, Benedict Tan, talks of having a voracious appetite for learning about entrepreneurship and new business models

**Work-life balance**

To learn more about tech enablers and executives and their lives beyond working hours

FEATURING

**Benedict Tan**

Associate at Vertex Ventures SE Asia & India

CONTRIBUTOR

e27

Benedict Tan joined Vertex Ventures in 2020 to focus on opportunities in Southeast Asia across the fintech and property tech sectors. Before Vertex, he worked at North Ridge Partners, a boutique investment bank focusing on tech opportunities in Southeast Asia.

Tan graduated from Singapore Management University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

He regularly contributes articles for e27 (you can read his thought leadership articles here).

In this candid interview, he talks about his personal and professional life.

How would you explain what you do to a five-year-old?

We team with smart people to help them “grow” new and exciting ideas to solve some of the region’s most significant problems, ranging from mobility to gaining unprecedented access to business capital. Think of it like planting a seed and giving it the water, sunshine and love it needs to grow into a big, beautiful plant!

What has been the biggest highlight/challenge of your career so far?

People may think that, like stock investing, venture investing is simply just injecting capital into a company and hoping it will multiply. However, that is not the case at Vertex Ventures Southeast Asia & India, where we take an active, hands-on approach to grow the company alongside the founders.

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My biggest challenge was coming in as a greenhorn to the industry with which my portfolio founder is associated, as I knew no one and needed to figure out where to start. Thanks to my colleagues and network's help, I overcame it and found my way around.

I enjoy helping founders with a wealth of experience in each industry find the missing piece of the puzzle, whether searching for a new C-suite member or introducing them to new investors.

How do you envision the next five years of your career?

I often think deeply about this question. I have always had a voracious appetite for learning about entrepreneurship, new business models, paradigms, and the major industries of the future.

Naturally, staying in the startup scene is a no-brainer for me! While I'm nowhere near the end of my VC learning curve, I would love to venture into starting up my own business in the future.

What are some of your favourite work tools?

Medium, market intelligence sites, and news aggregators are great for keeping a pulse on the latest developments in today's fast-paced market.

I am late to the party, but I recently fell in love with Notion for note-taking. Its collaborative features are convenient when working with colleagues across four countries!

As part of my VC role, I have been introduced to some exciting new tools. Has anyone been just as obsessed over ChatGPT as me?

What's something about you or your job that would surprise us?

Only a few people know this, but my home is like a mini-zoo. Growing up, my family used to keep parrots, lovebirds, arowanas, chickens, terrapins, frogs, rabbits, hamsters, chinchilla dogs, and more. I still find it strange when I step into my friends' homes and do not see any pets roaming around!

Do you prefer WFH or WFO, or hybrid?

After experiencing all three stages in the past two years, hybrid arrangements work best for me. The nature of VC work requires me to be on the go constantly, be it meeting up with founders or collaborating with my teammates in person.

But downtime is also essential, enabling me to strike a good balance and catch some quiet time to think more deeply and reflect on making the best decisions possible.

What would you tell your younger self?

You are ready as you'll ever be. Be bold to try new things, take risks and trust yourself. (And, probably, don't study too hard!)

Can you describe yourself in three words?

Pragmatic, outgoing, open-minded

What are you most likely to be doing if not working?

I enjoy the process of cooking and would probably be whipping up a mean steak! Lately, I've started collecting coffee beans in my travels around the region and have been experimenting with various brewing methods to perfect the extraction process.

What are you currently reading/listening to/ watching?

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I am halfway through reading *The unintended consequences of technology solutions breakthroughs and the restart we need* by Chris Ategeka. The book talks about how technology has altered our world in both positive and negative ways.

As for podcasts, I am a huge fan of business podcasts such as *The Memo* by Howard Mark, *20VC*, and if you have yet to listen, *Hard truths* by Vertex!