"I will retire when I make my first ten million." That statement made in the flush of youth turned out to be shooting below target, way bel ow target. Dr Tam's first ten million dollars came within two years of his new vision into business. Looking back, it is but a mere comma in his life. The community as a whole is grateful that he did not come to a full stop at his first financial milestone, for what followed is a series of pulsating exclamations points.

Perhaps more than most, Dr Tam stands for growth, growth of the personal kind. He believes that if one keeps growing as a person, one keeps growing in prosperity and responsibility. True to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Dr Tam has never looked back after his first millions. In fact, money-making has taken a back seat to his priorities in life. These days, what is on his mind is making an impact, and making a difference to the lives of people in his community.

For a man who is barely out of his forties, Dr Tam has a wealth of wise sayings, always a sign of a thinking man, always a sign of precocious wisdom. Another saying that is constantly on his lips is this: "Society does not embrace a man simply because of his material success. I have spent half a lifetime chasing that. Now what I care most is making sure that what is earned is used wisely and well. Society has made an investment in me. It is time it collects a decent return from humble little me."

This is an inspirational thought coming from a man who has tasted success early. At the tender age of 24, he partnered his brother and a friend to set up a joint venture, after scraping together $200,000. This maiden venture says a lot about Dr Tam. Trained in IT with a bachelor's degree from the Chinese University (with a subsequent doctorate in the same discipline from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University), Dr Tam's first runways success is a digital product, an electronic dictionary with the catchy name of "Instant Dict". His nimble mind quickly identified an unmet need and parlayed it into a wild business success. This hand-held electronic device has made him instant millions and turned the product into a household name. That was in 1989. By 1993, his company Group Sense (International) Limited, with him as Chairman, was listed on the local stock exchange. With that he reached the pinnacle of success as a 29-year-old Johnny-come-lately entrepreneur. Since then, his company has reached further into the digital market by producing Personal Digital Assistants, Smart Phones and other high-end products whose list of clientele includes such blue-chip multinationals as Sharp, Toshiba and Nokia. The cornerstone of Dr Tam's commercial success has always been unassailable quality in products and services. That is the unalterable article of faith that underlines all his business operations.

Less well-known but no less significant is another corporate creed he espouses: Dr Tam's willingness to share his business success with his employees, many of whom now have a stake in the company.
in his business as its shareholders. This is a radical departure from the normal practices and policies among local corporations. But Dr Tam is a firm believer that for business prosperity staff loyalty and longevity is the best policy. In spreading the largeness of his success, he ensures its continuance.

Awards, honors and other forms of social recognition come early to Dr Tam. In 1997, Group Sense (International) Limited won the Government’s “Hong Kong Award for Industry: Technological Advancement”. That same year, he was named one of the “Ten Outstanding Young Persons”. Earlier, in 1992, he was rightfully honored as the “Young Industrialist of Hong Kong”. A string of public service appointments soon followed. Dr Tam is currently the Deputy Chairman of the Hong Kong Productivity Council. He also sat on the Commission on Strategic Development, and is Vice Chairman of the Pearl River Delta Council. He represents the Information Technology Sub-sector on the Election Committee for Hong Kong’s Chief Executive. A host of other organizations also benefit from his participation as an active member, including the Advisory Committee of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the Digital 21 Strategy Advisory Committee, the Small and Medium Enterprises Committee. In 2001-2003, he assumed the chairmanship of the Hong Kong Electronics Industry Council. As a business leader who is energetically promoting technological cooperation between the Mainland and Hong Kong, Dr Tam serves as a member of the Guangdong Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference.

Dr Tam is a rare industrialist who proudly declares that “thinking is my hobby.” Without creativity, he says, we will all atrophy prematurely. This is why he refuses to be tied down to the operational nitty-gritty, preferring to spend his time more profitably in forward thinking and strategic planning. He believes that Hong Kong’s future prosperity will depend largely on the creativity quotient of its people. That is why he has trained his sight on the next big project: upgrading the English proficiency of young locals as a tool in global citizenship and creative entrepreneurship. With larger social concerns, it is not surprising that he is seriously canvassing the possibility of entering electoral politics as a candidate in the upcoming Legislative Council elections. For one thing, he believes that being on the campaign trail is a humbling experience that is beneficial to those who wish to serve. It keeps them grounded in here-and-now concerns of their constituents. With politics in his blood and societal improvement on his mind, Dr Tam is one business leader with a bee in his bonnet. The man who gave us the ubiquitous electronic dictionary is now itching to give us something with an even bigger impact: Good English as a means of effective economic and global participation. It is precisely the prescription this world city needs. It is another unmet need that is crying out to be met, as local educators await, with abated breath.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, I have the honor to present to you, on behalf of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Dr Tam Wai-Ho, Chairman of Group Sense (International) Limited, for the award of Honorary Fellowship.