

# **TIGERS** in the **PACIFIC RIM**

**NAT & CHANIDA**  
*Puranaputra*

## Mastering the Skills

By Dr. Josephine Gross

NetworkingTimes

**C**hanida and Nat Puranaputra are network marketing leaders from Thailand who have trained hundreds of home-business millionaires in the ASEAN Economic Community (A.E.C) and beyond.

*Chanida got started in the wellness industry over 20 years ago and occupied top leadership positions in several US-based companies as they opened up Asian markets, continually strengthening the professional image of network marketing as its presence grew in those regions.*

*Chanida retired her husband Nat once her income had surpassed what he was earning as a senior corporate executive. The couple has been enjoying building their business together for the last decade. Today widely recognized as international leaders, they have trained and spoken to large audiences in more than 25 countries.*

*The Puranaputras recently joined a young company they selected based on its innovative products and global vision. They launched their business in Thailand and quickly reached the top of the compensation plan. They are rapidly expanding throughout Southeast Asia and into the US, where they reside part of the time, as do their children and grandchildren.*

*The Puranaputras dedicate their lives to helping others achieve financial freedom and time with family, two values they hold close to their hearts. Nat and Chanida's Asian humility combined with their international business flair have enticed thousands of entrepreneurs around the world to dream big and take inspired action.*

### **"A Business Bigger Than Ourselves"**

Nat and Chanida moved from Thailand to Los Angeles in 1979 so Chanida could pursue her education. While getting her MBA, she worked in the hotel business and became a reservations manager for a five-star Japanese hotel. She loved her job, but after maxing out her income potential there, she resigned to start a Thai restaurant with Nat.

"We felt it was the only business we knew how to do," she says. "We invested all our savings, thinking that owning a business would give us more freedom. The opposite was true."

During that time, in 1989, a gentleman approached the Puranaputras about life insurance. Since they now had three children, Chanida and

Nat decided to buy it, not knowing it was network marketing.

As soon as they received their policy, the sales rep said, "You no longer have to pay for this, if you can introduce me to some people. Our company lets you build a part-time business. Come to our meeting and you will understand how you can earn sales commissions and overrides."

Chanida felt it was worth checking out, so she attended a meeting and filled out an application. When she came home, Nat tried to talk her out of doing the business, but she didn't listen. Instead, she started sharing the opportunity with some friends and contacts.

Whenever she would mention the business to

*Being welcomed as keynote speakers*



*With company founder Fabio Galdi and top earner Lamia Bettaieb*



Nat, he would say, “I don’t care. Just show me the money.” Once Chanida sold her first policy and earned a \$450 check, Nat became more supportive. He agreed to keep up the restaurant while Chanida was building her new business.

This first sale brought Chanida good fortune, although she didn’t think so at first. It so happened that a few days after she signed up her first client, he suddenly died. Chanida was shocked and worried about what would happen next. The company decided to pay out the insurance policy to the father of the deceased. When Chanida presented

the \$150,000 check to the 82-year-old man, he was in tears with gratitude. He had five other sons and the funds he received would allow him to send them all to school.

“At that moment, I felt my business was much bigger than me,” says Chanida. “For the first time I realized I could really be of service and make a difference in people’s lives.”

The good news spread quickly throughout the church of the deceased young man, who was Romanian. The church members decided they should all buy life insurance, and as a result, Chanida was promoted to National Sales Director within one year. Seeing his wife’s business succeed, Nat decided to join her part time. They continued working with

immigrants, first Filipinos, then Vietnamese, until they had a big team.

### **Opening Thailand**

In 1993 the Puranaputras moved back to Thailand to take care of Nat’s elderly mother. They left their business behind, but put their experience to good use. “Thailand has a lot of insurance companies,” says Chanida, “so I opened a training center to teach insurance reps how to recruit and retain people.”

Meanwhile, Nat became a senior executive for one of Thailand's main life insurance companies.

Chanida enjoyed training groups for other companies, but often wished she could build her own team. In 1996 she heard a big US-based network marketing company was coming to Thailand. She decided to visit its headquarters in Utah and meet the owners. The product was nutritional and the opportunity looked promising. She joined and began pre-marketing in Thailand.

Using every skill and technique she had learned, when the company finally opened Chanida quickly became Thailand's first Blue Diamond. Her success story caused a paradigm shift in how network marketing was perceived in Thailand.

"Up until then, it was considered a side business for housewives who wanted to make some extra money," she says. "The stereotype was the lady who knocked on doors and sold products at parties. It was seen as a business for which you don't need any education, and here I was with my MBA from America making a million dollars."

Chanida believes she was instrumental in helping Thailand open its eyes to the potential of network marketing as a vehicle for change and a business that attracts educated professionals looking for financial and time freedom.

Chanida quickly duplicated her success by teaching others how to recruit. "Don't go out to recruit," she would tell them. "Recruit as you go about your day and develop a passion for how this can change people's lives."

She also created a system for what to do daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly. She opened an office and gave presentations every afternoon and evening, seven days a week. She held weekly meetings for her inner circle—her team members with the highest recruiting numbers.

Soon local leaders would bring the business to other cities and duplicate the process there. Chanida would visit and teach them how to pres-

ent. The business spread from Thailand to the Philippines and Malaysia. In no time Asia became 80 percent of her company's global market.

Chanida stayed with this company for five years. At one point she had a conflict with the local management. Around that time, one of the company founders, Keith Halls, left the company to become a field distributor for another company, and she decided to help him open up Thailand.

When news of this company opening in Thailand got out, people flocked to Chanida, asking if they could be first to join her team. Keith interviewed her and the article was published in a national newspaper. By the time the company officially opened Thailand, 3,000 people signed up the first day.

At this point, Nat decided to leave his corporate job to join Chanida full time and together they built a large organization.

In their fourth year, the Puranaputras brought in a big leader who had strong connections in Vietnam. The company promised it would open



*Being recognized by corporate team at company event*



this new country, but somehow it didn't happen, so Nat and Chanida began looking for a new home.

### **Changing Companies**

In 2007 their previous company owner started a new company and approached Nat and Chanida again about opening Thailand and Vietnam. This time they were able to work things out. The Puranaputras' business spread from Vietnam to the rest of Asia, and in 2010 they became the company's top earners.

Chanida says network marketing is easy to do in Asia, if you are in the right company. "When Asians recognize our opportunity, they really put their minds to it and treat it as a business. Smart business people look for three things: low investment, high profit, and low or no risk. This business offers everything they are looking for.

"Vietnam has 80 million people, 90 percent of whom are under 40—the older people died in the war," Nat adds. "These young people are learning English and ready to work hard when the right opportunity comes along. That's why we had such

success there."

Chanida says she can name at least five US companies that have their top income earners in Asia Pacific. She calls them "five tigers in one cage."

"However," she adds, "despite favorable conditions such as the Asian work ethic and a strong networking culture, most new companies don't make it. The most common causes are poor management, insufficient funding, or failing to adapt to the local cultural imperatives."

After more than two decades in the profession, the Puranaputras look for five traits before joining a company.

"Number one, the company has to be at least five years old and be doing at least \$150 million a year," says Nat. "Once these two thresholds have been crossed, the company has survived the danger zone.

"Number two, the product has to be innovative, something anyone can use, and something people can't or don't want to live without.

"Number three, the compensation plan has to be simple and easy to understand. Our business is

based on duplication, so if it takes an hour to explain how the comp plan works, you will lose people.

“Number four is the product offering has to fit into the market trend. This will position the company for long-term success.

“Number five is the most important. It’s how we feel about the company owner and management. Typically company owners are numbers people who think analytically and are focused on the bottom-line. Many don’t understand that this is a people business. To succeed in network marketing, you have to put people first.

“Before we join a company, we spend time with the owner and really get to know what’s in his heart. Companies want loyal distributors; if the owner is sincere and honest, the distributors will be loyal to the company.”

In addition to learning how to select a good company, Nat says his experience working for a big insurance company also prepared him for success in network marketing.

“Our first job as leaders is to help people be-

come professional networkers,” he says. “In the insurance business, we constantly had to train people, so I was used to that. Second, we need to have a system to help people win. It doesn’t matter how difficult the environment is, if the system is sound, people can succeed. Third, we have to understand some basic principles of human psychology.

“Leaders know how to motivate and support; how to collaborate and edify each other. Working as a couple, Chanida and I build on each other’s strengths and balance things out: if one of us plays offense, the other plays defense. If one is a little harsh, the other takes a softer approach. It’s a dance of yin and yang. I focus more on the numbers, while Chanida’s strongest skill is to encourage and empower people.”

### Success Secrets

Chanida considers Art Williams her first mentor. Not only did she study his books, *Pushing Up People* and *All You Can Do Is All You Can Do, But All You Can Do Is Enough*, she also had a chance



to work with him closely in her first company. Her team won several contests and Art honored her with his company's Woman of the Year award in 1991. Chanida says Art gave her a 360-degree perspective of the business, covering all the skill-sets required to succeed.

"Art really taught me how to *push up people*, which starts with always seeing the good in them and helping them gain more confidence. I first had to do this for myself. I came to America not knowing anyone and speaking broken English. I built up my confidence through Art's programs, and then taught others, 'If I can do it, anyone can!'"

"I never see what's wrong with people; everyone has a good side, and that's what I focus on. It's why I can work with anyone, which is a must in our business."

Another skill Chanida learned from Art is how to use recognition to motivate people. "Recognition is one of the most powerful tools we have in our business. Art taught that at all your events, you have to recognize 75 percent of the attendees. Applying this rule has served our teams very well."

Chanida has a knack for keeping things simple. "For me, if things aren't simple, I cannot do it," she says. "If someone tries to explain a complex compensation plan, they lose me. I deliberately make things very simple so people don't feel overwhelmed."

"I also make things personal when showing them the vision. *If you talk to three people a week, you can make you an extra \$300 for your son's piano lessons. That motivates people. I saw the empty land in your backyard. This money can help you build the pool for your kids. Just talk to a couple of people a week and you can have that!*"

Chanida believes in the power of partnering—which can be with a spouse, mother, or best friend.

"Everyone needs a power partner," she says. "When working with couples, we always bring in

the partner from the very beginning. If one spouse is not sold on the business, he or she is going to pull the other person away. If the husband is crazy about the business and the wife is not involved, later on she will be jealous of his success. That's why we teach people to work as a team."

Chanida and Nat model what they teach by always supporting each other.

"When Nat is training, I listen as if I never heard him before," says Chanida. "I laugh at his jokes as if I heard them for the first time. People often can't tell we are together and are surprised when they find out. Nat and I give each other the same respect and attention as we would any other leader, and our team duplicates our way of working together."

When coaching their team to build internationally, Nat and Chanida always recommend to establish local connections first.

"This is easy to do," says Chanida. "You want to find Thai people? Go to Thai restaurants and talk to the owners. They are entrepreneurial and often want to diversify. That's exactly how we were recruited into this business. You want to build in Korea or India? Go to Korean or Indian restaurants. You want to recruit Vietnamese people? Go to nail salons; most have Vietnamese ownership. Donut shop are often owned by Cambodians. If you start building connections locally, you will be in a much better position when the time comes to visit that foreign market."

Nat and Chanida warn their leaders that to travel internationally, you have to be ready *mentally* and *financially*.

"In the beginning, I traveled alone," says Chanida. "You have to be strong to handle everything by yourself, but it shows your level of commitment. People think, 'She has a husband and kids at home, but she is here to help us.' That builds respect and trust—and the rewards can be high.

"Paying for flights, hotels, and functions is



*With their three children and respective partners*

expensive. While building internationally is not easy, it's so worth it, because if you find one person, just one leader who understands what you have to offer, it's like lighting a match and your business can take off like wildfire."

### **Finding a Home**

For the past couple of years Chanida and Nat had been looking for their final home in network marketing. In early 2016 they became intrigued with a five-year-old company based in Florida that sells information technologies. "At first, the idea of getting involved with a technology company scared me," says Chanida. "I'm a baby boomer and not particularly tech savvy. I'm simply a user. I also thought, technology changes so fast... How can we keep up?"

Then she remembered something she learned from Art Williams. He used to say, "Champions will do what they fear most." She asked herself, "What do I fear?"

The answer was: *new things*—including technology. She reflected back on when she first joined

Facebook, her daughter set up her account and made everything work. When Chanida logged in a few days later, she had close to a thousand friends' requests waiting for her, all from people around the world who knew her and wanted to be connected on social media.

Recognizing technology as a powerful communication tool, Chanida decided to give this Miami-based company some serious thought. She also remembered a middle-aged gentleman she sponsored, who went from being a total novice in social media to becoming an expert who is now selling his courses online. "I admire him so much," says Chanida, "and his example inspired me."

In March 2016, Chanida and Nat flew from their home in Los Angeles to Florida to meet with the company owner. "When we met him, all our doubts disappeared," says Chanida. "He shared his vision for where he wants to lead the company, and how he put together a team of people to accomplish it. He then had us sign an NDA and presented the product lines to be released in the coming months and years."



*With two of their grandchildren*

At the end of the meeting, Nat and Chanida were convinced this was going to be a homerun. They joined the company and its goal to make the Global Top 100 Direct Selling list within two years, and be in the top 10 of that list by 2020.

“We feel we can do it, because there is a high demand for our company’s product, says Nat. “One of the product lines is technology combined with wellness. Chanida has been in the wellness industry for 20 years, and this is the next generation of health products. Because in network marketing growth is *exponential*, not linear, I believe we can reach our goal.”

After they joined, Chanida and Nat and flew back to Thailand where they have the most influence. They called all their friends and told them, “This is revolutionary, a network marketing company that has no competitors. We can get customers from all network marketing companies, because everyone needs this product.”

Next, they invited their upline, Lamia Bettaieb, to Thailand for an opportunity meeting. The Puranaputras have a big home in Bangkok where they can host meetings with over a hun-

dred people, but somehow Chanida felt it was safer to book a hotel ballroom—for 500 people. The day of the meeting, there was standing room only, and the sign-up rate was almost 100 percent.

“The lifeblood of any business is customers,” says Nat. “Seeing the demand for this product, even consumers want to sign up as business

builders, because they don’t want to miss out. The compensation plan is so simple anyone can see how it works. The company pays out 50 percent without any conditions or restrictions so people can just run with it.”

After launching their business in their home country, Chanida and Nat expanded into the other nine A.E.C. countries (Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Cambodia, and Brunei) as well as in Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and India. Next they will focus on Los Angeles, known to be a melting pot of cultures and a bridge from Asia into the West. In June 2016 the Puranaputras are scheduled to speak at the ANMP International Convention in Dallas. From there, they are continuing on a roadshow throughout the US.

“Even with all the travel, I see and talk to my seven grandchildren every day,” says Chanida. “I don’t feel guilty about being away from them. I show them a toy and say, ‘Look what grandma got you for next time I see you!’ All this is thanks to technology.”

Chanida and Nat reached their company’s top rank of President Millionaire in May 2016. Their

goal is to create 100 leaders who earn \$100,000 a month by January 2017. “We know many network marketing leaders who suffer from a broken heart,” says Chanida, “Something happened to their company, or some things didn’t work out. Some are sitting on the fence, while others are in company but worry about their future. Now that we found a safe home, I have to offer them this opportunity of a lifetime!”

### **Vision and Contribution**

When thinking about money, Chanida says her sole desire is always to have enough to be able to take care of her family’s needs and support the causes she is passionate about. One such cause is the Starkey Hearing Foundation, founded by Dr. Bill Austin.

“Dr. Bill’s mission is to bring hearing to the world. He provides hearing aids to the entire developing world. Even Mother Teresa got hearing aids from him. I love to support him with my team.”

Chanida also wants to fund orphanages. Her daughter is already financing an orphanage in Zimbabwe. “I raised my children on the success principles of the business,” she says. “My daughter majored in business and graduated with honors, my oldest son has a political science degree from UCLA, and my youngest son is a USC graduate. Thanks to the business, all of them learned about leadership, freedom, service, and not stopping at no.

“Right now I have everything I need, everything I ever wanted. This is my time to contribute, and my children feel the same way. My oldest son left his home for a month and went to Calcutta with his wife to be of service. My youngest son went to Kazakhstan to volunteer, and now he is very active in his church. I want to continue to support their initiatives, and fortunately my business enables me to do so.”

Chanida’s vision for network marketing professionals is to continue raising the bar and to

overcome any remaining stigma attached to the business.

As an international business builder working within many different cultures, Chanida says one area where networkers can improve is in becoming more sensitive to cultural differences when penetrating new markets. Her new company owner is always receptive to her advice and eager to understand other cultures.

“In Asia, for example, people treat network marketing as a viable career,” she says. “As soon as they can make \$500 a month, they can come in full time, because they can live off of that, while in America, even \$1,000 a month is only a part-time income. In Asia, when one spouse makes even \$500, the other spouse can quit working and join them in the business. From there, other family members will sign up, as it is a tight culture.

“Because of this, many professionals in Asia are interested in our business—but you have to treat these people in a civilized way. If you want to open a new region, you have to think like the locals. The Chinese eat noodles; Thai people eat rice; Americans eat bread. Don’t ever think you can do things the same way here.

“In Thailand, if you use your feet to point or to move something, it’s considered extremely rude; in America, it’s acceptable. In Thailand, touching someone’s hair or passing things over someone’s head is very disrespectful. Calling people a dog is a serious insult, but calling someone a pig, on the other hand, is funny, because in Thailand, pigs are considered cute.

“Often Asian people don’t say what they feel because they want to be polite. Not knowing this can lead to endless misunderstandings. In Vietnam, if you ask someone, “Can you do this?” the person will say yes, because it’s impolite to say no. That’s why you need to learn a little bit about the culture. Learn even a little bit, and anyone can succeed.” ■