

Press Release
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The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards 2009

China Merchants Bank's Ma Weihua named Retail Banker of the Year

- *Ma Weihua, China Merchants Bank CEO, has won the Retail Banker of the Year award for 2008.*
- *Ma was selected for driving his bank's impressive retail expansion, upmarket client inroads, and consistently strong franchise performance.*
- *The senior executives of over 120 banks and financial institutions from 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, Gulf and Central Asian regions were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme.*

Singapore, 20 March 2009 –Ma Weihua, CEO of China Merchants Bank, has been named Retail Banker of the Year in the eighth Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards Programme. He received the award at The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards 2009 ceremony, held in conjunction with the region's foremost retail banking event, the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Convention. The ceremony was held at the Grand Hyatt in Singapore on the evening of March 19th, 2009.

About 120 senior bankers from award winning banks in 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, the Gulf and Central Asian regions attended the formal gala dinner, the industry's celebration of the region's best retail bankers that recognizes their efforts in bringing superior products and services to their customers.

The awards programme, administered by The Asian Banker and referred by prominent global bankers, consultants and academics, is the most prestigious of its kind. In 2009, the Retail Banker of the Year was chosen at the recommendation of peer retail banking leaders from a pool of more than ten other short-listed candidates from six countries in the region.

Ma Weihua, CEO of China Merchants Bank, has won the Retail Banker of the Year award for 2008.

The judges' decision was made on the basis of China Merchants Bank's (CMB) consistent retail asset growth and performance achievements dating back to Ma Weihua's appointment as CEO in 1999 and the subsequent evolution of the retail bank's strategy in the early 2000s under his leadership.

A former central banker, Ma has been instrumental in driving CMB's retail business expansion, building off the bank's market first-mover 'all-in-one' card concept and

becoming the first Chinese player to shift from a personal account settlement system focus to a customer-centric mindset integrating a deposit and client viewpoint.

Today, CMB has emerged as China's sixth biggest retail bank behind only the country's largest state-backed players on more than 40 million retail clients, over 400 billion RMB (\$58 billion) in retail deposits and retail revenue that accounts for more than a third of the bank's overall revenue composition.

Ma is also notable for making CMB the first Chinese retail bank to concentrate on mid and high-end clients, grounded on the concept of strong customer service and product and channel innovation. Helping CMB yield a dominant proportion of upmarket clients has been its standout credit card business, which has issued nearly 30 million cards and is profitable while others continue to bear losses, and online banking platform which boosts a uniquely high per client account balance and mid and high-end user volume.

CMB's retail business' consistent profit growth and overall strength has made it the Excellence Programme 'Best Retail Bank in China' for 2008 and a routine winner of the award over the last seven years. Ma is credited as the first Chinese banking leader to look towards retail business development as a source of wider bank sustainability, famously telling his staff: "If you don't do corporate banking, it's hard to survive today. However, if you don't do retail banking, then you won't survive tomorrow."

The bank's sustainability gains in the last decade have been impressive, exemplified by its rising cross selling ratio, credit risk management automation and steady lowering of non-performing loans despite rapid credit business growth, high branch to alternative channel substitution rate and buoyant non-interest income growth even amid escalating market challenges.

Over 120 banks and financial institutions from 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, Gulf and Central Asian regions were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme

"This year over 120 banks and financial institutions in 22 countries across Asia were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme. It has become the single most prestigious, comprehensive and anticipated awards programme that recognises the pursuit of excellence amongst retail financial institutions available almost anywhere in the world today," said Philip Strause, Chairman of The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme.

In addition to selecting the top retail banks, the programme also seeks to identify an eminent retail banker of world class standing as Retail Banker of the Year, reflecting the high quality of leadership and skills in the region. This coveted award is reserved for an individual who has demonstrated the ability to build a long-term, sustainable and profitable banking franchise over a period of years, and distinguished his or herself as a driver of the industry.

Strause, who has over 30 years experience as a principal consultant to leading financial institutions in North America and the Asia Pacific, added, "The Asian Banker Excellence in

Retail Financial Services Programme was instituted in 2001 and identifies the Retail Banker of the Year in recognition of the region's most outstanding career achievers."

About The Asian Banker

The Asian Banker is the foremost provider of strategic business intelligence on the financial services industry in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions. The organization has offices in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Beijing and Dubai as well as representatives in Shanghai, London and New York. With a business that revolves around publications, research services, training and forums, the organization is highly regarded in the financial services community for its incisive and independent commentaries on developments in the industry. The company's website is www.theasianbanker.com

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