



## Tony Fernandes

**Serial entrepreneur, founder of Budget Airline, AirAsia, and the owner of Formula One's Caterham Racing team**

Tony Fernandes is a flamboyant, highly successful entrepreneur. Having revolutionised the airline market in Malaysia through his work with AirAsia, he has also founded a number of other businesses including a budget hotel chain and owns the successful Formula One Caterham Lotus team.

## Tony's biography

### Tony Fernandes's Background / History

Having graduated from London School of [Economics](#) in 1987, Fernandes began working as an auditor, then financial controller, for Virgin Atlantic. When he returned to Malaysia in the early 1990s, Fernandes was the youngest ever managing director of Warner Music Group Asia, a role in which he was highly successful.

### Career

The winner of the 2009 Airline CEO of the Year Award, Tony Fernandes rose to success by revolutionising the airline market in Malaysia. He completely reversed the fortunes of AirAsia when he purchased the struggling government-linked airline, transforming it into a public listed company and creating Malaysia's first highly successful budget flight provider. In making his own business successful, he has also paved the way for similar operators, having successfully lobbied the Malaysian government to establish an open-skies agreement with Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand in 2003. His triumph, in what was a difficult airline market, has seen him become an internationally renowned CEO and entrepreneur and he is responsible for a number of other businesses, including the budget hotel chain Tune, which continues to grow. Along with Richard Branson, he introduced the first low cost long-haul flight between London and Kuala Lumpur in 2009.

An avid fan of Formula One motor racing since his youth, Fernandes worked with a number of other Malaysian businesses in order to bring the iconic Lotus back to the [sport](#). The team which was created, Lotus Racing, was entered into the 2010 World Championship, placing tenth. Called Team Lotus in 2011,

Fernandes team is now known as the Caterham F1 Team, and is continuing to strive to move up the grid.

### **Current / Past Roles & Positions**

- CEO of Tune Air and AirAsia Berhad
- Airline CEO of the Year 2009
- Founder of the Tune Hotel Group
- Founder and owner of the Caterham Formula One team

### **Awards, Accolades, Achievements & Honours**

- Ranked at number 21 – Forbes list of Malaysia's Richest (2013)
- Host – The Apprentice Asia (2013 – )
- Member – International Advisory Board, Global March to Jerusalem (2012)
- CBE (2011)
- Awarded the title Tan Sri Malaysia (2011)
- Officer of the Lgion d'honneur – France (2010)
- Airline CEO of the Year – Janes Transport Finance Magazine (2009)
- President – ASEAN Basketball League (ABL) (2009 – )
- International Herald Tribune Award – Visionaries & [Leadership](#) Series Malaysian CEO of the Year – American Express and Business Times (2003)
- Malaysian Entrepreneur of the Year – Ernst & Young (2006)
- Awarded the title Dato – Malaysian Government Member – Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) Fellow – Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (1996)
- South East Asia Regional Vice-President – Warner Music Group (1992 2001)
- Associate Member – Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (1991)
- Financial Controller Warner Music International, London (1987 – 1989)

### **Speaking Style**

An [inspirational entrepreneur](#), Fernandes is keen to share his knowledge and experience, explaining how [innovation](#), dedication and employee happiness and motivation go hand in hand in creating a successful business.

## **Tony's talks**

- **Sustainability and responsibility**
- **Formula 1**
- **The spirit of innovation**
- **Leadership in a tight economy**

