

WHY I DO WHAT I DO

Dr Johnny Hon
and what it
means to be an
angel investor

Global Group is a company I set up whilst studying for my PhD in Psychiatry at Cambridge – and I take great pride in the fact it is now celebrating its twentieth anniversary. Over the past two decades, Global Group has flourished, spanning venture capital firm to international angel investment, with wide-ranging projects all over the world.



My company's mission is 'Bridging the New Frontiers'. In simple terms, all my work aims to bridge the gap between the East and the West, whether that is through trade, entertainment, international relations or collaborating on technology.

I have always been passionate about people and I like to do things that benefit humanity. Over the past twenty years, I have striven to make sure that my career has been relevant to my wide range of interests, from fine art to financial technology, because it not only inspires me but many others too.

Angel investment is an industry that spans a myriad of areas and ideas. I have always loved things that are cutting edge, especially new technology and inventions. Artificial Intelligence, virtual reality, blockchain and Big Data are all current examples of ideas that represent the forefront of human thinking and endeavour, and this is where I can focus much of my time and money as an angel investor.

My company, Gate Ventures, allows me to invest in my passion for entertainment and has given me the opportunity to revive some of the classic musicals that I love, letting them evolve with new technology and be revisited for new generations. This was the motivation behind the revival of legendary West End show 42nd Street, and over the summer we debuted a new musical, A Legendary Romance, in America's Williamstown Theatre.

Over the last twenty years, there have been many highs and lows, together forming a learning curve that has helped me get to where I am now. One of my greatest achievements is my contribution to pioneering positive and lucrative East-West business relations that have helped my country of origin, China, enter the world market as the largest trading nation and second biggest economy.

As my career has developed, I have been able to step back and focus more time on philanthropic endeavours. The importance of giving back and helping people first struck me whilst working on my PhD thesis on Dementia and Downs Syndrome. I felt then, as I do now, that success in business would enable me to help more people than I could as an individual doctor.

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Whilst my journey and growth has not always been linear, every challenge I have faced has helped strengthen my resilience. As I entered the investment market as a young man, I sometimes found it hard to be taken seriously due to my age. After overcoming these hurdles, I have had great success, including in places where I faced initial scepticism.

The workplace and attitudes towards entrepreneurial spirit have changed so much in the past twenty years, and I recognise the hunger to learn and grow in my employees and clients, regardless of their age and experience.

My philanthropy takes many forms, ranging from helping children with congenital heart disease, to rebuilding schools after the devastating Wenchuan earthquake in China's Sichuan province, to sponsoring the first London production of the China National Beijing Opera Company at Sadler's Wells through the Hon Foundation for Music and the Performing arts.

One cause that is particularly close to my heart is the International Duke of Edinburgh Award, of which I am the Diamond Benefactor. The DoFE extra-curricular scheme equips young adults with skills that will enable them to fulfil their potential in school and beyond. Our mission is to develop well-rounded, empowered and forward-thinking young people who will work towards a better, brighter future.

Much of my philanthropy focuses on education and arts, as I wish to provide others with the same opportunities to enjoy world-class schooling and cultural performances, as I am fortunate enough to have experienced.

Looking back on the past twenty years, I feel proud at all Global Group has been able to achieve, but also inspired to continue to learn, grow and develop. I look forward to another twenty years of unique, exciting angel investment opportunities that allow me to travel the world and truly combine my business interests with my passions.

