

# THE BRAND LAUREATE BUSINESS REVIEW



**ASEAN 50TH**  
The Beacon of Unity in Southeast Asia

**MALAYSIAN PALM OIL :**  
A Glorious Century

**DATUK AHMAD IZHAM OMAR :**  
Driving Technology through  
Creative Content

**MERDEKA SPECIAL :**  
Celebrating 60 Years  
of Independence

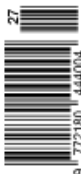
**SAY YES2BRAND :**  
The Age-Reversing Effects  
of Rebranding

**DATO' DR. IR. MOHD ABDUL KARIM BIN ABDULLAH**  
**THE HIGH-POWERED INNOVATOR**



SERBA DINAMIK HOLDINGS BERHAD

RM15 WM  
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# THE BRAND LAUREATE

BUSINESS WORLD REVIEW

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# A LIFE OF SIGNIFICANCE

28<sup>th</sup> August 2017 . The Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur



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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE |



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**H**AVE you had a chance to listen to the recent Volvo advertisement on radio? At the end of the commercial, it has a very strong and significant sign off which says: "Volvo – Made by Sweden." My mind was hit by this profound statement when I first heard it. A simple phrase, yet awesome, intense and powerful.

Why did Volvo use the phrase 'Made by Sweden' and not 'Made in Sweden'? When you really delve into it, 'Made by Sweden' is more personal to the brand as it indicates Volvo's country of origin – in short the immutable place of birth. In the same breath, the expression also helps to promote the **Country Brand** of Sweden and elevate its **Brand Positioning**.

'Made in Sweden' indicates that the product can be produced in Sweden but may not originate from Sweden. As we are aware, especially in the present era, brands can be manufactured in any part of the world but their country of origin or birth may differ from where they are made.

'Made by Sweden' affirms Volvo's heritage and legacy – that it is in fact a Swedish brand – even though its owner is China's Zhejiang Geely Holding Group, one of the largest automotive manufacturers in China. Volvo is banking on its Swedish roots and strong **Country Brand** to propel it forward. It is a prudent strategic decision since neither Geely's mileage nor reputation in automotive manufacturing is nearly as strong as Volvo's and where pure economics is concerned, if sales of Volvo cars go up and the brand becomes sustainable again, why should Geely mind?

Closer to home, Geely acquired a 49.9 per cent stake in our national car brand, Proton, recently. After years of declining sales, Proton was left with no choice but to bring in a foreign partner to help revitalize the brand. It may be hard for some Malaysians to accept the fact that Proton is handing nearly half its share to a foreign brand; but the reality of the matter is it has no choice. Proton had to make a decision to either regenerate its brand with the aid of Geely or go on to degenerate and eventually close down.

There comes a time when we have to accept that **Brand Sustainability** outweighs other matters such as heritage and legacy. What is the purpose of having a strong heritage if the brand is not

sustainable; for at the end of the day, the brand will just die a slow death. And for that matter, what is the point of a legacy that does not survive?

Proton, like Volvo, will always remain the pride of Malaysia and is a 'Made by Malaysia' brand, not so different from many of our successful brands such as AirAsia, Public Bank and PETRONAS – to name a few.

As we celebrate our 60th Merdeka (or Malaysian Independence Day) come August 31st, 'Made by Malaysia' should be our new **Country Brand Positioning** statement. Looking back, we have achieved so much during the last six decades; with each and every accomplishment building further upon the very roots and foundation of our nation. In truth, we must gladly cherish our triumphant moments and always be proud of them – and what better way to do so than to highlight that they are 'Made by Malaysia'!

'Made by Malaysia' is the product of all the hard work put in by resilient Malaysians, young and old, past and present, to build the **National Brand**. It is high time now to revitalize to regenerate for even greater outcomes. Together, we ought to commemorate this untold dedication and tireless commitment by the children of the land. A shining example of one such Malaysian is Dato' Dr. Ir. Mohd. Karim Abdullah, the Founder and Group CEO of Serba Dinamik, a 'Made by Malaysia' brand that specializes in the oil & gas segment. Under his strong captainship, the brand has progressed by leaps and bounds – even to the point of attaining public listing early this year.

Our nation's 60th Anniversary is in fact its *Diamond Jubilee*. A precious stone, the diamond is the hardest mineral and emanates energies of *Longevity, Balance, Clarity, Success and Abundance*. In this 6th decade of Independence, may **Brand Malaysia** shine like a diamond – illuminating the world with its uniqueness and roots of wisdom!

**The BrandLaureate** dedicates this 60th Merdeka Day to all Malaysians. May we journey as one to fulfill our ultimate dream of building a Malaysia that is rich in thoughts, fair in leadership and benevolent to all.

Happy Merdeka, Malaysia!



# HAPPY 60TH INDEPENDENCE DAY, MALAYSIA!



LET US BE GRATEFUL FOR THE RELATIVE PEACE AND STABILITY  
THAT OUR NATION HAS ENJOYED OVER THE DECADES.  
MAY OUR COUNTRY CONTINUE TO PROSPER IN THE YEARS TO COME.  
STAY UNITED, MALAYSIANS!



## EDITOR'S NOTE |



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**IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD** chances are high that by this time in our lives, we have either been bullies, victims of bullying, or bystanders to bullying. In today's world, anyone can be a victim, and bullying can affect people from childhood into adulthood. It comes in many shapes and forms and affects everyone differently.

Lately the culture of bullying and violence among students and teenagers seems to be gaining a foothold in Malaysian society. The recent bullying cases of two male youths T. Nhaveen, 19, and Zulfarhan Osman Zulkarnain, 21, have gained national attention, and in many cases, have raised the concerns of parents. Parents send their children to school praying for safety and protection from all forms of evil, worried about how they will respond in the face of adversity, deal with the "mean" teacher, or defend themselves against the class bully.

But what happens when their child is the school bully?

It's about time we take a deeper look at the root of the problem. Somewhere, somehow, social and emotional skills have gone lacking. If we look into the heart of bullying, what we often find are deficits of emotional control and empathy. After all, empathy is the antidote to bullying.

Bullies target vulnerable factors, such as poverty or social status associated with ethnicity, linguistic or cultural differences, migration or displacement. Such in the case of Nhaveen, the victim was targeted for being effeminate. And, if the previous bullying stories have taught us anything, it's that the relationship between bullying and suicide cannot be overlooked. Many youth suicides have also been linked to bullying.

And I know too that, while schools make more of

an effort to tackle bullying these days, there is still a tacit acceptance in our society that bullying is a natural part of life and that it is, in fact, something that "shapes character". After all, we are living in an era where bullies are revered and elected as world leaders. Bullying culture is so rampant in the local and international political scene that instead of being able to engage in respectful dialog, politicians resort to a bottomless pit of ugliness; throwing comments that evoke intimidation, suspicion, fear, and shame.

US President Donald Trump is an uncomfortable reminder that bullying isn't something people leave behind after school. There's meanness and smugness to the way Trump denigrates his opponents—or any person, place, or thing he doesn't like, which shows the very lack of empathy. The worst thing is that there are a rising number of people who take pleasure in condoning such behavior and equate it as having a strong character.

Parents should take the time to point out to their children when a politician or public figure (or anyone else, for that matter) crosses the line from civil and courteous communication to callousness, crassness, or cruelty. If we don't call it out when we see it and label it as offensive, unprofessional, and inappropriate, children will think we condone it. They may come to learn that it's just how adults should interact with others when they want to make a point.

While we can't serve as gatekeepers of everything our children take in, we can play a more active role in helping them filter out the wrong behavioral models, and be exposed to—and emulate—the right ones.

Remember: It takes a village to raise a child but it only takes one person to stop a bully.



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WHAT'S INSIDE | issue #42  
July - August



*This issue celebrates, clockwise from top, Dato' Dr. Ir. Mohd Abdul Karim Abdullah of Serba Dinamik, The BrandLaureate BestBrands Award 2016-2017, ASEAN 50th Anniversary, HE Dr. Makio Miyagawa, Bernard Goh, Malaysia's 60th Independence and many more....*



周大福  
CHOW TAI FOOK

完美婚嫁系列



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32 KIDZ: PAVING THE PATHWAY OF DREAMS  
Children signify hope, for they denote the very essence of the future. To be able to witness these seeds of hope light up the eyes of the young and germinate in their hearts is a profound experience that escapes even the most eloquent of words as such hope is able to carry them on through their lives like the bright flame of a torch – illuminating the days to come. Recently we had the privilege of being a part of such a journey – one that will remain magical for as long as can be remembered.

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Dato' Wah Idris is no stranger to the music scene. Throughout his career, he has branded Malaysia to the world through the music he composed and produced. Read on to find out about his musical journey.

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Bernard Chauly is a Malaysian Film Director whose address is geographically distant from the motherland, but whose heart could not be closer, as seen in his work such as *Istanbul Aku Datang*, *Pisau Cukur*, *Goodbye Boys*, *Gol & Gincu*, *Apa Dosaku: The Sybil Kathigasu Story*, and other films and television series.

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“ We strongly believe that with the fundamentals that the company has, it is moving forward to position itself stronger not only as a domestic player but also as an international player with the proceeds of funding that we have secured from the investors. With other mitigation plans that we have put in place, we believe we should be able to maintain and expand further the growth and the position of the brand ”

DATO' DR. IR. MOHD ABDUL KARIM BIN ABDULLAH, Group CEO of Serba Dinamik



DATO' DR. IR. MOHD ABDUL KARIM BIN ABDULLAH OF SERBA DINAMIK  
*Serba Dinamik has been at the forefront of providing top notch engineering solutions to the market under the innovative leadership of Dato' Dr. Ir. Mohd Abdul Karim bin Abdullah. Committed to achieving and sustaining high standards for the Serba Dinamik brand, the company is on its way to become Malaysian's leading total energy service provider.*







## STRIVING FOR AN ELEVATED SUCCESS

**"IF YOU DO NOT INNOVATE, YOU ARE GOING TO EVAPORATE. IF ENTREPRENEURS DO NOT HAVE INNOVATION IN THEIR BUSINESS PACKAGE, IT IS GOING TO BE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO POSITION THEMSELVES AS STRONG PLAYERS IN THE MARKET."**

– DATO' DR. IR. MOHD ABDUL KARIM ABDULLAH, GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

BY AIN MC

There is no question that anyone wouldn't pass the opportunity to secure a job at one of the top companies in the country. Engineer-turned-entrepreneur Dato' Dr. Ir. Mohd Abdul Karim Abdullah was not like anyone else; he had a different idea.

As a fresh mechanical engineering graduate, he joined a local gas industry giant as a maintenance engineer specialising in rotating equipment and longed to truly practise the theories he was taught in lectures. But he was not happy that he had to spend a lot of time in discussions and meetings. Reality hit him and he realised he aspired to do more.

Holding a notion that the only way for engineers to understand the fundamentals, theories and engineering concepts they have learnt in the university is by getting their hands dirty at the early stage of their career, Dato' Karim took the bold move to leave his first job and start off his career in a more challenging manner as a contractor.

It was a fateful decision that led him to found Serba Dinamik along with his two other partners. Despite refusing to take credit as the main driving force behind Serba Dinamik's success story, it is undeniable that he indeed contributed the major part of the story itself.

The BrandLaureate Business World Review caught up with him to learn more about Serba Dinamik's sensational growth and to what it attributes its increasing success.

### The Establishment

In 1993, Serba Dinamik Sdn Bhd was founded in Bintulu as a rotating equipment service provider where its service ensures a plant complies with Department of Occupational Safety and Health's (DOSH) requirements. Serba Dinamik's work included making sure plants in the oil and gas industry were ready for a major inspection every 18 months, which forms part of the integrated service package offered.

In any given month, there were about 10 to 18 plants in Malaysia that had to go through a plant turnaround. Each contract can be worth anywhere from RM200,000 to RM3mil, depending on the complexity and scale. During the turnaround, which takes 18 to 30 days, over 200 pieces of equipment is thoroughly inspected. Each piece of equipment has its own checklist and a lead technician has to inspect and then do the necessary maintenance, including replacing worn parts.

That was the beginning of the company's expansion. From having just a maintenance office in Bintulu, it went on to expand to other states like Terengganu, Melaka, Johor, and Kedah. In 2000, it expanded to the Middle East.

As the company grew and became more recognised for its performance, Dato' Karim, now holding the role of the Group Chief Executive Officer of Serba Dinamik Holdings Berhad, realised that clients preferred a one-stop centre for their needs. In 2009, it evolved to become an integrated energy solutions provider.





“*Serba Dinamik has the capabilities to carry out EPCC of plants, facilities, road infrastructure and buildings, as well as other related systems and solutions including design and installation of process control and instrumentation, auxiliary power generation and firefighting systems.*”

24 years in the market today and with a successful track record, Serba Dinamik now offers integrated engineering services. From an initial staff of three, the group now employs 1,500 personnel monthly in various locations and is on its way to become a leading Malaysian total service provider in the EPCC, plant operation & maintenance, systems integration, IT and training spheres.

**Leading the Pack in O&M**

In the years since, the company has amassed a significant body of work across a wide variety of sectors. With a reputation for quality and client satisfaction, Serba Dinamik prioritises attention to details, offering top notch solutions and sustainable engineering solutions.

With Dato’ Karim at the helm, Serba Dinamik has been one of the market leaders in providing engineering solutions to the oil & gas and power generation industries with operational facilities in Malaysia, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and United Kingdom.

Divulging in Serba Dinamik’s expertise, Dato’ Karim shares with us their two core competencies namely Operation & Maintenance (O&M) and Engineering, Procurement, Construction and Commissioning (EPCC). The two core competencies have been the revenue driver and also the foundation that makes up the strong business model for the ever-growing company.

Under their O&M services, their clients include O&G production platforms, crude O&G refineries, petrochemical manufacturing plants and LNG plants. Their services range from providing MRO of rotating equipment which includes gas and steam turbines, engines, motors, pumps, compressors and industrial fans; IRM of static equipment and structures including boilers and unfired pressure vessels, piping

systems and structures, as well as maintenance of process control and instrumentation.

As for their EPCC works, Serba Dinamik has the capabilities to carry out EPCC of plants, facilities, road infrastructure and buildings, as well as other related systems and solutions including design and installation of process control and instrumentation, auxiliary power generation and firefighting systems.

As an extension of their core competencies in providing maintenance services, they have started to embark on their asset owner business model strategy with their first CNG plant in Muaro Jambi, Sumatra in Indonesia. Moving forward, Serba Dinamik will continue to expand on this strategy through the development of small gas power plant and water utilities in Indonesia.

**Strength in Business Model**

Thriving in a very large industry with the existence of other companies with similar offerings requires a foolproof sustainability plan. In the case of Serba Dinamik, Dato’ Karim emphasizes on the importance of a strong business model to aid them weather through difficult times and also to maintain their position in the market.

With the inception of a business model that works in any kind of market conditions, Serba Dinamik has managed to advance and prevail in achieving its goals and bringing the company to national attention. He is also optimistic that Serba Dinamik’s shares will continue to receive overwhelming subscriptions due to its strong core competencies.

Serba Dinamik is confident of its ability to record flying colour financial results despite a slowdown in the oil



images:  
1) Seated from left: Dato’ Dr. Ir. Mohd Abdul Karim bin Abdullah, Syed Nazim bin Syed Faisal  
Standing from left: Rosli bin Hamat, Azhar Majid Qureshi, Yusni binti Mohamed Yusop, Jerry bin Sirat, Rosland Othman  
2) From left to right: Dato’ Dr. Ir. Mohd Abdul Karim bin Abdullah, Dato’ Mohammed Nor bin Abu Bakar, Datuk Seri Tajuddin Atan

and gas (O&G) sector. These companies need to retain their assets at the best operating level possible and thus regardless how the oil and gas performance will look like, the maintenance segment will always be in need. O&G companies still need maintenance for their current assets to equip themselves when the oil prices increase.

“Our fundamental is strong. We have operations in Middle East which gave us 48 per cent returns from total revenue. 80 per cent of our revenue is from O&M and the rest is from EPCC. And most of our contracts are long term, between 2 and 4 years, up to 2020. If the oil prices stabilises, we might expand into other countries in the region,” he says.

When asked if there is a possibility or plans for the current business model to evolve to meet the future standards of the industry, Dato’ Karim iterates on the strength of their business model.

“We will not run away that much from this particular model – we believe that technology changes from time to time. Even how an industry operates and carries out its processes will change sooner or later. The company must be able to adopt and adapt to these advancements,”

“At the moment, we are actually enhancing further our capability in our core areas. This is where we quite actively acquire companies to add in to the package because we strongly believe that these components can generate bigger revenue,” he says.

Currently, Serba Dinamik is leveraging onto their education and training sector where it is believed to be a vital area for every sector that the dynamic brand is currently attached to. Seeking out to acquire the license for domestic operation

and a further expansion of facilities to provide a better training, Dato’ Karim believes that this sector has the potential to come out as a separate unit for the company in the long run.

**Embracing Innovation with Perseverance**

With technologies evolving from time to time, businesses are indeed entering a new industrial age which is characterised by constant innovation and accelerating change. The ability to accommodate unexpected futures is a criterion every company should take into account. In line with putting business processes into high gears, Dato’ Karim stresses on one of the best strategies in staying ahead of the pack: innovation.

“We hold on to the concept that we’ve been telling to our key management team in which they would delegate it down to their subordinates—where we believe that innovation is a very important component in making a business entity successful,”

“If you do not innovate, you are going to evaporate. If entrepreneurs do not have innovation in their business package, it is going to be difficult for them to position themselves as strong players in their respective market. It goes without saying that ultimately, innovation is important,” he adds.

On the other hand, one will not be able to survive in this kind of economy by depending solely on innovation skills. While the pace of change and disruptive innovation happening around the brand is exhilarating, it is easy to fall from the right track. Having witnessed the fluctuating economic conditions for the past few years, Serba Dinamik has gone beyond and persevered to this very day.

Over the course of the last few years, companies have seen the industry go through a tumultuous time, and the downturn has really led some of them to opt for downsizing and some even pulled out from the market. It’s the element of perseverance being instilled in each one of the Serba Dinamik employees that has made it easy for them to pull through.

“It’s not always positive results coming in to whatever we plan or do. If there is success, it can be used as a reference. If there is failure, then there’s a lesson we need to learn and we have to mitigate how to overcome it,” explains Dato’ Karim.

**Expanding Global Footprints**

Since the early years of Serba Dinamik’s inception, the company has been growing towards global dominance. Not only is the company diversifying from the local energy market, it’s also exploring different geographical spaces. Their globalization drive took off with the mission to have their capabilities in the industry be at par with the international standards.

With that being said, the company not only has a strong presence in Malaysia, but it has also seen 16 successful years in the Middle East’s region, specifically in Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, and Kuwait.

Serba Dinamik’s reach doesn’t stop there. Their international portfolio also includes Southeast Asia’s countries such as Indonesia, Laos, and Thailand, and they also have a solid base in United Kingdom.

“Serba Dinamik’s first international venture was in Qatar, where we acted as a subcontractor to GE Oil & Gas at the



“

*We are looking at the African continent at the moment. We have collaborated with Islamic development bank with credit rating of triple A that has a very strong presence in Africa. They'll be our medium to enter Africa. The initiatives have started and we strongly believe in our capability to serve them in terms of the developments of power requirement of the country*

”



01

images:  
1) Staff of energy engineering services provider Serba Dinamik at work  
2) Corporate Office at Seksyen 11, Shah Alam

LNG Plant at Ras Laffan in Doha. We subsequently moved to other countries in the Middle East where our projects served to boost our brand name and the company's image of capability and capacity,”

“In the Middle East, we compete with major international players such as GE Oil & Gas, Dresser Rand, and Elliot Ebara, so we differentiate ourselves on our strong after-sales service. In Southeast Asia, Serba Dinamik hosts an office in Indonesia, and we have been active in Thailand, and Brunei. Further afield, we are also present in Turkmenistan,” explains Dato’ Karim.

Establishing a presence in more mature markets is necessary for Serba Dinamik as they position themselves as a global entity. With their previous business revenue of 40 per cent international projects and 60 per cent domestic projects, they are looking forward to ensure the split will become 50/50 in the next two years, and within five years, the split will likely be 70 per cent international work and 30 per cent domestic work.

Dato’ Karim opines that the need to expand beyond domestic borders is vital in acquiring additional revenue for the business but it also goes back to the issue of sustainability. But to where they leave their footprints will also be the key factor to the longevity of their sustainability plans.

“We are always on the look out to widen our reach to developing countries, and not countries that are already matured. This is how we always choose our next stop for our global market.”

Dato’ Karim also shares their latest target for internationalization that they are currently ongoing:

“We are looking at the African continent at the moment. We have collaborated with Islamic development bank with credit rating of triple A that has a very strong presence in Africa.

They'll be our medium to enter Africa. The initiatives have started and we strongly believe in our capability to serve them in terms of the developments of power requirement of the country,” he affirms.

**“Think Locally, Act Globally”**

Becoming a global company is an impressive feat, and not every business that sets out to do it accomplishes its goal. To successfully convert your business from domestic to international, you will need to consider a new set of factors that might not necessarily affect a local-only company.

Dato’ Karim shares with us his insights on what it takes to break down Serba Dinamik’s national borders and run a multi-country operation. In their effort to expand their dynamic network further, Serba Dinamik prides itself in carrying out the slogan that has been the foundation as to how they succeed in venturing into foreign markets – “think globally, act locally”.

There is one partner in particular that Serba Dinamik feels is significant when going into an international business area in a certain country – the local community. The company has strived since the very beginning of the process to prioritise local employment in their global expansion plan.

The importance of being a good corporate citizen is something that Serba Dinamik does not take for granted. The foreign venture will not only represent an opportunity that will benefit the country they're entering but also to change the lives of the people in the local community. The slogan “think locally, act globally” embodies just that.

“When we look at the world as our market, we need to look into the local sentiment in a serious manner. We want the local participation to be there so that we can get their support and reduce the feeling of uneasiness of the local people seeing us as foreigners coming into their country to do something and taking off their money,”



02

images:  
1) Field overhaul services of complete inspection of critical machine parts and recommendations for replacement  
2) Overhaul, repair, testing and recalibration to ensure functionality

“

*We are of course quite happy to have that kind of achievement through everybody's hardwork. We strongly believe that with the fundamentals that the company has, it is moving forward to position itself stronger not only as a domestic player but also as an international player with the proceeds of funding that we have secured from the investors. With other mitigation plans that we have put in place, we believe we should be able to maintain and expand further the growth and the position of the brand*

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He continues, “Look at the local support – what can they contribute? Logistic or accommodation? Licensing? If they can give some manpower which meets the industry requirement, then you go for it. This formula is quite successful regardless of which country we go. We manage to build a bridge between a foreign entity and a local entity.”

Their modus operandi evidently bore fruits in 2001 as they secured their first job in Middle East with Qatargas LNG Plant. The job was executed successfully thus leading them to have repeat orders which continued for the next 4 years. This initial success has led to many more expansion, mergers and acquisitions for Serba Dinamik in the global arena.

**Transition as a Public Entity**

With a conspicuous positive upward trajectory, Serba Dinamik has indeed prospered as a private company. But with their constant effort in diversifying itself in riding the changing landscape of the industry, there is a significant need to raise their capital for the next level of growth.

In 2003, Serba Dinamik attempted to list on a small market of the Bursa Malaysia and raise approximately nine million RM (approximately \$2.5 million). The efforts were not successful, and they had to go back to the bank and seek the support of friends and family who trusted in their vision and mission.

Fast forward to 14 years later – dubbed as one of the largest initial public offerings (IPO) in Malaysia since 2015, Serba Dinamik has successfully made its debut on the main board of Bursa Malaysia.

Serba Dinamik saw its opening price at RM1.53 with 4.248 million shares traded. Its opening price is three sens higher than the IPO price of RM1.50. The company's IPO has been very well-received with its retail tranche of 26.7 million new shares applied for by the Malaysian public registering an

oversubscription of 4.96 times. Out of the total proceeds, Serba Dinamik plans to utilise RM300 million for capital expenditure, RM60 million for repayment of borrowings and RM29.3 million as working capital.

Despite the economic worries for the global oil prices, Dato’ Karim is positive about the direction that the company is going, following the listing.

“We are of course quite happy to have that kind of achievement through everybody’s hardwork. We strongly believe that with the fundamentals that the company has, it is moving forward to position itself stronger not only as a domestic player but also as an international player with the proceeds of funding that we have secured from the investors. With other mitigation plans that we have put in place, we believe we should be able to maintain and expand further the growth and the position of the brand,” he shares.

Taking your business from a private company to a public one is a big decision with many implications for how it will be managed. Running a private company—even one with investors—is very different from overseeing a public entity.

We asked Dato’ Karim on his role in regard to the transition the company has just gone through.

“The responsibility is still the same, the only thing that’s different is the status of the company. Privately owned, we have more freedom to decide and we can make faster decision but the latter, you have a lot of compliances to follow. The way of how we do things have changed, it has to be more transparent, and we have to be more cautious as to follow the necessary compliances that have been set up by the respective regulators.”

“Of course the system is more complex and investment into getting all these system in place are also reasonably costly but we are of the opinion that as a public entity, the



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accessibility for funding is much better, with that we can grow the company to a higher height,” he adds.

Post listing, Serba Dinamik has seen an increment in the market capitalization and a huge amount of work are currently going on for the company. The company recently announced its first batch of new contracts since the listing, comprising five contracts with a combined value of RM469.2mil.

The largest win was a three-year, US\$75mil (RM332.2mil) contract awarded by Muhammed Jabar Trading and Contracting, which requires it to provide turbomachinery maintenance and engineering support services.

The rest are a four-year, RM65mil contract from Shell MDS (M) Sdn Bhd to provide mechanical maintenance and project services, a one-year, RM45mil contract from Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd to do maintenance services for weir gas compressors, a one-year, RM25mil contract from Petronas Floating LNG1 (L) Ltd to provide manpower, workshop facilities and equipment for rotating equipment overhaul and repair work, and a three-year, RM2mil contract from Petrofac (Malaysia PM304) Ltd to conduct condition-based monitoring.

The contracts were secured by Serba Dinamik's wholly-owned subsidiaries, Serba Dinamik Sdn Bhd and Serba Dinamik International Ltd and are expected to boost its position as being among the top providers of maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services here and internationally.

**Refinery & Petrochemical Integrated Development (RAPID) Project**  
2017 is forecasted to be another uncertain year for the oil and gas industry and yet, Dato’ Karim is very optimistic

about the country's path in making Malaysia into an oil and gas service hub by 2020.

Being the lifeblood of Malaysia's economy, oil and gas accounts for approximately 30 percent of government revenues. Even with a lower oil price, the Malaysian oil and gas industry remains an effervescent ecosystem open to new horizons across the value chain.

All actors in the Malaysian oil and gas scene are closely eyeing the Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development (RAPID) Project – the second mega-project within PIPC. The RAPID project site preparation is in progress and is expected to have a 300,000 bbl. per day refining capacity while additional petrochemical plants will generate value to petroleum products produced in RAPID.

The project offers a plethora of opportunities for players to tap into a new level of project opportunities locally. Even given the recent drop in oil price, the Malaysian government has made a very bold statement that RAPID is going ahead. Furthermore, the project serves as a major building block of the nation's ambition to position itself as a prominent hub for the region.

Serba Dinamik is making a very offensive move to grab as many opportunities as possible arising from the RAPID project. They currently have two contracts in the project which contributed 3 percent to its revenue and they are still bidding for a few works there.

“We have even established a fabrication facility in Pasir Gudang to be prepared to service the RAPID project and are now looking at making further investments in this facility to better support the EPCC contractors working in Johor. Further ahead, we will target maintenance work for the project,” he explains.

“We have even established a fabrication facility in Pasir Gudang to be prepared to service the RAPID project and are now looking at making further investments in this facility to better support the EPCC contractors working in Johor. Further ahead, we will target maintenance work for the project”



images :  
1) 5s Activity at Paka Service Centre  
2) Career Fair of KPT Carnival Tour 'Soaring Upwards 2.0' at Sunway University, Petaling Jaya

Petronas's Pengerang Integrated Complex (PIC), commonly referred to as RAPID is the cornerstone project for the development of Southern Malaysia into the region's premier downstream hub. More than USD 26 billion will be invested in Malaysia's largest-ever downstream development, and it is not only a financial but also a technical challenge, as it will be the first refinery and petrochemical integrated development of its kind in the world.

With such opportunities and prospects, Dato' Karim believes that 2017 will be a good year for Serba Dinamik despite the fluctuating condition of the oil & gas industry.

**The Power of People and Giving Back**  
Every part of a business boils down to people and the corporate culture they embody. At the core of Dato' Karim's leadership philosophy is his belief that Serba Dinamik is built on the value of "walking the talk" – which simply means doing what you say you will; transforming the words behind your corporate values, into tangible actions.

As the age old saying goes, 'actions speak louder than words'. Therefore the priorities that are set, decisions that are made and actions taken by leaders at every level of an organisation's hierarchy must demonstrate what is valued. It is this vision that Dato' Karim has been highlighting to all his employees and it is this very value that has maintained their mark in the industry.

"We want everyone (despite their job position) to say something and make sure it is achievable. They have to walk the talk and make sure things are progressing along the direction. This is vital as it is the commanding principle

in moving the company forward,"  
He also adds in, "We exercise that even in the early days; my other partners and I. We made sure in 1 year duration, we directors must become project manager for a particular project. This is to ensure that the skill and knowledge are still there. This is how I led my employees up to today. From this practice, they can further learn to enhance their own experience and knowledge."

Serba Dinamik does not only heighten the significance of internal strength encompassing the people of the company but it has also been boosting its external fortitude by giving back to the industry with its expertise.

As an entity that is grateful to the country – as Dato' Karim describes it – Serba Dinamik took up the challenge from MITI in becoming the anchor company in the Vendor Development Programme. The anchor company has the responsibility to select, appoint and assess a vendor development company; then provide them with as much jobs as possible in a way to nurture them in growing from an SME to big companies.

"We grew from the same status of a VDP company under the vendorship of Petronas 15 years ago. We are here today to imitate the same practice in giving back to what the nation has given us," he acknowledges.

Serba Dinamik is actively looking for collaborations with government agencies in helping other Malaysian companies to go overseas. Currently, Serba Dinamik has 7 vendor companies under their wings. Dato' Karim believes it is vital to help and support these companies to not just

grow domestically but also internationally.  
**The Way Forward**  
Over the years, Serba Dinamik has grown from strength to strength and successfully achieved its mandates for the good of the nation. As a progressive and forward looking organisation, the brand is continuously transforming and investing in its expertise to rise above new challenges from the evolving financial and economic landscape.

Dato' Karim is thriving on the challenge of transforming and uplifting the brand name of Serba Dinamik to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to be among the best in the world. With an ambition plan to grow and develop Serba Dinamik into becoming one of the top ten MNC of preferred choice, his eyes are all set on claiming the pinnacle of success for Serba Dinamik.

"We strongly believe that what we have promised to our investors are achievable. With optimism, hardwork, and further enhancement of our capabilities, we believe that we are able to generate what we have promised," he concludes.

Passionately pouring its effort into making positive impact for the industry, Serba Dinamik is bent on to continue building a solid track record. With the vision of Serba Dinamik strong and clear, coupled by its impressive expansion strategy; we can't wait to see what Serba Dinamik does next.



THE BRANDLAUREATE GETS UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH SOME OF THE KEY MANAGEMENT STAFF OF SERBA DINAMIK ON THEIR HUMBLING REFLECTIONS ON THE 24-YEAR-OLD ESTABLISHMENT, AND THE VISIONARY BEHIND THE ENERGY BRAND.

On Serba Dinamik's brand vision...

"Serba Dinamik is both a local and global market contributor to the energy field and I believe we will advance further upon the vision that is implemented and executed. We are all about safety, quality and effectiveness as these three elements will continue to ensure us to be a company of first choice in the market."

- JERRY BIN SIRAT  
Vice President Technical Support Division



On Serba Dinamik's development...

"Dato' Karim is a very inspirational leader who leads by examples. He has tremendous vision and I'm impressed with that aspect of him. I have 44 years of experience working in many different parts of the world and rarely have I seen someone with his vision. He is also compassionate and kind. I feel that Serba Dinamik is going places on the international scene because it has tremendous leadership in the form of Dato' Karim. Serba Dinamik is proving its name as a dynamic company because of him."

- SYED NAZIM BIN SYED FAISAL  
Group Chief Financial Officer



"Serba Dinamik has been successful because the company is founded by someone who works hard and walks the talk. Dato' Karim is an entrepreneur at heart. As a former banker who now works with an entrepreneur, I see the passion that is different than working in a big corporation. Thus, his passion brings more meaning to what we do here in Serba Dinamik."

- ROSLAND OTHMAN  
Senior Vice President Special Projects



On Serba Dinamik's brand vision...

"There is a lot of good changes going on right now. My task is to ensure the company is living up to its standards of a public listed company. Being a 2 billion market cap company, I think there is a certain requirement for us to be there. In terms of the operation structure of the company, there is a lot of enhancement has been done. We also did a lot of co-blood governance matters to be put in place to ensure that as far as the company is concerned the control is there, the risk framework is being addressed, the corporate governance standard is on par with other public listed companies. While doing all these, we also need to upgrade our staff level. For the past 23 years, the staff has been on Sdn Bhd mode, so after the listing you see the staffs are more professional in a sense that there are more requirement to be met. We enforce higher standard on the staff in order for them to be more professional and proficient in dealing with clients. As far as Serba Dinamik from the market's perspective is concerned, we see that Serba is more known to the market as compared to last time. Even Petronas now looks at Serba Dinamik as one of the successful vendor development companies. I foresee that all the positive changes continue in foreseeable future."

- AZHAR MAJID QURESHI  
Vice President System Integration Business Unit



- images:
- 01) Listing Day on 8th February 2017
  - 02) Donations to Rumah Perlindungan Nur Hati
  - 03) From left to right: Serba Dinamik Management with representatives from Malaysia AIDS Foundation, Rumah Amal Al-Firdaus, Teratak Nur Barakah and Rumah Perlindungan Nur Hati
  - 04) Breast Cancer & Stress Talk by UMRA Hospital
  - 05) Blood Donations Program at Bintulu Service Centre
  - 06) Shah Alam Bowling Tournament
  - 07) CIDB Marathon Safety Run 2016 at Wetland Park, Presint Putrajaya
  - 08) Family Day at i-City Shah Alam





# INTERNATIONAL BRAND PERSONALITIES

Bestowed on personalities who have contributed significantly to the world and communities through their areas of expertise, recipients of The BrandLaureate Awards are role models and a source of inspiration to many. Here are some of our brand personalities who have been recently conferred with The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award. Congratulations!

## KYLE BALDA

*The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award*

Kyle Balda has been working professionally in feature animation for the past 15 years, most notably with Pixar Animation Studios and Industrial Light & Magic. He began his career studying traditional animation at The California Institute of the Arts in 1991, and continued his training during summer internships with Lucas Arts and Pacific Data Images. In 1993 Balda joined the crew of Industrial Light & Magic where he participated in such films as The Flintstones (1994), The Mask (1994), Mars Attacks! (1996) and as supervising animator on Jumanji (1995). Kyle returned to California to work at Pixar as an animator on A Bug's Life (1998) and Monsters, Inc. (2001) and as directing animator of Toy Story 2 (1999).

## JAMIE OLIVER

*The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award*

Jamie Oliver, MBE is a British celebrity chef and restaurateur. He is most known for his typically English cuisine that has garnered him numerous television shows and restaurants. When he moved to serve as a sous chef at the River Cafe he was noticed by the BBC and in 1999 debuted his television show, The Naked Chef which was followed by his first cook book subsequently becoming the No. 1 bestseller in the UK. After his Naked Chef Series he was endorsed by multiple companies and expanded his television capacity to include a documentary called Jamie's Kitchen; garnering him an invitation from the Prime Minister to 10 Downing Street.



## FARLEY 'JACKMASTER' FUNK

*The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award*

Farley 'Jackmaster' Funk is a DJ and producer. He first made his name broadcasting on Chicago's WBMX-FM as a member of the Hot Mix 5 DJ team. Farley also appeared at the Warehouse club and then began a residency at the Playground. Known as Farley Keith or Farley Funkin' Keith until 1984, he then adopted the name Farley "Jackmaster" Funk and together with Jesse Saunders, created the first house single to reach the UK charts. His anthem *Love Can't Turn Around* (cover of Isaac Hayes' *I Can't Turn Around*) made the Top Ten in mid-1986. He is notable for producing a number of tracks in the mid and late 1980s.

## EMMA STONE

*The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award*

The physically stunning actress Emma Stone first made her mark among American audiences as an ingénue, via her involvement in the massively successful comedy *Superbad*. The actress's combination of deadpan comic timing and undeniable beauty made her an instant hot property in Hollywood. By 2010, Stone had earned top billing status, and was starring in her own comedy - a hilarious modern take on the *Scarlet Letter* called *Easy A*. The following year found Stone's star rising even further in the realm of comedy but it also proved to be the year in which the young actress branched more into drama. She won her first Oscar this year for her role in *La La Land*.

## DAME VERA LYNN

*The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award*

Widely known as "the Forces' Sweetheart", Vera Lynn is an English singer of traditional pop, songwriter and actress, whose musical recordings and performances were enormously popular during the Second World War. During the war she toured Egypt, India, and Burma as part of ENSA, giving outdoor concerts for the troops. She released the album Vera Lynn 100 in 2017, to commemorate her centennial year, and it was a number 3 hit, making her the oldest recording artist in the world and first centenarian performer to have an album in the charts. She is held in great affection by veterans of the Second World War to this day.

## ERNIE ELS

*The BrandLaureate Legendary Award*

Ernie Els is a South African professional golfer who has been one of the top professional players in the world since the mid-1990s. He is known as "The Big Easy" for his fluid, seemingly effortless golf swing. Among his numerous victories are three major championships: the U.S. Open in 1994 at the Oakmont Country Club and in 1997 at the Congressional Country Club, and The Open Championship in 2002 at Muirfield. He won the World Match Play Championship a record of seven times. He has also held the number one spot in the Official World Golf Rankings.

## MICHAEL DUDOK DE WIT

*The BrandLaureate Legendary Award*

The animator, illustrator, and director Michael Dudok de Wit studied film and animation at the West Surrey College of Art and Design, and his work combines hand-drawn animation and watercolor, a sense of space and brushwork from China and Japan, and a unique use of film language. Dudok de Wit's shorts are known for their ability to convey the maximum amount of emotion, meaning, and humor in just a few animated brushstrokes. Dudok de Wit's animated short films appear around the world in festivals and have won numerous prizes. His best-known short is the moving eight-minute *Father and Daughter* (2000), which won a BAFTA, the 2001 Academy Award for Best Animated Short, and many other awards at festivals.



## CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR

*The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award*

Christiane Amanpour is a world renowned war correspondent and news anchor. She is currently CNN's Chief International Correspondent and Anchor of Amanpour, a nightly foreign affairs program on CNN International, and the Global Affairs Anchor for ABC News. Over the course of her illustrious career spanning three decades, Amanpour has reported from every major world news event and hotspot, including Iraq, Afghanistan, North Korea, the Palestinian territories, Iran, Sudan, Israel, Pakistan, Somalia, Rwanda, the Balkans, Egypt, Libya, throughout Europe and the United States. She has interviewed many of the world's top leaders, including Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Prime Ministers of Israel, and Muammar Gaddafi and Hosni Mubarak during the Arab Spring.

## DAME JULIE ANDREWS

*The BrandLaureate Legendary Award*

Julie Andrews made the leap to film stardom in 1964 with lead roles in *The Americanization of Emily*, opposite James Garner, and *Mary Poppins*. It was as the lovable, magical nanny in *Mary Poppins* that Andrews won an Academy Award for best actress. The following year, she was nominated for her part in another musical, *The Sound of Music*, which featured her as a governess to the von Trapps. The family-oriented movie featured Andrews on songs like "My Favorite Things," "Do-Re-Mi" and "Something Good." Both *Mary Poppins* and *The Sound of Music* were hugely successful, winning Andrews fans around the globe. The two films have remained popular over the years, becoming firmly entrenched as classics.

## ROGER BALLEEN

*The BrandLaureate Legendary Award*

One of the most influential and important photographic artists of the 21st century, Roger Ballen's photographs span over forty years. His strange and extreme works confront the viewer and challenge them to come with him on a journey into their own minds as he explores the deeper recesses of his own. His contribution has not been limited to still photography and Ballen has been the creator of a number of acclaimed and exhibited short films that dovetail with his photographic series. The collaborative film *I Fink You Freaky*, created for the cult band Die Antwoord in 2012, has garnered over 85-million hits on YouTube.

For the latest updates on the discovery of our branding stars, visit our website [www.thebrandlaureate.com](http://www.thebrandlaureate.com) or Facebook fanpage [www.facebook.com/brandlaureate](https://www.facebook.com/brandlaureate)







SUNWAY TO OPEN 5 HOSPITALS  
WITHIN 5 YEARS AT THE COST OF  
RM1 BILLION

Sunway Bhd is betting big on its healthcare unit, which is being primed for an initial public offering in a few years, with five more hospitals planned within the next five years at a cost of RM1 billion.

As part of that thrust, Sunway Group founder and chairman Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah highlighted that the company will be spending up to RM400 million in ramping up the present 630-bed Sunway Medical Centre into a 1,000-bed hospital by 2020. The RM400 million is in addition to the RM1 billion to be allocated for the planned five hospitals.

Cheah said that this year, the Sunway Group estimates that its Sunway Medical Centre alone will be contributing RM50 million in net profit to the group in FY2017. He is upbeat that once the other five hospitals are completed, they will be highly profitable as the demand for medical care is increasing in the country together with medical tourism.

In May this year, the group announced its 1Q2017 results where its quarterly net profit hit RM107.9 million on the back of a quarterly revenue of RM1.10 billion

– NST



PERODUA MYVI PRODUCTION  
HITS ONE MILLION

Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd's (Perodua) has surpassed one million units of its Perodua Myvi production since it was introduced in 2005.

President and Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Dr Aminar Rashid Salleh, said it crossed the one million mark in the middle of June, and continued to be Malaysia's top selling local car.

"To commemorate this occasion, Perodua had a special 'line-off' ceremony at its manufacturing facility in Sungai Choh, Rawang," said Aminar in a statement on Tuesday.

He also said for the first five months of 2017, the carmaker sold 81,900 vehicles, 5.9 per cent more than the 77,300 units sold in the same period in 2016.

"We estimate the total industry volume for the first five months to be around 233,700 units. Based on this, our market share for the year is currently at 35 per cent.

"The group is cautiously optimistic of achieving its 202,000 sales target for this year despite tough and challenging market conditions," he said.

Myvi units have been exported to Mauritius, Brunei, Singapore, the UK, Fiji and Nepal since 2006 – BERNAMA



PETRONAS' TOP MANAGEMENT  
SIGNS MACC CORRUPTION-FREE  
PLEDGE

Malaysian oil and gas giant Petroleum Nasional Bhd's (Petronas) leadership has signed the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) corruption-free pledge (CFP).

The signing was led by Petronas president and group CEO Datuk Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin and was witnessed by Petronas chairman Tan Sri Sidek Hassan and MACC chief commissioner Datuk Dzulkifli Ahmad.

The oil giant, which is in the Fortune 500's largest corporations in the world, said the signing will strengthen

the company's resolve towards becoming a graft-free organisation and demonstrates its continuous commitment to uphold high standards of governance and to combat all form of corruption within its organisation.

"This signifies the 'Tone at The Top'. Not only it is leadership by example but also leaders who have zero tolerance towards bribery and corruption," Sidek said in a statement.

– NST



MALAYSIA INITIATES SPECIAL  
PALM OIL MISSION TO EU

Malaysia initiated a special palm oil mission to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France on June 12-13, 2017 to discuss the European Union's (EU) resolution on palm oil and deforestation.

The mission, led by Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong, discussed with European Union (EU) Commissioners and Members of European Parliament (MEPs) regarding the resolution.

During the mission, Mah had engaged discussions with influential Members of European Parliament, including the EU Commissioner of Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella and Chairman of Industry, Research and Energy Committee, MEP Jerzy Buzek.

"The bilateral meetings focused on the European Commission's proposed follow-up actions arising from the adoption of the European Parliament Resolution on Palm Oil and Deforestation of Rainforests on April 4, 2017," said Mah in a statement.

Mah said the MEPs were enlightened on Malaysia's continued commitment to sustainable oil palm cultivation, particularly through the recent decision by the Malaysian government

to make it mandatory that the Malaysian palm oil producers and processors adopt the Malaysia Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) certification – BERNAMA



BANK MANDIRI TO OPEN FIRST  
BRANCH IN MALAYSIA

Bank Mandiri, Indonesia's leading commercial bank, will be opening its first branch in Malaysia within the next few months.

According to a report in Indonesian newspaper, Koran Tempo, the Malaysian government, via Bank Negara Malaysia, had given the green light to Bank Mandiri's "Qualified Asean Bank" (QAB) status application recently.

He said Bank Mandiri had allocated RM300 million to fund the opening of its branch in Malaysia, adding that the bank would be injecting its capital in three stages, with an initial commitment of around RM100 million or between US\$50 million and US\$60 million.

Bank Mandiri was established by the Indonesian Ministry of Finance in 1998, in which the Indonesian government retained a 60 per cent stake, while the balance is owned by local and foreign shareholders. It is Indonesia's largest bank in terms of asset ownership and funds, and has 2,505 branches in the republic

– BERNAMA



BANK ISLAM APPOINTS KHAIRUL  
KAMARUDIN AS CEO

Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd has appointed Khairul Kamarudin as its chief executive officer effective. A lawyer by training and a veteran

with more than 21 years' experience in the Malaysian corporate scene, Khairul joined Bank Islam in 2005, playing a vital role in leading the asset recovery for Bank Islam during the turnaround and transformational years.

He was the bank's deputy CEO before the appointment. In an emailed media statement, the bank highlighted that Khairul's two decades' of experience in the Malaysian corporate scene included stints at PricewaterhouseCoopers (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and Pengurusan Danaharta Nasional Bhd.

"Among the notable achievements under his leadership were the enhancement of the Bank's overall business strategies; the introduction of award winning products and services, including Asia Pacific's First Shariah-Compliant Business Credit Card, Co-Branded Visa Debit-i with Malaysia's football associations and universities; Bank Islam Visa Cash Out Service; Transact-At-Palm ("TAP"); eDonation and the financing of Waqf land," the bank wrote. – NST



MAYBANK ISLAMIC IS ASIA  
PACIFIC WINNER OF BANKER'S  
ISLAMIC BANK OF THE YEAR 2017  
AWARD

Malaysia's largest Islamic bank in terms of assets, Maybank Islamic Berhad, has emerged as the Asia-Pacific winner of the Banker's Islamic Bank of the Year 2017. It also received accolades in the Country Awards category for Malaysia.

The recognition came following what the London-based publication, The Banker, described as "Maybank Islamic's set of impressive performance indicators" in 2016, coupled with a steady regional growth story.

In a media statement to announce the winners of its annual Islamic Bank of the Year Awards 2017, the financial publication acknowledged Maybank Islamic's leadership in Malaysia's Islamic finance market where it claims

top position among Shariah-compliant financiers in the country. By total assets, total financing and total funding, including deposits and investment accounts, Maybank Islamic's dominance has translated into a strong set of financial results, it noted.

"Tier 1 capital and total Shariah-compliant assets also enjoyed notable growth, climbing by 12 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively. Maybank Islamic's return on equity for the year was 15.4 per cent, while its cost-to-income ratio was a respectable 36 per cent and non-performing financing was just 0.8 per cent."

For the financial year ended Dec 31, 2016, Maybank Islamic's net profit rose 10 per cent to RM1.34 billion and total assets grew 16 per cent to RM181.8 billion. The bank's steady growth in Singapore and Indonesia also contributed to its recognition as the best in Asia Pacific – NST



SP SETIA TIES UP WITH SHANGRI-  
LA DOWN UNDER

Property developer SP Setia Bhd has officially announced Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts as the hotel operator for its proposed twin-tower development in Melbourne's central business district (CBD).

This is the first time a Malaysian property developer has partnered with a leading hotel brand name for a development project that has a construction value of about A\$480 million in Australia. The cost of building the hotel is A\$280 million.

SP Setia president and CEO Datuk Khor Chap Jen said with Shangri-La as its partner, it would definitely spur Melbourne's tourism industry and create job opportunities both during and after the construction period.

"The spinoff is tremendous in the sense that Shangri-La is known for its chain of hotels in China.

"The project will provide job opportunities to 1,000 people during the construction period, and upon completion of the hotel, it will provide about 1,000 ongoing job opportunities," Khor told reporters on the sidelines of an event to exchange documents with Shangri-La Asia Ltd CEO Lim Beng Chee to mark the strategic partnership between both parties.

The event was witnessed by SP Setia's board of directors and former Housing and Local Government Minister and the Prime Minister's special envoy to China Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting – THE STAR



MALAYSIA TOUTS GREEN  
EXPERTISE

Malaysia is keen to strengthen economic ties with Kazakhstan and aspires to be a role model to the Central Asian country in the development of its green energy sector. Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry adviser Datuk Loo Took Gee said Malaysia would like to share its experience with Kazakhstan in the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

She said the ministry had conducted discussions with Kazakhstan's Vice-Minister of Energy Bakhytzhan Dzhaksaliyer on energy efficiency and had received a positive response.

"Energy efficiency has a broad scope. I've talked to the vice-minister and he is also of the opinion that Kazakhstan should be looking at energy efficiency to save energy. It's an area where we would like to discuss with the Kazakhs and explore opportunities here."

"We hope that Malaysia will be given an opportunity to invest in Kazakhstan. That is why we are seriously pursuing meetings with the Energy Ministry as well as the Kazakhstan Electricity Association, to show that we are serious," Loo told NST Business in an interview.

Loo is also deputy commissioner (Malaysia) for Astana Expo 2017 and is former Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry secretary-general.

Loo said Malaysia's participation in the Astana Expo 2017 would serve as a platform for the country to showcase its developments in the green energy sector to Kazakhstan and other participating countries – NST



ALLIANCE BANK LAUNCHES  
MALAYSIA'S FIRST MOBILE  
FOREIGN REMITTANCE  
APPLICATION

Alliance Bank Malaysia Bhd and Alliance Bank Bhd have launched the 'Alliance Cash2Home' application – the first mobile foreign remittance application in Malaysia, which offers paperless account opening and remittance services via mobile phone.

Alliance Bank group chief executive officer Joel Kornreich said the mobile application service represents the second installment in a series of innovative value propositions that offer speed, simplicity and responsiveness, while being uniquely aligned to the needs of consumers.

"Based on our forward positioning research, we learnt from business owners that employees usually have to take leave from work to open an account at a bank branch.

"By leveraging on technology, and working on what our customers need, we have simplified the process of account opening and foreign remittance to be fast and hassle-free for both employer and employee," he said at the launch ceremony.

Alliance Bank's head of group transformation office Ken Yong said the bank tested the application with a focus group and received positive results, with a 100 per cent acceptance rate among foreign workers – NST





**GOOGLE BEATS APPLE AGAIN IN GLOBAL BRAND RANKINGS**  
For the second year running, Google beat Apple for the top spot in this competition conceived by research company Kantar Millward Brown.

Apple came second last year, after being No. 1 from 2010-2014 and again in 2015. Microsoft held steady at No. 3, where it's been for the last three years. However, this slightly resurgent brand enjoyed a brand value leap of 18 per cent.

Tech companies dominated this league table, compiled on the basis of 3 million customer interviews in 51 different countries.

The sheer scale of the top five, however -- Google, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon and Facebook -- represents 25 per cent of the total brand value of the top 100 -- CNET



**UBER'S OPEN COO JOB IN THE SPOTLIGHT AMID LEADERSHIP VOID**  
With Chief Executive Travis Kalanick taking a leave of absence from Uber Technologies Inc, the vacant job of chief operating officer takes on a lot more importance as the company frames the position as key to solving its woes.

Kalanick, under fire for crass behavior and fostering a culture of sexism and rule-breaking, in early March announced he was searching for a COO to help run the ride-services company. But in the months since, Uber has suffered a string of controversies and

embarrassing setbacks and the job has remained unfilled - part of a leadership vacuum that extends through the company and up to the board of directors.

In a report released, former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and his law firm, Covington & Burling, recommended sweeping management changes at Uber in the wake of sexual harassment allegations and other scandals.

The report advocates for a COO who "will act as a full partner" and run "day-to-day operations." It also calls on the board of directors to take steps to limit the CEO's responsibilities and provide "clear lines of demarcation between" the COO and the CEO -- NST



**APPLE ISSUES US\$1B GREEN BOND AFTER TRUMP'S PARIS CLIMATE EXIT**  
Apple Inc offered a US\$1 billion bond dedicated to financing clean energy and environmental projects, the first corporate green bond offered since President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris climate agreement.

The offering comes over a year after Apple issued its first green bond of US\$1.5 billion -- the largest issued by a US corporation - as a response to the 2015 Paris agreement.

Apple said its second green bond is meant to show that businesses are still committed to the goals of the 194-nation accord.

"Leadership from the business community is essential to address the threat of climate change and protect our shared planet," said Lisa Jackson, Apple's vice president of environment, policy and social initiatives.

Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook was one of several chief executive officer's who directly appealed to Trump to keep the United States in the pact before he made his decision.

The tech giant said proceeds from the green bond sales will be used to finance renewable energy, energy efficiency at Apple facilities and in its supply chain and procuring safer materials for its products.

The offering also includes a specific focus on helping Apple meet a goal of greening its supply chain and using only renewable resources or recycled material, reducing its need to mine rare earth materials. -- NST



**DISNEY TO DELIST AILING PARIS THEME PARK**  
Walt Disney Co. will delist its first and only outlet in Europe, ending a 27-year run as an independent company for the Paris theme park that has struggled to match the popularity of its U.S. counterparts and had to be bailed out by its parent at least three times.

Disney now holds more than 97 per cent of the capital of Euro Disney S.C.A. after it started a public tender offer for the European unit last year, the company said in a statement.

Disney raised its stake in February by buying 9 per cent from Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal's Kingdom Holding Co for two euros (US\$2.24) a share in stock and offered other investors the same terms.

Under French stock market regulations, Disney can now force a mandatory buyout of the remaining shares it doesn't own and delist the company as of June 19. Euronext Paris had suspended the trading of Euro Disney

shares Tuesday before the market opening.

Chief executive officer Bob Iger is doubling down on the troubled Paris resort as part of a deeper commitment by Burbank, California-based Disney to its global theme-parks business. Hurt by sputtering European economies in recent years, the park's finances were further damaged by the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks and challenging business conditions that continued through last year -- THE STAR



**QATAR CLOSES HELIUM PLANTS AMID RIFT WITH ARAB POWERS**  
Qatar, the world's second largest helium producer, has closed its two helium production plants because of the economic boycott imposed by other Arab states, industry sources told Reuters.

The helium plants operated by RasGas, a subsidiary of state-owned Qatar Petroleum (QP), were shut after Saudi Arabia closed its border with Qatar, blocking overland exports of the gas, a QP official told Reuters. RasGas is 70 per cent owned by QP and US giant Exxon Mobil has 30 per cent.

The official declined to be named under briefing rules. Phil Kornbluth, head of US-based industry consultancy Kornbluth Helium Consulting, said his sources had confirmed the closure.

The closure of the plants is a sign of how the rift between Qatar and Arab powers could affect commodities markets. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain cut diplomatic and transport ties last week, accusing Qatar of supporting terrorism, a charge Doha denies -- REUTERS



**AVON CEO EXPECTED TO STEP DOWN**  
Avon Products Inc Chief Executive Sheri McCoy is expected to step down, the Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday, citing people familiar with the matter.

Activist investor Barington Capital has been pressuring the cosmetics company to search for a new chief executive, saying Avon's shares have suffered under McCoy.

Avon's stock has sunk about 84 per cent since McCoy took charge as CEO in April 2012 and, in one of her first moves, rejected a \$10.7 billion takeover bid from Coty Inc.

McCoy is near a decision to retire, and the terms of her departure are still being worked out but no final decision has been made, the report said.

The company, which pioneered door-to-door selling, has been struggling with changing consumer tastes, raising concerns that its more than 130-year-old sale model is outdated and unable to attract shoppers who want instant gratification -- REUTERS



**MORGAN STANLEY CEO SAYS SAUDI ARABIA COULD BE 'MAJOR OPPORTUNITY'**  
Morgan Stanley CEO James Gorman said Saudi Arabia could be a "major opportunity" for the firm as the country unveiled plans for oil giant Saudi Aramco's \$100 billion initial public offering and introduced a series of reforms to attract foreign capital in

2015. Gorman, speaking at the bank's financials conference in New York, said he has personally been spending a significant amount of time in Saudi Arabia, as has President Colm Kelleher.

In May, several U.S.-based bank CEOs including Gorman, JPMorgan Chase & Co's Jamie Dimon and Citigroup Inc's Michael Corbat attended a business forum in Saudi Arabia.

Morgan Stanley already has a presence in Saudi Arabia, having set up an office in the region in 2007.

Other banks are scrambling to expand into the country.

Citi received a license from Saudi Arabia's regulator in April for investment banking and capital markets services, and Goldman Sachs Group Inc has applied for a license to trade equities in the kingdom... -- REUTERS



**NIKE, SANRIO, UNIVERSAL STUDIOS FACE EU PROBE OVER ONLINE SALES**  
EU antitrust regulators will investigate whether Nike, Comcast's Universal Studios and Hello Kitty owner Sanrio illegally block some cross-border sales or ban certain online retailers from selling their products.

The European Commission announced the investigations but did not provide details of the sales practices.

"Nike is aware of the European Commission's investigation and will continue to cooperate with the authorities," the company said. Universal Studios and Sanrio did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The EU move follows a year-long inquiry by its competition authority into e-commerce practices by 1,900

companies, part of a broader strategy to boost online trade and economic growth.

"We are going to examine whether the licensing and distribution practices of these three companies may be denying consumers access to wider choice and better deals in the single market," European Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said in a statement.

Nike is the license rights holder for Barcelona soccer club merchandise, while Sanrio owns the Hello Kitty brand, which adorns items ranging from stationery to clothing. Universal Studios holds the rights for movies such as Minions and Despicable Me. The new investigations would cover similar issues to those of the e-commerce inquiry, but also include licensing of rights and offline distribution. -- REUTERS



**CALLAWAY IS THE TOP GOLF BRAND IN THE WORLD, BUT HAS ROOM TO GROW**  
Google unveiled its latest self-driving sCallaway Golf Co is the world's most recognizable golf brand, but that doesn't necessarily make it an attractive investment with huge upside, analysts at Cowen said.

Cowen's John Kernan initiates coverage of Callaway's stock with a Market Perform rating and \$14 price target as the golf business has shown moderate growth and extremely cyclical profitability. In fact, the company's operating margin peaked in fiscal 2007 at 9 per cent and management's strategy of product innovation, customization and improving inventory management will only drive an operating margin expansion of 150 basis points to 7 per cent in fiscal 2019.

Callaway owns a 15 per cent stake in Topgolf, a golf concept that combines the game with entertainment, nightlife,

food and alcohol. As such, exposure to the non-traditional aspect of the sport does provide Callaway's investors with a potential valuable option in Callaway's stock -- BAZINGA



**TOYOTA CHIEF MAY CONSIDER ACQUISITIONS TO GAIN AUTO TECH ACCESS**  
Toyota Motor Corp may consider mergers or acquisitions to procure new automotive technologies, including self-driving technologies, the company's president, adding that it had to compete more aggressively against its rivals.

At an annual shareholders meeting President Akio Toyoda said the world's second-biggest automaker, which took longer to warm to self-driving cars and electric vehicles than its rivals, would be more aggressive in expanding in these areas, conceding he may have focused too much on preserving the status quo at the firm until now.

"We've been investing 1 trillion yen (\$9.08 billion) each year for R&D, expanding capex and buying back shares, but this may not be enough. We need to consider all our options, including M&A, to survive in the future."

As the rise of self-driving cars increasingly blurs the lines between automakers and technology companies, global automakers are trying to expand their role beyond making cars into transportation service providers, raising their research and development budgets and investing heavily in technology companies.

Toyota has invested \$1 billion in an artificial intelligence research institute, and has struck up technology partnerships with Microsoft Corp and Uber Technologies. -- REUTERS



# IBRAHIM INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (IIBD)

Puts Mobility on Track



**16th of May, 2017** – Johor Corporation (JCorp) announced the commencement of key infrastructure developments for the Ibrahim International Business District (IIBD), namely the Flyover, Link Bridge and PERSADA Annexe. The public infrastructure upgrade is part of the fulfilment of the IIBD Blueprint for Integrated Connectivity Plan to improve the accessibility for both vehicular and foot traffic, and the provision of retail space that is conducive, comfortable and safe to achieve IIBD's agenda to become the central business district in Johor Bahru city. The event was officiated by YAB Dato' Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, accompanied by YAB Dato' Mohamed Khaled bin Nordin, Menteri Besar of Johor.

In his keynote speech, YAB Dato' Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said, "As IIBD is set to be the region's emerging investment hub, the three public infrastructure components, which is the Flyover, Link Bridge and PERSADA Annexe collectively present enhanced connectivity that will strengthen the business district and link facets of communities. The Flyover will improve traffic flow along critical corridors to accommodate the local population growth, besides expediting transportation of goods to the local and international markets. This upcoming public infrastructure upgrade in the heart of Johor Bahru

marks yet another significant collaboration between the Federal and State Governments to bridge a new mobility culture among the rakyat and citizens of IIBD, by connecting them to the economic opportunities and systems that will allow them to thrive."

YAB Dato' Seri also announced the RM250 million Facilitation Fund from the Federal Government to drive the development of Johor Bahru's public infrastructure and to ensure the integrity of the Integrated Connectivity Plan of IIBD Blueprint for the Flyover and Link Bridge. The funding will be provided through the Unit Kerjasama Awam Swasta (UKAS), which is responsible for monitoring and implementation of such projects.

The IIBD Masterplan is purposed to drive business and investment acceleration through key projects within IIBD as the central business district in Johor Bahru city. Infrastructure development presents as one of the prioritised focus areas to ensure IIBD becomes a choice location for its citizens and business communities, both local and foreign investors and entrepreneurs, to thrive and flourish. Under the Mobility aspect of the IIBD Blueprint, public infrastructure development and upgrading will involve the provision of traffic and pedestrian linkages and avenues.

# SUNWAY MALLS

The Spirit of Nature



**1st of June, 2017** – In the spirit of togetherness, Sunway Malls joined hands to usher in the season of Hari Raya Aidilfitri with a grand launch held at Sunway Putra Mall. Following the successful opening of 5 malls in the past 20 years, Sunway Malls' first joint Hari Raya launch signifies the continuous growth of the brand from strength to strength as one of the leading mall operators in the shopping mall industry.

The celebration began with a graceful traditional dance accompanied by the spellbinding sounds of a Gamelan performance. In line with the theme of flora and fauna, Tan Sri Datuk Seri Razman M. Hashim, Executive Deputy Chairman of Sunway Group; HC Chan, CEO of Sunway Malls & Theme Parks; Kevin Tan, COO of Sunway Malls; Chow Heng Wah, General Manager of Sunway Carnival Mall; Phang Sau Lian, General Manager of Sunway Putra Mall; KS Wong, Senior General Manager of Sunway Velocity Mall and Albert Cheok, Centre Manager of Sunway Giza marked the official launch by watering plants to symbolise Sunway's continuous efforts towards sustainable development.

"In many ways, the coming together to celebrate the

festive season has always been Sunway Malls' hallmark as we embark to expand our footprint in key urbane markets. We wish to deliver unparalleled mall experiences from each of our malls in these markets," said Chan.

Guests were serenaded by local actress and singer Marsha Milan with her own rendition of Hari Raya Hari Bahagia and Manusia. To give back to the community this festive season, children from Yayasan Chow Kit were treated to a buka puasa session alongside the Sunway Malls' community after the launch.

Although celebrating as one in the launch, each mall under the Sunway Malls brand celebrates individuality with different themes and characteristics in their respective mall decors to appeal to a variety of shoppers.

In line with Sunway's direction towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UNSDSN) Association, shoppers can redeem a packet of flower seeds with no purchase at all! Start at home, plant the seeds, and watch these beautiful flowers bloom in your home or garden this festive season! Seeds will be given away to shoppers while stocks last.

# RED WING SHOE COMPANY

Announces First Store in Malaysia

**13th of June, 2017** – Red Wing Shoe Company announced the grand opening of its new Red Wing Store in Kuala Lumpur, widening its footprint in Southeast Asia. As the leading provider of safety footwear, Red Wing serves all industries including those with the most difficult work environments, such as energy. The company understands the demands of providing absolute protection, comfort and durability on the jobsite, and now brings this customized shopping experience to its Malaysia's customers.

Located in the Avenue K Shopping Mall, the Kuala Lumpur store features Red Wing's full head-to-toe PPE offering, including protective footwear that meets or exceeds standards such as EN ISO and ASTM, flame resistant workwear, safety glasses, gloves, as well as other personal protective equipment and accessories. In addition to supporting the Southeast Asia energy market, the store will offer Vasque®, Red Wing's product line of performance hiking boots and shoes, and its Heritage collection of handcrafted work-inspired lifestyle footwear, created for any occasion.

Leather chairs, brick walls, custom fixtures and a state-of-the-art sound system bring visitors into an industrial work-themed atmosphere that provides comfort for shoppers and connects them with the core principles of the Red Wing Shoe Company – safety, performance and service. Visitors enjoy complete peace of mind with one-on-one expert assistance from Red Wing employees familiar with the needs of each customer's work environment and purpose. Red Wing's service level is second-to-none, and customers leave with the knowledge of how to properly take care of their feet to have comfort and be effective on the job. The signature Kuala Lumpur store offers the footwear industry's premier foot-scanning technology, which quickly identifies an individual's unique arch type, foot size and pressure points, revolutionizing the science of shoe fit and comfort.

The new store is a result of Red Wing's longstanding collaboration with Leeden National Oxygen Ltd (Leeden NOX), a distributor partner for over four decades. While the store opening marks the first Red Wing brick-and-mortar store in Malaysia, the two organizations have successfully opened and sustained stores in Singapore. Red Wing and Leeden NOX are delivering to Southeast Asia premier destinations for modern craftsmanship, personal service and premium footwear, while leveraging their significant industrial expertise to keep work crews safe and productive.



# CHASSIS CHECK

Safe Vacation this Raya

**11th of June, 2017** – The vacation season is a gruelling endurance test for most cars: Long journeys with maximum payload, high temperatures, traffic jams, mountain passes, and poor road conditions. According to ZF Aftermarket Malaysia, shock absorbers play a critical role in car safety and are advising drivers to have them checked professionally before traveling this coming holiday season.

"Many people do not realise that worn out or damaged shock absorbers have a major impact on car safety", said Cheah Chee Luen, General Manager Independent Aftermarket (IAM), ZF Sales & Service (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd..

According to ZF Aftermarket Malaysia, defective shock absorbers not only reduce braking performance, resulting in longer stopping distances, but also increase the chances of skidding or aquaplaning when the roads are wet. In line with this, ZF Aftermarket Malaysia experts strongly recommend that shock absorbers and all complementary components be initially inspected after 80,000 kilometers at the latest, and thereafter every 20,000 kilometers.

Damage and wear may pose a serious safety risk particularly when travelling on vacation. The high payload – often associated with an unfavorable distribution of the center of gravity as a result of roof racks or bicycles on the trailer hitch – makes the car much

more unstable than usual from a physical perspective. In critical situations such as emergency braking or evasive maneuvers, worn components can have a much more dramatic effect.

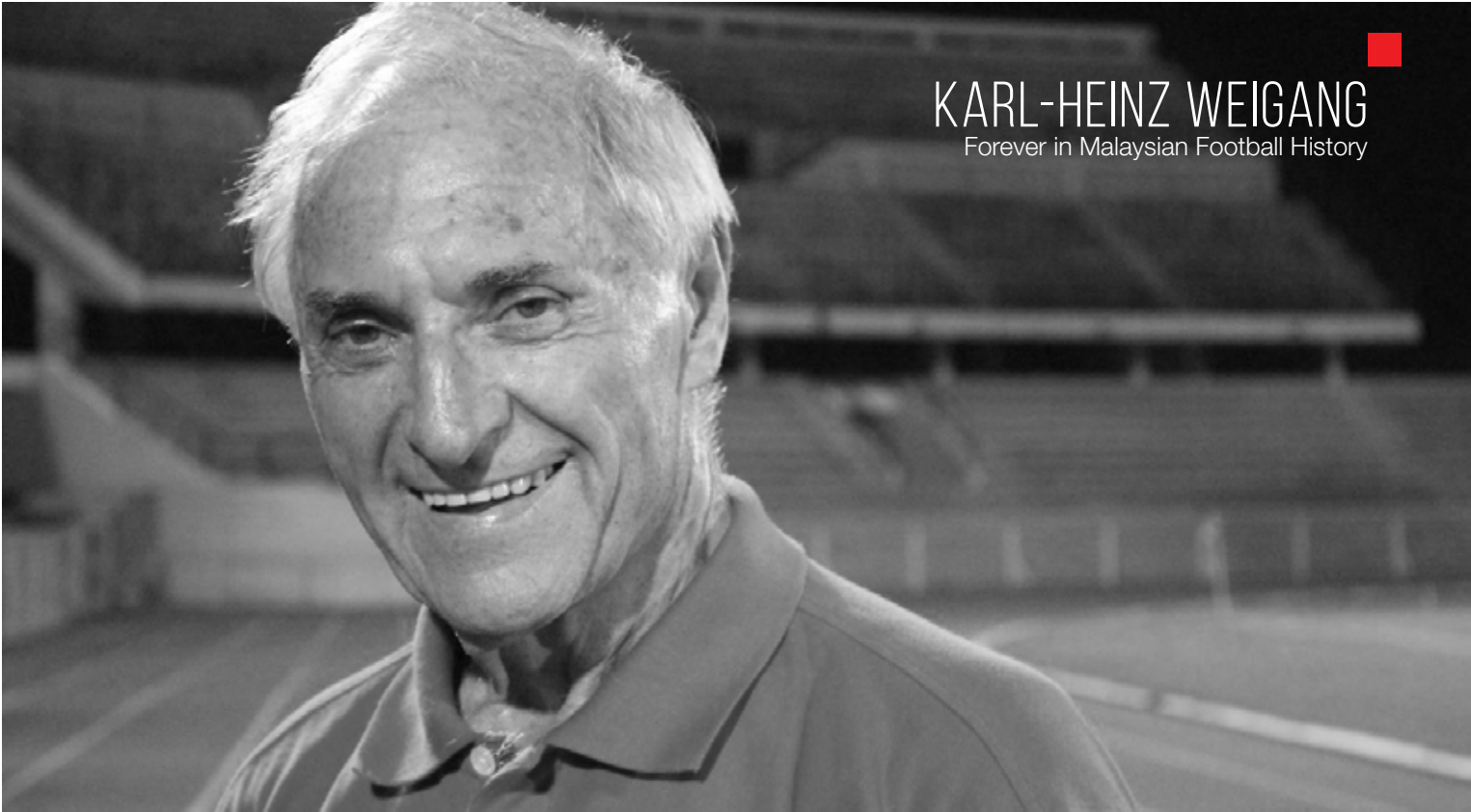
To emphasise this point, the company has produced a video to remind Malaysian drivers of the important role that shock absorbers have on car safety and ride comfort. Please click here to view the video.

ZF Aftermarket Malaysia offers a complete range of SACHS shock absorbers and Lemförder steering and suspension products for many popular Asian car models such as Honda, Hyundai, Isuzu, Mazda, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Proton, Perodua and Toyota.

Cheah Chee Luen shared, "Our SACHS Asian range is affordable for Malaysian drivers, but still incorporates 100 years of experience, German technology and quality control processes. This is to ensure parts that are tailored to each vehicle and matching the original quality standard."

"We advise drivers to check with their garage or service centre to ensure that they are using high quality replacements parts such as our SACHS range. This will provide them with peace of mind and help ensure that they 'balik kampung' safely. We wish everyone a safe and joyful Hari Raya Aidilfitri," Cheah Chee Luen concluded.





KARL-HEINZ WEINGANG  
Forever in Malaysian Football History

**13th of June, 2017** Former Malaysia's national coach Karl-Heinz Weingang, the last man to lead the national team to the Olympics, died at the age of 82. Weingang passed away in Germany after suffering a heart attack.

Weingang is a former national coach of both Malaysia and Vietnam, and also guided African countries Ghana, Mali and Gabon during a 40-year career.

"With deep condolences and sorrow, I would like to inform our long staying guest Mr. Karl Heinz Weingang passed away in Germany this morning," read a tweet from the Perak Football Club's official Twitter page.

Weingang was working with Perak as recently as February before being "rested" by the state side, and replaced by former Selangor coach Mehmet Durakovic. He had a contract with the club until June, but left for Germany several months ago for minor eye surgery, and to undergo a football course.

Weingang's passing means a huge void for Malaysia and Perak, where he leaves behind a legacy that will be long remembered. As national coach, he guided Malaysia to perhaps their biggest achievement by helping them qualify for the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. Malaysia would eventually pull out of the Olympics in protest of the Soviet

Union invasion of Afghanistan weingangs's heroics were portrayed in the popular 2016 film Ola Bola.

With Perak, Weingang masterminded two Malaysia Cup titles in 1998 and 2000. And later in his career, he twice saved them from relegation. When the club were flirting with the drop in 2014, he returned as technical director to keep them in the Malaysia Super League (MSL).

Weingang answered Perak's call last season to help save them from relegation. Last year, the Bos Gaurus again called on them to save them when they were only two points above the relegation zone under Syamsul Saad. Answering the call of his beloved club, Weingang left his wife behind in Germany once again to not only preserve their MSL status, but also lead them to a fourth-placed finish.

"I am hurt that my services have just been terminated like that. But this a club I love so much, and everyone associated with Perak, including the beloved fans, will always have a special place in my heart," Weingang told ESPN FC after being rested in February.

Always one to speak his mind and a firm believer of his principles, Weingang's stern ways didn't always sit well with his players.

But his firm approach also brought out the best in many of his understudies, including Khalid Ali, whom Weingang transformed from a defender to a powerhouse midfielder in the 1980s.

Former national captain Datuk Soh Chin Aun, who was one half of the ever-reliable centre-back combination with Datuk Santokh Singh, said he was saddened to hear the news of Weingang's passing. Describing the German as "not only a good coach, but a very good friend", Soh said Weingang's contribution to national football is something to be remembered forever.

"He has done so much for Malaysia, as far as football is concerned, taking us to the Olympics. We (former national players) will always remember him. We all loved him," he told theSun.

Santokh said Weingang's death is a great loss to the national footballing scene. "His touching words 'play for the country and not for yourself' is something I will never forget. The experience of playing under him, and qualifying for the Olympics, no words can describe," he said.



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KUALA LUMPUR 2017  
29TH Southeast Asian Games



Kuala Lumpur 2017 (KL2017) is the brand name of the 29th Southeast Asian Games and the 9th ASEAN Para Games. The Southeast Asian Games will take place between 19th and 30th August 2017 whilst the ASEAN Para Games will be held from September 17th to 23rd, 2017.

The Games will coincide with the celebration of Malaysia's 60th Independence Day as well as Malaysia Day. It will be the sixth time that Malaysia hosts the biennial games.

**The games**  
Participating nations

All 11 members of Southeast Asian Games Federation (SEAGF).

- Brunei
- Cambodia
- Indonesia
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Timor-Leste
- Vietnam

**Sports**

A total of 38 sports will be contested in this edition including three new sports that consist of two winter sports and one summer sport which are cricket, ice hockey and ice

skating. For the first time, two winter sports are accepted by the South East Asian Games Federation (SEAGF) Council into the SEA Games.

On 16 June 2015, Chief Executive Officer for the 2017 SEA Games, Zolkples Embong hopes the staging of Olympic sports will be part of the legacy of the SEA Games in Malaysia. He said that while it has always been the norm for host nations to select sports they are geared towards in an attempt to increase their haul of gold medals, the practice is not in line with the goals, which is to groom athletes from the region to compete at the Asian and Olympic Games. He gave an example of 2011 Southeast Asian Games hosted by Indonesia which included many non-Olympic sports and the host played to their advantage by being the overall winners with 182 gold medals. However, Indonesia only won 47 gold medals in 2015 Southeast Asian Games. He added, in terms of the number and type of sports, Malaysia may not include non-Olympic sports like floorball and sailing's optimist race in 2017.

As of February 2016, the sports of Archery, BMX cycling, Wrestling, Triathlon, Judo, Muaythai, Canoeing, Bodybuilding and Fencing were removed from the preliminary shortlist of the sporting disciplines to be played at the 2017 SEA Games. Also removed from the list are the women's events in boxing, billiards and snooker, sanda (of wushu), and weightlifting and 8 events in Athletics. The final list includes 38 sports with 405 events for the 29th SEA Games.

**Venues**

The Bukit Jalil National Stadium is the main venue for 2017 SEA Games.

The 2017 Southeast Asian Games will be organised across several states in Malaysia. All the existing venues in Bukit Jalil National Sports Complex were upgraded while a new velodrome, costing MYR 80 million was built in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan to host track cycling events. It was completed in late March 2017 and opened on 26 May 2017. Initially, Sabah and Sarawak were requested to host a number of games; however, Zolkples Embong has decided not to involve the East Malaysian states, citing "higher cost" as the main reason for non involvement.

More than RM1.6 billion has been allocated by the host country to turn the National Sports Complex in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, and its surrounding areas into a Sports City.

**Medals & Sponsorship.**

The medals of the games were designed by Royal Selangor, which is also the designer for the torch and the baton. Royal Selangor is also one of the games main sponsor. To date, MASOC's sponsorship totals RM82.6 million, exceeding its sponsorship target of RM80 million.

**Baton & Torch Relay**

The games baton relay dubbed the Rising Together Baton Run, is the first of its kind in the history of SEA Games where the participating countries (excluding Kuala Lumpur) took part. The run covered a distance of 10 kilometers in each of



the 10 capital cities passing through the landmarks of each countries' capital city. The baton relay began with Brunei on 5 March 2017, followed by the Philippines on 12 March, Laos on 18 March, Myanmar on 25 March, Thailand on 1 April, Vietnam on 9 April, Timor-Leste on 17 April, Cambodia on 22 April and Indonesia on 30 April and ended with Singapore on 13 May 2017.

The baton relay then continued across Malaysia, beginning with the state of Johor and traversing through the 13 states and Putrajaya and ending with the host city, Kuala Lumpur on August 12th. The games baton and games torch are designed by Royal Selangor. The baton represents dynamism, confidence and new beginnings and the aspirations of the Southeast Asia community.

The games torch with a length of 125 mm, 86 mm width and height of 850 mm weighs 2 kg with fuel and 1.8 kg without fuel. It has a sleek custom-milled combustion chamber and a triangular cross section which symbolises strength in unity. The games logo and motto and the ASEAN Para Games are engraved on the torch.

**CONCEPT**

**Theme**

"Rising Together" is the theme of the 2017 Southeast Asian Games. It was chosen to signify Southeast Asia as a community and a region that has come a long way in making its mark on the global stage and to urge its people that it is time to come together to write the next chapter in its collective journey of peace, progress, and prosperity. It also signifies that with Kuala Lumpur 2017 Southeast Asian Games being the first SEA Games after the formation of the ASEAN Community, sports will play a big role in uplifting and inspiring the entire region and bringing all the citizens of Southeast Asia.

**Logo**

The logo of the 2017 Southeast Asian Games is an image of a Wau Bulan, a crescent-shaped kite traditionally popular on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The combination of stripes and colours were collated from the flags of all the Southeast Asian countries to create the Kuala Lumpur 2017 identity. It was selected after a nationwide logo competition which saw 174 entries submitted for consideration. The Wau is described as graceful, beautiful, powerful, rising high above and something that could uniquely represent the transcendent power of sports.

**Mascot**

The official mascot of the 2017 Southeast Asian Games is an anthropomorphic Malayan tiger named Rimaau. It was unveiled on 14 November 2015, together with the games' logo and theme. The name is an abbreviation of the games' core values, namely: Respect, Integrity, Move, Attitude and Unity. Rimaau is described as a gracious, friendly, competitive and athletic athlete.





## THE DIARY



# PAVING THE PATHWAY OF DREAMS

**A Small Step for Adult-kind, a Giant Leap for KidSZ**  
Children represent hope, for they signify the very essence of the future. To see the future unfold before one's very eyes is a profound sighting indeed. For *special project team KidSZ* of The BrandLaureate, it has been a sheer privilege to be a part of such a journey recently which took place on the 22nd of April, 2017.

It was a day when children of limited means got to live out their dreams at *KidZania Kuala Lumpur*, with everything fully taken care of from A to Z, topped up with plenty of extra goodies! From the briefing & opening ceremony, interactive quizzes and fun-filled journey by specially chartered bus to meals & ice cream, time of play & fellowship and building lasting bonds, each moment spent with this chosen group of young ones was a step in the right direction.

*"Joining hands to bring cheer to the less fortunate is indeed very gratifying. Standing united, impossible things became possible; and with the heart in the right place, simple things became special."*  
-Kalwant-

This endeavour was made possible with the help of many whose genuine concern and heartfelt contributions converged and brought untold hope to the underprivileged and high-needs children of the *Kampung Muhibbah Poor Community* – and for this, our group, *KidSZ* (an apt acronym derived from the names of its four team members – Kalwant, Ian, Shahril & Zaidi), is truly grateful.

**Moulding Young Hearts**  
As a species, humanity's very future depends on its legacy – none more valuable than life itself. This is why children symbolize hope. To be able to witness the very seeds of hope germinate in the eyes of the young is an experience that escapes even the most eloquent of words - for it is a hope that will carry on like the flame of a torch – illuminating the future.

Though not all are born into equal means, every child has a right to equal opportunity. It falls to those in power, or those in a position to make a difference, and those with the heart to make it happen. And when such a light lights up in their eye, the whole world seems like a better place. There is a warm fuzzy feeling inside that gives an irreplaceable sense of solace.

*"My father once thought me that one need not be grateful; but ought never be ungrateful. I saw sweetness like honey flowing in the eyes of young ones who never knew much sweetness in their lives... If that's not thankfulness, then what else could it be?"*  
-Ian-

And the sense of gratefulness shown by children is so pure...untainted. Getting a child on the right momentum is so vital that it becomes a gift that will keep on giving in their lives. It is a starting point – a stepping stone – a launch pad to greater heights. After all the future seems to be always in a state of change and it is the young, malleable hearts that will be able to reshape themselves to embrace that change. *Team KidSZ*, together with the other staff of **The BrandLaureate** and volunteers from *New Life Community Centre (NLCC)* and benevolent sponsors, had the sheer privilege of ushering in new dimensions of thought into these children's lives using a fun, relatable approach.

## THE DIARY

### Turning a Dream into a Goal

To have a dream is good. But most often, dreams remain only that – a dream. Having goals, however, can take you places. When one has goals, one will strive and take steps to meet said goals. It is for this reason that *Team KidSZ*, a specialized subset of **The BrandLaureate**, which is the sobriquet for brand excellence of the **Asia Pacific Brands Foundation**, decided to introduce a select group of children to *KidZania* - a place where dreams are put into motion in the flesh - transforming them into a foretaste of ambition and great things to come!

The **Asia Pacific Brands Foundation** and **The BrandLaureate** have been instruments of change for over a decade, championing brands and branding not just locally, but in the global arena as well. To these epitomic institutions, it is all about legacy. In like spirit, this initiative has come about rising from the such likeness of starting something that will become a legacy. But like all great things, it has to start somewhere.

*The Kampung Muhibbah Poor Community* in Puchong is a very poor community which is located at a low-cost housing settlement in Selangor. *The NLCC (New Life Community Centre)* has been working with the interested locals in the area to help raise the standards of living of the underprivileged community. It had been an uphill battle, but not one without triumphs along the way; and at the end of the day, this endeavour has proven itself to be a positive catalyst that has driven said blessed efforts further than ever imagined.

This includes education endeavours for children, school-goers and adults for the purpose of improving on

knowledge, skills and earning capacity to upgrade their lives as a whole. *KidSZ* has approached *NLCC* and with its help, sourced for needy children from this community who deserve the chance to experience the outlook for a better life through educational exposure usually privy to those who can afford the finer things in life.

*"Children need clear guidance when it comes to formulating their ambitions and KidZania is a great place to start."*  
-Shahril-

Amongst the young in the commune who benefitted from this impactful initiative are preschoolers, young adults (of secondary age) and a good number of young learners. In this instance, a pressing similar need has brought people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds together as one for a common purpose. It is hoped that the equipping of students with books and stationery, coupled by the experience at *KidZania*, will drive them to make a positive change in their lives and usher in brighter days ahead. Desire and passion are pivotal in all that we do, and even in ambition, they can drive one to reach the unreachable; and this is what we sincerely hope to have planted in the soil of their fertile hearts, aside from the good time.

### Resounding Goodness from the Inside out

All in all we found that this initiative, particularly in the preparatory stage, encouraged critical thinking skills (including outside-the-box thinking), simultaneously building on staff abilities and talents. This provided new avenues where we could channel our abilities and this in turn has been brought back as experience to enrich the organization.

New dimensions of knowhow could be imported into the core order of business from the experience gained, whilst there is massive cost saved in terms of staff equipping. The experience as a whole has helped to build team spirit, *EQ* (and perhaps even *IQ*) gained from mingling with people from different walks of life (in this instance the younger generation and youths). The children truly deserve the chance to experience the outlook for a better life through exposure and education – luxuries commonly privy to those of better financial standing.

From an organizational perspective, this is a form of hands-on, cost-effective training (a sort of practical training course) which hones in on the inherent skill sets of the teammates (not to mention encourages teamwork and team-building).

*"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for kids, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood"*  
-Zaidi-

Truth be told, the value of money may inflate with each passing year; but the value of knowledge only increases. After all, knowledge ensures a better quality of life and makes living more meaningful by adding depth and perspective to it. Value, in the unique form of what we had the opportunity to offer, was brought to those who need it most; thus, looking at the grand scheme of things, we have indeed succeeded in bringing about a positive change and improving the quality of many lives for the better. It will be a day long remembered. And this truth goes both ways.

**"THE PERSONNEL MAKES AN ORGANIZATION TICK. GOODHEARTED EMPLOYEES INADVERTENTLY GIVE THE COMPANY A HEALTHY HEART!"**







# THE BRANDLAUREATE BEST BRANDS AWARDS 2016 2017

The winners of The BrandLaureate BestBrands Awards 2016-2017 were announced by the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation (APBF) at its gala dinner held at The Majestic Hotel, Kuala Lumpur on 22nd May 2017. The night was made even more special as it celebrates the beginning of The BrandLaureate's new season this year. Having celebrated its 10th anniversary last year, The BrandLaureate turns over a new leaf, embarking on a new season, a new chapter where there will be new developments, changes and activities taking place.

The prestigious Awards night was attended by Guest of Honor, Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dato' Sri Haji Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the 5th Prime Minister of Malaysia as well as 900 guests comprising corporate leaders, brand owners and leading personalities. It was a night to celebrate as the APBF welcomes Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dato' Sri Haji Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as its new patron. Befitting to the position, Tun Dato' Sri Haji Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is a strong proponent of branding and is one of Malaysia's and the region's best diplomat, branding Malaysia during his tenure as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and as the Prime Minister, taking Malaysia through great heights of success.

The theme for this year's award is *Take Responsibility of Your Brand for Your Brand Integrity, Quality, Credibility* which is to encourage

brands to take responsibility especially during this difficult and competitive time. Responsibility is the key word as it determines the success or failure of any brand. Consumers would only trust a brand that is responsible, one that has INTEGRITY and known for its QUALITY products and services. In today's world, where consumers are more affluent and fastidious, brands must have integrity and quality to build CREDIBILITY.

The success of the recipient is reflected in the trophy which is crafted in pewter and plated in 24K gold. The dimensions created by the polygons represent the movement of the brand as successful brands are dynamic and have a fluidity which allows them to move with time. Meanwhile, the image of the trophy with its clenched fist positioned at its heart signifies the commitment to responsibility and the determination to build the brand to its highest level.

In his welcoming speech, Dr KKJohan, President of The BrandLaureate congratulated all the winners of the Award and expounded on the Award's chosen theme, "This is an appropriate theme as it reflects on the importance of being responsible in branding. Everyone and anyone can brand but to embark on responsible branding, one needs to have a clear understanding of what is a brand and its significance to the organization, community and country. A successful brand



is driven by a responsible brand leader who is committed and dedicated to the performance and sustainability of his organization's brand."

During the night, over 60 companies and individuals received The BrandLaureate Awards which were divided into the following categories;

1. The BrandLaureate Hall of Fame - Lifetime Achievement Brand ICON Leadership Award - Global Icon
2. The BrandLaureate Elite of Elites Brand Leadership Awards
3. The BrandLaureate Brand Transformational Leadership Awards
4. The BrandLaureate Brand of the Year Awards
5. The BrandLaureate Most Valuable Brand Awards
6. The BrandLaureate Most Sustainable Brand Awards
7. The BrandLaureate Most Favourite Brand Awards
8. The BrandLaureate Brand Influencer Awards

9. The BrandLaureate Best Choice Brand Awards
10. The BrandLaureate Corporate & Product Branding Awards

The first award presentation was presented to YABhg Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who received The BrandLaureate Hall of Fame - Lifetime Achievement Award Brand ICON Leadership Global ICON. Meanwhile, The BrandLaureate Elite of Elites Brand Leadership Awards honors the top leaders of industries who have led their brands to be market leaders. The first recipient was YBhg Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dato' Sri Paduka Dr. Lim Kok Wing, Founder & President of Limkokwing University of Creative Technology with the title King of Creative Innovation followed by YBhg Tan Sri G.Gnanalingam, the Chairman of Westports Holdings Berhad - King of Logistics - Integrated Port Solutions and YBhg Tan Sri Dato' Sri Leong Hoy Kum, Founder and Group Managing Director of Mah Sing Group Berhad - King of Property - Real Estate Magnate.

All recipients of The BrandLaureate BestBrands Awards were carefully selected by the selection committee. Each Award winners have shown exceptional accomplishments in branding and these outstanding brands, products and personalities are the best in their respective industry and have achieved dominance in their particular niches.

Aside from the Award presentation to the winners, the prestigious event also saw Dr KKJohan and YBhg Tan Sri Rainer Althoff, Chairman of The BrandLaureate presenting a glitter portrait of Tun Dato' Sri Haji Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's wife, Tun Jeanne Abdullah, painted by artist, Meteor during a special performance. Guests were also entertained with exciting performances by singing sensation, Dayang Nurfaizah, Vince Chong, electric violinist, Dennis Lau, jazz band, FAZZ and a lively lion dance during the event's opening.



## KING OF CREATIVE- INNOVATION IN EDUCATION



## KING OF LOGISTICS- INTEGRATED PORT SOLUTIONS



## HALL OF FAME - LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT BRAND ICON LEADERSHIP AWARD

## KING OF PROPERTY- REAL ESTATE MAGNATE



## BRAND ICON



# THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SEASON

The turn of every season signifies a new dawn for all of us and I look forward to the freshness and vigour of it all. We make new aspirations that drive us to further build on our past success and take bold and strong actions that will navigate us to new terrains. Terrains which test our commitment and resilience to our cause; the same with brands, if brands want to be at the forefront of leadership position, they need to change and transform with every season.

The BrandLaureate Awards is a good example of how it changes with the season to build strong brand leadership in the industry.

The BrandLaureate Awards was launched in 2006, signifying the beginning of 10 glorious and inspiring years where we established our presence as the first brands and branding award in the country. 10 years down the road, we have become a strong brand, market leader and acknowledged by country and corporate leaders as a credible branding foundation, doing an excellent and impeccable job in building brands and branding our country brand.

Without a strong vision and desire to achieve, we would not be where we are. Without a strong leader, we would not have established our presence and footprints. Without a strong brand, we would not have achieved so much in such a short time.

### The First Decade 2006-2016 – Creating Brand Awareness for Brand Success

The BrandLaureate Awards created strong awareness amongst brands to further build their brands to become successful market leaders. It imparted to them the importance of branding and to be exact, the implementation of

strategic intelligence branding as the key driver to attain brand excellence. BrandLaureates, as successful recipients of the Awards are known, and spurred on by the importance of brands and branding have attained strong brand performance and expanded their market reach, built on their brand value and increased their brand equity.

### The Second Decade 2016 – 2026 – Initiating Brand Activation for Brand Significance

The second decade marks the beginning of a new season where there is a need to relook, reinvent, reinvigorate and reinforce our brand positioning as the premier and coveted branding awards in the world.

Brand activation is the key that will allow us to create new trends and ideas that will enable us to stay ahead of the curve and further stamp our brand significance. In this second decade, The BrandLaureate will activate new initiatives that will value add to the industry, driving the importance of having strong strategic intelligence branding to raise your brand significance.

Successful brand activation comes about when one takes responsibility of one's brand and as the President of The BrandLaureate, I am highly committed to its growth and success. I have never shirked on the responsibility that for a brand to succeed, they must be a brand champion that drives it passionately.

Taking responsibility is also the theme of The BrandLaureate BestBrands Awards 2016-2017 which I feel is most appropriate in this difficult and competitive time.

# TAKE RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUR BRAND FOR YOUR BRAND INTEGRITY, QUALITY, CREDIBILITY

RESPONSIBILITY is the key word as it determines the success or failure of any brands. Consumers would only trust a brand that is responsible, one that has INTEGRITY and known for its QUALITY products and services. In today's world, where consumers are more affluent and fastidious, brands must have INTEGRITY and QUALITY to build CREDIBILITY. CREDIBILITY is the final benchmark in brand assessment as credible brands are synonymous with INTEGRITY and QUALITY.

Responsible brands gain the trust of consumers and this is an important element in building brand sustainability. Where trust is concern, reliability comes to mind and unless you are reliable, you will not have the attributes of integrity, quality and credibility. Reliable and responsible brands have a strong culture of transparency and accountability which further enhances their brand perception, leadership position and reputation.

Taking responsibility means taking ownership of one's brand. Every brand needs a strong leader, full of conviction to drive his brand. Without ownership, the brand will drift aimlessly and eventually sink to its bottomless pit. We have seen many of these incidents, where brands drift aimlessly with no strong leaders to steer them to their right path.

Successful brands go through a long process of strategic and intelligent branding to gain market share and leadership positioning. The right branding enabled these brands to build INTEGRITY, QUALITY and CREDIBILITY as their DNA; these inherent attributes have strengthened their foundation and helped them overcome adversity and brought them to a higher level of success.

When you have all the above features in your brand, you will have a strong and responsible brand which is what consumers look for. In this age and time, you cannot fool consumers. Like the saying goes, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating", so if your brand does not measure up to their expectations, they are not going to give your brand a second chance.

So take responsibility to build a brand that has INTEGRITY, QUALITY and CREDIBILITY. How big and how great you want your brand to be depends solely on one's responsibility.

Make this the beginning of a new season for your brand and be responsible in making history for your brand. Make an impact for your brand.

MAKE YOUR BRAND GREAT AGAIN!







# Congratulations!

THE ONLY AWARD WORTHY OF YOUR BRAND!



**DR KKJOHAN**  
President of The BrandLaureate

## THE BRANDLAUREATE BEST BRANDS AWARDS 2016 2017



**THE BRANDLAUREATE  
HALL OF FAME – LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT  
BRAND ICON LEADERSHIP AWARD –  
GLOBAL ICON**  
**Y.A.BHG. TUN DATO' SRI HAJI  
ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI**  
Fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia



**KING OF LOGISTICS –  
INTEGRATED  
PORT SOLUTIONS**

**Y.BHG TAN SRI DATUK  
G. GNANALINGAM**  
Chairman  
Westports Holdings  
Berhad

**KING OF CREATIVE  
INNOVATION IN  
EDUCATION**

**Y.BHG PROFESSOR EMERITUS  
TAN SRI DATO' SRI PADUKA  
DR LIM KOK WING**  
Founder & President  
LimKokWing University of  
Creative Technology

**KING OF PROPERTY –  
REAL ESTATE MAGNATE**

**Y.BHG TAN SRI DATO' SRI  
LEONG HOY KUM**  
Founder &  
Group Managing Director  
Mah Sing Group Berhad

**BRAND ICON**

**MR. HENDRIK STOEL**  
Managing Director  
British American  
Tobacco Malaysia

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY  
OF YOUR BRAND FOR YOUR BRAND  
INTEGRITY, QUALITY, CREDIBILITY



### MOST SUSTAINABLE BRAND AWARDS



**APM**  
Manufacturing – Integrated  
Automotive Systems &  
Solutions



**BAT**  
Business & Community  
Leadership



**KDU**  
Education – University  
College (Private)



**LAM SOON**  
FMCG



**LONPAC**  
General Insurance



**PETRONAS LUBRICANTS  
INTERNATIONAL (PLI)**  
Manufacturing – Automotive  
& Industrial Lubricants



**PHARMANIAGA**  
Integrated Healthcare  
Solutions



**SWISSMA**  
Manufacturing – Steel  
Roofing



**UEM EDGENTA**  
Integrated Assets Solutions

A member of UEM Group



**VS INDUSTRY**  
Manufacturing – Electronics  
Manufacturing Services

### BEST CHOICE BRAND AWARDS



**DRINHO**  
Consumer – Soya Beverage



**KNIFE**  
Consumer – No. 1 Brand in  
Cooking Oil



**PRUDENTIAL**  
Assurance & Financial  
Planning



**PUBLIC MUTUAL**  
Financial and Wealth  
Planning – Unit Trust



**TEXAS CHICKEN**  
F&B – Fried Chicken



**THE MAJESTIC HOTEL**  
Hospitality – Luxury Hotel



**TUPPERWARE**  
Consumer – Storage  
Solutions



**WHITE HORSE**  
Interior Design – Ceramic  
Tiles



**YOKOHAMA**  
Automotive – Battery



**ZOUK**  
Lifestyle Entertainment Club

### BRAND OF THE YEAR AWARDS



**ADIDAS**  
Sport – Footwear & Apparel



**AVON**  
Beauty & Fashion



**CHOW TAI FOOK**  
Brand Excellence in Retail  
Jewellery



**GREAT EASTERN**  
Best Performing Brand –  
Insurance



**MAH SING**  
Best Performing Brand –  
Property



**PUBLIC BANK**  
Best Performing Public Listed  
Company – Banking



**TNB**  
Best Performing Government  
Linked Company  
– Energy & Power

### MOST VALUABLE BRAND AWARDS



**BRUNSFELD**  
Real Estate & Management



**GUOCERA**  
Tiles



**HONG LEONG ASSURANCE**  
Insurance & Financial  
Planning



**JONES LANG WOOTTON**  
Real Estate Investment



**KOSSAN RUBBER**  
Manufacturing – Gloves



**MFM**  
Food Manufacturing

### MOST FAVOURITE BRAND AWARDS



**ANTABAX**  
Consumer – Derma  
Protection Solutions



**CUCKOO**  
Consumer – Home  
Appliances



**GUARDIAN**  
Retail – Health, Beauty &  
Personal Care



**NATUREL**  
Consumer – Olive Oil



**NUTRIPLUS**  
Consumer – Egg



**PERODUA**  
Automotive –  
Sedan/Compact Cars

### BRAND INFLUENCER AWARDS



**AIA**  
Life Insurance



**BLACKMORES**  
Wellness – Natural Health  
Solutions



**LBS BINA**  
International Property  
Development



**LIMKOKWING**  
Creative Technology  
Education



**TOUCH N GO**  
Micropayment System

### CORPORATE & PRODUCT BRANDING AWARDS



**AR-RAHNU X'CHANGE**  
Finance – Collateralized  
Borrowing/Pawn Broking



**CHEK HUP**  
F&B – Coffee



**DANCOM**  
Telecommunication & IT  
Solutions



**EKOVEST**  
Property



**HAPPY EGG**  
Consumer – Eggs



**MSM**  
Manufacturing – Sugar



**MSU**  
Education – Leadership &  
Human Capital Development



**REDTONE**  
Telecommunications –  
Integrated Services Provider



**TOYO TIRES**  
Automotive – Proxes  
High Performance  
Tyres



**UNIKL**  
Education –  
Entrepreneurial  
Technical Learning



**VILLAGE GROCER**  
Retail – Premium  
Grocer



**WORLD BLOCK  
CHAIN FOUNDATION**  
IT- Block Chain



**WINNER DYNASTY  
GROUP**  
TDJH - Tian Di Jing  
Hua  
Worldwide Charity



**SAYYES2BRAND**

By Dr KKJohan, President of The BrandLaureate

# THE AGE-REVERSING EFFECTS OF REBRANDING

## COUNTRY BRANDING SERIES

### COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT: CHANGE IS GOOD

#### COMING CLEARLY INTO SIGHT

This world is tangible. Thus the visible often beats the invisible when it comes to leaving an impression. This is more so in an experiential age of technology. In the past, one would have to physically enter a jungle to be immersed in the surroundings. Today, by way of 3D Goggles as well as related media, software and technology, one can go in depth in the virtual; once again appealing to what our optics perceive in an engaging manner. The same can be observed when it comes to the latest in cinematic experience. Even the theatres are 'rebranding' themselves by way of greater equipment, levels of comfort and convenience to create new levels of enjoyment in watching movies.

A Brand that has withstood the weathering of time is no doubt latched on securely to the hearts and minds of consumers. But alas, it is destined to eventually be taken for granted. This is the way of this world. A rocketing Brand is free to move and shape its own destiny, but when it stops moving, the former high-flying laws no longer apply. Dust begins to settle on an unchanging brand. Rust starts to form on the long-entrenched and unmoving brand. The now stationary Brand seems to fossilize under the weight of the very sands of time...further soiled by the dust left behind by speeding competitor Brands.

"I choose to view Rebranding as 'Saving the Best for Last'."

The world is particularly concerned about beauty and looks as well. In a world where the young are emerging with high qualifications, they are matching the more experienced workforce with the added credit of their youthful look and zeal. Even men are grooming themselves more intricately to remain competitive without losing the edge of appeal in terms of presentable looks which lends to the *Brand Image* of the organization they represent. In essence, this is them 'Rebranding' themselves to stay in demand and exude the magnetism of undimmed relevance. Rebranding can breathe new life into any Brand.

### COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT: GYRATING GREATNESS

#### EMBRACING THE 'CHANGE ATTITUDE' WITHOUT LOWERING ALTITUDE

In the past, folks often said, *If something is working well, why change it?* But remember, the sentiments of yesteryear are bygone and the climate is different today. Thinking in such a way will inevitably make your brand a fossil in this dynamic and fickle age. After all, even great treasures have been forgotten since time began simply because they remained unmoving in an ever-moving globe.

"The market is fast-changing, and often, the niche of yesterday becomes the necessity of today."

It is part of the human condition to take things for granted. Not only does this happen in our personal everyday lives, even leading brands are not spared from it. High-achiever or entrenched Brands are often viewed in a 'certain way' which is mostly positive; but it is very hard to think more of them other than popular acceptance or what they are generally said to be. **Note:** This perception may or may not be what the Brand intends.

Imagine your Brand is the world, spinning on its own axis. A planet never has to lower itself in order to look different to an onlooker from beyond the cosmos. But it does go on spinning, ever-changing; yet always maintaining its sovereign posture, continuing on with its own perpetual 'Rebranding'. In like manner, your Brand will not lose its greatness simply because you are opting for a Rebranding measure. It is not a sign of weakness – far from it – but of making the most of any room for improvement. It is not indicative that the Brand is falling apart or withering away; but a signal that it is willing to stand up and fight to preserve all that is and ever will be. Rebranding is a valiant declaration that the Brand believes in fighting for excellence – uplifting itself into new thresholds of glory!

Only the bravest of champions refuse to remain glued to the laurels of success. Only the boldest of Brands possess the nerves of steel to get out of their comfort



“  
Rebranding needs not be complex. It is an art form, because it requires expression. It is a facet of beauty, for it requires admiration.”



“Imagine your Brand is the world, spinning on its own axis. A planet never has to lower itself in order to look different to an onlooker from beyond the cosmos. But it does go on spinning, ever-changing; yet always maintaining its sovereign posture, continuing on with its own perpetual ‘Rebranding.’”

zones and aspire for something better. And to those who dare...be prepared to be ‘reborn’!

#### COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT: STARTING OVER WITH THE BEST FOOT FORWARD

#### EFFECTIVE REBRANDING: USE YOUR STRONG POINTS EXPERTLY

Ever wish you could simply start over in life? Ever wish you could turn over a new leaf? In a sense, this is what Rebranding is to a Brand. A fresh start, not from scratch – but from a point of secure establishment. The foundation of a Brand is all the security it will ever need to face the world. And when you Rebrand, it is like your Brand discovering the ‘Fountain of Youth’ long whispered in myth. A Rebranding exercise is a form of therapy that makes your experienced Brand ‘young again’. And one can never underestimate the mesmeric appeal of youthfulness rediscovered!

Rebranding needs not be complex. It is an art form, because it requires expression. It is a facet of beauty, for it requires admiration. Yet, it is vital that its effects are felt first within the Brand. This is not so different from love – if you don’t have it, how can you offer it in the first place? To spread the momentum of an innovative move in a new-fangled way, the people of the Brand need to be stimulated. The *modus operandi* and outline of the Brand in its former skin needs to first be

stripped away, then broken down into relatable components, and reinterpreted from new eyes; its very *Vision* and *Mission* reinstated to become more relevant to the consumer and patron of today.

“Rebranding is an expression that a Brand is willing to admit there is room for further improvement and takes the bold steps to see that change take effect effectively.”

Making an impact is all about shattering cemented perceptions. When perceptions come crashing down, new dimensions of the brand, which were previously hidden from sight, come to light. These once-veiled parts add a new shine to the Brand and outline it with a new shape in the visual horizon. Patrons will gasp in amazement at dimensions of the Brand even they have never seen before (but always believed existed).

In the spectrum of Rebranding the *Country Brand*, the people must see their National Brand in a greater light – light that reveals what it could be. It is this new move that will spread out like a tidal wave to the four corners of the world and bring about the completeness of the move. When a country is going through Rebranding, by manner of it being a nation, global reach is essential, though the conveying of the endeavour begins at home. It is after all the people who make the place. But

even deeper than that, true *Country Rebranding* takes place in the hearts of the people...it lights up a figurative beacon within which is then carried by each individual like a torch to the ends of the Earth – shooing away the darkness that previously clouded the true glory of the *Country Brand*.

For the ‘Rebranding’ of a *Country Brand*, an intimate change in Branding perceptions must first commence, taking the shape of grassroots awareness, or a well-ingrained renewed sense of alertness concerning the homeland, actively conveyed amongst and practiced by denizens of the nation first and foremost; subsequently embraced by the rest of the world. This somewhat organic flow leads towards effective Rebranding intrinsically and extrinsically; in short, a domino-effect long-lasting reshaping of views.

“For the ‘Rebranding’ of a *Country Brand*, an intimate change in Branding perceptions must first commence, taking the shape of grassroots awareness, or a well-ingrained renewed sense of alertness concerning the homeland, actively conveyed amongst and practiced by denizens of the nation first and foremost; subsequently embraced by the rest of the world. This somewhat organic flow leads towards effective Rebranding intrinsically and extrinsically; in short, a domino-effect long-lasting reshaping of views.”

## A COMMEMORATIVE FEATURE ON CELEBRATING A 100 YEARS OF MALAYSIAN PALM OIL INDUSTRY







# BRANDING THE MALAYSIAN PALM OIL

WITH TAN SRI DATUK DR. YUSOF BASIRON

BY IDA IBRAHIM

As the Malaysian palm oil industry embarks on a new chapter towards another hundred years, one of Malaysia's resilient and most important economic pillars is bound to build yet a stronger brand legacy than before. Known as the most prolific oil-producing plant in the world, the palm oil industry has expanded by leaps and bounds feeding and sustaining more than three billion people in over 150 countries worldwide.

The BrandLaureate caught up with Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Yusof Basiron, Advisor to the Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, to talk about the vital and indispensable palm oil industry in Malaysia and how, in its many ways, has become a gift to the world. The former CEO of Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC) also expounds on the crucial brand image palm oil has on the country.

“THE MALAYSIAN PALM OIL INDUSTRY ASPIRES TO SUPPLY WHAT THE CONSUMERS WANT. CUSTOMER IS ‘KING’. WE CAN SUPPLY RSPO-CERTIFIED OR ZERO DEFORESTATION PALM OIL OR NORMAL PALM OIL, BASED ON DEMAND, PREFERENCE AND PRICE BEING OFFERED.”

- TAN SRI DATUK DR. YUSOF BASIRON

**This year marks 100 years since the first commercial oil palm cultivation in this country, how do you describe the brand image of Malaysian palm oil today?**

Malaysian palm oil has been recognised as a high quality product that is consistently produced by good manufacturing processes. As a perennial crop, customers and buyers are assured of a consistent supply meeting the good agricultural practices long established by the industry. It's affordability and technical advantages make it a highly sought after oil for the food manufacturing sector. The Malaysian palm oil brand has been well perceived and accepted worldwide as customers are assured of a high quality product that is backed by extensive R & D through the Malaysian Palm Oil Board. The Malaysian palm oil brand is traded through specifications set by the Palm Oil Refiners Association of Malaysia (PORAM). R & D has been a crucial element in ensuring the success of the Malaysian palm oil industry. The range of products that can be created through the refining and fractionation process has helped us to meet our buyers needs. This provides confidence to our customers as they are assured of a high quality sustainable oil with a good after-sale-service support. Although it took a lot of hard work, Malaysia had had a 100 year journey to support and establish a reputable and well recognised brand. We are proud of where we are today.

**How has technology advanced through palm oil research?**

The R & D has allowed us to develop new products. Initially, palm oil was used to make soap and margarine. Through R & D, its use was expanded and today it is found in almost everything where oil is a component. Comparative nutrition research conducted on palm and olive oils have revealed that the cholesterol response in the palm oil and olive oil diet are similar. Palm oil is packed with additional health boosting vitamins and anti-oxidants as compared to olive oil. As palm oil grows in tropical climate, the oil is more robust in defending itself against nature, adding to its superiority over olive oil.



**How is our palm oil faring internationally?**

Palm oil is exported now to all countries world-wide. The oil is basically consumed globally. We are the second largest producer. Since 2006 Indonesia became the largest producer due to the availability of land and labour which has allowed the country to expand its hectrage and increase its production. However, Malaysia is far ahead in terms of R & D advancements which were undertaken though the establishment of the Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia (PORIM) way back in 1979. When I was the Director -General, my team and I developed a technology to simplify the milling process. We then commercialised it to a company called CB Industrial Product Holding Berhad (CBIP) which collaborated with us. CBIP is now the main licensee, commercialising the technology and selling oil palm mills all over the world. Today, CBIP is a successful supplier of the Modipalm technology. A Modipalm mill, based on continuous sterilization of the palm fruits has the advantage of potentially reducing the need for labour to 16 people from 60 people in a conventional mill. One of our biggest challenges is attracting people to work in this sector. Therefore, going forward we need to adopt new technology to reduce our dependence on labour.

**Wow, that's a tremendous improvement... !**

Yes. On top of that, we are able to export these mills to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Latin America and many more. When we export, we bring revenue to the country. Our palm oil industry has grown by leaps and bounds as you can imagine. We were producing 2.5 million tonnes and Indonesia produced a mere 0.5 million tonnes back in the 1980s. 35 years later in 2015, we were producing almost 20 million tonnes of palm oil while Indonesia and others have produced over 40 million tonnes. Our total global palm oil production has therefore expanded by almost 20 folds from 3 million tonnes to 60 million tonnes during the last 35 years and all these quantities have been efficiently marketed. Nationally, the palm oil industry contributes 9 per cent to the total exports of Malaysia. This year alone our palm oil revenue is expected to reach 70 billion ringgit.

**What are the initiatives done to help the palm oil industry overcome its challenges?**

Over the years, Malaysia has held many oil palm congresses annually that helped to upgrade the capability of palm oil producers. As the research findings are shared through

the conferences held, Malaysian producers have become knowledgeable producers. They are capable of producing a high quality of palm oil consistently. Of course, with the knowledge-sharing approach, the producers overcome many challenges themselves. They are capable of handling and overcoming diseases, soil infertility or any other problems that new players or other countries may face. We are blessed that there are no devastating diseases in Malaysia as in Africa and Latin America. We consider it as our good luck and fortune.

Similarly, we are able to address challenges when they are encountered in the processing and marketing as we are equipped with research studies and good agricultural and plantation management knowledge.

**How so?**

We managed to overcome attacks from the anti-palm oil campaigners who, in their respective countries, were only interested in protecting their oil industries. These are producers of soya, sunflower and rape seed oils, just to name a few. In order to protect their industries from being penetrated by Malaysian palm oil, they smeared us with negative campaigns and tactics by saying that palm oil is unhealthy and that the palm oil industry is destroying the habitat of orang-utan, both of which are not true. Similarly, a lot of work has gone into defending ourselves against allegations of deforestation.

**How did you overcome these false allegations?**

Once again, research studies were used to counter and prove that all these claims are false, to the point of revealing that palm oil is even healthier than olive oil. It is essential that Malaysian producers of palm oil demonstrate to their customers that the Malaysian palm oil industry practices a high standard of sustainability. We built our sustainability standards, MSPO and RSPO (although RSPO is a B to B initiative, Malaysia was the first to adopt it) that are being promoted by the Malaysian producers themselves and acknowledged by the NGOs in importing countries. Our farmers are able to produce palm oil that is certified through the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) standard, which is then exported to countries in Europe that recognise the RSPO certification. In fact, they are producing more than what the Europeans are willing to buy. Despite the negative campaigns, Europeans continue to import more of our palm

oil because we have overcome the challenges by creating positive and sustainable solutions. Although they are trying to protect their oil producers, but as long as we are able to comply with their import requirements, they cannot prevent nor give any excuse to not import our palm oil as they have to allow free trade to operate.

**But it seems that olive oil is better known to be the preferred brand oil in the market...?**

Olive oil has built a reputation in the advanced countries such as Europe, Australia and North America. Their efforts in branding olive oil have been very strong. They are short in supply thus they brand it as one of the premium oils in the marketplace. Their promotion exercise involves using Italian and French chefs to promote the oil in cooking. To offset the high subsidies given to farmers to grow olive oil, they market and increase the target price of olive oil to ten times more thus making it more expensive than a normal oil. Unlike olive oil, palm oil is being consumed by the whole world. This shows that the world enjoys consuming palm oil at a price discount of one tenth of the price of olive oil. In my opinion, that is good as consumers get to enjoy the same quality or better oil at one tenth of the price. That shows the world is smarter than you think as they are consuming a high quality oil at a lower price. To me, that is a better bargain.

**So, are we not branding palm oil enough?**

Unfortunately, we cannot match the other oils in the market, especially olive oil. Palm oil is our national oil. We want to make sure that palm oil is the oil for the entire world population as it is our most popular oil. What you see in the supermarkets are mostly our palm oil products, which are cheap, affordable and of a good quality. We are basically meeting the needs of a consumer; a good quality product at an affordable price. We should be applauded for what we are doing for mankind. After all, oil is a basic necessity, it should be made available to everyone and not just enjoyed by a certain income group.

**There are countless palm oil brands in the market. How do you ensure that our palm oil brands live up to the Malaysian brand image you mentioned before?**

All manufacturers carry their own brand labels and this is done deliberately as we cannot have just one commodity brand to represent everything derived from Malaysian palm oil. It remains a challenge for the industry to create a brand for palm oil which is basically a commodity. But again, we do have a country brand which is significant. When we say Malaysian palm oil, it already carries a lot of weight from the country's brand image. Thus our Malaysian palm oil is most synonymous with the Malaysian brand.

We are also coming up with Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) initiative to give further assurance that our palm oil is produced sustainably. In today's sustainably-focused world, if you mention sustainability, people would have a better image of the product. If you add the words 'Malaysian' and 'sustainable' together, the good brand image will carry through. This is how Malaysian palm oil has evolved over the years. We continue to work hard to provide brand support as we have realized that this is the brand image and identity that Malaysian palm oil can survive and rely on even for the next hundred years.

**Thank you for the insightful talk, Tan Sri...**  
Thank you.





# THE FATHER OF MALAYSIA PALM OIL

TAN SRI EMERITUS PROFESSOR DATUK  
DR. AUGUSTINE ONG SOON HOCK

BY NURILYA ANIS RAHIM

For as long as palm oil has been an important part of Malaysians, the oil palm tree has been an equally important bedrock of Malaysia's economy and socio-development. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the first planting of the incredibly versatile oil palm crop in Malaysia. From what was merely a decorative plant, it is now recognized as one of the world's most productive sources of vegetable oil and fulfils part of the global food supply requirement.

A discussion on Malaysian palm oil rarely takes place without the mention of Tan Sri Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr. Augustine Ong Soon Hock, who is considered by many to be a 'father figure' in the Malaysian palm oil industry. Ong played an important role in overturning the negative campaign against palm oil and has set a legacy that continues to strengthen the palm oil industry and its contribution to the Malaysian economy. A pioneer in Malaysia's palm oil industry, he has paved the way for many scientists to build on his work in supporting the industry.

A father of four, 82-year-old Ong remains active in the palm oil industry to this very day as he continues to nurture his passion for chemistry and for nature. As an eminent scientist, innovator and inventor he continues to guide and nurture younger scientists in their quest to achieve world-class breakthroughs. His unerring commitment and dedication truly personifies the Spirit of Merdeka and its pursuit of excellence.

Aside from palm oil research, Ong is also a well-known educator, having served as a lecturer in Universiti Malaya and University of Science Malaysia (USM) as well as University of Oxford's Visiting Professor at the Dyson Perrins Laboratory in 1976. Throughout his career, he has authored and co-authored over 400 articles, and co-authored two books, The Chemistry Of Free Radicals, published in 1974 and Nutrition, Lipids, Health And Disease in 1995. He added a feather in his cap when the University of Oxford used his first book as a resource material. His significant research findings include the conformation of free radicals and SH2 cleavage of t-butyl peroxide.

**Pushing Frontiers**

As the country's palm oil research pioneer Ong is proof that it's never too late to expand the mind and discover new things. He continues to challenge himself to improve the chemistry and technology of palm oil and promote the palm oil industry. He remains heavily involved with numerous research projects and affiliation with many organisations, especially where research and development of palm oil is concerned.

When he ventured into palm oil research in the 1970s, Ong felt that he could contribute to the nation's economy by promoting the benefits of palm oil. As a scientist, he is passionate about palm oil research. His excitement can be seen whenever he talks



about all things related to palm oil. During the interview at his office in Petaling Jaya, the friendly father-figure patiently tried to explain the molecular build-up and natural chemical compounds of palm oil.

"Science is experimental and there are many new things to explore. Research often starts off with a problem and I love the solution process. While some people find it a chore to work on new research, I love to make new discoveries," explains Ong, adding that his interest in all things related to science was ignited when he was a young boy growing up in a rubber plantation in Alor Gajah, Melaka.

The eminent scientist still conducts palm oil research for numerous organisations, including the Malaysian Palm Oil Board, Universiti Malaya and Malaysia University of Science and Technology. The hardworking innovator and inventor is also busy with collaborative research with several private companies which specialise in palm oil, rubber and bio-mass products.

"There really is no end to learning and I want to update new findings related to palm oil. I'm still on a quest to further cement the fact that palm oil has many nutritional benefits and its phytonutrients have anti-cancer benefits. Considering its potential, it is important to spread the good news across the world," added Ong.

Ong obtained his first patent from Britain in 1974 on lipids research of olein-stearin separation method. He later added 15 more patents to his name in palm oil research. His research on palm oil covered several aspects of palm oil; from its chemical composition, nutritional value, technical training and to its waste treatment. Ong was also a co-researcher in the isolation of tocotrienols from palm fatty acid distillate. Tocotrienols, an anti-oxidant, has beneficial effects on brain neurons, is loaded with anti-cancer properties, and lowers the levels of bad cholesterol. Ong's research inspired other scientists in other parts of the world to conduct similar research on palm oil.



“CHEMISTRY IS A  
POWERFUL DISCIPLINE  
TO EXPLAIN NATURE AND  
PALM OIL IS NATURE'S  
GIFT TO MALAYSIA. AND  
IT IS MALAYSIA'S GIFT TO  
THE WORLD”

**Malaysia's Palm Oil Advocate**

As a sustainable crop, oil palm plays a critical role in helping to feed more than three billion people in over 150 countries worldwide. Palm oil is the most consumed vegetable oil in the world, with 60.96 million metric tonnes consumed in 2015 and 2016.

"Palm oil answers the needs of many developing countries, and even some developed countries, at affordable prices. It supplies the calorific needs of the world population. The oil palm is the most prolific oil-producing plant in the world. Our average yield is about less than four tonnes of oil per hectare per year. If you compare it to soya, for example, that's about 10 times more," says the former Director-General of Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia.

Palm Oil has been unduly over criticized over the years due to lack of understanding. To set the record straight, Ong, fondly referred to as the Father of Malaysian Palm Oil, has spent years clearing myths surrounding the benefits of Palm Oil and conducted a wide range of research covering the chemical composition, nutritional value, waste treatment, and conversion of palm oil to bio-diesel. For that he received the Merdeka Award in 2012 for his significant role in advocating and promoting the Malaysian Palm Oil Industry to the world.

Just shy of one month in office, Ong, as Director-General of the Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia (PORIM), dealt with the Anti-Palm Oil Campaign from the American Soybean Association (ASA) in 1987. He spent two years in challenging the anti-palm oil campaign. As part of his efforts to counter the fight against palm oil, Ong advised the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on the nutritional aspects of the palm oil, addressed the American media and nutritionists and established several nutrition advisory committees worldwide. Ong used research and scientific evidence to convince his detractors of the health benefits of palm oil.

"Although efforts made to work out peaceful arrangements with the ASA were attempted, these were turned down. We had no choice but to counter the campaign which was essentially a trade issue under the guise of health," he says.

The ASA called for a truce in 1989, ending the Anti-Palm Oil Campaign. Today, scientists acknowledge the nutritional value of palm olein, a new source of healthy oil with nutritional values at par to extra-virgin olive oil but at a fifth of the price.

"The Campaign stimulated a lot of research all over the world, some sponsored by PORIM. It was a blessing in disguise. These efforts helped us to realise that palm oil is not harmful to health and that it has almost a perfect structure for good health," he adds.

Ong continues to devote his time and energy to learning, discovering, and enhancing the chemistry and technology of palm oil. Between 2006 and 2011, he conducted continuous research on palm oil and contributed to several discoveries. Among them is the sn-2 hypothesis, proposed with his colleague Dr S H Goh, which showed that palm oil is less fattening than corn oil and soy bean oil, based on comparisons of their triglyceride structures. He created a new palm oil milling process which resulted in zero waste. The patented process was based on a concept that oil palm fruits are edible, including palm puree fractioned upon removing crude palm oil, thus creating a new source of healthy food for the world. The novel process identified new sources of carotenes, vitamin B complex, beneficial polyphenols and vitamin E including tocotrienols. He also created a new green product by expoxidising used cooking oil which is very beneficial to the environment.

With so much on his plate, it is no wonder that Ong continues to put his train of thoughts to good use to benefit humanity. He continues his journey in advocating and educating people the true benefits of palm oil to the rest of the world through his years worth of research and studies.





# ASEAN 50

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2017 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## ASEAN'S GOLDEN CELEBRATION

THIS YEAR ON AUG. 8, SOUTHEAST ASIA CELEBRATES AN IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARY. THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF ASEAN. CRITICISM AND CHALLENGES ASIDE, ASEAN REMAINS ONE OF THE LONGEST LASTING AND MOST SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS OF ITS KIND IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. FOUNDED IN 1967 WITH JUST FIVE MEMBERS: INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND THAILAND. TODAY THERE ARE 10 MEMBER STATES: INDONESIA, MALAYSIA, PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE, THAILAND, BRUNEI, LAOS, MYANMAR, CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM. ASEAN HAS SINCE MATURED INTO A COMMUNITY FOCUSED ON ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND GROWTH, AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING. AS THE LARGEST AND MOST VIBRANT BELT OF ASIA, ASEAN HAS BENEFITED FROM PEACE AND STABILITY AS WELL AS FROM ITS ENDEAVORS TO BECOME AN INTEGRATED ECONOMIC BLOC THAT OTHER SUBREGIONS ARE LOOKING TO ACHIEVE AND LEARN FROM. ASEAN IS BOTH THE WORLD'S SEVENTH-LARGEST MARKET AND THIRD-LARGEST LABOUR FORCE, AND HAS BEEN PROJECTED TO BECOME THE FOURTH-LARGEST ECONOMIC BLOC BY 2030.

THIS YEAR, PHILIPPINES IS SET TO BE THE HOST OF THE 50TH YEAR CELEBRATION AND THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR IS "PARTNERING FOR CHANGE, ENGAGING THE WORLD". AS WE CELEBRATE OUR SHARED SUCCESS FOR THE LAST 50 YEARS, WE LOOK WITH EXCITEMENT TO THE FUTURE AS WE WORK HAND IN HAND TO PARTNER FOR REAL CHANGE.







# PARTNERING FOR CHANGE ENGAGING THE WORLD

Over the course of 50 years, the ASEAN organization has achieved more than anyone would have imagined. Most importantly, it has helped to promote regional peace and harmony so that our nations could develop in an environment of stability and good relations. It has also made significant progress in joining together 10 highly diverse countries into a much more integrated community, with deepening economic linkages that are helping to underpin regional prosperity.

ASEAN has tremendous economic strength, with 630 million people, most of them still very young and powerful engines of growth in the form of ongoing industrialization, urbanization, accelerating technology adoption and improving education. At the start of 2016, the 10 economies of ASEAN were collectively the seventh-largest economy in the world. By the start of 2017, that rank had improved to sixth, and by 2020 it will be fifth.

This is a pivotal year for the ASEAN organization and its member states. First, it has to check on the support and cooperation of all member states; Second, find out if all member states are really walking the talk in their myriads of meetings and conferences; Third, are they a strong force, one to beat when push comes to shove especially on matters of peace and security; Fourth, is

the ASEAN region becoming better or worse (cultural, social, economic, environmental).

### ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC)

ASEAN has been instrumental in addressing non-traditional security challenges such as climate change, pandemics, natural disasters and trans-national crimes in various forms. The Declaration, "One ASEAN One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region", signed at the 28 ASEAN Summit in Lao PDR on 6 September 2016, lays out solid political commitments to achieve a more collective, unified and swifter response towards disasters not only within ASEAN but outside the region. In the area of transnational crime, the ASEAN Convention on Trafficking in Persons Against Women and Children (ACTIP) signed by the ASEAN Leaders in November 2015, represents the first ASEAN regional convention and legally binding instrument on combating trafficking in persons.

As a founding member of ASEAN, the foreign policy of Malaysia continues to emphasise on the relevance and importance of ASEAN as the forum and catalyst for regional dialogue. In its foreign policy strategy, Malaysia will continue to actively reaffirm its commitment and work within ASEAN to achieve peace, security and prosperity in the region. Malaysia will also continue to

work together with fellow ASEAN Member States on ASEAN Community building efforts, particularly after the historic establishment of the ASEAN Community on 31 December 2015. On a broader scale, ASEAN will encourage closer relations with other regional groupings on issues of common concerns and mutual benefits.

### ASEAN Economic Community

ASEAN is one of the brightest spots in the global economy. With an average annual real growth rate of 5.3 per cent between 2007-2015, ASEAN has consistently outperformed global growth. In 2015, ASEAN's combined GDP stood at US\$2.4 trillion, positioning it as the 6th largest globally and 3rd in Asia. The region's economic growth is projected at 4.5 per cent in 2016 supported by the growing private and public consumption, robust infrastructure investment and accommodative fiscal policy. Regional economic growth is projected to accelerate further to 4.6 per cent in 2017, reflecting improvement in the economic climate and growth prospects, and an expected pick-up in commodities prices. ASEAN attracted US\$121 billion or 7 per cent of total global foreign direct investment inflows in 2015, leading to creation of jobs opportunities as well as income and economic growth. Contributing to this achievement are, among others, the strategic location of ASEAN amongst major economies such as



China, India and Japan, making it an ideal production and distribution hub to global and regional markets, along with cost effectiveness, dynamic labour force, rich resource endowment and relative regional peace and security. ASEAN is also one of the major players in the global trading system. Its total trade in 2015 stood at US\$2.3 trillion, collectively accounting for the 4th largest share of total global trade after China, USA and Germany. ASEAN is quickly emerging as a main participant in the global value chains which in turn will further cement its role and position in the global trade.

These significant progress and accomplishments were made possible through concrete initiatives and putting in place key rules, regulatory frameworks and fundamentals that are necessary for the ten ASEAN members to collectively move forward as an economic community. The elimination of tariffs and the implementation of trade facilitation initiatives to address non-tariff barriers have led to strong growth in trade in goods. The services sector, essential for global value chain participation, is also gaining traction, making the largest contribution to the region's GDP and attracting the most foreign direct investment in recent years. The creation of a business-friendly and innovation-supporting environment through the enactment of competition laws and consumer protection laws as well as improvement in the intellectual property ecosystem, further promotes investment both from within and outside the region. The pursuit of regional economic integration has also led to the improvements in transport and other infrastructure networks.

Recent achievements include the operationalisation of the ASEAN Open Skies and the completion of missing links in the ASEAN Highway Network, which have contributed to reduced business costs.

### ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

In the ASEAN Socio Cultural Community, efforts were intensified in building a people-centred, people-oriented ASEAN Community. Some of the critical achievements of regional cooperation in 2016 include the completion of all action lines specified in the previous ASCC Blueprint 2009-2015, and development of priorities for the ASCC Blueprint 2016-2015 through high-level commitments and sectoral work plans. With regard to human development sectors, several new initiatives have been established to strengthen the region's capacity to address the emerging threat of health pandemics. ASEAN has also put in place measures to boost its resiliency through the establishment of the ASEAN Risk Assessment Centre (ARAC) for Food Safety. The Regional Plan of Actions on the Elimination of Violence Against Children and Violence Against Women was adopted as a continued commitment to protect and promote the rights of women and children.

Development of human resources, promotion of decent work and protection of rights of workers also prominently figured in the past year's achievements. ASEAN has developed the ASEAN Guiding Principles for Quality Assurance and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems; ASEAN Guidelines for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Labour; and ASEAN Guidelines on Essential Workplace Action for Enterprises on the Prevention and Management

of HIV and AIDS. The ASEAN Leaders also adopted the Vientiane Declaration on Transition from Informal Employment to Formal Employment towards Decent Work Promotion in ASEAN.

In 2016, ASEAN has promoted and enhanced complementarities between the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. Major achievements include the issuance of a Progress Report on Promoting Complementarities between the ASEAN Vision 2025 and the SDGs 2030 and the convening of a Special Session of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting focusing on Sustainable Development. A series of regional workshops and symposiums on promoting and enhancing the complementarities have also been scheduled. ASEAN has also intensified its efforts to engage people and introduced the development of ASEAN to the outside world through culture, arts and sports. These will continue to be effective instruments in bringing about friendship, development, peace and integration through greater interaction and understanding among ASEAN peoples.

Against all odds and expectations, ASEAN has managed to survive 50 years and in many ways considered to be a political miracle and over the last five decades has faced significant challenges. If ASEAN can learn from its past, the miracle may continue well into the 21st century.



# THOUGHTS ON ASEAN: IS CHANGE INEVITABLE?

ASEAN'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2017 MARKS A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE FOR A COMMUNITY OF TEN DIVERSE NATIONS THAT CAME TOGETHER AT DIFFERENT TIMES IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES. AS THIS GROUPING LOOKS TOWARDS ITS NEXT MILESTONE IN 2025 AND FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE, WHAT IMMEDIATE STRATEGIC AND FLASHPOINT CHALLENGES WILL SHAPE ITS NEXT FEW DECADES? CAN THE ASEAN COMMUNITY REALLY CREATE A MORE CONNECTED, VIBRANT AND UNITED ASEAN? HOW CAN ASEAN MEET THE EVOLVING EXPECTATIONS OF ITS DIALOGUE PARTNERS? WHAT MUST ASEAN DO IN ORDER TO STAY RELEVANT AS OTHER STRATEGIC SUB-REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS EVOLVE AROUND IT? WHAT KIND OF FUTURE CAN ASEAN SHAPE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS REGION?



"This year will mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN. While we still have a long way to go in perfecting regional integration, I still believe that the pillars of mutual respect, non-interference and inclusiveness is a model for successful regional partnerships moving forward. It is now, more than ever, we need to show the world which is full of hate and divide, full of tears and suffering, that the ASEAN Way - which is far more than just leaders holding hands in photos - does work. Certainly,

no other model, despite the inherent difficulties, could work in a region as diverse as Southeast Asia. We must be proud of our achievements, we have gotten this far - being tested on DAESH, the South China Sea and North Korea but most importantly - we as the ASEAN States must believe it ourselves. We in ASEAN must rise to the occasion and take leadership. All difficulties can eventually be surmounted so long as mutual trust, respect and transparency remains. Still, it is always better to be a do-er than just a talker, even in regional affairs."

**Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein**  
Malaysian Defence Minister and Minister with Special Functions in the Prime Minister's Department

"ASEAN cannot rely on natural resources and unskilled labour but have to strive towards sustainable development and better quality growth so we can move up the value chain."

**Nguyen Xuan Phuc**  
Prime Minister of Vietnam



"The challenges of ASEAN will still be of geopolitics of the region but the obsession of geopolitics must be balanced with what are considered to be cross-border challenges that impeached upon the people of ASEAN. So while we wait for some closure on these geopolitical challenges that region faces, we continue to be vulnerable to the high risk of human security that are affecting the marginalized sector of ASEAN member countries. Secondly, ASEAN needs to exhibit a level of sincerity and candidness that might be very critical in the next 50 years. ASEAN has been known as the organization with decision making is at the lowest common denominator and when we try to agree to disagree, sweep contentious issues under the rug, I believe ASEAN next 50 years must

be a deeper relationship that goes beyond diplomatic visits and nice pleasantries. Lastly, transnational border challenges such as climate change, human trafficking and natural disasters and many more are still going on that inflict suffering on the people that ASEAN has promised to take care of. The next logical step to the evolution is to go beyond simple coordination and to really take institutional building in quick response as the prime feature in addressing the challenges. In a nutshell, it is not enough to have mechanisms in place but what is important is the need to put flesh in these mechanism to ensure that ASEAN is not inhibitive to the norms of decision making in quickly reacting to these issues. It is when ASEAN member countries are distracted from larger geopolitical rivalries that they give lack of attention to more important issues."

**Dr Aries Arugay**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Political Science  
University of the Philippines-Diliman

"Herein lies the challenge to meet the trust and expectations in the next 50 years. Addressing the economic concern of people, especially the young ones, is key in building ASEAN's economic greatness. To do that, we need to engage them because we would not know what they want if we don't ask them. But, more importantly, they will not care about ASEAN if we don't ask them their shared goal for

this region. And if they do not care, we will be under-utilising the strongest asset of ASEAN, which is the people. Our leaders have led Asean on a great journey for the past 50 years but the next 50 years will be charted by every single young people of ASEAN."

**Khairy Jamaluddin**  
Youth and Sports Minister of Malaysia



# WHAT SKILLS DO ASEAN COUNTRIES NEED TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE?

When we think about future skills, we need to consider the uniqueness of the 10 countries within ASEAN - a bloc that is home to more than 600 million people.

Technology has been transforming lives for hundreds of years - from steam engines, automation and machines, to progressively becoming an intimate part of humankind through smart homes, smart cities, smart nations, and smart work.

All these have redefined our relationships, communication, and the way we work, play, perceive, construct, think, create and love. Here's our three key insights into what this digital revolution means for future skills.

1. Everyone can embrace digital as our new sixth sense: being digital is to augment and enhance our five natural senses and not replace what is human.



Photo courtesy of ASEAN

Asia and the Pacific: Top 10 economies leveraging their human capital		
Human Capital Index 2016		Global rank*
Japan	94.1	4
New Zealand	88.1	6
Singapore	84.1	13
Australia	83.1	18
Korea, Rep.	82.1	32
Malaysia	74.1	42
Thailand	73.1	48
Philippines	72.1	49
Sri Lanka	65.1	60
Mongolia	64.1	65

Sources: World Economic Forum 2016  
\*2016 rank out of 130 economies. The Human Capital Report seeks to provide holistic overview on how well countries are leveraging their human capital and establishing workforces that are prepared for the demands of competitive economies.

2. Digital will change the limitations of space and time: The use of technology closes geographical distances, compresses space, creates a new living digital dimension, and increases the efficiency of speed. We no longer really need to organize our work, life and society around time restrictions.

3. Digitization allows for benefits to be shared with the broader community: A self-centred, secular approach of individual survival will no longer be sustainable in this brave new world of technology. This civilization of human-machine interaction allows for increased consciousness of our humanness and care for the broader humanity.

### Thriving in the digital economy

ASEAN - graced with a young, diverse and digitally savvy population - is uniquely placed to benefit from the digital transformation:

ASEAN's youthful population drives consumption and provides human capital

Digital adoption strengthens ASEAN's ability to maximise the use of technology in all aspects of life

ASEAN's diversity in resources, expertise and culture promotes growth through innovation.

ASEAN's ability to participate and thrive in the new era of digital economy and trade doesn't just depend upon building future skills, but on developing the right skills right now. We've identified three clusters of skill sets:

### Life skills and values:

To capitalize on digital assets in ASEAN, we need both hard and soft life skills. Hard skills mean being able to capture, translate and interpret data through data analytics and machine learning.

We must also be able to filter and judge the massive amount of data; give meaning, add value and derive insights from data analysis.

Life skills include: empathy, humility, attentiveness, open mindedness, patience, persistence, emotional intelligence, social and behavioural understanding. These drive the ability to be intuitive and discerning - to get to the essential truth and elevate insights where sense-making is required.

Additionally, leadership qualities of purpose, judgement, effective decision-making, personal responsibility, confidence, optimism, and the courage to take a stand are needed. Most importantly, we'll need young people to develop an interest in a deeper appreciation of life where they can discover a sense of meaning and purpose and achieve their potential.

### Cross-cultural skills and ASEAN identity

We cannot embark on this technological journey alone as an individual, or as a single country. The new technological revolution will require a common unity - a unity in diversity. While ASEAN celebrates diversity, we need to be united and anchored as one ASEAN identity to meet the challenges of an uncertain future.

Developing a common bond requires building cross cultural competency, and can start from the school curriculum by learning about history, food and the culture of countries around us. Being united in one common ASEAN identity can facilitate job creation - we can network in our own backyards, and co-create new technology ecosystems.

The service mind-set embedded in the ASEAN common identity can inspire and nurture our young people to give and think beyond themselves - to collectively participate in this digital revolution, promoting a more equitable distribution of wealth and quality of life and bringing peace to the region by ensuring access to technology for everyone.

### Deepening skills and network connectivity

Technology isn't just useful - it can change the nature of the world. This new nature is fluid and requires diversity, inclusiveness and a sharing mentality. Technology grows organically from an independent entity to the creation of networked ecosystems.

A third level of skills will involve deep domain learning, acquiring knowledge in an area or sector that allows young people to be part of a networked community to contribute to the diversity of unique talents within each cluster. For example, deep-domain learning may be students specializing in trading and maritime studies at the International Trading Institute, Singapore Management University to build knowledge and contribute to Singapore's strength as a trading and maritime hub.

Other examples include sharing of science and technology with farming practices, or learning from farms on microfinancing across countries, leveraging their respective areas of expertise. This proposed approach of combining sectoral level skills with diversity follows a humanistic route, promoting a warmer society, with cross pollination of ideas, sharing, cooperation and innovation.

Navigating this uncertain world will depend on capitalizing ASEAN's assets of a young, diverse and digitally savvy population. We must appreciate the inherent talents, skills and personal values that we have been endowed with at both individual and country levels; embrace diversity and cultivate unity with a common ASEAN identity leveraging sustainable technology and networked ecosystems to build an inclusive ASEAN. Then we can live up to the ASEAN Economic Community vision expressed in the 2025 blueprint of a resilient, inclusive and people-centred region.





**Grab (Malaysia)**

Grab – then known as GrabTaxi – was a gamechanger in the ride-hailing service industry when it first launched in 2012. Since its launch in Malaysia by co-founder Anthony Tan, the app has launched in 6 more countries around the region: the Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia. Manila saw the app's launched in August 2013; it has since expanded to include other Philippine cities such as Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Bacolod, Baguio, and Cagayan de Oro.



**British India (Malaysia)**

Established in 1994, British India is a fashion label calling Malaysia – not Britain or India – as its home. It was founded by Pat Liew, who has more than 30 years of experience in the retail industry under her belt. Since its launch, more than 20 years ago, the Malaysian brand has expanded into other countries in Asia, with more than 40 outlets in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines.



**BreadTalk (Singapore)**

BreadTalk, entered the Philippine's market in 2004, opening its first branch at Glorietta 4 mall in Makati City and enticing customers with its unique open-plan kitchen that offered a glimpse of how the bread was made. The company opened its first overseas outlet in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2003. Since then, it has expanded to more than 900 outlets in 17 countries. Its brand portfolio also includes Toast Box, Food Republic, and Ramen Play.



**TWG Tea Company (Singapore)**

Luxury brand TWG Tea (which stands for The Wellbeing Group) was founded by Taha Bouqdib, Maranda Barnes, and Rith Aum-Stievenard in 2008, with Singapore as the launch base of the brand. The luxury brand quickly became well-known worldwide, with its teas being served in some of Singapore's best hotels and in the front cabins of Singapore Airlines. Food chain Dean & DeLuca also brought the brand to US markets, while Harrods brought the brand to London.



**CP Group (Thailand)**

The Charoen Pokphand Group (CP) is Thailand's largest private company and is one of world's largest conglomerates. Founded in 1921, consists of three core businesses that operate in agribusiness and food, retail and distribution, and the telecommunications industries with investments in over 20 countries.

# 12 ASEAN BRANDS THAT HAVE GONE GLOBAL

WHAT BETTER WAY TO CELEBRATE ASEAN 50TH ANNIVERSARY THAN TO REJOICE ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS ON FAMILIAR HOMEGROWN BRANDS IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION WHO ARE MAKING THEIR MARK AROUND THE WORLD. HERE ARE SOME BRANDS THAT FAST BECOMING KNOWN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, WITH SOME EVEN VENTURING BEYOND THE REGION AND BRINGING THEIR PRODUCTS TO THE GLOBAL MARKET.



**Jollibee (Philippines)**

The fast food giant behind well-loved food products such as Chicken Joy and Yumburger traces its beginnings to 1975. Since then, Jollibee has established an international presence in Canada, the United States, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Brunei, Oman, and Qatar.



**J.Co Donuts (Indonesia)**

The popular donut brand finds its roots in Indonesia, where it was established in 2005 by businessman Johnny Andrean. In a little over 10 years, the company now operates over 214 stores in Indonesia and has expanded its presence to other countries including Malaysia, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, and Singapore.



**Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts (Malaysia)**

Founded by Chinese-Malaysian businessman Robert Kuok, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts opened its first location in April 1971 in Singapore. Inspired by the legendary land found in the novel Lost Horizon by James Hilton, the Shangri-La group draws from the description of the land being an earthly paradise. Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts has a presence in Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North America, and the Indian Ocean islands, with over 40,000 rooms.



**Pilmico Foods Corporation (Philippines)**

Another Filipino conglomerate, the Aboitiz group, has established an international presence with Pilmico Foods Corporation. Pilmico operates animal farms and also produces and distributes flour and animal feeds. At present, Pilmico flour is exported to

Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Hong Kong. Its feeds business also currently exports to Cambodia.



**San Miguel (Philippines)**

Established in 1890 as La Fabrica de Cerveza de San Miguel, San Miguel is Southeast Asia's first brewery and the Philippines' largest brewery to date. The company has manufacturing operations abroad, including in Hong Kong, China, and Australia.



**ThaiBev (Thailand)**

Thai Beverage, better known as ThaiBev, is Thailand's largest and one of Southeast Asia's largest beverage companies, with distilleries in Thailand, Scotland, Ireland, China, and France.



**Integrated Micro-Electronics (Philippines)**

One of the Philippines' oldest and largest conglomerates, the Ayala group has expanded its presence beyond the country, not only in the region but also globally. IMI's global presence includes manufacturing operations in China, Singapore, the United States, Mexico, Bulgaria, and Czech Republic. The company also has sales operations in Japan and Germany.

Source: Rappler.com

# VISIT ASEAN

ANNIVERSARIES ARE PERFECT OPPORTUNITIES TO REFLECT AND DISCOVER THE HIDDEN GEMS OF WHAT MAKES SOUTHEAST ASIA AN EXOTIC TRAVEL DESTINATION. THE VISIT ASEAN@50 GOLDEN CELEBRATION 2017 CAMPAIGN HAS REVEALED 50 CROSS-BORDER TRAVEL EXPERIENCES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA THAT WILL SHOWCASE THE REGION'S RICH DIVERSITY AND PROMOTE MULTI-DESTINATION TRAVEL WITHIN ASEAN. THE CAMPAIGN AIMS TO CONTRIBUTE TO RAISING INTERNATIONAL TOURISM ARRIVALS TO THE REGION FROM 109 MILLION IN 2015 TO 121 MILLION BY 2017. IF YOU ARE ALREADY DREAMING OF YOUR UPCOMING ADVENTURE, HERE ARE SOME OF WHAT VISIT ASEAN@50 HAS TO OFFER THIS YEAR!



**1. BORNEO'S CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS**

A 5-day, 4-night immersive cultural experience across Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei and Kota Kinabalu in Sabah, Malaysia (with a beach stop in between)

**2. WANDERING THROUGH WILD BRUNEI**

Brunei. A 6-day, 5-night jaunt between worlds: Bandar Seri Begawan's bustling urbanity, Ulu Temburong's deep rainforest experience, and Tunku Abdul Rahman Park's pristine seascape

**3. ANCIENT KINGDOMS: YOGYAKARTA & MELAKA**

A 6-day, 5-night exploration of Southeast Asia's most venerable sultanates and their respective histories, from Yogyakarta in Indonesia to Melaka in Malaysia

**4. CULTURE, CITY & CHANCE**

A 6-day, 5-night jaunt through Bali, Indonesia's cultural highlights; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's brightly lit streets; and the fortunes to be made at Genting Highlands' casinos

**5. THEME PARKS AND RETAIL THERAPY**

Flyer. A 7-day, 6-night trip through Southeast Asia's top theme parks and most popular outlet stores, courtesy of Singapore, Johor, Jakarta and Bandung

**6. PALAWAN'S NATURE-BASED GRANDEUR**

A 7-day, 6-night hop from the Philippines' natural wonders in Palawan, following on to leisurely stopovers in Malaysia and Singapore

**7. THREE-PART HARMONY: PHILIPPINES, VIETNAM, CAMBODIA**

A 7-day, 6-night hop through highlights from three different Southeast Asian countries: the Philippines' highlands, Vietnam's colonial remnants, and relics from Cambodia's generations of royal rule

**8. THE AMAZING MEKONG WATERWAY**

A 7-day, 6-night trip down Southeast Asia's most important river, exploring history and culture in equal measure through Ho Chi Minh City and Chau Doc in Vietnam; and Phnom Penh and Siem Reap in Cambodia

**9. MAJESTIC MARCH THROUGH MYANMAR AND MALAYSIA**

18-day, 17-night tour is nothing short of epic: See Myanmar on and off the beaten path before detouring to the Malay Peninsula for a jaunt through Singapore, Malacca and Kuala Lumpur



# Global Cuisine

## SATAY

### ASEAN SIZZLING SKEWERS

BY Tony Thompson

Southeast Asia is one of the world's top eating destinations. Despite its diversity, it shares a common thread; Great tasty street food! Street food is a big draw for the masses and reflects the multicultural makeup of Asean's ethnically diverse citizens. An eclectic dish that has become one of Asean's favourites is satay, grilled meat skewers marinated with spices that are usually served with peanut sauce.

It is widely believed that satay, a local favourite rich in flavour and variety, originates from Malaysia. In reality, its genesis hails back to the nation's neighbouring country of Indonesia. The influx of Arabs and Indian Muslim traders was thought to have brought shish kebabs to Java in the early 19th century. Shish kebab (grilled cubes of skewered marinated lamb) was a popular dish in the Middle Eastern kingdom. Traders from the kingdom came to the exotic Dutch East Indies archipelago to trade and find fortune, bringing their eating customs with them. Javanese food vendors adapted shish kebab to local conditions using the many abundant Javanese exotic spices. Popular meats are chicken, beef and goat served with generous roasted peanut sauce. In shish kebab, the meat cubes are larger whereas in saté, the meat is slightly thinner to imbue the marinated meat with aromatic flavors. The skewers are meticulously grilled over flaming hot charcoals and given a customary char. Traditional accompaniments include pickled sliced cucumbers (*ajaj ketimun*) and fragrant shallots onions. A serving of steamed Indonesian rice cakes dumpling (square ketupat or rounded lontong or kupat in Javanese and Sundanese) deftly hand-wrap in coconut leave frond- completes this irresistible popular saté. From Java, satay spread through the Malay Archipelago throwing up numerous variations upon crossing the Straits of Malacca into neighbouring Asean countries.

If you wish to explore the most authentic satay that Asean has to offer, follow our special culinary guide to delicious satay around Southeast Asia for a wholesome experience.

#### INDONESIA

Saté is a renowned dish in the Indonesian archipelago: it is considered the national dish and a staple cuisine to local populace. Jakarta street foods represent a significant part of urban food diet for millions of low-and-middle-income consumers. There are restaurants specializing in saté, such as Sate Ponorogo and Sate Khas Senayan chain of restaurants. In Bandung, the West Java Governor's office is popularly called 'Gedung Sate' (Satay building) mimicking the pinnacle of the saté roof structure. Indonesia has one of the richest regional variations of satay in the world.

#### • Sate Madura

Originating from the island of Madura, this saté variant is often made from mutton or chicken, served with peanut sauce or sweet soy sauce (kicap manis) mixed with palm sugar. Chicken Madura saté is usually served with peanut sauce, while mutton Madura satay is usually served with kicap manis, accompanied with lontong, thinly sliced shallots and sambal condiments.

#### • Sate Ponorogo.

Originating from Ponorogo, a town in East Java, this is the largest marinated chicken meat version. Each skewer consists of single piece of chicken-rather than several bite-sized portions. The meat is marinated in spices and kicap manis, a process called bacem and served with lontong. The bamboo skewer is much thicker. The grill is made from terracotta earthenware, packed with charcoal with a hole in one side to allow ventilation. After a few months of usage, the earthenware grill becomes brittle and disintegrates.

#### THAILAND

Bangkok, the City of Angel never fails to amaze with the plethora of sidewalk dining. This amazing street capital is a food heavyweight for its no holds barred multitude of delicious (aroi) and reasonably priced food selection found in every nook and corner of the street (soi). Barbequed skewers are an excellent choice, besides the customary tom yam and som tam. Customers throng the sidewalk, looking for the tastiest grill pork skewers known as 'moo ping.' These larger-sized grilled pork skewers are awesome-a must try smoky delight, basted with rich creamy coconut oil over a bed of flaming-hot coals. It elevates the taste of this succulent barbequed meat, stimulating olfactory-overdrive.

Chicken satay strips are popular as well. Thai style satay comes with peanut sauce and a condiment of pickles (ajaj) pairing easily with toasted half bread and sticky rice. In Thai restaurants abroad, the spicy peanut sauce and green birds eye ajat takes the spotlight: often drenching both the satay and patrons in beads of sweat. In Northeastern Thailand, a spicy chili dipping sauce called 'jaew,' a combination of tamarind paste, cilantro, fish and thinly sliced shallots is often served with moo ping. You can easily find moo ping vendors by looking for the aromatic waft of billowing-smoky-clouds emanating from the charcoal grill. However, local authorities are clamping down on illegal vendors to free the sidewalks from the infamous Bangkok traffic congestion.

#### CAMBODIA

The sheer variety of street food options in Phnom Penh despite the hodge-podge of vendors can be overwhelmingly complicated. Cambodian lemon grass beef skewers (Sach ko ang jakak) is a perennial favorite. 'Kroeing' or yellow Khmer aromatic curry paste is a base of aromatics-made by grinding and pounding the herbs and spices in a mortar and pestle base. With the addition of galangal, turmeric and dried red chilies gives kroeing its bright amber color. Kroeing is an essential paste for many Cambodian dishes



Sate mutton madura



Banh mi



Moo ping



Khmer lemongrass beef

with prahok. Prahok is salted fermented mudfish paste seasoning. Beef strips marinated overnight with 'kroeing' gives it a wholesome taste. A small bit of beef tallow (fat) is added to the skewer to ensure juiciness. Lemongrass beef is a favorite among the locals and tourist- so much so there is an entire street devoted to this barbecue obsession. Add generous servings of papaya julienne and chili-carrot-pickles, with the addition of caramelized smoky char-grilled beef fillet skewers and you have a mouth-watering winning combination.

#### VIETNAM

Ho Chi Minh City fast expanding skyline is dotted with many construction cranes. It is a vibrant city, modernizing at a rapid pace in its quest to be the next Asean tiger. Thankfully, this former French colony still has a whole repertoire of culinary delights to satisfy any taste buds. One of its famous satays are Bun cha, grilled Vietnamese pork skewers marinated in Hoisin and fish sauce with fragrant pounded lemongrass. Grill pork sandwich (Banh Mi Thit Nuong) is also a popular local dish. Banh mi is local Vietnamese sandwich bread or baguette. The French introduced baguette in the early part of the 19th century in Indochina. Compared to its French baguette counterpart, banh mi has a thinner crust and made from combining rice and wheat flour. This pork sandwich spread has a dollop of mayonnaise and pate served with pork meat and fresh vegetables and cilantro. It makes for delicious marriage of East and West-succulent skewered meats with crunchy baguette, bursting with multitude of pickled flavors.

#### PHILIPPINES

Manila is a city filled with street-food options and brightly decorated iconic Jeepneys, a symbol of the city's pride. There are two main satay categories in the Philippines. In the northern Philippine Islands, which is home to Chinese and Christian Filipinos, Barbikyu skewers are the mainstay of the populace. Barbecue or barbikyu is often made with pork, however chicken meat is also served. Barbikyu is an extremely popular dish. Filipinos eat this appetizing satay as a main meal or simply as snacks (pulutan). 'Pulutan' in tagalong means "it makes for a tasty snack with alcoholic consumption."

In the Southern Mindanao Islands, satay is known as 'satti.' Traditional meats like beef, chicken, goat and lamb are preferred. Satti is also a breakfast meal in Zamboanga for the local residents. Each serving of satti has only three small strips of skewered meat served with rice cakes (ta'mu) and accompaniments. Among the variations in Southeast Asia, satti has the most generous servings; literally drenching the satti with copious amount of traditional peanut gravy.

The Asian life is certainly full of wonderful possibilities-made more meaningful with the universal interaction of friendly vendors; diverse countries unified by mouth-watering sizzling satay!



■  
\***BRAND SPEAKS**  
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**BRAND ASEAN AT 50**

This year sees the ASEAN brand reach the distinguished age of fifty. Its early detractors probably thought it wouldn't reach five.

Obvious comparisons are made with the EU. People look to the EU (despite all its flaws) as a model of cooperation in almost every area of government, society and culture. However, there is a broad homogeneity of attitudes to governance across Europe – the EU's principles are closely mirrored by each member state's principles. ASEAN cannot claim the same.

After the First World War, and the disastrously divisive Treaty of Versailles, the nations of Europe were thrown into a period of recrimination and punitive reparations resulting in ultra-nationalism, the rise of fascism and another world war. Eager not to repeat history's mistakes, The United Nations, World Bank, IMF, European Community were all, in part, a reaction to the horrors of the Second World War. Much of the world was seeking to forge ever-closer ties in an attempt to bind nations together for the common interest and with open lines of dialogue. The idea being that if everyone was hungry for mutual prosperity, there would be no appetite for war. Similarly, ASEAN, amongst other things, was formed to promote political, social and economic cooperation. Indeed it provided a platform for the cessation of the Indonesian Malaysian Confrontation, heralding a period of peace between the ASEAN founding members that exists to this day.

Most of the members too felt a fraternal post-colonial empathy with one another. It was time to forge alliances, not just with former colonial masters, but also with other newly-formed, proudly independent nation states in the region. These relationships between neighbours had often previously been shaped by the political situation thousands of miles away in Britain, France, Holland and the United States. Now came the moment for dialogue on their own terms.

ASEAN was never touted as being anything other than an association of independent nation states fundamentally created as a practical vehicle for regional dialogue.

Conversely, many have felt that the ideologues in the EU have too much sway – that the founding principles of inter-nation cooperation have given way to the creation of a super state. Brexit is in part a result of this suspicion. While Brexit has seen people crying in streets, would a similar event in ASEAN have the same effect? Or indeed, if it were to dissolve tomorrow would most people notice, or care? They may not, but they would certainly



notice the long-term effects of ASEAN not existing. ASEAN has been accused of being not much more than a “talk shop”, a political façade that is more interested in showing cooperation than actually cooperating on anything demonstrably effective. While the critics may have a point that more could be done, in its defence ASEAN has presided over decades of peace – not a bad result in itself. It has had a profound impact on relative regional stability.

While the EU has been increasingly centred around ideological pan-Europeanism, ASEAN has always seemed to have been based on pragmatic deal making and creating win-win scenarios for each of its individual member states. It is after all an Association, not a Union.

Most brand managers strive day in, and day out to create love for their brand using empathy and affinity. Conversely, and perhaps counter-intuitively, the ambition for those managing brand ASEAN should not be so much focused on generating love for the brand, and focus instead on brand respect. The pragmatism at the core of the brand is its strength – this is its brand purpose; true and authentic. Respect for this pragmatism and the mission of ASEAN people are keys to ensuring more people care about its future.

And what about the Trump-Brexit world we live in where protectionism and a go-it-alone attitude seem to be taking hold? Perhaps ASEAN's pragmatic ethos can actually form a more robust foundation that is less prone to the political whims of the day. ASEAN may well be in a stronger position to weather another fifty years.

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THOMAS SUTTON  
IS COUNTRY DIRECTOR OF  
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# MALAYSIA & JAPAN: CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF STRONG TIES

WITH H.E. DR MAKIO MIYAGAWA,  
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO MALAYSIA

BY NURILYA ANIS RAHIM

AS MALAYSIA CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE, OUR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE 'LAND OF THE RISING SUN' REACHES ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY. MALAYSIA AND JAPAN HAVE FORGED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ON AUGUST 31ST, 1957, THE VERY SAME DAY THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA DECLARED ITS INDEPENDENCE. OVER THE LAST 60 YEARS, JAPAN HAS HAD THE PLEASURE OF JOINING IN THE NATION BUILDING OF MALAYSIANS, WITH MALAYSIA NOW BECOMING A KEY COUNTRY AND PARTNER IN EAST ASIA.



Asia in 1980's was the era of rapid economic growth. Many Asian nations starting with Japan, followed by the Five Asian Tigers, showed to the world rapidly growing economies. Malaysia was among the industrializing nations that wanted to emulate the miracles of these Asian nations, especially Japan. With Tun Mahathir Mohammad as the new Prime Minister in 1981, he launched a new slogan that would direct his close relation to Japan and other Asian countries. He initiated the Look East Policy (LEP) as his brain child, aimed to emulate positive characteristics of other neighbouring nations. The principle goal was a shift in focus of relation from the West, in particular, Britain, towards the new rising Asia, specifically, Japan.

Malaysia-Japan relations have always been depicted as special by academics and diplomats who frequently refer to LEP as a symbol of cultural, economic and ethical ties. When talking about LEP, it is important to remember that this policy was the product of a congruence of strategic thought among the key players in the two countries more than three decades ago. LEP was launched in response to a proposal by the Japan Malaysia Economic Association and Malaysia Japan Economic Association. The LEP would mean many things: the emulation of the Japanese model; a way to attract Japanese capital; to put Malaysia on the track to heavy industrialisation; and directly uplift the economic status of *bumiputeras*.

Since then, Japanese involvement in Malaysian economy due to LEP has been remarkable. It has strengthened economic ties between the two nations. For the past three decades, the relationship has blossomed to include other areas of cooperation as well, such as maritime security, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Japanese capital flowed heavily to Malaysia's manufacturing sector and trade between the countries as well as other Asian countries increased remarkably.

The BrandLaureate recently met up with Ambassador of Japan to Malaysia, H.E. Dr Makio Miyagawa at his official residence in Kuala Lumpur where he shared with us his thoughts on the bilateral relation between the two countries. The humble ambassador shares his diplomatic life,

"I was first assigned to Malaysia as a political counsellor more than twenty years ago. I was then posted to Geneva, and then called back to Tokyo. After several years, I became Ambassador in our mission in Geneva, and again stayed in our Head Quarter in Tokyo until the day I returned to Malaysia. I was very happy to be back as an Ambassador and wish to be here for 10 years," added Miyagawa jokingly.

Prior to his move to Malaysia, Ambassador Miyagawa held successive positions in Foreign Ministry; Legal Desk Chief, Deputy Director of US-Japan Trade Division and of Russian Division, Director in Economic Affairs Bureau and Asia Oceanian Bureau, Deputy DG (Director-General) of Climate Change Negotiations, amongst others. He



served in the Japanese Embassy in the UK and Malaysia, and in the Japanese Mission in Geneva. He received D.Phil. in International Relations from Oxford University and Bachelor in Science in Aeronautical and Spacecraft Engineering from the University of Tokyo.

**Celebrating 60 Great Years**

In conjunction with Japan-Malaysia 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Japanese Embassy in Malaysia will be organising a series of events and exchanges to further embark on the diplomatic relations

between Malaysia and Japan. As Miyagawa further explains,

"All through 2017, a series of exchanges including visits by politicians and business leaders as well as a variety of cultural events, one after another, are organised for both Japanese and Malaysians to understand each other's culture. Martial arts such as Judo, Kendo and others developed in Japan are to be performed in Malaysia this year. Some are already in the pipeline, while others are either under planning or to be programmed."

To kick off, Japan's His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito made a five-day official visit to Malaysia in April to celebrate the 60th anniversary of formal diplomatic ties between the two countries. In his first official visit to Malaysia, Naruhito attended a banquet hosted by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Muhammad V and met with Prime Minister Dato' Sri Najib Razak, as well as Malaysian students and Japanese residents.

"We plan to organize a series of dialogues of industrial leaders, including one in a form of a joint meeting of JAMECA (Japan Malaysia Economic Association) and MAJECA (Malaysia Japan Economic Association). Such dialogues are intended to promote a closer economic relationship between the private sectors of Malaysia and Japan. For many years, such dialogues have continued and strengthened partnerships" adds Miyagawa who plays the role as the interlocutor in promoting these events.

There are also various efforts done to promote Malaysian students to Japan and vice versa. In line with the 60th anniversary celebration, Malaysian government and the Japanese embassy are making plans to provide better incentives to encourage more student exchange programs for student from Japan and Malaysia.

**Brand Presence**

For the past 60 years, many Japanese brands have successfully established presence in the Malaysian market ranging from electrical appliances to automotive, beauty products, food products and many more. A number of industrialist have made efforts in promoting products, brands and services to be established in Malaysia. For instance, Perodua is a Malaysian national car but an outcome of a Japanese-Malaysian collaboration with Japanese carmaker, Daihatsu. Today, one third of the cars on Malaysian roads are Perodua cars.



*images:*  
1) Crown Prince Naruhito visits the SMART Tunnel project office, accompanied by H.E. Dr Makio Miyagawa  
2) Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito arrives at Kuala Lumpur international airport in Malaysia to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties

"Another example is the giant retailer, AEON, which has established itself in Malaysia for the past 30 years with over 30 stores all over the country. It was first set up in response to the Malaysian Government's invitation to AEON Japan to help modernise the retailing industries in Malaysia. The name 'AEON' today is well known among Malaysians as well as foreigners and, has become their much preferred choice for shopping."

Meanwhile in Japan, Malaysia thrives in the field of tourism with the '*Malaysia Truly Asia*' brand being featured on a number of taxis. As Miyagawa shares, "there are many taxis driving around Japan with '*Malaysia Truly Asia*' branding decals – a sight that can easily be seen around Tokyo and other major cities. Aside from that, in the southern islands of Japan which are called Okinawa and Kyushu, the '*Harum Manis*' mangoes are very popular, exclusively brought in from Malaysia to Japan."

**Strengthening the Relationship**

With the ever growing friendship and goodwill between Malaysia and Japan, bilateral relations have been strengthened through economic relations, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. The diplomatic relation with Japan has impacted the Malaysian economy greatly with a number of diplomatic attempts to strengthen the bilateral relations for the past 60 years. As shared by Miyagawa,

"The most prominent attempt is the Look East Policy which the former Prime Minister Tun Mahathir advocated that there should be lessons to be learned by Malaysians on Japanese's academic and societal values. Many Malaysian students have visited, studied and stayed in Japan to acquire Japanese values and ethics, which were brought back here in those alumni and have been serving this nation. It is something that has been put to practical use by Malaysians to uplift Malaysia onto a higher developmental and industrial plane. These values have strengthened Malaysia's education system as well."

During Prime Minister Najib Razak's visit to Japan in 2015, the two prime ministers agreed that the two countries' relationship should be uplifted on to strategic partnerships which includes ranges of not just industrial investment but as well as societal, education and security collaboration.

Miyagawa stated that Malaysia and Japan have also worked together in helping Malaysian entrepreneurs start up and develop businesses, and moving forward, it involves enhancement of new technological advancements and the expansion of modern service industries.

"To those long lasting and broad-ranged areas of collaboration, the two governments have recently added a new field of co-operation, security and defence, as an integral pillar of the strategic partnership," says Miyagawa.

Malaysia triumphs in transforming its economy from its natural resource to being technology driven and service centred for the last 20 to 30 years under the leadership of a number of politicians. As Malaysia prepares to become a developed nation by 2020, what is needed for the country is a proper infrastructure building during this rapid economic growth.

It has become very clear that the deficiency of infrastructure would drag the feet of rapid growth causing the supply of electricity, water, houses particularly in urban areas and the supply of public transportation. The development of MRT and LRT railway and a variety of other infrastructure are needed to continue rapid economic growth and Japan continues to be a big contributor in enhancing Malaysia's effort to build new infrastructures, one after another.

"When I heard that Japan is now down to the third or fourth place of trading partners in Malaysia, despite vibrant collaborations between Japanese and Malaysian businesses, I wonder for the reason behind it. The answer I had found was due to the large accumulation of industrial bases of the Japanese businesses, hitherto made for

decades in Malaysia, in a variety of sectors ranging from electronics appliances, car industries, telecommunication, finance and retails, which must have reduced the need for cross-border trade. Had our industries engaged in business to Malaysia solely through trade from Japan, the bilateral trade amount could have been far greater. As a witness thereof, Japan has ranked the top in the accumulated direct investment in Malaysia."

Miyagawa further shares his opinion on some of the things that the country could improve on, "Moving forward, Malaysia must continue to improve its infrastructure building of both hardware and software. Software infrastructure includes the development of the legal system. As human activities are broadened with expanded spheres, firm legal infrastructure buildings are essential to regulate daily human transactions and exchanges. As an industry expands, it needs good governance in rules, governing environmental protection, in intellectual property rights, and in government procurement systems. Meanwhile, software infrastructure is equally crucial as it is not just limited to laws and regulation but it also includes a standard of business morale. These infrastructure building will definitely help Malaysia to advance towards acquiring a full developed nation status."

As Malaysia celebrates its 60th Independence, Miyagawa shares his sentiment on this special occasion,

"For the last 60 years, Malaysia has developed a will to think and act independently, rather than simply depending upon others. I believe that Malaysia should continue to explore such independent paths to strategize future growth. The country must solidify their societies to make Malaysia one of the best countries around the world. For the past three years since I was posted here, I have realised that with so many compassionate and hospitable people, Malaysia definitely has a bright future, and that Japan will continue to support this beautiful country."



# DRIVING TECHNOLOGY THROUGH CREATIVE CONTENT

WITH PRIMEWORKS CEO DATUK AHMAD IZHAM OMAR

BY IDA IBRAHIM

TODAY, MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, THE CONTENT CREATOR IS “KING.” WE’VE ENTERED A NEW MEDIA WORLD WHERE TRADITIONAL MODELS DON’T ALWAYS WORK AND TECH IS CONSTANTLY THROWING NEW INNOVATION, NEW FORMS AND FORMATS AND MEDIA HAS TO WORK OUT HOW TO DELIVER A MESSAGE ACROSS EVERY ONE OF THEM. MEANWHILE, MEDIA CONSUMERS ARE FOUND TO BE MORE OBSESSED WITH THE CONTENT OFFERED BY CONTENT CREATORS — SOMETIMES REGARDLESS OF THE QUALITY — RATHER THAN THE PLATFORM. THEY WILL CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR AND GO WHERE A CREATOR HAS PRODUCED INTERESTING CONTENT. ONE OF MALAYSIA’S TOP CONTENT MAKERS THAT HAS DONE A BRILLIANT JOB OF MARRYING THE MOST TRADITIONAL BUSINESS SYSTEMS WITH TODAY’S VIEWERS’ DEMAND IS PRIMEWORKS STUDIOS SDN BHD, THE AWARD-WINNING CONTENT CREATION SUBSIDIARY OF MEDIA PRIMA BERHAD AND ONE OF ASIA’S LARGEST PRODUCTION COMPANY.



Primeworks Studios’ business activities encompass content creation as well as content distribution and marketing. Producing TV content since 1984 and feature films since 1994, Primeworks generates an average of over 5,000 hours of TV content annually including entertainment, magazine, documentary, drama and sports programmes. Flagship and popular shows include *Anugerah Juara Lagu*, *Majalah 3*, *Nona*, *Welcome to the RailWorld*, *Best in the World*, *Hip-Hoppin’ Asia*, *Jalan-Jalan Cari Makan*, *Mentor*, *Melodi and Jejak Rasul*. Over the years, Primeworks has achieved tremendous milestones in the broadcasting industry, including winning many international and local creative awards.

We met with Primeworks’ CEO Datuk Ahmad Izham Omar to tap on the creator’s unique view on diversification, creativity and quality storytelling – on whichever platform they choose to use.

**1.How do you feel the expectations of TV audiences have changed since you joined this industry up until now?**  
It’s totally different now. Last time people watch appointment TV, meaning they would wait for the time to watch TV. Now the habits have changed, people binge watch, which is watching as many episodes at one time. They watch whatever they want, how they want by however ways they can get the show. There is no such thing as TV channel anymore for the younger folk. The younger audience no longer understands the concept of a channel. All they know is they are in the form of videos and they are only interested in getting them.

**2. For more than 40 years, with traditional broadcasters, consumers don’t seem to have the control over what they watch and when. Now the Internet gives viewers total control of the content they want to watch completely on their own terms. When did you realize that this was a real thing and how did you respond to this challenge?**  
I realise it in 2010. It is mainly because when we put one of our dramas up on the TV3 website just to see on how it would do. We found that there were suddenly 34 million downloads on the drama. Thus we realised that we might as well set up a new Over-the-top (OTT) content for our viewers, called *Tonton*. In 2010, it was still considered so early that it was set up even before iPad was launched. We were too ahead of our game. It’s good that we started early as Tonton is now really, really strong with 7 million registered users, which is almost a quarter of TV viewers in Malaysia. It also means that we hold the crowd that may never want to watch traditional TV. However, that being said, there are still many people who watch traditional TV but the numbers are declining in terms of the younger demographic.



**3. How did you cope with the declining of viewers then?**

We do it by continuing to run Tonton. We actually shape people’s viewing habits. Instead of waiting for people to decide on what they want to watch, we put everybody’s favourite dramas on the internet. So, we changed their habits to want to

watch Tonton at anytime, anywhere.

**4. Are the content shown on Tonton different than the ones shown on traditional TV?**

Originally, they were the same. The concept is that you catch up on the episodes that you missed on TV on Tonton. However, now the content is different. We have exclusive shows and original shows on Tonton.

**5. In your opinion, what is the future of television in Malaysia?**

You cannot define television by being in a box anymore. It can be anywhere, it can be on your phone, laptop and even in your car. For us in Primeworks, what we do is we make content. It doesn’t matter what the platform is, we create content to be delivered via online, via normal analog, via satellite, via mobile and many more. So, I see the future will be good. We can export our content by ensuring our content is strong. Next, we make sure our platforms are catering to the younger demographics. Hence, we have Tonton. Media Prima recently purchased Rev Asia Bhd, the advertising and social media business, creating what would be Malaysia’s largest digital media company.

**6. Now, with the rise of OTTs such as iFlix and Netflix in Asia, how do you stay competitive?**

We sell content to them. They are also our customers. But, our TV side competes with them. The only way we can fight with them is through Tonton or through any other non-traditional platforms. We practise the concept of co-opetition, where we cooperate and compete at the same time.

**7. Viewers have also moved away from loyalty to TV channels to loyalty to individual programmes, how does that work for you?**

This has happened since long time ago. When TV first started, everyone went onto a channel because they wanted to watch a specific show. That is why it is very, very important to create a hit. If you have a hit, everybody will make their way to your channel to watch the hit show. Also, if you have a hit, you can sell it to other TV channels. Our biggest shows are actually the biggest shows in Malaysia. Of course, them being on TV3 helps. Shows like *Anugerah Juara Lagu*, *Anugerah Bintang Popular and Mentor Milenia* are the ones that usually get our biggest clients.

GREAT SUFFERINGS MAKE GREAT ART. HAVE YOU SEEN THE IRANIAN FILMS? PEOPLE ARE BEING OPPRESSED THERE YET THEY MAKE INCREDIBLE MOVIES. OUR CREATIVITY DOESN’T COME FROM A DEEPER SOURCE OF HURT OR PAIN. WE DON’T SUFFER ENOUGH FOR US TO BE MORE INDUSTRIOUS.

**8. Could you tell us more about the tent-pole movies and how are they relevant to your production company?**

Now, we have also decided to invest more into our movies. We don’t make what we call middle-of-the-road movies anymore, we make grand movies instead. We feel that we really have to take a bet on that. So, earlier on we’ve done *J Revolusi*, which is a big movie that we have produced with Infinitus Productions. Together we are currently producing a movie called *Pulang*. *Pulang* is about a sailor who is in his 40s who went on a ship to work in the sea but never return back to his wife who waited for him for 61 years. For that movie, we required ships, location and computer-generated imagery (CGI) which all require a lot of investment. Another production we are currently doing is animation *Ejen Ali*, which represents a big tent-pole strategy because it is not a cheap investment but a very, very expensive one. But with animation comes a chance for us to do other things and avenues. You don’t just get to sell the show but the toys, t-shirts, merchandise and the brand itself.

**9.From your professional view, what do the majority of Malaysians like to see on TV?**

Based on the ratings, Malaysians like to watch music-related shows. Secondly, Malaysians like to watch dramas. They like the simple love triangle drama. The same story but played by differently characters. Nevertheless, our creative producers are getting more creative in coming up with new ways of the same story again but with different storyline. Thirdly, Malaysians like to watch football – local football to be exact. Luckily, we produce all three major content, so the demand is still there.

**10. There seemed to be a lot of drama and not enough shows dealing with smart storytelling and complicated characters that challenge viewers – what say you?**

It is the same around the world. The more complex you make it, the more people don’t want to watch it. All the movies with complex characters that win Academy Awards are not blockbusters movies. *Moonlight*, a movie which recently won Oscars made losses; *La La Land* was an exception as it was a movie about singing and dancing. Malaysia is more mass market than you think and want to admit. People actually like to see shows with simple storyline as much as we don’t prefer it.

Malaysians who live in urban cities, who live in ivory towers don’t realise that a majority of Malaysians want something else. I realised that long time ago when I saw the ratings that left me shocked, which made me realise that Malaysia is more different than I know.

**11. So, what does that say about Malaysians?**

It says a lot about our upbringing, culture and education. We need to be exposed to the world view. We need to have a creative education in school not to make us all become creative individuals, but for us to not become a soulless nation. We need more people to appreciate creativity. Once we get people to appreciate creativity, our creative works will go up because we cannot simply make any movie but a movie that is of a certain level. And that also will filter into the business world and everything else. The whole nation will be creative.

**12. Do you look forward to the day when this happens?**

Yes. People used to scold us when we do reality shows, giving remarks like “how come the singers are so bad?” Well, those are basically the ones that were regurgitated and spat up to us! We’ve travelled around the country and had to work with the best of what we got. But sometimes we can find the gem, the diamond in the rough like Faizal Tahir and Jaclyn Victor. At the end of the day, it is not about the talent. It is about the drama, the hype and the conflict. Regardless if it was a singing show, if you got those these three elements, you get the high ratings.

**13. In your opinion, what is currently lacking in Malaysian content?**

I can say that we are currently lacking in the international appeal or attractiveness. Malaysian audience has a very different taste than the international market. We do not watch *Top Gear* despite the show being a big hit around the world. Over here, *Top Gear* fails miserably. We do not watch the big, smart shows that are currently a hit elsewhere. Because of that we never acquired the international style of storytelling or qualification as we never needed it. For us to grow is to go outside. For us to go outside is for us to start changing. Changing is trying to get people to write in a different way, getting the creative teams to be on an international par. How do we get international clients to be attracted to our production when we don’t have a track record of doing something international? So, over the years we have been pouncing on co-productions with Japan. We use our collaboration with Japan as an example to sell our content overseas. This is what we do as we have a lot of Malaysian content that is not meant for international market. So by doing co-production we use that as a library of examples for our international clients.

**14. Thus you have to strike a balance in creating a local show that has a global flavor to it nonetheless?**

We have done that in our show ‘Welcome to the RailWorld’ featuring host Henry Golding, which is now sold to 28 countries around the world. “Welcome To The Railworld Japan,” which filmed for over 50 days, will be the Japanese version of the hit Malaysian TV series. They like the fact that it is new, different and fun. Not only that, our long-running show *Jejak Rasul* has been sold to many countries.

**15. So, how would you say our local shows are faring internationally?**

Our TV shows have a lot of potential than films. Ejen Ali is currently sold to more than 28 countries. ‘Welcome to the RailWorld’ have been picked up by an international distributor. I would say there is potential. It is just there is not enough inventory. Now it is the time to build our inventories, creating content which an international client would pay for. To get the client to pay for it, you need to show a track record. So, it is a chicken and egg situation. Thus we jumped on the opportunity to co-produce with international teams as it builds our catalog.

**16. For many years now Korean content have garnered a huge and devoted following in Malaysia with the support of the Korean government, can the same thing be said about us?**

The reason why Korean content is appealing is because the people on their show and music band are cute and sexy. This is the international appeal that they tap on. No one wants to admit this which I find it to be very strange. If we follow the famous music video by South Korean singer PSY, here in Malaysia we would get slated. Also, our music is not as happy, bright and jumpy as theirs. Maybe we got to change who we are first. But that is difficult as over here everybody is very sensitive. Thus our goal is to break the norm.

**17. You came from a music background. I think you have the upper hand of innovating the Malaysian music through what you do, don’t you think?**

Yes, it is easier when it comes to music. But when it comes to TV shows, it is still the scantily clad 21-year-old that will bring you the numbers. Even the movie *Avatar* was a big hit as they use scantily clad aliens! That is the basic reality of it.

**18. How would you describe your style of leadership?**

You are asking me? (laughs) I think I am a collaborative person. I love to hear other people’s ideas and work together on it. I may have a firm idea on what I want to do but I don’t like telling it first. I like to hear what others think before I throw in my idea. I don’t know much of things that are going on as I am not out there meeting clients and customers, so I like to hear what people who I work with have to say.

**19. Are you happy with what you have achieved thus far?**

Not yet. As I am impatient, I wish things could have been done faster. I just wish we move faster and faster. But culturally, we don’t. As a society, we don’t really move fast as we could. We are too comfortable. This is a theory I have: Great sufferings make great art. Have you seen the Iranian films? People are being oppressed there yet they make incredible movies. Here, we make noise but we still have Starbucks to go to at the end of the day. We are okay and because of that our creativity is okay, too. Our creativity doesn’t come from a deeper source of hurt or pain. We don’t suffer enough for us to be more industrious.

**20. What part of your job as CEO excites you the most?**

To discover new things and to be able to allocate resources, the right people to that. I get to see people bloom, find their niche and get excited about it.



# ADOBE CREATIVE CLOUD SOLUTIONS

HOW BUSINESSES CAN THRIVE IN A  
DIGITAL DISRUPTION ERA

BY GERALD CHUAH

EVERY DAY, THE ACCELERATING PACE OF DIGITAL DISRUPTION HAS LED ORGANIZATIONS TO SOURCE FOR THE BEST WAY TO ENGAGE CUSTOMERS. TO CATER TO THIS NEW TREND, ADOBE - WHICH IS WIDELY KNOWN FOR ITS MULTIMEDIA AND CREATIVITY SOFTWARE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, HAS SHIFTED ITS BUSINESS OPERATIONS INTO CLOUD-BASED TECHNOLOGY, TO GENERATE POSITIVE OUTCOMES WITH THIS NEW DIGITAL WAVE.





EVERY DAY, the accelerating pace of digital disruption has led organizations to source for the best way to engage customers. To cater to this new trend, Adobe – which is widely known for its multimedia and creativity software products and services, has shifted its business operations into cloud-based technology, to generate positive outcomes in this new digital era.

Adobe's recent collaborations with local brands such as iFlix, Astro Radio and Malaysia Airlines, are strong testament that Malaysia is a key market for the brand in Southeast Asia.

During a media briefing in Kuala Lumpur on the topic: 'Experience Business Wave in the Digital Disruption Era: How Businesses can Transform and Deliver the Best Experiences For Customers,' Managing Director of Adobe SEA, V.R. Srivatsan said nowadays, many organizations are trying to address how they can best respond to this disruption to deliver impactful customer experiences.

Founded in December 1982 by John Warnock and Charles Geschke, Adobe Systems Incorporated is an American multinational software company based in San Jose, California, United States.

Historically, Adobe focuses on the creation of multimedia and creative software products. It is best known for Photoshop - an image editing software; Acrobat Reader - the Portable Document Format (PDF), and Adobe Creative Suite, as well as its successor Adobe Creative Cloud.

Their latest product Creative Cloud -- delivers the world's leading creative desktop tools, mobile apps, and services such as Adobe Stock images. It connects seamlessly with their assets through CC Libraries, enabling users to work effortlessly across desktop and mobile devices for a creative workflow. With apps such as Adobe Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator, Creative Cloud helps people produce their best work, while Adobe Document Cloud helps organizations drive business faster by delivering superior customer experience on any device - making paper-based processes 100 per cent digital.

Adobe Sign is the leading e-signature solution that allows anyone to sign and send documents from any device; and integrates with other powerful companion mobile apps such as Salesforce, Microsoft, Workday, Dropbox and Box.

Srivatsan who leads this digital transformation across industries in APAC and Malaysia said: "Having been at the heart of many of these transformational projects, Adobe is excited to share our experiences working with industry players from Malaysia and around APAC region that have started digital transformation journeys.



"Many Malaysian companies are still in the early stages in their digital transformation journeys and Adobe is looking at how to grow their businesses in Malaysia, by mirroring the expected growth in digital marketing in the country," he added.

Srivatsan also explained about Adobe's Three Clouds systems, and how it helps organizations in their digital work processess by integrating businesses and customers.

Moving forward, Srivatsan explains how Adobe has shifted its business by going cloud based, and how their Three Clouds solutions offer the best experience to their customers in the local market.

#### Q&A

##### Q1. What is your role and responsibility as Managing Director of Adobe Southeast Asia (SEA)?

Adobe is a company with great vision, and one that I'm proud to be part of. Every day, I am excited with the opportunity to make a difference and create a meaningful impact, on our customers and employees. The company delivers market-leading solutions and constantly pushes itself to the forefront of innovative and creative ideas. My role includes working with top brands across the region on their digital transformation journeys to deliver the best experiences possible for their customers. At the same time, I lead and inspire my team to provide the best-in-class service and platforms to help customers thrive in this digital economy.

##### Q2.What has Adobe achieved in 2016 and what will it strive for in 2017?

Globally, 2016 has been a year of growth for Adobe. In the era of digital business, Adobe is constantly advancing state-of-the-art content creation, driving digital transformation of industries, and empowering experiences with intelligence. In 2016, we introduced Adobe Sensei – a framework of intelligent services built into the Adobe Platform to dramatically improve the design and delivery of our customer experiences. In 2017, we introduced Adobe Experience Cloud, emphasizing on the business experience, and our commitment to help businesses transform, and meet the changing demands. Moving forward, machine-learning, Artificial Intelligence (AI), mobile and new technologies around Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) will continue to the be area of focus in our business, as more developments are seen across Adobe Creative Cloud, Experience Cloud, and Document Cloud.

##### Q3. Please explain the concept of "Digital Disruption" and how it impacts businesses?

Today we are in the "Experiential Era" where digital has disrupted all aspects of our lives. In the age of the connected consumer, people are consuming more content across devices, and are expecting everything they do online to work just the way they wanted - instantly and easily; from anywhere, at any time.



More is known about us than ever before – who we are, what we buy, where we are, what we do online, and our interactions with devices like wearables, our car, our house and even refrigerator. At the same time, there is an explosion of data flowing through devices, servers, and the cloud.

The flood of big data is overwhelming to many companies, and provides tremendous opportunities to understand the impact of the digital experience. These days, exceptional experiences matter more than ever. And the ability to do that in a timely, meaningful manner is the key competitive differentiator that sets brands apart.

##### Q4. How does this digital wave impact business direction and transformation in Malaysia? And how best can they respond to deliver impactful customer experiences?

Throughout history, there have been waves of enterprise solutions such as "Back-Office Wave" which is focused on Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems; and "Front-Office Wave" which is focused on Customer Resource Management (CRM) systems to keep track of customer conversations and to manage sales processes.

Today, we are in the Third Wave of enterprise disruption, which is the "Experience Business Wave". This new transformational wave is all about experience - to keep customers engaged. And businesses need to reimagine their digital experiences to drive brand loyalty and growth. This requires a new approach as well as technology-enabled capabilities across data and content, to design and deliver an experience that both surprises and delights consumers at every touchpoint.

While businesses in Malaysia are digitally-driven by different reasons, the rate of transformation is expected to multiply. Currently 34 per cent of organizations in Malaysia are undergoing digital transformation, and there is a big opportunity for these businesses to leverage on Adobe's expertise and solutions to deliver impactful customer experiences.

##### Q5. What new business opportunities are available in this 'Digital Transformation era'?

Businesses today are about user-experience. Customer

interactions are no longer confined to the storefront, or on the website. Today, they are multi-device, and multi-touch. Customers expect to be delighted at every touchpoint, and brand building is about giving customers a predictive experience at the right place, and the right time. Experience then becomes the new commodity. Businesses that are laser focused in delivering the best experiences and offer the most relevant and personalized content will stand out amongst the competition, and drive new opportunities in the digital era.

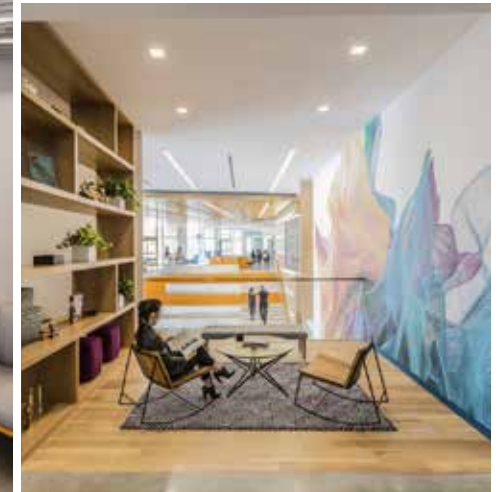
##### Q6. How can Adobe help businesses and industry players in the APAC region, including Malaysia, to get the most out of Adobe solutions?

Adobe has a variety of solutions to help Brands in all aspects of their customer interaction. We offer business tools that they need to design and deliver exceptional digital experiences and to measure the impact. To help customers get the most out of Adobe platform, we have a dedicated team of customer success managers who work closely with businesses across industries and geographies to demonstrate our solutions through customized proof-of-concepts and value engineering. This will help our customers understand how they can use our solutions to realize tangible benefits, and how to improve their outreach and customer experiences.

##### Q7. Briefly explain Adobe's Three Clouds system – Experience Cloud, Creative Cloud, and Document Cloud. What are the benefits of these cloud integration, and how can it help organizations in their digital transformation journeys?

Adobe is the only company with a complete platform which allows Brands to make, manage, and monetize their content. In March 2017, Adobe introduced Adobe Experience Cloud, which reaffirms their commitment to help businesses transform, which has been recognised by analyst firm Gartner and Forrester as an undisputed leader in their respective categories.

The integration of Adobe's Experience Cloud, Creative Cloud and Document Cloud provides a synchronized Adobe Cloud Platform that allows businesses to centralize and standardize customer data and content from any system, to improve the design and delivery of customer experiences throughout the organization - to facilitate collaboration and exchanges across business teams and units.



The platform also makes data and insights available through APIs to more than 4,000 developers, technology partners, and system integrators around the world, which in turn provides feedback into its AI and machine-learning capabilities with Adobe Sensei.

##### Q8. Having been at the heart of many of these projects, what is your advice to businesses before embarking on their digital transformation journey?

It's no longer a question of whether to embark on their digital transformation, but how to do it effectively. There are many companies in Malaysia and around the region that are convinced they need to transform digitally, but simply do not know where to start, or don't have the skills and resources to do so.

Today, businesses need to plan their digital transformation from the customer's viewpoint, by combining the Art of Content and the Science of Data, to ramp up the design for speed and scale, and to integrate big data across businesses to derive real-time insights, and drive action.

##### To achieve all the above, there are four key pillars to observe:

- **Know and Respect Your Customers** – Generate insights from customer data to understand their needs and preferences, so as to personalize content and offers, and to respect their choices.
- **Speak in One Voice** – Always communicate in a consistent voice, with the same message across all platforms.
- **Make Technology Transparent** – Enable customers to interact on their platform of choice, and make technology easy and convenient to them.
- **Delight Customers at Every Turn** – Be predictive, and offer customers what they want and when they want it, across every touchpoint.

For more information and contact details, visit [www.adobe.com/sea](http://www.adobe.com/sea). Adobe also organises webinars and face-to-face events such as Adobe Experience Forums, MAKE IT roadshows, and Digital Marketing Innovation sessions.



# village

## VILLAGE GROCER

A PASSION TO DELIGHT

BY GERALD CHUAH

EVERYONE LOVES SHOPPING, EVEN WHEN IT COMES TO BUYING GROCERIES; ESPECIALLY IF THEY SHOP AT THE NEWLY OPENED VILLAGE GROCER OUTLET AT KL GATEWAY MALL IN BANGSAR SOUTH.

SHOPPING TAKES A NEW DIMENSION IN THIS FOOD HAVEN - A BIG, BRIGHT, FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT, WITH SO MUCH MORE TO OFFER AND DISCOVER.

Village Grocer Executive  
Director Ivan Tan



With a floor space of 21,000 sq. feet, the Village Grocer outlet at KL Gateway mall in Bangsar South is easily one of the largest grocer in Kuala Lumpur. I was privileged to have a guided tour of the premises by Village Grocer General Manager of Marketing Anthony Lee

This high-end grocer, with affordable prices in a big mall is the latest trend in the supermarket food chain, with a wide variety of products to cater to both expatriates and local shoppers.



exports, so that customers can have peace of mind when they shop here.

“Locally, some of our farmers are moving in that direction. Some of these fruits and vegetables are sourced locally from farmers who have demonstrated acceptable farming standards,

“For example, the world famous Holland tomatoes which are sweet and juicy are now locally grown in Cameron Highlands. We are sourcing for strawberries next,

Being spoilt for choice is an understatement as you walk through these endless corridors of food racks, dotted with thousands of imported food products– from fresh vegetables, imported fruits, healthy snacks and artisan cheese, to seafood, cold meats, wines, and so on.

**GLOBAL GROCER**  
Village Grocer which won The BrandLaureate BestBrands Awards 2016-2017 for Best Premium Grocer in May 2017, has a full-fledged chain of premium grocers across Klang Valley which aims to be the leading premium supermarket chain in Malaysia.

Currently, it operates 10 outlets, including the recently opened premium grocers at MyTOWN Shopping Centre in Cheras, and KL Gateway Mall in Bangsar South. The other existing branches are located in Bangsar Village, 1 Mont Kiara, Sunway Giza, Atria, Citta Mall, Avenue K, SS15 Courtyard, and Tropicana Avenue.

Besides offering the largest variety of products, it also boasts of quality, fresh produce flown in straight from the farm within 36 hours.

For example, at the Fruits & Vegetable segment near the main entrance, you can find imported green like avocados, pomegranates, and broccolis. Also popular are blueberries from United States, Chile and Africa, and strawberries from Australia, Korea and Japan.

Lee said: “We are the only local grocer that flies in food daily from overseas, including countries like Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. Despite the high cost, we make them accessible to our customers at affordable prices,

“We consider ourselves a Global Grocer, as we help to bring in all these global products and make it easily accessible to local consumers,” he added.

All imported goods are approved by various health authorities. For example, the Australian government is vigilant when it comes to checking the quality of their food

“For convenience, most of these fruits and vegetables are carefully selected and prepacked for easy display and take away.”

**HUGE INVENTORY**  
At the Seafood section, you can find big garoupas, Norwegian salmon and red snappers. Another favorite is Sakura organic chicken, besides other meat items.

All the seafood items are chilled on ice, and are arguably more hygienic than those in the wet market, with the further benefit of ‘No Fish Market’ smell. There is also a small sink nearby, in case you want to wash your hands.

Lee said that with such a huge inventory, one of their biggest challenge is to keep track of expiry dates by putting systems and processes in place.

“About 40 percent of the items here are perishables, and we put them in front for easy access for grab-and-go customers.”

With everything available under one roof, the premium grocer also serves as an alternative to the neighborhood wet market, and provides a wholesome shopping experience for the entire family.

**CUSTOMER CONSCIOUS**  
In terms of shopping behavior, most people buy products based on their personal preferences.

“The expats tend to do ‘big trolley’ shopping during weekends. They are generally more savvy when it comes to imported food items, for obvious reasons. The locals are a little more price-sensitive and split their shopping based on good price, value and offers. But both look for freshness and quality.

“We are customer conscious and we always listen to our customers, and put them first in our product offerings, services and pricing,” said Lee.



images :  
1) Village Grocer outlet at KL Gateway Mall in Bangsar South.  
2) The premium grocer takes pride in providing the best quality merchandize, freshest ingredients, and value for money to their customers at their outlets.  
3) With the tagline Passion to Delight, you can find a big selection of branded products here.

So, how do you know what customers really want? Lee answered: “It depends on who they are and which country they are from. For example, most expats look for familiar products from their own countries. “If they can’t find it, they will usually inform us, while the locals are more conservative, and buy only what they need for the moment.”

Meanwhile, back to the KL Gateway grocer, you can find a variety of healthy snacks like Beetroot and Chia Seed crisps here. Besides coffee and cereal, there is also a popular Sushi counter, for takeaways in the middle section.

If you wish to create a cheese platter for a Party, no worries head to the cheese section to find a variety of imported and aged cheeses from France, Spain and Greece. Lee said Goat cheese from Spain is one of his favorites, and he usually pair it with red wine from Chile, Argentina, or Australia.

There is also a big non-halal section, featuring a huge variety of products from East to West, from Oriental sausages to meat loaf and ham for Sunday roast, besides a variety of soup ingredients from Bah Kut Teh to Ginseng soup.

**EVOLUTIONARY JOURNEY**  
Starting from humble beginnings with Pasaraya OTK (Ong Tai Kim) in Gombak, currently Village Grocer and B.I.G have a total of 13 outlets and they are planning to open another four outlets by year end, including one in Johor Baru.

During an interview at the BrandLaureate Awards gala dinner in May 2017, Executive Director Ivan Tan said: “It is

not a journey, but an evolution”.

“Yes, we have come a long way. Village Grocer is a homegrown business which started as a family sundry shop in the 50s, “In 1997, we opened our first OTK supermarket, followed by our first premium grocer at Bangsar Village in 2004 to cater to different groups of consumers – the expat and savvy shoppers at the affluent Bangsar neighborhood,

“Over the years, our business keeps evolving, but our philosophy remains the same. We take pride in providing the best quality merchandise with the freshest ingredients to our customers, and provide them the best value for money,

“That has been our key driver, whether in the Pasaraya OTK business model or the Village Grocer model - which is our core business philosophy.”

**B.I.G WELCOME**  
In April 2017, Village Grocer made headlines when they acquired Ben’s Independent Grocer (B.I.G) to cater to this growing segment, although the motto for B.I.G and Village Grocer remains separate.

“We are happy to welcome B.I.G team into our Village Grocer family and we’re still very excited, looking forward to synergize our operations from procurement, human resources and marketing,

“Moving forward, we plan to come out with more innovative concepts and merchandizing to better serve our customers,” said Tan.

“People who buy from B.I.G look for a certain experience. It was established with one idea in mind, to be a one-stop ‘Eat. Drink. Shop.’ avenue, focusing on its F&B outlet and presentation, whereas Village Grocer appeals to the middle income group.

“Both outlets have their own loyal customers and provide different experiences, and we plan to maintain that,” said Lee.

B.I.G was founded in 2011, and its outlets are located at Publika Shopping Gallery, Jalan Batai, and Glo Damansara.

**PASSION TO DELIGHT**  
The concept of premium grocer will not go away. This market segment is growing, and will not stop because consumers have become savvier due to globalisation, having acquired a refined tastes after studying and working abroad.

“Our tagline, ‘A Neighbourhood Grocer with a Passion to Delight’ will always be our mission statement, because at Village Grocer, we believe that our customers are the most important people in our business,” said Tan.

“Everything we plan and do revolves around them, and we make sure the moment they walk into our grocer, to the moment they leave, they will always have a very delightful experience with us,

“It’s a journey, and we are getting better at it,” he added.



# NEGARAKU, MERDEKA!

AS WE CELEBRATE OUR NATION'S 60TH INDEPENDENCE DAY, LET US BE THANKFUL AND REFLECTIVE ON ALL THE BLESSINGS WE HAVE SO FAR ENJOYED. ADMITTEDLY MALAYSIA IS NOT PARADISE, NOR IS IT THE 'BEST', NOR 'SAFEST', NOR 'HAPPIEST' COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. THAT'S ALL VERY SUBJECTIVE. STILL, THERE IS MUCH FOR US TO CELEBRATE, SUCH AS OUR CLIMATE, OUR FERTILE LAND, OUR ABUNDANT RESOURCES, OUR CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, OUR WONDERFUL PEOPLE! TO CELEBRATE OUR LOVE FOR MALAYSIA, WE CURATED A 'MERDEKA SPECIAL' WHERE WE FEATURE MALAYSIANS WHO CHANNEL A SENSE OF PATRIOTISM IN THEIR WORK AND ALSO A FEW OTHER SEGMENTS THAT WOULD DEFINITELY REMIND YOU OF HOW IT FEELS TO BE A MALAYSIAN. CHECK IT OUT!







# DATO' WAH IDRIS: MALAYSIA'S MUSIC BRAND AMBASSADOR

"WHEN YOU HAVE AN IMMENSE PASSION FOR THE WORLD OF MUSIC,  
EMBRACE IT AND TAKE IT VERY POSITIVELY"

BY NURILYA ANIS RAHIM

Many Malaysian musicians have made waves internationally and one who is no stranger to the music scene here in Malaysia is the musical icon, Dato' Wah Idris. Born and raised in Ipoh, Perak, Wah is an award-winning composer, an accomplished musician, and a record producer with over 35 years of experience. His vast experience includes composing and producing international songs as well as music and videos for brand developments for clients ranging from various corporate companies. His years of experience have made him what he is today – an Industry Mover Shaker!

Conferred the title "Father of Technics" Malaysia by Mr. Kawata, the Chairman of Electronic Musical International Division, Matsushita Japan, Wah is truly a one-of-a-kind musical maestro. He gathers his musical inspiration from his surrounding and environment, turning the sound into tunes and music notes which subsequently became evergreen hits. With a creative mind, song writing would just come naturally for Wah.

The BrandLaureate had the privilege of listening to his musical journey where he shared the story of his early days, accomplishments and his hope for Malaysia's music industry. Wah's passion for music started at a very young age. He was only 4 years old when he played his first note on a piano from the song "*burung kakak tua*". He was engrossed with music from then on and began to enjoy the world of sound.

Piano was Wah's main instrument. He listened to different genre and as he grew, he began to learn other instruments on his own. Known as a multi-instrumentalist, Wah plays the piano, flute, saxophone, guitar and also sings. Born from a family with the same love for music, Wah formed his first band with his three brothers where he played the piano, flute and sang. Later on he formed his own band in Ipoh, named the *Apple Jam Band*. They had small gigs around town, performing at weddings and functions, mainly to express their love for music.

Wah then headed to Kuala Lumpur and joined *The Strollers* who were one of the top local bands during the early 60s. After few years, he decided to take a step forward in his music career that led to his departure from the band. He believed strongly in music and knew he could go further by getting proper education. With supportive parents who encouraged his dream and determination, Wah was given the once in a lifetime opportunity to move forward in his musical career. He got himself enrolled into the largest independent college of contemporary music in the world, Berklee College of Music, in Boston, Massachusetts, United States. It became one of the greatest moment for him as he was able to expand his creative knowledge and experience the American music scene.

While in America, Wah became the only Malaysian who played in an all-American band. He was performing in gigs around New York, Boston, New Hampshire and all over the States and in every city he played at, he would proudly introduce himself as a Malaysian.

"Indirectly I was representing Malaysia to the world. I felt proud whenever people asked me where I'm from and I tell them I'm from Malaysia. It is important to be proud of who we are. Malaysian students from other universities came to watch me perform and we were able to showcase the Malaysian spirit and values in America."

Unfortunately, his American dream was short-lived as he had to return back to Malaysia after his final year of studies. Upon returning to Malaysia, Wah's name began to rise as he was featured by television and radio stations and local dailies. He got himself involved in the music scene in Malaysia and made history by becoming the first Malaysian to win an International Music Award, the "Golden Kite World Song

Festival" held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 1986. He again, made Malaysia proud and brought the country's name to the international arena.

Wah then started working with different local artists, the likes of Sheila Majid, Ning Baizura, Fauziah Latiff, Amy Search and many others. The year 1998 saw another historic moment for Wah as he was entrusted by the government for branding Malaysia to the world by creating an anthem, "*Standing in the Eyes of the World*", sung by Malaysia's Queen of Rock, Ella for the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games held in Malaysia in 1998. It was his way of giving back to Malaysia and the world.

Following that, Wah became more involved in the music business, producing advertisement jingles and theme songs for corporate clients. He was invited by broadcasting station NTV7 to create a strong branding for the station. "*I Feel Good*" became the tune and brand name created for NTV7. He also did an anthemic song for KFC Malaysia, "Voice of Tomorrow" which was sung by children all over the world. Wah's work focused on branding through music.



Topping the list of works that Wah had done was "*NegaraKu*", Malaysia's national anthem which he rearranged and reorchestrated together with the world-class Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra in 2003. The new world-class *NegaraKu* was endorsed by the Government and launched by His Royal Highness during the Merdeka Day Celebration held in Putrajaya. It was Wah's highest contribution for the country. In 2007, he was chosen again to write Malaysia tourism's theme, the iconic song "*Malaysia Truly Asia*" under the Ministry of Tourism. The anthem was heard not only in Malaysia but was played in many countries all over the world.

## The Country's Music Emissary

With his foresight and great intuition, Wah is ready to transform the nation into one of the most creative, lively and entertaining place to live in. He set himself as an example and a role model that the younger generation would emulate. He is indeed positive with the future of creativity in Malaysia's music industry.

"I've seen young talents who are pretty good but they need the guidance to be better. Malaysia has grown tremendously and we are proud to have great young writers and singers. I'm very positive in passing the baton to the younger generation to grow our music scene. What we have to do is strive harder and work towards getting the proper support from the government. Having a spokesman would do a lot of good for our industry, someone well-equipped that would lead to speak on the behalf of other musicians. I would love to be given the opportunity to speak in Parliament to discuss on how to improve our industry for the future of music," added Wah on his future goal.

With the country celebrating its 60th year of Independence, Wah hopes to make Malaysia a place of hope, opportunity and progress as well as a country that is well respected by the rest of the world. He further shares his thoughts on the celebration of *Merdeka*,

"*Merdeka* is a time of quietness and understanding the fight for the country and to thank the country's protector for the peace they help bring to us. My advice for the younger Malaysians is to never forget our roots. Independence did not come from us, it is a gift from the older generation who fought for our independence, therefore there must be a respect to it. We are fortunate now to be living in a country with no major issue and we must appreciate that. At the end of the day what's important is that we must believe in ourselves and remember who fought for us. The young generation must salute *kemerdekaan*, be proud and have the sense of patriotism in their mind and soul."



# BERNARD CHAULY: ORBITING ORIGINS, ORCHESTRATING ORIGINALS

“I’M NOT A NOSTALGIA MERCHANT AND I DON’T LIKE SAYING SOMETHING FOR SENTIMENTALITY OR VINTAGE SAKE: WE ARE OF COURSE A PRODUCT OF OUR UPBRINGING AND MY UPBRINGING WAS POSITIVE. ”

BY IAN GREGORY EDWARD MASSELAMANI

Film Director Bernard Chauly is a Malaysian icon who has inspired the masses by directing a good number of local delights at high standards. But there is more to this maestro of creative directing, whose motto is ‘Just B’, than meets the optic senses.

**You currently reside in Norfolk, UK. Why you have decided to live abroad and yet produce local films?**

By circumstances of relationships and personal choices, I have decided that home is the small town of Norfolk and work is anywhere and everywhere in the world. And for this to be possible, it needs to come from a sense of believing your journey doesn’t end where it begins.

I was born in Taiping and I grew up in Ipoh; and when people ask me what’s your hometown, in the past my hometown was Ipoh. But when my mother passed away, we sold the house; I no longer call Ipoh my hometown, but I call Norfolk home. This year will be 10 years since I became a UK resident. But even before that, I was a citizen of the *Commonwealth* first.

In 1999-2000, I was a recipient of the *Foreign & Commonwealth Scholarship* to pursue my Masters in London – having done my first Degree in Malaysia. And when I went to London, it was to equip myself with skills to craft stories about Malaysia and South-East Asia. So it was always about going to UK to study in order to return to tell Malaysian/SEA stories from a local perspective.

A very important platform for me in the early days was the *Malaysian Video Awards Festival (MVA)* and the way they defined what it meant to be a ‘Malaysian film’ is a film made by a Malaysian anywhere in the world; or a film made in Malaysia by anybody. So what that meant was that I was

able to make a short film in London that won me a *Best Malaysian Short Film*.

I made a decision to nurture a Malaysian audience first and foremost, before anything else. As it happens, thanks to the Internet, direct flight, the ability to work remotely and save time, I have been able to live in England but work in Malaysia and abroad. In a way, thanks to the spirit of *Independence*, we can be a proud passport holder of Malaysia – but it doesn’t mean that we only have to be in Malaysia to do work for Malaysia as a Malaysian. Seek out the best opportunities and by all means go for the best, but do not disengage from Malaysia entirely.

**Your films have the *muhibbah* theme as the ‘feel good element’ to it – perchance it relates to your mixed parentage?**

Yes I am a Malaysian of mixed parentage. My father was born a Punjabi Sikh, my mother was born Chinese Buddhist. They got married and chose to embrace a new religion, Catholicism, and therefore my father modified his surname, so my identity, ‘Chauly’, is unique – which I think embraces ‘possibility’ in Malaysia.

Relating that to the films that I do, most of them have been in the *Malay* language. So in a way, I have always been working on the periphery – trying to access the majority audience – and that’s deliberate. Because I’ve always wanted to tell stories that have universal themes and conflict, and to begin with a broad as audience as possible. I don’t think anybody really sets out to make *muhibbah* films.

As with most things in Malaysia, it always comes back to food – and I would ideally like to see Malaysian films as ‘rojak’. Malaysian cinema, more than any country in the region, has the opportunity to be *rojak* – multiple languages,



“MY VIEW OF MALAYSIA IS THAT IT SHOULD EMBRACE IT ALL. IT SHOULDN’T JUST BE SUPER MODERN AND IT SHOULDN’T JUST BE NOSTALGIC OR VINTAGE – EVERYTHING SHOULD CO-EXIST NATURALLY.”

multiple story context, multiple conflict – a variety of sorts. I would say just as our country is quite young, I am quite young in my trajectory as a filmmaker and the important stories that I really want to tell. I’m just at the beginning...

**What makes you so passionate in talking about being a Malaysian, our cultures and social issues in your work?**

I was born Malaysian and I am a proud Malaysian passport holder. Plus, I was brought up by a single parent (single mother who was widowed at a very young age – before I was born). As a teacher, she was not only an educator, but someone who was very passionate about social issues – the rights of the child, spirituality, youth development, etc. So I was brought up in a household where it wasn’t only about making money and being successful in your career. In fact when I chose to study what I eventually studied, my mother’s biggest question was: But son, will what you do make a difference?

So that idea, that it’s not just entertainment if I make a film – it’s not just telling a story to purely indulge an audience. The conflict in the story has to be real and has to matter to me and the characters; and hopefully it makes the audience think as well as be entertained. That is a seed which keeps growing – making stories that matter in Malaysia and SEA whilst expanding brand reach.

**How do you want people to react when they see your products? What thoughts do you want to spark in their minds?**

I would like them to react positively and critically. I have always been happy when Malaysians who have never seen local films watch my work and are proud to say that this is a Malaysian story – one that they can show their friends proudly. At the same time, I also hope that it challenges them in a subtle way.

So far I’ve been a director for about 12-15 years and all my films and TV shows in particular, they have been quality rather than quantity. The most insistent phrase that I am very proud of is: *Karya Bernard tak pernah mengecewakan* (Bernard’s work does not disappoint). And that has been deliberate that I have not simply said yes to all my projects.

Ultimately, I would like the viewing to be enjoyable with an element of thought.

**Are there any fellow Malaysians who strike to you as exemplary?**

Marina Mahathir comes to mind. She was a co-producer of my first film and has been a friend. She was born in a political dynasty, but is very much an activist, a mother, a wife and an icon of strength in Malaysia. It’s heartening to observe what she stands for and her ability to speak out to the many.

**What would you like to pass down to the younger Malaysians about Merdeka?**

I think to younger Malaysians, it’s to understand *Independence* in the context of still being part of the *Commonwealth*. We became independent from Britain after a certain trajectory of history; but being independent means that we’re also part of the *Commonwealth*. We have gained freedom, but there’s also quite a lot of access we still have to our post-colonial masters.

It’s also important for people to understand *Merdeka Day* alongside *Malaysia Day*. Many forget *Malaysia Day* which is to a certain extent perhaps the more significant event for us to commemorate – the former is when we became free, and the latter is when we started forging our identity.

I think also that it is important to tell the young that at *Independence*, everybody who was there at that particular point – native, indigenous, migrant, Eurasian, etc., all were, on that day, given equal opportunity to make this country whatever we worked, fought and challenged it to be. Going back to *Merdeka Day* 60 years ago, let’s remind ourselves that we were all given the same voice to say those three words together: *Merdeka! Merdeka! Merdeka!* Let us continue evolving.

**How would you be celebrating Malaysia’s 60th Merdeka?**

On the eve of *Merdeka*, I will hopefully be watching the episode of *Anak Merdeka* that I directed, which will appear on three language platforms on *Astro*, produced by Angsana Productions Services SB and financed by Khazanah Nasional – a gift to the nation, and listening to *Standing In The Eyes Of The World*.

And on the 31st, I hope to have a party at home, celebrating the eve of my birthday. Though I am not born on *Merdeka*, the time of *Merdeka* is usually a time of reflection and celebration – a double birth so to speak!



# DOUGLAS LIM: LAUGHING WITH MALAYSIANS

“I WANT PEOPLE TO BE CONSTANTLY IMPRESSED BY WHAT I DO. THAT’S WHY I AM VERY RARELY UNPREPARED, EVEN THOUGH I AM DOING A 2-MINUTE APPEARANCE.” OF COURSE, IT IS ALL FOR THE ATTENTION.

BY JUSTIN CHEW

Douglas Lim is many things. He is primarily a stand-up comedian, but when he is not cracking jokes on stage, he is an actor on both screen and stage, and an award-winning composer and lyricist. His stand-up comedy performances include “Eh, Got Free Ticket Ah?” (Actors Studio Bangsar), Comedy Club (KL, Penang & Singapore), Lake Club Comedy Night, Harith Iskander’s Nationwide Tour, PJ Laugh Festival, and The Malaysian Association of Chinese Comedians (MACC).

He is currently touring with MACC for the comedy show ‘Now That’s What I Call Jokes Vol. 8’. In the month of June 2017 alone, the MACC show will be staged in Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, Kota Kinabalu, Labuan, Penang and Singapore.

Douglas shares with us his views and opinions on his favourite topics of comedy and entertainment, the state of the country and the world, and life in general.

## WHY BE A COMEDIAN?

*Most children of military personnel wanted to be soldiers or pilots like their fathers, but I was different. I wanted to be a clown.*

Douglas’ father was a helicopter pilot with the air force. Living on a base in Sungai Besi when he was young, he mixed around with all the other military children. He discovered that most of them wanted to be like their fathers – they wanted to be soldiers or pilots. However, he was different. When he was three or four, he remembered saying that he wanted to be a clown. He loved attention. At a young age, his input of comedy was either clowns or cartoons. He recalled seeing a clown – it made him laugh, and he liked it. Along the way, he wanted to be other things like a lawyer or an inventor, but he was already hopelessly addicted to attention, and getting a reaction from people.

He was candid about his stand. “I’m not out to empower people. I’m an entertainer. I’m not your role model. You want to laugh, I make you laugh. Our transaction ends there. I have a degree in teaching English as a second language. Being a teacher is a heavy responsibility, but as a comedian, I can make you laugh and we can all have a good time. It’s something I prefer.”

“I want people to be constantly impressed by what I do. That’s why I am very rarely unprepared, even though I am doing a 2-minute appearance.” Of course, it is all for the attention.

## BEING A COMEDIAN IS NOT EASY

*Sometimes, a particular client might be displeased that I had said something, and because of that, I would not get my full payment.*

He wanted people to come to his shows expecting a good time and more. He wanted to be able to meet their expectations and surpass it, but some people just did not like his humour.

“When I was just starting out, I got gigs to entertain at corporate events, where I realised that people just wanted to talk to each other. I thought comedians were



“SOMETIMES, A PARTICULAR CLIENT MIGHT BE DISPLEASED THAT I HAD SAID SOMETHING, AND BECAUSE OF THAT, I WOULD NOT GET MY FULL PAYMENT.”

not suitable to be invited to perform at these events. One uncle even took a pillow and threw it at me,” Douglas said.

“Sometimes, a particular client might be displeased that I had said something, and because of that, I would not get my full payment. Then, there are the people who waited for me after my show to tell me that I should not have said something because it is sensitive.”

Malaysians tend to be judgemental. In the online world, the ability to hide behind anonymity has given license to many people to give all kinds of comments. Some even pay more attention to comments than the original object that was being commented on.

Douglas shared that there were people who came up to him, and said, “Douglas I don’t like it.” He asked them why they did not like it, and suggested that they articulate or explain it. He was even willing to have a discussion with them about it. However, to his dismay, they could not explain why they did not like it.

“You can say why you do not like it and I might even agree with you if your argument is good. It is not helpful if you just say, ‘I don’t like it.’”

## COMEDY: WHAT’S ACCEPTABLE AND WHAT’S NOT?

*Offense is usually not given, but taken.  
~ Jimmy Carr*

Douglas enjoys playing with Malaysian languages and accents. Unfortunately, there will be some vocal people, such as those with online presence, who feel that Malaysians cannot make fun of anything. It must be noted that offense is usually not given, but taken.

“For example, a joke about any illness, such as haemophilia or Parkinson’s is a bad joke. No doubt about that. However, if a joke gets 99 percent of people in the hall laughing, but one person is offended, then we have to wonder what is wrong with that person,” explained Douglas.

“As entertainers, we look at what’s happening around us, how it’s affecting people around us, but not in the same way as a politician, activist, etc. For example, people are unhappy about the cost of living going up. So I make a joke about it in my show,” he elaborated. He gave an example: I said to my cousin, “What’s up?” My cousin laments, “Everything is up!”

“I could joke about my interests, like songwriting, but it is just me. It is something I like, but not everybody’s cup of tea. I joke about cendol, because everybody has had cendol before. I must joke about things my audience can identify it,” he added.

## CONTRASTING MALAYSIA WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

*In first-world countries, people can no longer talk about topics such as race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, and gender equality because it is considered distasteful. However, in Malaysia, we can still make fun of each other, and it will be all right.*

First of all, Douglas thinks that it is presumptuous to think that anything about Malaysia is unique. Many other countries have a multicultural society and a lot of biodiversity in their natural habitats. However, Malaysia does have some plus points in its favour. First of all, he enjoys Malaysian humour. The level of privacy in Malaysia is still low. Therefore, people can say all kinds of things, and make fun of each other, and it will still be all right. In first-world countries, people can no longer talk about topics such as race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, and gender equality. It is considered distasteful to talk about these topics in the developed countries.

In contrast, in first-world countries, commentary about leadership, the Prime Minister or President is allowed and accepted, and it is part of entertainment. In Malaysia, that is not possible. Douglas is of the opinion that Malaysians in general have not come to the level of maturity where they can accept the system of the country’s leadership. When leaders are elected in a democracy, they are in office. They are actually working for the people. The people are the boss. However, Malaysians think that their leaders are untouchable, and whatever they say is correct and whatever they say, must be respected. So, the population of the country has some way to go before they realise that they are the bosses.

## HOW HAS MALAYSIA EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

*Speaking English does not mean we are accepting Bahasa Penjahaj.*

In entertainment, Malaysians have made giant strides, our icons P. Ramlee and Sudirman were famous internationally. Now, we have Yuna, who is making waves globally, and recently recorded a duet with Usher. Shila Amzah, a singer-songwriter who won the Asian Wave in Shanghai, China.

She has received a string of musical awards since then. Ronny Chieng is in the Daily Show with Trevor Noah in the USA. Douglas was very happy that fellow Malaysians had achieved so much, but there are issues as well.

“In the past, there was a movie where P. Ramlee acted as a pirate in a cave. Nowadays, TV and movies do not show gangsters drinking and gambling, and neither do they show corrupt police officers and officials. Homosexuality and LGBT cannot be mentioned either. I feel that we have gone backwards in that sense,” he observed.

“When the movie Sepet came out in 2005, I found out that a Muslim man and woman who were not husband and wife in real life could not lie down on the same bed, even though it was purely for acting purposes only. I did not know that,” he added.

Douglas hopes that before accepting or rejecting something, people should analyse what it is, but many do not. “Some people might say this thing comes from America, so I will immediately reject it. There is also a movement to reject English. I think English is important, but so is Bahasa Malaysia. I get irritated when locals can’t speak the national language, because they should have learnt it in school.”

“Speaking English does not mean we are accepting Bahasa Penjahaj. The people who do not like the English language think they are surrendering their identity and they are kow-towing to the coloniser’s language if they speak English. That is not true.”

For example, Les Misérables was originally in French. When an English production was made of it, it became bigger and more successful. The French were not upset that it was translated to English.

Douglas believes that the media shouldn’t cover terrorist attacks. Once the attacks are not covered, there might be a drop in these attacks, as the terrorists want to be covered and sensationalised.

“I think with the growing voice of people who are always right and who take on the role of moral guardians and the constant censorship... I think creative thought and entertainment will suffer.”



# ALTIMET: INCARNATING MALAYSIANS THROUGH MUSIC

“IT’S ABOUT EVERYONE AND EVERYDAY LIVES. HIP HOP IS ‘LAGU RAKYAT’ – FOLK MUSIC. YOU HAVE TO SPEAK TO OR/AND FOR THE FOLK. WHEN I SAY IT’S ‘LAGU RAKYAT’, PEOPLE AUTOMATICALLY THOUGHT OF GURINDAM OR ZAPIN. BUT THE TRUTH IS, IT’S NOT A PARTICULAR SOUND. IT’S THE APPROACH, OBJECTIVE AND THE INTENTION OF THE MUSIC ITSELF.”

BY AIN MC



Once in a great while, someone comes along and manages to break through the music scene and not only turn heads, but puts the entire industry on notice. His name is Altimet and he has attained the status of legend in his own right and inspired people.

One of the most talented artists making an impressive dent in the local hip hop industry today, Altimet is an award-winning rapper, live entertainer, songwriter, and producer. He is recognised as one of the movers and shakers in the entertainment industry thanks to his long and illustrious career in the music industry that has seen him break records, and bag awards with his nothing short of ordinary hits.

Altimet’s sharp rapping skills and his gripping showmanship deem him to be a nonpareil act. Since his breakthrough in the early 2000s, Altimet is still a force to be reckoned with and one who became a solidified star in the industry.

## Going In Depth

Before Altimet, he had no idea he would grow up to become one of the best rappers in the industry. He made his musical debut in 1999 as a member of hip-hop group Teh Tarik Crew and since then, music has given him a massive platform. It helped propel him from being a DJ to rap maestro in just a few years.

His craft came from pure talent, raw emotion or a longing to make great art and is united by his personal strengths and approaches to his profession.

Even with no musical background, music and Altimet are a match made in heaven. Imprinting his reflection deep into the minds of his audience, he managed to establish a unique style and lyricism which is not afraid to go against the grain to completely defy the status quo of what typical rap song is supposed to be about.

In his sound, one can sense the message he tries to convey. His most inventive and highly infectious tunes address Malaysian’s social culture and mentality. He shares with us the inspirations behind his lyrics.

“It’s about everyone and everyday lives. Hip hop is ‘lagu rakyat’ – folk music. You have to speak to or/and for the folk. When I say it’s ‘lagu rakyat’, people automatically thought of gurindam or zapin. But the truth is, it’s not a particular sound. It’s the approach, objective and the intention of the music itself,”

“That’s where I find my inspiration. I look around and I write based on what I see. Some of the songs have certain things that everyone can identify with because it’s universal but the specific ones are about the people around me and also myself,” he adds.

“I THINK WE’RE GOOD,  
WE ARE CATCHING  
UP, EVOLVING FAST,  
CATCHING UP WITH LOT  
OF COUNTRIES WHO ARE  
PREVIOUSLY AHEAD OF  
US”

A man with distinct and firm taste, who while willing to take risks also understood the value of core classics – he believes in music bringing people together but despite his music doing exactly that, he is no exception in getting backlash from the public for what they interpreted from his music.

“I’m responsible for what I say but I’m not responsible for how they interpret it. We all have our own lenses to which we receive songs and visuals – and all of our lenses are individually coloured by our experiences. It’s hard to control.”

“Sometimes there’s a lot of harsh word in hip hop because I want to get to my point. I only get 5 seconds to tell you how I feel that’s it. I only get 3 minutes to tell you the story and that’s it. Sometime they read more into it, sometimes they read less into it. Sometimes I get backlash because of their experiences and how they choose to interpret it,” he admits.

## Inspirations

You can’t have a true artist without a detailed list of people who inspired him. Plainspoken and thoughtful in conversation, Altimet likes people who push themselves out of their comfort zone because indirectly, these people will actually push the genre of the music forward.

His biggest influences include trailblazing acts like Jay Z, Eminem, Kanye West, Charlie Barker, Miles Davis and the list goes on. But he spoke with sheer admiration when mentioning his number one local idol.

“Sudirman. I’d say he was the first Malaysian hip hop artist because his songs are so ‘rakyat’ it’s not even funny. His hits were not just purely love songs. He had all these crazy songs. He was so creative. Nowadays if you want to be a pop act, you’re not allowed to be that creative with your song. He definitely pushed the boundaries,” he expounds.

## 60 Years of Malaysia

As someone who has been in the hip hop music scene for almost two decades, Altimet has definitely seen the ups and downs faced by the country. His patriotism is seen channelled out through his optimistic vision of the country itself.



“I think we’re good, we are catching up, evolving fast, catching up with a lot of countries who are previously ahead of us. We seemed to have carved out a permanent place in the musical landscape. People no longer say we’re just part of a trend. There’s been a lot of improvements in terms of song writing, leaps and bounce by a lot of people who pushed the boundaries and themselves forward.”

He also has high hopes for the future of creativity in the music industry of Malaysia as he sees a lot of the local acts doing great things.

“We are going through some growing pains. I think that we’re always on the way of being a developed nation. I think we are going through a bit of a plateau right now, it’s a critical time. How we all conduct ourselves in the next 5 to 10 years will determine what the next 40 or 50 years is going to be like. So it’s up to us.”

For someone who has been born and bred in Malaysia, his work has been echoing a sense of patriotism when he passionately talks about our people at large. We asked him what Merdeka means to him after all these years,

“Merdeka is an intangible concept actually. Because none of us went through any form of occupation or physical occupation. As we move forward, it’s going to be more and more intangible. Because all the physical struggle that is associated with Merdeka gets further and further behind. History kinds of gets compressed, there should be a way to constantly remind ourselves that to make that tangible factor to an intangible factor.”

He believes that Malaysians should constantly remind themselves that at one point our people had nothing. He

seeks to have an active effort into teaching the youth that one time, it wasn’t all gravy and it wasn’t all good.

With that in mind, he will be celebrating this year’s Merdeka by giving thanks to what was achieved 60 years ago, an effort he believes to be more internal rather than external.

## Retirement in 2018

Despite having given fans chart-topping hits, such as his latest infectious masterpiece ‘Amboi’, Altimet will bid farewell to live performances for good when he turns 40 next year.

He said his decision was neither sudden nor the result of unhappiness with individuals. Far from being disappointed with the local music scene, he believed he has met all the challenges he has set for himself in music. He indeed has achieved it with unlimited ambition and passion.

“I just want a new challenge. As a Muslim, 40 is when you grow up. That means your youth is done. Hip hop has been a big part of my youth, so I think it’s time to leave some things behind. People are going to misinterpret my reasons. The truth is, hip hop will always be part of me, but it’s time for hip hop to manifest itself in a different way in my life,” he explains.

While we patiently wait for a new name to fill this upcoming void left by Altimet, it is undeniable that his is a name impossible to divorce from the lives of documenters and participants of the music industry. His name will definitely continue to shape the scene and keeping it steadily moving forward towards a better Malaysia!



# SYED AZMI: MALAYSIA'S INTERNET ACTIVIST

“YOU CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS. THAT’S WHAT MAKES HEROES”

BY IDA IBRAHIM

Syed Azmi Al Habshi is no stranger to any Malaysian social media platforms. If you are an avid user of Facebook, you might have come across one of his postings on your newsfeed. Syed Azmi is one of Malaysia's famous dog-gooder who have gained fame through the power of social media for all the right reasons and continue to inspire many to follow suit.

While Syed Azmi is best known for his dog-petting event back in 2014, the 30-something-year-old pharmacist is an advocator and initiator of countless community projects involving groups like the homeless, the blind and the deaf, old folks' homes, refugees, cancer patients and abandoned babies. Among his projects in the Klang Valley are Free Market and Suspended Meals. Free Market, a cheeky twist of the flea market term, is where one gives out items for free and recipients are merely required to say a polite please and thank you.

The Free Market is geared towards doing good for the community and inculcating good values, where the organisers aim to educate the public to donate whatever they can (energy, skills, belongings, among others) to those who need them more, or those that do not have access to the items or services offered.

“Imagine a homeless can get branded products, or a student can get stuff without compromising their expenditure, or finding something that's just available for you, all with no money involved. What will happen to our daily life?

“In a way, I want to educate the public too that there is more value to each item than just monetary value, not to love your harta that much, how it feels to give,” he wrote in reply to a comment on Facebook.

Syed Azmi shared that it is a good cause aimed at spreading kindness, “You can move mountains. That's what makes heroes. You have to start talking about it and not wait for someone else to make a change if you believe your cause is good. We can make a difference,” he said.

Meanwhile, Suspended Meals is a project where one can buy two of the same item on a menu, one of which will be “suspended.” A restaurant patron who forgets to bring her wallet or who is simply in need, like single mothers, can consume anything on the “suspended” item by left by the kind stranger before her. Suspended Meals have featured food like scones and even sirloin steaks, he explained.

In fact, many of his projects aim to ease racial, social and political tensions by bringing Malaysians together, regardless of their race, religion or political inclinations, around a shared belief by paying it forward.

Until today, Syed Azmi and his friends have managed to undertake 30 community events in the last one year by relying solely support gathered via social media. They have no ready funds to back them and they have no links to political, government or non-governmental bodies. This isn't the first cause Syed Azmi has championed. While his ability to instantly reach thousands if not millions of people online has opened entirely new possibilities to organizing, building and sustaining a movement, Syed Azmi is determined to continue to use social media as a platform to advocate powerful initiatives and concerns while spreading awareness.



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Syed Azmi, who is also a child activist, has clarified that his postings on social media are meant to raise awareness on the importance of child protection, and not to victimise religious institutions. He was glad that his postings on social issues surrounding child abuse managed to get more parents to speak up against it.

“I was happy that it gathered attention and sparked conversation among parents, with regards to the safety of their children in their respective schools. It also inspired a number of parents to come forward and talk about how their children had been sexually abused.

“I have always maintained the anonymity of the individuals mentioned in my post. My posts serve to promote awareness, not hostility,” said the child activist.

His post on child abuse was later shared more than 100 times with 975 likes. Syed Azmi has maintained that everyone needs to step up and intervene when things do not appear to be normal as someone may be in danger.

“As said, E. V. E. R. Y. O. N. E. plays a role to stop abuse and injustice. Get trained, listen and learn. May we be protected and all our kids protected. It takes the whole village to take care of one kid,” he said on his Facebook page.

The impact of social media or activism and other social campaigns cannot be understated. As Syed Azmi knows it by heart, it doesn't take a campaign to create a leader. All it takes is just one follower to empower someone to do something that they believe in.

Perhaps while Syed Azmi continues his charitable efforts and remains an internet hero in the eyes of many, his actions will continue to inspire a breed of Malaysian netizens to follow suit, creating passionate leaders who want to find their voice, create a change and spread kindness in their own little way.



## IN THE WORDS OF SYED AZMI...

*I'm a Muslim first, Malay second.*

*Dogs are one of the most amazing creatures... I do feel the connection, even though I'm not a dog-owner. You do know that they have a sense of loyalty. You can feel it.*

*I'm no longer afraid of well-bred dogs, but when I see stray dogs, the feeling's a bit different. Last time I'm probably be afraid of them and shoo them away, but now I actually look at them in a sad way, sad in the sense of “I wish I could help you more, but you're tougher than you look.” I guess that kind of feeling calms me down, and the dogs do not disturb you that much.*

*How can people be so mean? How can they be that mean? It's something that you just don't understand – the hatred, even though you do not know that person at all. If they use it in the name of religion, that's even weirder because you know no religion on earth would have such ethics.*

*We do not have the concept of most people, who say you “orang mana.” We don't have that question in my house. When you go out, they ask “you orang mana?” and you say Malaysia, but when you come here, you say Kedah or Kelantan or Melaka. I don't like that. Why do you segregate yourself? And then you talk about vernacular schools. So normally I'll say I'm Malaysian... I guess Malaysians actually segregate themselves.*

*If you're kind to others, you'll get it back – ten-fold actually.*

*You don't know one day you might be homeless. If you help others, you never know... What happened to me with the dog event – if I hadn't done any of those other projects, do you think I could survive? No, it's because of all the other projects that make me seem like a hero. I never thought of using these projects... it was brought up by other people but those things saved me in my dog event.*

*My passion has always been for the old folks because it's not publicised enough. There's no story, there's no “kesian” because they're old folks. When you're talking about old folks, it's probably even my parents. It's not that they're left alone; they're not abandoned, but old folks that you think are redundant because their ideas are just old, old folks you think that they cannot be themselves again. So I always try to find a way to show that they're still an important part of society. We'll be having a project called CeritalahLagi, Karim Raslan kind of topic. We're calling them to do a storytelling session for the public – talk about what five cents meant to you last time.*

*Transparency, humbleness and humility... it will never go out of style. It's actually more classy than having a Chanel bag.*

*I'll be a bit more sensitive, but will I stop? No, I'll still be me. I'll still go on with projects that I believe in. You wouldn't get below par Syed Azmi projects.*



# MERDEKA REFLECTIONS

OF THE TOP TEN NON-EU COUNTRIES SENDING STUDENTS TO STUDY IN THE UK, MALAYSIA WAS RANKED SECOND, AFTER CHINA IN 2015-16. IN THE SAME YEAR, 17,405 MALAYSIAN STUDENTS WERE STUDYING IN THE UK. OF THIS NUMBER, ALMOST 2,500 STUDENTS FROM OUR COUNTRY ARE STUDYING UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE COURSES IN LONDON PER ANNUM, WITH THE MAJORITY STUDYING AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL.

BY FIQRI FIRDAUS

Last year, I was part of the statistics, a postgraduate student at King's College London. As Merdeka is approaching, I cannot help but recall back the times I had during the same Merdeka period in the UK last year.

**On the other side of the world**

Of course, there are many differences between the Malaysian and UK way of life. First of all, the quality of life in particular is different. The UK culture takes work-life balance more seriously. Workers are only allowed to work a certain number of hours every day, and this is practised across different industries. I was also profoundly impressed with the level of professionalism and social etiquette, such as punctuality. If someone said he will be there to meet you at 10 o'clock, you can be sure he will be there! Also, in English society, individualism is appreciated. Last but not least, the famous London weather made an indelible impression on me, of course!

Of particular interest to me was the practice of a sustainable society among the people of the UK. They prioritised the care and maintenance of their health and vitality. They cared deeply about nature, and take environmental issues very seriously. In fact, environmental issues were highlighted in the local newspapers daily. Part of this movement was a growing number of cafes offering healthy food, vegetarian meals, vegan options and the like. This is partly because eating less meat or removing it from the diet entirely will reduce one's carbon footprint, and is healthier too.

Moreover, the UK code of corporate governance is ahead in terms of corporate sustainability. It sets the bar really high and covers people and profit, and safeguards the planet as well. There was a lot of consumer activism, and the people were vocal about fair trade agreements, human rights and animal rights, to name just a few. I loved the efficient public transportation system too, especially in the cities.

**Remembering Malaysia**

What did I miss when I was in the UK? First of all, I missed the signature Malaysian hospitality of our country. Nowhere in the world can we find that feeling of warmth, welcoming us with open arms and big smiles.



I missed my family and friends. These are the people who are close to me, whom I can relate to and talk to in my moments of indecisiveness or in times of idleness or boredom. In Malaysia, there will always be a relative or a friend for anything.

I missed the sense of togetherness, that cohesiveness that has united our melting pot of colours, backgrounds and beliefs since our Independence in 1957. I missed the high level of tolerance and cultural sensitivity, and the thoughtfulness and pleasant mannerisms towards other people.

I get homesick when I had to burn the midnight oil to finish assignments. If I am awake in the wee hours of the morning, I get hungry... but I could not find somewhere to grab a bite. It was then that I would remember our Malaysian 24-hour Mamak stalls fondly.



I MISSED MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE CLOSE TO ME, WHOM I CAN RELATE TO AND TALK TO IN MY MOMENTS OF INDECISIVENESS OR IN TIMES OF IDLENESS OR BOREDOM. IN MALAYSIA, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A RELATIVE OR A FRIEND FOR ANYTHING

I also missed that we can string up a sentence with English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil words, and probably add some words from a dialect or two, and our family and friends would understand it, and vice versa. Through the years, I realised that foreign visitors would find this confusing and amazing at the same time.

In Malaysia, the teachers and lecturers help students a lot, even until they 'spoon feed' us with information. In contrast, in the UK, once a member of the staff of the university or lecturer says 'No', they really mean it. You have to be really independent studying in the UK.

Last but not least, I missed my mother's home-cooked meals. Of course, there were many good restaurants, cafes and all sorts of other food and beverage outlets in the UK, especially in London. Nonetheless, nothing beats my mother's heart-warming cooking, especially when I am hungry, busy or unwell.

Last year, I came across a Malaysia Fest in Trafalgar Square, London and was pleasantly surprised. The fest was an annual event conceived to promote Malaysia to the world, while bringing Malaysians in London together. There were Malaysian culture, food and offerings galore, and my Malaysian friends and I felt right at home there. It was awesome and we hope it would bring other Malaysian students a sense of home too.

**Happy Independence Day!**

'Merdeka' is the Malay word for 'Independence'. It was in 1957 that we gained our independence peacefully from England. Now, celebrating our 60th year of independence, I am reminded that I am proud to be a Malaysian, and fortunate to live in a country where people from different ethnicities and beliefs can live peacefully as neighbours, colleagues and friends.

Since a young age, I have been instilled with the concept that it is perfectly all right to make friends from different ethnic groups and religions. I got to know my neighbours well when I was growing up, and we would celebrate the different festivals together. As children, we were especially happy about the numerous public holidays declared to celebrate everybody's festivals. Also, I have always believed that family values are very important, and I am reminded of the true meaning of family whenever there was a family emergency.

My wish for the 60th Merdeka is that we may continue to live in harmony, with hearts filled with kindness, tolerance, understanding and compassion. Let our diversity make us stronger, as we combine our many strengths into an indomitable whole.

*Note: This article was based on Fiqri Firdaus' experiences living in the UK. At present, Fiqri is a director with Urban Bash Sports where he's responsible for Marketing and Talent Management.*



# A WALK DOWN GASTRONOMY LANE OF JALAN TAR, KL

IN THIS AGE OF RESTAURANT MAKEOVERS ON TV CONVINCING US THAT AN EATERIE CANNOT BE SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT MODERN INTERIOR DESIGN, KUALA LUMPUR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT OF JALAN TUANKU ABDUL RAHMAN, OR COLLOQUIALLY KNOWN AS JALAN TAR IS UNIQUELY HOME TO MANY AGING YET DELECTABLE EATERIES THAT HAVE WITHSTOOD THE TEST OF TIME. FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS, THESE EATERIES ARE STILL THRIVING IN THE MODERN METROPOLIS OF KL, ATTRACTING GENERATIONS OF PATRONS WITH THEIR UNPRETENTIOUSLY DELICIOUS FOOD. THIS INDEPENDENCE DAY, LET’S REVIVE, RELISH AND REDISCOVER THE MOST ICONIC AND CHARMING EATERIES ALONG JALAN TAR THAT YOUNG AND OLD MALAYSIANS SWEAR BY...

BY IDA IBRAHIM & JUSTIN CHEW



**KEDAI MAKANAN LIM KEE**

Nowadays, it is becoming increasingly hard to find tasty but affordable fare in Kuala Lumpur. The prices of food are going up and up, causing much vexation among the inhabitants of the Klang Valley. However, with a little effort, little gems from a bygone era can still be uncovered. One of these unassuming establishments is Kedai Makanan Lim Kee. The place has seen better days and the furnishing is spartan. At night, the corner shop is brightly lit in an otherwise dark and quiet location. Yet, customers will slowly trickle in as the night progresses. At 8pm, there will be only three tables occupied, but by 9pm, most of the tables placed outside on the sidewalk will be full. Looking at the customers, it appears the shop is a beacon for late diners, office workers in tidy shirts who get off late from work, and tourists from nearby hotels searching for authentic Chinese food.

The shop offers bakkutteh and stir-fried dishes. The bakkutteh comes with a generous bunch of enoki mushrooms on top, and is served with side dishes of braised tofu pok and yaozhaguai. The piping hot soup is delicious and nutritious, a definite picker-upper for people who need energy after a long day. The soup has the right amount of herbal flavour for a satisfying kick. The ribs and



lean meat are surprisingly tender, not hard or tough at all.

The scrumptious fish fillet with ginger and spring onions is highly recommended. The fish is fresh, and the sauce has just the right amount of ginger flavour. The appetising clams stir-fried with dried shrimp is also fantastic. The clams are fresh and juicy, and the dried shrimp gives it an extra burst of seafood flavour.

Everything is served in generous portions, and the seafood is fresh. The food is tasty, not oily and not too salty. A great place for wholesome traditional Chinese food on a budget, it offers good value for money.

Address: 54, Lorong Haji Taib 1, Chow Kit, 50350 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**RESTORAN INSAF**

Restoran Insaf is a very old and trusted name that has been around since the 1970's serving excellent South Indian style Briyani. To those that used



to frequent Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman in the 70's and 80's, there were not many eateries along this stretch at those times and this used to be a must visit restaurant then. This restaurant used to be only visited by the Indians and Indian Muslims in the early years but now you get a lot of Malay customers coming here too.

They serve good Pakistani Muslim food and have a good reputation for their Briyani Rice, especially their all-time favourite dish, Nasi Ayam Madu. Another local favourite is the Mutton Briyani, which is cooked according to the traditional 'Karaikudi' way, also known as the 'Chettinad' way. From those days, Insaf's Mango Juice has been their famous drink as they were known to use only Indian or Australian Mangoes for the juices.

Dining here is not very comfortable as you do not have the privilege of being able to sit long after your meal and have a conversation as customers are coming in and everyone is rushing for a table. At times, you may have people waiting behind your seats for you to finish your meal so that they can occupy your table next. Despite this, people are willing to sacrifice that comfort factor just because the food is really good.

Address: No. 116, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**COLISEUM CAFÉ**

Established in 1921, Coliseum Cafe & Grill Room was Malaysia's finest café and grill room during the British colonial era. More than eight decades later, Coliseum remains one of the most compelling attractions in Kuala Lumpur today, drawing scores of local and foreign visitors who come for its nostalgic ambiance and classic offerings.

The café has a reasonable range Western and Malaysian food such as sizzling steaks, French onion soup, chicken chop, and baked stuffed crab. The Western dishes are known to typify Hainanese cooks who used to rule the colonial kitchens of old. In some ways the Coliseum is perhaps a little jaded but the place is a true-blue retro dining experience. The bar is well-worn and very pretty, inundating you with thoughts of all the people who've come through before.

Address: 98, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**RESTORAN JAI HIND**

For the last 60 years, Jai Hind has been one of the most unique and probably one of the oldest Northern Indian food restaurants



In Kuala Lumpur. Jai Hind mainly offers Northern Indian and Punjabi food hence you will see quite a few Punjabi men here with their distinctive turbans and long beards. The restaurant is not known for its ambiance or celebrity chefs but it is very authentic and very popular among local people. As the place is quite near the courthouses, you will also see Punjabi lawyers in their black suits tucking into their breakfast or lunch.

The palakpaneer, a staple at any North Indian restaurant in KL, is the best you'll eat in the city. The house-made buffalo milk paneer cubes are juicy and firm, bathed in a rich, forest-green gravy of puréed spinach. The dried chilli chicken and aloo parata are firm favourites too.

However, the place can be a tad stuffy and hot during lunch hours due to the weather and the crowd, but if that does not bother you, you're in for a satisfying meal. The style of this restaurant, like many in Malaysia is self service and pay for what you eat. Given the choice of food, you could eat here for a week, and eat something different every day!

Address: 13, Jalan Melayu, City Centre, 50100 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

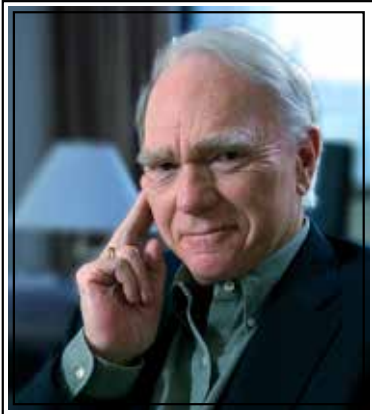
**CAPITAL CAFE**

Capital Café first opened its doors in 1956, and has retained much of its old-school charm with marble tabletops, wooden chairs, and tiled flooring. This old-world coffee shop which has been around for more than 60 years serves much more than just caffeine. There are at least four sections within the shop, independent of each other, serving Nasi Padang (steamed rice with vegetables and meat dishes of your choice served on a banana leaf-covered plate), rojak, fried noodles and the famous Satay. It is said that they serve the oldest and best satay in KL city centre. With a wide selection of sambal-laced dishes to choose from, the nasipadang is as delicious as it is popular. With Merdeka just around the corner, Capital Café might just be worth the visit for a walk down memory lane.

Address: 213, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia







BRAND EXPERT

# ROBERT MCKEE

## WHY BRAND STORYTELLING IS THE NEW MARKETING

Who is Robert McKee? According to many, he's the world's foremost educator on story form and brand storytelling. McKee's students have collectively won 60 Oscars, 200 Emmys, and hundreds of other prestigious awards. *John Cleese* has said of his seminar, "It's an amazingly important course that I've gone back to do three times," marketers from brands such as Kraft Foods and Pepsico have credited McKee's seminar, Storynomics, with transforming the way they reach and engage their audiences. Alex Paufler, CEO and president of Mercedes-Benz (Thailand), appreciates the value of McKee's doctrine: "Customers, business partners, and employees do not remember numbers or bullet points well, but they remember stories. Thus, talk in stories."

To learn more about this doctrine, the following questions were put to him.

**Today, brand storytelling is being talked about more and more in the marketing industry as a strategy. How can companies do it well?**

The way to persuade the buyer is to get their attention with a story, and that is very difficult in this day and age of distraction. Story is the most effective way to get attention because what attracts human attention is change. As long as things are moving on an even keel, you pay attention to whatever you're doing. But if something around you changes—if the temperature around you changes, if the phone rings—that gets your attention. The way in which a story begins is a starting event that creates a moment of change. When someone is watching a story, something happens that turns the situation, usually to the negative. (It could be to the positive, but even if it turns to the positive, it's going to become negative in a moment.)

Naturally, this arouses curiosity: how is this character going to put their life back into balance, to the positive? The change gets [the audience's] attention, the fact of things going out of balance arouses their curiosity, and then if you tell the story well, this protagonist, this core character, has within them some essential human quality that the audience recognizes and thinks, "that is a human being like me." Once they make the connection that this story is about someone like them, they're personally invested. Now, curiosity becomes suspense...[Once] you have them in a state of empathy, curiosity, and suspense, you can hold them for 30 seconds, a minute, or more. And hopefully, if the climax is well done, it will trigger them to take an action: to remember your product next time they're in the store,

or to go online and look it up. That, in a nutshell, is the process a well-told story puts an audience through.

**Do you think all brands have an opportunity to tell stories, or do you think it only applies to some of the sexier brands like Red Bull and Apple—brands with interesting products. How can boring brands use story to fuel their marketing?**

First of all, they have to use imagination, [and think], this product [or] company only seems boring. If you dig into something, anything offers some sort of positive contribution to civilization. It cures some ill. It fixes some problem. It performs some kind of service.

Companies that perform a service, their natural core character—the centerpiece of their stories—is the consumer in a very natural way. When you perform a service, there's a consumer who uses that service to actively benefit themselves. Therefore you can tell a story about the consumer's experience with the service. That's the natural thing to do. The hard thing is getting an audience to empathize with a product and/or a corporation. When a story stars a consumer, there's a kind of natural empathy. That character is a human being, just like me. The human connection is easy.

The hardest thing of all is when the logic of the material says the correct protagonist for this marketing story is the corporation itself. That is a branding story. Corporations do have consciences, and corporations do make decisions and take actions; therefore, you can portray corporations as thinking, acting, and being. But the problem is, in the modern world, how do you make a corporation empathetic? People have antipathy toward corporations. This is one of the reasons why so many companies like Starbucks, like Tide, have missions. You can tell the story about a mission—about what Tide is doing for people living in disaster areas, what Starbucks is doing to help educate its employees—you can dramatize it. The corporation comes alive, has a heart, and is out there on a mission.

You only have three choices in a marketing story for who the story is about: it's either about a corporation, about a product, or, if it's a service, it's about the consumer.

**Many marketers use very short-form content—on Twitter, Facebook, etc. Does storytelling fit into those channels?**  
Of course it does. But, the shorter it is, the more difficult it

is to write. You've got to throw life out of balance [quickly]. Without that, there's no curiosity. There's no interest in how balance will be restored.

But if your marketing is really good, you realize you don't necessarily need to put all the elements of a story in front of the audience, because the audience's mind is a story-making mind. If you give them certain elements, they will supply the rest.

For example, Nike tells a story in three words: just do it. And the story goes like this: I'm a lazy-ass, overweight couch potato, stuffing my face with potato chips. I finally make the decision that I'm going to change my life, and I go out and buy a pair of Nikes, and I try to jog and it hurts like hell. But I keep going, and every day I manage to jog another block farther, and it hurts like hell, until I get to the point where I'm actually losing weight and getting in shape, and I can go farther, and I can do a 5km run. My life changes. I feel better, I look better, and I've got energy, etc. 'Just do it' implies the story of the transformation of the couch potato into an athlete. That's how brief it can be.

**Do you think that industries like technology, that are used to moving quickly and trying new strategies, are better prepared to take on brand storytelling, as opposed to legacy brands?**

I don't think so. No matter what industry you're in, it doesn't prepare you to look at a human being the way a writer looks at a human being. One of the most important things I teach business people in my Storynomics lectures is to change their logic. They are used to thinking in terms of inductive logic. They make a PowerPoint presentation, which is inductive logic. They gather evidence—this point, this number, this authority, this that, therefore—and they draw a conclusion. That is of no use in telling a story. They have to shift from inductive logic to causal logic. And that is a categorical change. They've got to think in terms of cause and effect in a human way, and they've got to think in-depth, since most of human life is subconscious and irrational and based upon needs and desires that rise up out of people in various contradictory ways. They've really got to understand human nature. That takes wisdom. Science does not necessarily prepare you for that shift.

Source: LinkedIn

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# Thank You



*To all our esteemed clientele,*

*As Chairman of the Beverly Wilshire Medical Centre (BWMC) group, I am truly honoured to receive the BrandLaureate SME BrandLeadership Award for 2016/17.*

Beverly Wilshire Medical Centre strives to set the highest standard in cosmetic surgery, aesthetic medicine, dental aesthetics and healthy aging in the region.

We remain fully committed to providing our best care and excellent service to you and every individual that chooses us as their choice for beauty and health care provider.

Beverly Wilshire Medical Centre has been recognized as a multi-award winning integrated plastic, aesthetic and healthy aging facility since 2013; most notably being awarded the titles of International Cosmetic Surgery Clinic Of The Year by IMTJ for two years consecutively and Specialist Beauty Medical Centre by BrandLaureate for three years running. We have also received the coveted Aesthetic Centre Of The Year award by Frost & Sullivan, cementing our place as the premier facility for all things health and beauty. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and sincerest thanks to those who have supported us throughout our tireless pursuit in becoming the pinnacle of our industry.

For 2017, we remain focused on expanding our reach throughout the region through various digital marketing strategies, social media platforms, portals and business development opportunities. The digital age is bringing business and consumers closer together at an exponential rate and online marketing channels can provide a great window into pursuing opportunities that were once constraint by geographic location. We are primed to service the ever-growing, insatiable demand for medical tourism and are equipped to service the booming sector as it rapidly expands on a global scale.

Thank you for the strong support and well wishes we receive towards our continued success and commitment to excellence.

**DATO FRANCIS NG TIAN SANG**  
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# GUSHCLOUD

## CONNECTING BRANDS WITH SOCIAL INFLUENCERS

BY AIN MC

Social Influencers have become powerful allies in the marketing world, yet most remain unaware of their value, with no platform to initiate conversations with their favourite brands. Until, the existence of 'influencer marketing.'

Influencer marketing is fast becoming a powerful way brands can connect and engage with audiences. Popular with good reason, as if done right, influencer marketing can have unparalleled sales, growth and equity results for brands and generate unmatched ROI for marketing budgets. But how does it work?

In Malaysia, we have Gushcloud. It is Southeast Asia's leading influencer marketing and media network with offices in 8 countries: Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea and America.

Over the past 5 years, Gushcloud has worked with leading brands and top influencers to create the

best social media campaigns. Its network consists of some of the most talented content creators on social media—whose unique skill sets are tied together by a common theme: an eye for all things beautiful and an intimate knowledge of what works well on their social platform.

In May 2015, Gushcloud joined Yello Digital Marketing (YDM) Group, South Korea's leading and fastest growing digital marketing group to form APAC's leading Influencer Marketing and Media Company. Gushcloud recently hosted the Influence Asia Awards 2017 in Malaysia, the biggest social media influencer award show in Asia and it was attended by top Asian social media influencers.

But the real question is, how does it really work –this influencer marketing strategy? We talked to Ng Siang Hang, CEO of Gushcloud Agency where he shares about the methodology behind Gushcloud's gameplan.



“IN MALAYSIA, WE HAVE GUSHCLOUD. IT IS SOUTHEAST ASIA'S LEADING INFLUENCER MARKETING AND MEDIA NETWORK WITH OFFICES IN 8 COUNTRIES: SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA, INDONESIA, PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, VIETNAM, KOREA, AND AMERICA.”

**1. Can you briefly describe your background and what do you do for Gushcloud?**

I first joined Gushcloud Malaysia as the country manager, before I became the COO of Gushcloud and now the designated CEO of the agency side. I oversee the operations of Gushcloud Agency in 7 different countries: Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Korea and Vietnam.

**2. How and why did Gushcloud start? What was the goal when Gushcloud was founded?**

Gushcloud started as a social sharing platform, which then pivoted to becoming an influencer management network by late 2012. It is now the largest influencer marketing network across Southeast Asia and we have plans to expand in other parts of Asia and beyond.

**3. What do you think of the influencer marketing industry in Malaysia as compared to other countries?**

The digital marketing industry in Malaysia can be considered to be more mature as compared to the other countries in Southeast Asia. Brands are becoming more open and accepting of using influencer marketing as part of their marketing campaigns.

**4. How does Gushcloud gather its database of influencers and what are the criteria for someone to be called as an 'influencer'?**

We have exclusive influencers signed under us and we have represented more than 12,000 influencers across the region. That said, we are always on the lookout for upcoming social media influencers who we feel that we can exclusively represent. Although there are no criteria to the influencers to be represented, we would

ensure that their branding/brand name is compatible and suitable for us.

If we are just talking about reach, engagement and numbers, the criteria for someone to be an influencer differs from country to country as each has their own preferred platforms and market size. However, as long as they are able to influence their fans and followers regarding a topic, product or service and have a sizable number of following on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, they can be considered an influencer.

**5. Why do your clients pick Gushcloud over other agencies? What do you think you do better than your competitors?**

We have offices in 7 different countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam and Korea), which allows us to do campaigns at a regional level. For instance, if a brand in Korea has plans to break into the Indonesian market, our Korean colleagues can easily ask for advice from the Indonesian counterparts on how to do so. And with upcoming expansions in North Asia, we can execute even bigger regional campaigns across Asia.

**6. What is a challenge you've overcome at Gushcloud and how did you do it?**

One of the initial challenges that we had was the fact that social media and influencer marketing are both relatively new concepts in the industry, and many brands have little knowledge to none about how it works. Only after seeing the successes of our social media campaigns, did the brand marketers become more open to accepting influencer marketing as part of the campaign strategy.

Furthermore, organising Influence Asia has helped the industry to grow further by recognizing the hard work and effort these influencers has put it by legitimising their work.

**7. Can you share with us the benefits of using social media campaigns as opposed to other traditional campaigns that we used to have?**

With social media campaigns, brands can reach out to their target audience more cost-effectively. Reaching out to 1,000 people is much cheaper using social media as compared to television or billboards.

It also allows brands to engage and interact with their consumers, hence being able to receive feedback. Furthermore, the results are measurable, and marketers are able to take immediate action to spot trends and re-align campaigns.

**8. With offices in 8 countries, can you share with us how did Gushcloud manage to leave its footprints in each of these countries?**

We managed to replicate the business model across 7 countries and have executed successful regional campaigns across the region and have worked with various clients ranging from brands to governmental agencies.

“WE SHOULD BE CONSISTENTLY UPDATED WITH THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN TECHNOLOGY – TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR NEWER SOCIAL PLATFORMS THAT CAN BE LEVERAGED FOR INFLUENCERS TO UPLOAD THEIR CONTENT ON”

**9. Social media has been an undeniably effective marketing tool but there are also concerns rising in terms of how people spend too much time on it, what is your opinion on this?**

I believe that social media, like what you mention, is a tool. The effects of it depends on its users and how they make use of the content that they consume.

Influencers and content creators need to know and understand that they have a huge responsibility because many of the younger and future generations of today and tomorrow watch and read a lot of the content that they create. The recent Influence Asia had a brand promise of “Creating Tomorrow's Positive Influence Asia” which also reinforces that notion as well.

**10. How do you see social media evolving over the next 5 years and what do you hope to see?**

We should be consistently updated with the latest development in technology – to be on the lookout for newer social platforms that can be leveraged for influencers to upload their content on.

That said, I would say I hope to see an increase in quality of content, which we can already see it happening right now with our influencers.

**11. Have you ever envisioned a future where social media is no longer valid? What would happen to the world if this happen?**

Validity is subjective as well. The world has existed before without social media, but now that everyone is intertwined and more connected because of social media, I imagine there will be a devastation of sorts. Social media is more than just an application, it is a way to connect, to interact, to create and express.

**12. What would you say is a key piece of advice for start-ups trying to use social media to grow their business?**

Know who you are marketing to, it is important to identify a target audience before moving forward with the planning and execution of a campaign.





# 10 QUESTIONS

WITH **Sadiq Khan**

*Sadiq Khan is currently the Mayor of London, succeeding Conservative Party Mayor Boris Johnson. He immediately resigned as MP for Tooting upon his victory at the mayoral election. He is London's first ethnic minority mayor, and the first Muslim to become the mayor of a major Western capital. Khan won the largest number of votes in one election of any politician in British history. Check out his answers to the Top 10 questions!*

**You're the first Muslim mayor of a major western city. Do you feel an extra responsibility to tackle religious extremism?**

One of the things that's important to me as a Londoner is making sure my family, people I care about, are safe. But clearly, being someone who is a Muslim brings with it experiences that I can use in relation to dealing with extremists and those who want to blow us up. And so it's really important that I use my experiences to defeat radicalization and extremism. What I think the election showed was that actually there is no clash of civilization between Islam and the West. I am the West, I am a Londoner, I'm British, I'm of Islamic faith, Asian origin, Pakistan heritage, so whether it's [ISIS] or these others who want to destroy our way of life and talk about the West, they're talking about me. What better antidote to the hatred they spew than someone like me being in this position?

**What is your greatest fear?**

Another terrorist attack in London. Even though I know the Met and security services are doing a fantastic job keeping Londoners safe, it still keeps me awake at night.

**What is your earliest memory?**

Watching the Queen's silver jubilee procession drive past the estate where I grew up.

**Which living person do you most admire, and why?**

Mo Farah represents everything that's great about our country.

**What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?**

Caffeine addiction.

**What is the trait you most deplore in others?**

When people don't accept others for who they are. We shouldn't just tolerate diversity, we should respect and celebrate it.

**What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

A cricketer. I had a trial with Surrey as a 15-year-old with Geoff Arnold (former Surrey and England fast-medium bowler). He made a big mistake.

**What has been your biggest disappointment?**

Labour losing the 2015 election: we weren't able to help the people who needed us most.

**There was a great sense of divide across the UK after the Brexit Vote particularly in places like London which had voted to remain, similar to the sense of divide across the United States at the moment. In London itself do you feel like enough time has passed that things have healed, that sense of divide has healed?**

So London was the one region in England to vote to remain in the EU overwhelming so, but we've got to accept and this is the point I made in the speech. There is a rise of populism, across the world, the USA we saw it recently, France, the UK. In my view, the EU vote, the Brexit vote was a proxy for the frustrations that people have, the middle class have. The fact they are not showing the fruits of globalisation and we need to make sure that we do a far better job in them getting the benefits of globalization or getting more and more of populism rising.

**How would you like to be remembered?**

As a mayor who made London better for all Londoners, and as a good husband and dad.



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# KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGY



**BOSE SOUNDLINK REVOLVE+:  
LITTLE SPEAKER. BIG GOOSEBUMPS.**  
**US \$299**  
SoundLink Revolve+ is one of Bose's best performing portable Bluetooth speakers yet. It delivers true 360° sound for consistent, uniform coverage. This pint-sized enclosure is packed with more technology than meets the eye. A highly efficient transducer. Dual-passive radiators. An omnidirectional acoustic deflector. This speaker is arguably the best-sounding Bluetooth speaker for its size. It has a handle that makes toting it inside or out easier, and it's water-resistant so you don't have to worry about spilled drinks or pool splashing.

EVERY YEAR, THE MOST POPULAR BRANDS ARE SADDLED WITH RELEASING THEIR FLAGSHIP DEVICES, WHICH GET PEOPLE TALKING. THEN, THE QUESTION “WHICH SHOULD I BUY” IS CONSTANTLY NAGGING AT THE BACK OF YOUR MIND. BUT WE ARE HERE TO MAKE IT EASY FOR YOU. HERE ARE OUR PICKS OF THE HOTTEST, COOLEST AND MOST SIZZLING GIZMO NOW!



**HP SPECTRE X360: A VERSATILE 2-IN-1 LAPTOP WITH A KILLER 4K DISPLAY.**  
**US \$1,530**  
HP's 15-inch Spectre x360 is a more refined version of an already popular high-end notebook. The notebook offers an appealing mixture of style, specs, and performance, yet it weighs well below 5 pounds. The 15-inch HP Spectre x360 is highlighted by thin side display bezels and surprisingly compact footprint. That said, the

notebook is handily among the best looking full-size laptops out there. It is a solid contender for being the best full-size convertible laptop available today. It stands out among its peers with beautiful design, an attractive set of hardware features.



**AMAZON ECHO SHOW:  
IT DOESN'T JUST LISTEN, IT WATCHES.**  
**US \$230**

Amazon is adding a visual component to the Echo, its smart speaker that doubles as a personal assistant through artificial intelligence. The Echo Show is able to play video flash briefings and YouTube, show music lyrics, photos, and weather forecasts, even double security cameras. Users will also be able to do all the vocalized Amazon shopping which has occasionally been triggered by voices on TV.



**DJI SPARK:  
SMART, RELIABLE, AND INCREDIBLY INTUITIVE.**  
**US \$499**  
The DJI Spark is a mini drone that features all of DJI's signature technologies, allowing you to seize the moment whenever you feel inspired. With intelligent flight control options, a mechanical gimbal, and a camera with incredible image quality, Spark empowers you to push your creative boundaries. It's a selfie drone you can interact with just by waving your hand. It's also a short-range quadcopter that can be controlled with your smartphone, complete with forward obstacle avoidance and subject tracking capabilities.

**LG WATCH SPORT:  
ACCURACY, SIMPLICITY, AND SAFETY.**  
**US \$349**

LG combines the best of style and technology in the new LG Watch Sport, featuring both Android Wear 2.0 plus a bold new look, it's a win-win all around. The LG Watch Sport comes with a high performance elastomer strap, GPS for tracking exercise and navigation, a heart rate sensor for your workouts, and cellular connectivity. With dedicated buttons for Google Fit and Android Pay, plus a rotating side button, it's Android Wear's most powerful watch.



**LOGITECH CIRCLE: A WIRELESS SMART SECURITY CAMERA THAT DETECTS PEOPLE.**  
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Watch over home from anywhere with Circle's innovative security features. Circle lets you see and capture HD video, anytime, from as many devices as you want. Each camera features a 135-degree wide-angle glass lens, unlimited streaming 1080p HD video, night vision, and delivers home surveillance you can trust. Every Circle camera comes with 24-hours of free AES 256 Bit Dual Layer Encryption storage, stored in your secure private cloud, unlimited streaming and content downloads.





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**Reason to Buy:** Be prepared to take your productivity level to a whole new level with this cool stuff!

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# The Grapevine



Mime et moi

### A New Generation of High Heel Shoes

If you've ever had to carry an extra pair of comfy shoes in your bag when wearing heels, that struggle is about to be a thing of the past. German shoe retailer Mime et Moi came up with a brilliant solution by creating interchangeable heels. Each shoe comes with five different heel-change options from stilettos to flats, and with a quick snap on/off you can switch up your look in an instant. The bonus? The different heel heights are small enough to fit into your handbag, making them ideal for commuters (leave those sneakers at home).

**Reason to Buy:** Sore feet at the end of a night out could be a thing of the past!

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### Gather – A Superproductive Desk Setup

Gather is a minimal, modular desk organizer that adapts to your workspace by allowing you to configure its pieces however you like. Gather is a modular home for your essentials, thoughtfully designed to help you cut through the clutter. The solid wooden base – which comes in walnut or maple – has four lengthwise slots, which the various thermoplastic top pieces (holders, trays, et al) are inserted into. Additional pieces, such as a headphone stand and a coaster, can be attached to the sides or back of the base via integrated rare earth magnets, or they can be used separately. Similarly, multiple wooden bases can be put together using those same magnets, where the longer organization pieces can span across them.

**Reason to Buy:** It's time to put an end to the unsavoury sight of a cluttered desk, don't you think?

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The emergence of new brands occurs almost on a daily basis that it becomes almost impossible to catch up! But not all is given the limelight they truly deserve and why is that? What makes some brands stand out from the rest? It's the uniqueness that catches people's attention! In this new section, we feature some of the brands that we don't want you to miss.

micro

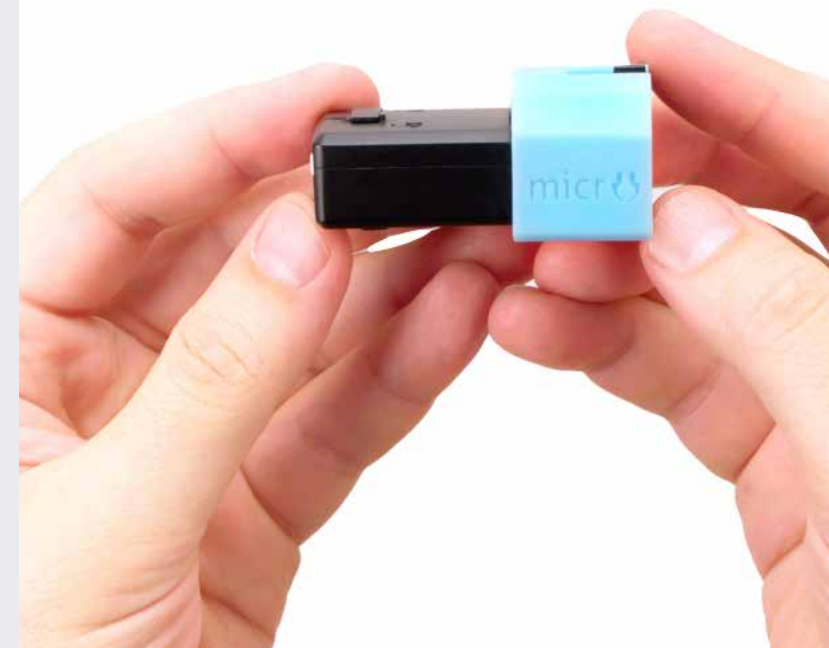
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**Reason to Buy:** Because we believe your travel adapter should be one of the coolest gadgets you own!

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The much-anticipated, US\$10-million [RM38-million] home of global club brand Zouk Kuala Lumpur [KL] opened in August 2015 at TREC, Malaysia's and Kuala Lumpur's first and largest purpose-built entertainment and lifestyle enclave.

With distinct straight line edges defining its external appearance, the structure is a vision that embodies the innovative concept of the 26-year-old world-class brand – and it is a symbol of leadership in Asia's entertainment industry.

The 13-year-old Zouk Club KL, the capital of the city's electronic dance music scene, is lavishly outfitted with state of the art lighting and sound equipment, set against a kaleidoscope of soundscapes from EDM, House, Electro, Open Format, Trance, Techno, Trap, R&B, Hip Hop to Indie and Nu-Disco. It stands poised, a new landmark at its address, the bustling Jalan Tun Razak.

The award-winning nightspot is a hallmark of club design and concept, with its dramatic architecture resonating with the global club brand. Adventurous in its ethos, the 11-room Zouk Club KL draws 17,000 partygoers every week of whom, 20 per cent are tourists.

A fixture on DJ Mag's Top 100 Clubs In The World, the award-winning superclub is ranked No.21 in the world, auguring superbly for the bigger, bolder Zouk Club KL that has yet again ushered a game-changing era.

**The Making of Asia's and One of the World's Biggest Super Club**  
How does one plan and build a new home for the biggest global club name on this side of the world that's a staggering three times the size of what it used to be?

Zouk KL's co-founder Cher Ng took lead of the new Zouk KL's concept, research and planning, which started three years ago, in 2011. He recalls: "By late 2014, the design draft had reached over 60 revisions, and we started the design process two years ago in 2012. I'm particular when comes to space planning and that's one thing I've learnt over the years that it can make or break a club."

Cher did his research, studying designs of various clubs through his frequent travels. The former club at Jalan Ampang was also a case study – on how the crowd moved around within the complex; dictating the correct ceiling height for the rooms; having the right entrance design for better flow and crowd management; and specifying the type of sound, light and visual effects to be achieved in each room.

Cher examined the design dynamics in perspective, piecing the elements together for the guests' overall experience at the new superclub at TREC. It also helped him to determine the suitable size for each room so as to cater to demand, as well as creating little nooks in the club, which he observes "some people have the habit of going back to their favorite spots and corners in the club all the time".

Based on these, American designer Phillips Connor of DB&B embraced the challenge – all 106,000 sq feet of it – the new Zouk KL along Jalan Tun Razak. When faced with the



task, he had nothing with which to make any comparisons – there was no precedent, no reference to turn to.

Phillips notes: "The project is very large and there is a complex interrelationship between the variety of venues within the space. It is important to create a systematic approach to planning. This building was created from the inside out – from looking at the different clubs in the space; how they interrelate with one another; how customers would experience them; and then, creating the building architecturally, the building design is progressive – it's new, it's angular, and it zooms towards you. There is lots of ethereal light, with plenty of colouration on the facade.

The result: An architectural and design marvel. The powerful experience of Zouk KL starts when one approaches the building, designed by the award-winning Veritas Design Group as an aggressive, iconic architectural statement. So bold and alluring, people can quickly recognise and identify it.

Zouk KL's facade [63 m long x 15 m high] features a hard and reflective property that picks up the night light beautifully says Fabian Low of SLK Interior and Falkcon Interior, who sourced for various materials from Canada, the Philippines, Italy, Spain, USA, China, Indonesia and Japan, during the one-year building and construction of Zouk KL.

Zouk's brand founder [SG/KL] Lincoln Cheng lent his expertise as a trained architect, acting as a design advisor overseeing Zouk KL's design layouts and selection of materials that attribute to the club's aesthetic values.



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# 3HORSES

*The Traditionally Produced Malt Beverage*  
Over 400 years of brewery



## HISTORY

Nearly four centuries ago in Breda, the year that marked the birth of '3 Hoefijzers' brand in 1628. By 1886, the name changed to '3 Horses' which is easier to pronounce and remember. This traditionally produced malt beverage is produced in Germany by United Dutch Breweries (UDB). Their long history of brewing makes the perfect taste in every single bottle.

## QUALITY

Today, 3 Horses Malt beverage has attracted a lot of interest in consumers. This beverage is positioned as a healthy and trendy lifestyle beverage compared to normal soft drinks that is harmful to health. 3 Horses is the first Malt brand to offer the light version that is suitable for people with diabetes.

In addition, this beverage has been produced from the best available raw materials and does not contain any artificial ingredients (GMO). The source of water used is from the finest natural mineral water.

The middle east currently the biggest market for 3 Horses. Being highly responsible in the details of their brewing process, The United Dutch Brewery emphasises quality reassurance by ensuring that the brewing of malt for this beverage does not undergo fermentation.



**"THIS BEVERAGE HAS BEEN PRODUCED FROM THE BEST AVAILABLE RAW MATERIAL AND DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY ARTIFICIAL INGREDIENTS (GMO). THE SOURCE OF WATER USED IS FROM THE FINEST NATURAL MINERAL WATER"**

## HALAL

3 Horses is certified as Halal by 'Halal World' or also known as 'Islamic Chamber Research & Information Centre' (ICRIC). In the Middle East, it is not necessary to have the halal logo on the packaging. But in Malaysia, it is important to make consumer comfortable with the product.

The Halal by ICRIC is acceptable in most countries worldwide including Malaysia, which is recognised by JAKIM and is tested 100 per cent non alcohol by the Malaysia Biotechnology Corp. situated in Melaka.

National Fatwa council in 2011 has ruled that malt drinks like 3 Horses can be consumed by Muslims by Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Abdul Shukor at its previous series of muza-karah (discussions).

## PRODUCT

3 Horses comes with various flavours and packagings. The flavours consists of 1 Classic flavours, 1 Dark Malt flavour and 9 fruity flavours that is Peach, Apple, Lemon, Strawberry, Pomegranate, Apple-light, Lemon-light, Strawberry-light and Pomegranate-light.

In Malaysia, it started off with glass bottle to allow the positioning of 3 Horses with the nice, premium feel and touch. 3 Horses then came with the can version to suit the market. 3 Horses is focusing the glass bottle version in the on-trade market while the can version in the off-market for the whole South Asia.

## ADDED VALUE

We create an added value to the society by providing a better and healthy drink as an alternative for a healthy lifestyle. Apart from having 3 Horses as a trendy drink, this beverage can be used as a simple handy gift for an appreciation.

3 Horses is also suitable to be used as celebration drink such as weddings, parties, and also corporate function. The classy design and the authentic taste will allow consumers to really appreciate the value.



**HEALTH FACT :** Malt is known to lower blood pressure, release hypertension, improve blood circulation, and supply daily recommended value of 8 vitamins, particularly B2, B3, B6 and folate

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### Fine Experience

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### Authentic Flavour

Trend-setter. A smack in the face for new generations of modern cuisine



*The Traditionally Produced Malt Beverage*

## "Splash a Dose of Goodness"

### Serving Suggestions

#### Chilled

Serve it well chilled in your favourite glassware

#### With Food

Fine taste when paired with any cuisine. Spicy, especially

#### Celebrations

In parties, weddings, birthday parties, corporate and all special occasions

### HALAL, AUTHENTIC, NATURAL AND CLASSY BEVERAGE

For over 400 years, 3 Horses has been perfecting the art of taste and quality, producing the most authentic taste of Malt beverage. Today, 3 Horses clearly has a strong acceptance worldwide and is seen as something different and premium plus halal and suitable for all range of ages. In this perfect blend and breathtaking aroma, 3 horses produces this high quality beverage with passion for a new generation of equally demanding customers.



Imported



Halal



### 3 Horses Beverage

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# A HANDS DOWN Success

LED BY BERNARD GOH, HANDS PERCUSSION CONTINUES ON ITS BOLD QUEST TO ACHIEVE ARTISTIC SUCCESS.

BY ANU VENUGOPAL



For Bernard Goh, there is no denying the power of the drums.

It was his love of the percussion instrument that led him to train under the late Tan Hooi Song, who founded the *24 Festive Drumming*, named after the number of festivals celebrated annually in China. Bernard's fascination of the drums developed and in 1997, he made the bold decision to establish the *Hands Percussion* group together with his friends - and hasn't looked back since.

"People are attracted to the catchy tunes and energetic sounds and vibes coming from the drums. It has the capacity to capture a person's attention first, then the potential to affect positive social change through music especially with children," said Bernard.

The Founder and Artistic Director of the home grown percussion group has legitimate reasons to be proud, as Hands turns 20 this year. From performing in small scale productions to stages like Plenary Hall, winning awards and going on worldwide tours, he led *Hands* through a musical journey, with significant milestones. For some, these high points are reflections of their past while for others it's a time of celebration, but for Bernard it is about looking forward.

"For some, 20 years may be long, but for me it's like being a teenager. You're still young with a lot to learn. Similarly, *Hands Percussion* is just a teenager. We've got a long way

to go. And I need to know how to go on, how to sustain the group for the next 10-20 years," said Bernard, who is also the Artistic Director of Damansara Performing Arts Centre.

With nine full-time, eleven part-time and ten trainee performers, the performers too have expanded, with the original members known as *Hands 1* and a second team, *Hands 2* which was formed in 2005. 10 years ago, Hands also formed a Gamelan group and started honing their artistic skills, rehearsals, creativity session and more at their own double storey office in Sungai Buloh.

The far-sighted Bernard has led his team, Malaysia's first and only, fully professional, self-funded, percussion group through nearly 30 productions. A strong believer of the need to evolve with the times, Bernard is one who marches to the beat of his own drum. From performing on Chinese drums, the gamelan, gendang and more, the *Hands Percussion's* members continue to expand their artistic skills.

Partnering with local talents such as Susan Sarah John, Jo Kukathas, Kamrul Hussin and Geng Wak Long, and international percussion bands such as Daffra Drums, *Hands* have had their fair share of musical collaborations and artistic presentations. These collaborations, helmed by Bernard have added to their repertoire of bold, creative presentations, offering audiences the opportunity to experience high-quality and thought provoking productions.

"If I believed that *Hands* was only about Chinese drumming, I wouldn't be where I am today. When I first started, I wanted the team to go from traditional Chinese drummers to musicians and then performers. Today, they can drum, play, read and compose music, as well as act and dance," added Bernard who believes strongly in the need for diversity and versatility in the Hands team.

The ex-lecturer and graphic designer turned teacher has been busy creating a variety of shows for his members since the beginning - from *When Percussion Meets (2001)* *Drum Slices 2 (2007)* *Rhapso Drums (2010)* to *KALEIDOSCOPE II - Hands Drumming Festival (March 2012)*. Creatively planned and executed with fine details the group's as productions such as *KALEIDOSCOPE 2 - Hands Drumming Festival* and *Dreams* in November have won awards at the 8th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards.

Awards and recognition aside, like most performing based companies in the country, Hands has had their share of problems, chief among them, getting sponsorship. However, this has not stopped Bernard from dreaming big dreams for his members and expanding the minds of ardent followers of their contemporary shows.

"The past 20 years hasn't been easy. I worked hard, knocked on many doors, talk to people about *Hands*. At the end of the day it depends on me, whether we do it in badminton courts or go for 3000 seats at Plenary Hall or go for a tour



“MY INTEREST AS A THEATRE PRACTITIONER IS TO SEE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE SEE IT AS A VIABLE OPTION FOR EXPRESSING CREATIVITY. THEY HAVE BOUNDLESS ENERGY AND TALENT. AS LONG AS THEY COME IN WITH THE ATTITUDE THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE, SKILLS CAN BE TAUGHT”

abroad. I need to set the target for the whole team to follow. Everyone is struggling, not just the performing arts. We cannot hold back but must carry on creating," revealed the 46-year-old.

Undoubtedly Bernard has been successful in his quest to create avant-garde productions that have the ability to manipulate music and movement through creative, artistic processes. *Hands Percussion's* artistic offerings like Tchaikovsky On Gamelan and Opium have the ability to get audiences pondering and reflecting on its messages.

The group's successful partnerships with local percussion groups such as Kumar Karthigesu & Friends and No Noise Percussion and international acts such as Sisu and Bi-Hots bear testament to the fact that the performing arts is meant to be a collaborative process.

There is plenty of collaboration in commemorating of the group's successful 20 years of existence. Starting with a nationwide tour in Johor Bahru, Ipoh, Penang and Kuantan in April and May, the talented group will go on to showcase the results of a three-year collaboration with Daffra Drums, led by Olivier Tarpaga, Marimba player, Tan Su Yin and cellist, Florian Antier. Another unique concert is DeafBeat's 10th Anniversary concert, featuring eight hearing-impaired youths previously coached by Bernard, before being coached currently by Muji Lee.

"Drums can inspire people even those with special needs,

I never expected anything except to just teach them, and I found a way to explain drumming to them without any special classes," revealed Bernard, who is proud of the group who now is a part of CIMB's ongoing CSR project.

As part of the Kuala Lumpur International Arts Festival, DiverseCity 2017, *HANDS* will also be collaborating with Scandinavia's SISU Percussion and marimba player, Tan Su Yin and Malaysian-based menswear designer, Moto Guo in Percussion Paradise, with all compositions composed by *Hands* themselves.

In keeping with their philosophy that 'art can inspire change', the members of the group also lend their drumming talents to teach students the art of drumming through their Balik Kampung projects and coach at government, private and international schools. With the aim to sharpen creativity and provide a fun platform for children to learn, interact and perform together, this is one way *Hands* gives back to the community and country.

"Time passes by so fast. I am proud to be here. I am proud that we're still together. My best moments are not award winning nights, but the feeling and bond between us. *Hands* doesn't belong to me. It belongs to all Malaysians because it belongs to this land," said Bernard.

A local brand with international benchmarks and ever-increasing talent, Hands Percussion is the one to watch for the next 20 years.



# IMPIANA PRIVATE VILLAS KATA NOI PHUKET



Perfectly poised on a dramatic rocky headland above the cozy bay of Kata Noi and nestled within a realm of lush greenery, every room at this stunning eleven luxury villas commands the breathtaking view of the Andaman Sea.

Impiana Private Villas Kata Noi is an exclusive 5-star boutique resort and hosts four private villas and seven luxurious suites. Arranged over three levels, each of the spacious bedrooms features floor-to-ceiling glass walls and provides an immense view of the ocean as well as natural lighting when sunlight bursts in during the day. The attentive butler service is on hand to pamper and ensure you have everything you need, with all the privacy that you want.

The grandeur Royal Villa which lies on the upper floor sprawls an impressive 260 sqm and features two oversized bedrooms and a sparkling Jacuzzi. The rooms are adorned with the finest modern furnishings, unique works of art and top quality fittings in the living areas, bedrooms and bathroom. Adding to the appeal is the private infinity swimming pool, a spacious outdoor deck that is perfect for alfresco dining or a customised spa treatment as well as a personal butler who will attend to your every need. Given its location and the entire sea-front wall made of glass, this villa commands the best view of all.

The themed Honeymoon Suite epitomises love and romance and is ideally suited for couples, honeymooners or those celebrating wedding anniversaries and special occasions. With the private infinity pool as centre piece, the outdoor terrace of this one-bedroom Honeymoon Suite is furnished with padded reclining loungers and enjoying the island's cool ocean breeze, creating a secluded personal paradise in the heart of Phuket. One may even opt for a customized spa treatment on the private deck while being serenaded by the mesmerizing sounds of the lapping waves below.

The Classic Villas and Suites range from 60 sqm to 170 sqm and each is characterized by its respective interior design concepts. Tastefully furnished with a mix of modern contemporary and accentuated with minimal pieces of classic furniture, the bedroom and living room will instantaneously transform the mood. As with other Villas and Suites, the sea-facing full-glass partition opens up to an infinity private pool and a private deck with an unobstructed views of the Andaman Sea.

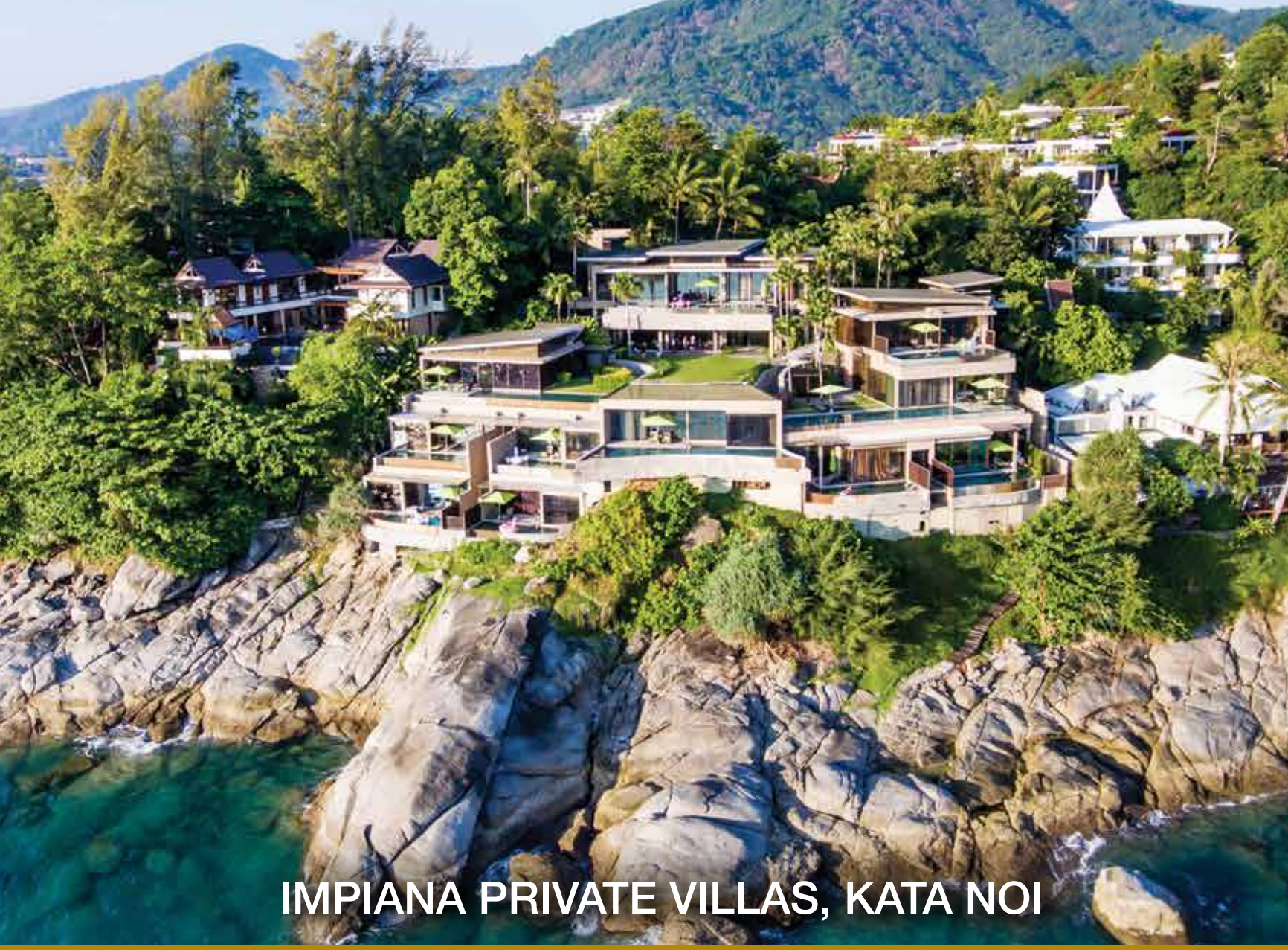
The Living Room restaurant is ideal for those who appreciate the tastes of Phuketian cuisine with dishes specially prepared by the in-house private chef.

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## IMPIANA PRIVATE VILLAS, KATA NOI



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# VENICE

QUEEN OF THE SEAS

Write up by : **IDA IBRAHIM**

VENICE OWES ITS EXISTENCE TO THE SEA – TO EXPERIENCE THE FULL TRUTH OF THIS STATEMENT, TAKE A BOAT OUT TO THE ISLANDS OF THE LAGOON AROUND IT AND WATCH THE CITY RECEDE INTO THE WIDE EXPANSE OF WATER AND SKY, BECOMING A MIRAGE OF DOMES, PINNACLES, TOWERS AND PALACES. LIKE MANY OF THE THE WORLD'S MOST EVOCATIVE CITIES – ISTANBUL, ST. PETERSBURG, NEW YORK – VENICE IS UNTYPICAL OF THE COUNTRY TO WHICH IT BELONGS, BUT NOWHERE ELSE IS REALLY LIKE VENICE AT ALL. WHETHER SWELTERING BENEATH THE SUMMER SUN OR SWATHED IN WINTER FOGS, THE CITY IS LITERALLY UNIQUE.





Venice is built on a collection of islands, seahorse shaped, and crisscrossed by more than 150 canals and 400 bridges, which were settled in the 5th century by refugees from the mainland. The republic they established lasted more than a thousand years, growing fabulously rich on trade with the East, extending its rule over islands and cities. Such mixed eastern influences, and especially such wealth, are reflected in Venetian art and architecture – often fantastically rich and ornate – but not noticeably in its food, where seafood is the chief allure, its small clams are a local delicacy, caught in the lagoon and fried live in olive oil and garlic.

In Venice you either walk – or go by water. To see Venice the very first, take a vaporetto (water bus) from the railroad station or the only parking lot in Piazzale Roma. On the slow journey down the Canal Grande, you see palace after palace rise from the waters, some Gothic in style such as the fanciful 15th Century Ca' Grande, but almost nothing seems to have changed in the two centuries since Canaletto painted it all.

After chugging under the bridge of the Rialto, once the city's commercial centre, the vaporetto reaches the Piazza San Marco (St. Mark's Square). The immense square, though often crowded, remains the heart of Venice, with Renaissance arcades on three sides housing famous cafes. Napoleon called it the "finest drawing room in Europe," and orchestras still play here every evening. Be warned: these cafes are not cheap! On the Piazza's fourth side rises Venice's cathedral: *St. Mark's Basilica*, a five-domed Byzantine church overlaid by an extraordinary fantasy of pinnacles and gold stars on an azure ground. On its front stand four ancient Roman bronze horses looted from the Hippodrome at Byzantium – but the ones you see now are reproduction, the originals being inside to protect them from pollution. The tall campanile (bell tower) beside the Basilica is also a replica, the original having collapsed with minimal damage to surrounding buildings in 1902.



Almost any turning in Venice will bring you face to face with some architectural marvel or a gallery full of world-class paintings. Among the many churches which five the Venetian skyline its air of elegant fantasy are the Renaissance Santa Mara dei Miracoli, the Baroque Santa Maria della Salute and on the island of the same name, San Giorgio Maggiore by the Renaissance genius Palladio, whose pale dome is one of the city's landmarks. The Accademia Gallery houses masterpieces of Venetian art down the centuries but for a more modern note try the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation in the half-built Palazzo Venier, noted for its Surrealist art.

Sooner or later everyone gets lost in the labyrinth of canalside pathways that is Venice away from the crowds. Despite being one of the world's most touristed cities, you need only take a wrong turn to find yourself in a narrow alley beside walls punctuated only by barred windows, before you emerge into some square basking in the afternoon sun. Then, footsore and hot, is the time to take to the water. Gondolas, the obvious first choice, are as fantastic as anything in Venice – fantastically impractical and expensive, but very romantic if you don't object to bobbing around in the wakes of the motorboats. If you want to gondola cheaply, take a traghetto – communal gondolas which cross the Canal Grande at various fixed points.



image :  
01-02)Overlooked by the exotic splendour of St. Mark's Basilica, the Piazza San Marco is one of the world's classic café locations.

03)The Lido – the long strip of sand that forms Venice's seaside playground – still basks in the faded elegance of a turn-of-the-century resort.





01

#### The Lagoon and Islands

When you tire of the city, take another vaporetto to the lagoon and islands. The vaporetto from Fondamente Nuove chugs along through the placid lagoon like an old train pulling up at wayside halts lying scarcely above the water. Murano, biggest of the lagoon islands, is crowded with glassmakers' workshops; the craft has been practiced here for centuries, and if the island's products – multicolored fish with arabesque fins, cute little dogs – are often kitsch, there's undeniable satisfaction in taking home something you have seen created with such skill. Burano, bright with coloured houses, is famed for its fishing and lacemaking, and again you can watch its lacemakers practice their traditional calling. Torcello, the farthest of these scattered islands, was among the first to be settled; some of the houses on the Rialto were moved stone by stone from here when the island became malarial and was abandoned. Today it is a lonely, evocative place, with little besides its imposingly plain cathedral standing amid overgrown fields. If you enjoy solitude (like Ernest Hemingway who wrote *Across the River and Into the Trees* here) you can stay at Torcello's one small hotel, but you'll be stranded on the island after the last vaporetto leaves in the early evening.

Biggest by far of all these islands, the one which shelters the lagoon from the sea, is the 9-mile (14 km) long Lido. Grand hotels line the wide beach, and none is grander than the Grand Hotel des Bains, a luxurious fin de siècle building where the German novelist Thomas Mann wrote *Death in Venice* in 1911 and where, 60 years later Luchino Visconti made the movie of the book. But more typically Venetian in its ornate fantasy is the Moorish-style Hotel Excelsior. Even if you don't want to swim or sunbathe, the Lido is worth a visit.

02



image :

- 1) The wee island is located in the same lagoon as Venice, but its colors pop and fizzle in a way that makes it feel almost tropical.
- 2) One of the last remaining examples of the ancient Torcello church in Venice.



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70<sup>e</sup> FESTIVAL DE CANNES

17-28 MAI 2017

# 70 YEARS OF CANNES

## OF CINEMATIC TREASURES AND MASTERPIECES

Cannes is widely considered the most prestigious film festival in the world, mainly because of its exclusivity and long history of premiering some of the greatest films of all time. The festival has launched the careers of many prominent filmmakers, like Quentin Tarantino and Steven Soderbergh.

Cannes carefully cultivates its image by programming a limited number of films, by giving awards selected by juries that are stacked with well-known filmmakers, actors, and composers from around the world, and by maintaining the largest film market in the world.

Winning a prize at Cannes doesn't guarantee commercial or critical success. And yet it's undoubtedly a big deal — it can launch a career — and it guarantees the director's place in film history. It can also propel a film toward success during awards season months later; The Artist, for instance, premiered at Cannes in 2011, where star Jean Dujardin won the Best Actor award. It went on to win five Oscars, including Best Picture — the first French film ever to win that prize.

But Cannes's importance extends beyond awards recognition; it also affects which films make it to the audiences at all. One of the most important events for most Cannes attendees is the Marché du Film, which is the world's busiest movie market. "Specialty distributors" — that is, movie distributors that specialize in finding ways to get audiences for foreign, arthouse, and other niche films — often make their most important deals of the year at the festival. Filmmakers who hope to find funding and distribution for their films spend

their days at Cannes networking with financiers, distributors, and publicists from all over the world.

The 70th Cannes Film Festival played host to some good movies this year (there is never a year when it doesn't), yet throughout the 12-day event, there has been a pervasive feeling, shared by critics, distributors, publicists, and audiences alike, that the festival's been having a soft year and its magic was tamped down. It had something to do with the lack of a universally agreed upon home run, like "Toni Erdmann" or "Amour" or "4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days" or "Breaking the Waves."

It also had something to do with the new security system, which freighted the simple act of walking into a movie with a touch of that airport depression. For all that, Cannes is still Cannes: the most momentous film festival in the world. Here we bring you this year's well-deserving winners of the film industry.

### THE A-LISTERS

Here are the winners from the 2017 Cannes film festival, as chosen by a star-studded jury led by Spanish director Pedro Almodovar.

#### Palme d'Or: The Square

Swedish film, The Square, a dark satire of the contemporary art world, was the surprise winner of the top Palme d'Or prize at the world's biggest film festival. The film, a savagely funny takedown of political correctness and the things we choose to hang in art galleries, had premiered to strong reviews - but even director Ruben Ostlund was shocked as he picked up the award, shouting, "Oh my God, oh my God!"

#### Grand Prix: 120 Beats Per Minute

120 Beats Per Minute, a moving drama set in Paris at the

height of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1990s, scooped second prize for its wrenching portrayal of a romance between two activists in the advocacy group ACT UP. The film was a deeply personal project for director Robin Campillo, who was himself an activist in the French branch of the group that helped shame the world into action.

#### Jury Prize: Loveless

In her first film role in her native Germany, In The Fade, Hollywood star and former model Diane Kruger swapped her usually glamorous image to play a mother who vows revenge after her ethnic Kurdish husband and son are killed in a neo-Nazi attack.

#### Best Actor: Joaquin Phoenix

Triple Oscar nominee Joaquin Phoenix won best actor

for playing a traumatised hitman in Lynne Ramsay's ultra-violent You Were Never Really Here.

He gives an electrifying performance as Joe, a former soldier who is hired by a New York state senator to rescue his daughter from a paedophile ring.

#### Best Actress: Diane Kruger

In her first film role in her native Germany, In The Fade, Hollywood star and former model Diane Kruger swapped her usually glamorous image to play a mother who vows revenge after her ethnic Kurdish husband and son are killed in a neo-Nazi attack.

Hailed as a "powerhouse performance" by Variety magazine, Kruger said the role had taken a huge emotional toll. "The film almost killed me," she said at Cannes. "I haven't worked since."

#### Best Director: Sofia Coppola

Sofia Coppola picked up best director for her remake of the American Civil War thriller, The Beguiled, starring Colin Farrell as a soldier who bewitches several Southern women including Nicole Kidman. Collecting her award, the Bling Ring director thanked her father -- Apocalypse Now director Francis Ford Coppola -- for teaching her the tricks of the trade.

#### Best Screenplay: Lynne Ramsay and Yorgos Lanthimos

The nine-member jury opted to split the screenplay prize in two, dividing it between Scottish director Lynne Ramsay for You Were Never Really Here and Greece's Yorgos Lanthimos for The Killing of a Sacred Deer, a chilling suburban thriller starring Colin Farrell and Nicole Kidman.

#### Special Prize: Nicole Kidman

Nicole Kidman was the undisputed queen of this year's Cannes with four projects showing. To mark its 70th birthday, the festival rewarded her with a special prize.





‘BAYWATCH’, BASED ON ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR TELEVISION SERIES OF THE 1990S DOESN’T GO FOR THE SAME BROAD AUDIENCE AS THE SHOW. THE MOVIE AIMS FOR GROSS-OUT HUMOUR BUT FORGETS A KEY INGREDIENT: COMEDY.

By : AIN MC

Fans of the late 80s and 90s TV hit series Baywatch should prepare to be sadly disappointed by the movie inspired by the show. It is a painful two hours and the film is its own worst enemy as the first 30 minutes of the show never quite delivers the goods. Despite a talented cast, with two huge Hollywood actors well-seasoned in the comic genre, the script is weak, the humour stale and the plot twists are well below par, even by 90s TV standards! Neither Dwayne ‘Rock’ Johnson nor Zac Efron could save it from drowning.

Even a predictable and flimsy story line would have been acceptable and somewhat expected for this type of film had the script been entertaining instead of saturated with one-liners that crash-land as soon as they are spoken. A pity really, as it did have the elements to be a fun and lighthearted movie.

The plot, like many of the original storylines, is simple. Lifeguard Mitch Buchannon (Johnson), impetuous new Baywatch recruit Efron and the remainder of the scantily-clad Baywatch team uncover an illicit plot which threatens the future of their precious bay. Lieutenant Mitch is somewhat of a legend at the bay with a reputation for being a man who many owe their lives to. However it

seems lifeguarding for him is more than just being able to swim and save countless lives, it’s about solving crimes too. The team takes their work incredibly seriously (with the exception of Efron’s character, Matt) and as dedicated lifeguards they set out to get to the bottom of this fishy barrel of criminality, with predictable plots and painful pathetic humour along the way. Some of the jokes – albeit not very unoriginal, are laugh-out-loud funny, which is what makes it worse in a way as the remaining 90 minutes of the film was lacking in real humour.

The show touches on the training of three new members, Matt, surfer Summer (Alexandra Daddario) and the least likely lifeguard ever, computer geek Ronnie (Jon Bass) by the elite team of lifeguards Mitch, Stephanie (Ilfenesh Hadera) and CJ (Kelly Rohrbach). After noticing bags of the drug ‘flakka’ washing up on the beachfront, the team investigates the rise in narcotic activity which ultimately leads to the new owner of the expensive beach front resort ‘The Huntley Club’ and Bond type villain, Victoria Leeds (Priyanka Chopra). Ignoring their superior’s warnings to stay away, the team continues to dig deeper, uncovering more of the complicated operation.

At least Pamela Anderson and David Hasselhoff are in it! But try not to blink, as their cameos are so small, you may miss them. But fans, don’t despair, you’ll be happy to hear that Baywatch does reintroduce beautiful bodies in teeny costumes, abs in places that you never knew existed and slow motion running shots with cleavages bouncing around freely, and it even makes fun of it too. In fact, it goes out of its way to laugh at itself with a mixture of self-deprecating humour and semi-seriousness.

But the most mind-numbing part is the feeling that the film is living from scene to scene; aiming to get in as many clichéd cheap laughs into each scene as possible, whether they actually work or not. For example, Mitch refuses to call Matt by his real name, addressing him each and every time by a different boy band name and although this might be humorous at the beginning, by the end of the film when Matt actually elevates his game and Mitch refers to him as Matt, you have actually stopped caring.

At best Baywatch is a mediocre, highly predictable, buddy film with more action than humour. To conclude in the words of Victoria Leeds: “This is so tacky” and sadly yes, most of it was.

# Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance

IN THE BOOK GRIT, ANGELA DUCKWORTH MAKES THE CASE THAT THE DIFFERENCE IS A COMBINATION OF PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE-OR, AS SHE CALLS IT, GRIT.

Author: Angela Lee Duckworth  
Title: Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance  
Source: AFP

### What is Grit?

By studying the world’s top performers in many different domains, Duckworth had a hypothesis - that high achievers were special in two specific ways. First, they were unusually resilient and hardworking. Second, they knew in a very deep way what they wanted. They had determination and direction. She put this hypothesis to the test by creating the Grit Scale. She started to look at other domains to see if it could predict success in every field. It did. It predicted who would stay and who would quit in sales roles. It predicted who would get further in formal schooling as adults. In almost any domain, the grittier you are, the more successful you will be.

### Effort matters twice

Dan Chambliss is a sociologist who completed a study of competitive swimmers titled “The Mundanity of Excellence.” He observed that most stunning human achievements are the aggregate of countless individual elements, each of which on their own are ordinary. Greatness, he concluded, was doable no matter what your starting level of talent. Duckworth eventually came up with two simple equations that she used to try and explain how you get from talent to achievement.

- TALENT X EFFORT = SKILL
- SKILL X EFFORT = ACHIEVEMENT

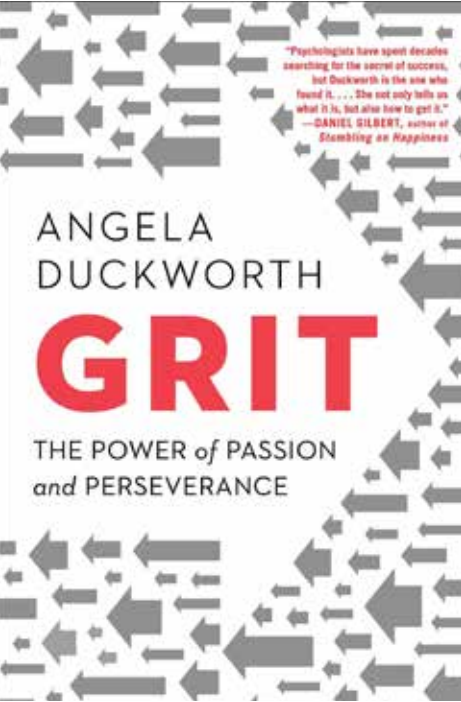
Talent, she says, is how quickly your skills improve when you invest effort. Achievement is what happens when you take your acquired skills and use them. Duckworth concludes that many of us quit what we start far too often and far too early. Even more important than the effort that gritty people put in on a single day is the fact that they get up the next day, and the day after that, ready to get on the treadmill and keep going. In order for you to become the best you can possibly be, effort matters twice.

### Growing Grit - Interest

No matter where you are on the grit scale today, the good news is that you can get better over time, which is a relief to most people, because determination seems like something that would be hardcoded into your DNA. There are four different elements to growing your grit. The first is by having a passion for what you do. There are a lot of reasons why this is true.

First, research shows that people are far more satisfied with their jobs if they work on something that they are naturally interested in. Unfortunately, this isn’t the case for most of the working population. In a recent Gallup study it was found that 87 per cent of the workforce around the world is “disengaged.” Second, other research shows that people perform better at work when they do things that interest them. But how do you find what you are truly passionate about?

Duckworth found that most of the people she interviewed for the book spend years exploring different interests until they found the one that ultimately came to occupy all of the waking thoughts. So your passion probably isn’t going to come to you like a flash of insight. You need to try a lot of things to eventually find the thing that lights



a fire in you from the moment you wake up to the time you go to sleep.

If you haven’t found your passion yet, you can start by paying attention to what occupies your thoughts during the day. How do you enjoy spending your time? Could you see yourself doing that for the rest of your life? Once you’ve found it, you are now ready for a lifetime of “deepening”.

### Growing Grit - Practice

The most successful and gritty people practice more than their less successful peers. This isn’t surprising, because they enjoy what they do. You’ve probably heard of the 10,000 hour rule, made famous by Malcolm Gladwell in the book Outliers. It was based on the work of Anders Ericsson, who has spent his career studying how experts acquire world-class skills.

The key insight of Ericsson’s work is that experts practice differently than the rest of us, not just longer. He calls what they do “deliberate practice.” People with grit are not just driven by a desire to spend a lot of time doing what they love doing, they are driven by a desire to continuously get better way what they love doing. Here’s how they practice.

First, they set a clearly defined stretch goal, designed to improve a specific area of their performance. Second, they do the task with full concentration and effort. If you are trying to get better at what matters most to you, you need to block out any and all distractions. Third, they seek immediate and informative feedback about how they are doing. They find a way to measure the results they are looking for, and then pay very close attention to the results. Lastly, they repeat this process with reflection and refinement. If what they are doing isn’t working, they try something else - usually with the help of a coach or a mentor.

### Growing Grit - Purpose

Being interested in what you do is one way to fuel your passion. Giving your work a purpose greater than yourself is another. Gritty people rely on both, not one or the other. Duckworth gives us three different ways to cultivate purpose in our lives, no matter what stage we are at. First, you can reflect on how the work you are already doing can make a positive contribution to society. In almost any job, there is some greater purpose that can be found. Second, you can start thinking about how you can change your current work to enhance the connection to your core values. Find the small ways you can change the work that you do to bring you more (or even just some) joy. Third, you can find a purposeful role model - somebody who inspires you to be a better version of yourself.

### Growing Grit - Hope

Duckworth points out an old Japanese saying: Fall seven, rise eight. Gritty people have an expectation that tomorrow will be better than today. That today’s failure will be tomorrow’s success. Or as Nietzsche once said, “What doesn’t kill me makes me stronger.”



# WHAT'S HAPPENING



## 7 – 9 JULY 2017 BORNEO FASHION WEEK

**What:** Borneo Fashion Week 2017, serves as a hub for young independent and creative talent, will present 20 acclaimed international and Malaysian designers in the island of Borneo's most important fashion event. Attended by a host of key influencers, socialites and VIPs in the business, fashion and lifestyle arena, celebrities, retail entrepreneurs, as well as the country's foremost media, this will consolidate Borneo's position on the world stage of fashion.  
**Where:** Kuching, Sarawak  
**Website:** : [www.borneofashionweek.com](http://www.borneofashionweek.com)



## 19 – 22 JULY 2017 ARCHIDEX 2017

**What:** South East Asia's most successful annual industry trade event for the architecture, interior design and building fraternity – ARCHIDEX (International Architecture, Interior Design and Building Exhibition) has continually been reaping phenomenal success and garnering steady growth. Held annually at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, the exhibition is widely recognised as a leading event that draws together South East Asia's fraternity of architects, interior designers, developers, urban planners, engineers, academicians, students and various related industry professionals.  
**Where:** Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC)  
**Website:** [www.archidex.com.my](http://www.archidex.com.my)



## 14 – 16 JULY 2017 RAINFOREST WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL

**What:** The Rainforest World Music Festival, a not-to-be-missed occasion, guarantees a smashing time in the heart of the Borneo Jungle. Established in 1998 with an audience of only 300 people, it is now a major annual event in the state's music calendar, eagerly anticipated by a crowd of over 20,000 people who flock from overseas, interstate as well as locals. It is a family-friendly event with an accent on participation especially at the afternoon workshops  
**Where:** Sarawak Cultural Village  
**Website:** [www.rwmf.net](http://www.rwmf.net)



## 19 – 30 AUGUST 2017 29th SEA GAMES

**What:** After 16 years, Malaysia is once again hosting the SEA Games and ASEAN Para Games which will be branded as Kuala Lumpur 2017. The 29th chapter of the SEA Games will be a landmark occasion and a source of pride to all Malaysians. The Games will coincide with the celebration of Malaysia's 60th Independence Day as well as Malaysia Day. It will be the sixth time that Malaysia has hosted the biennial games.  
**Where:** Kuala Lumpur  
**Website:** [www.kualalumpur2017.com.my](http://www.kualalumpur2017.com.my)

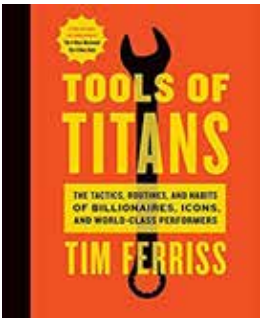
# BOOKS



## CAPTIVATE: THE SCIENCE OF SUCCEEDING WITH PEOPLE

By Vanessa Van Edwards

Van Edwards shares shortcuts, systems, and secrets for taking charge of your interactions at work, at home, and in any social situation. This is the first comprehensive, science backed, real life manual on how to captivate anyone—and a completely new approach to building connections. Just like knowing the formulas to use in a chemistry lab, or the right programming language to build an app, Captivate provides simple ways to solve people problems.



## TOOLS OF TITANS: THE TACTICS, ROUTINES, AND HABITS OF BILLIONAIRES, ICONS, AND WORLD-CLASS PERFORMERS

By Timothy Ferriss

This exceptional book is part philosophy, part business, and part story. Tim Ferriss distils some of the most important lessons he has learned through his own experiments with life and work, as well as from the dozens of successful people from all walks of life he has befriended or interviewed for his podcast and writings. This book contains the distilled tools, tactics, and 'inside baseball' you won't find anywhere else.



## UNSHAKEABLE: YOUR FINANCIAL FREEDOM PLAYBOOK

By Tony Robbins

After interviewing fifty of the world's greatest financial minds and penning the #1 New York Times bestseller Money: Master the Game, Tony Robbins returns with a step-by-step playbook, taking you on a journey to transform your financial life and accelerate your path to financial freedom. No matter your salary, your stage of life, or when you started, this book will provide the tools to help you achieve your financial goals more rapidly than you ever thought possible.



## OPTION B: FACING ADVERSITY, BUILDING RESILIENCE, AND FINDING JOY

By Sheryl Sandberg, Adam Grant

From Facebook's COO and Wharton's top-rated professor, the #1 New York Times best-selling authors of Lean In and Originals: a powerful, inspiring, and practical book about building resilience and moving forward after life's inevitable setbacks. Option B illuminates steps to help others in crisis, develop compassion for ourselves, raise strong children, and create resilient families, communities, and workplaces. This book will help us all make the most of life.

# BRAND THOUGHTS & TIPS

“FAIL OFTEN SO YOU CAN SUCCEED SOONER ”

Tom Kelley

“I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO BOSS UP AND CREATE MY OWN LANE”

MK Global

“OTHER PEOPLE’S SUCCESSES ARE GOOD NEWS — FOR THEM AND FOR YOU. GOOD FOR YOU BECAUSE THEY SHOW YOU A WAY” TO GO

Steve Wynn

“DON’T BE AFRAID OF COMPETITION. PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY “OTHER PEOPLE ARE DOING IT”. THE WORLD IS CHANGING SO FAST, THERE IS ROOM FOR LOTS OF PLAYERS TO INNOVATE IN DIFFERENT WAYS. COMPETITION VALIDATES THE MARKET AND ISN’T A BAD THING”

Katrina Lake

“RICH PEOPLE DON’T GET RICH BY ACCIDENT AND POOR PEOPLE DON’T STAY POOR BY ACCIDENT — BOTH TAKE EFFORT — BOTH ARE WORK.”

Grant Cardone

“IF YOU DO WHAT YOU’VE ALWAYS DONE, YOU’LL GET WHAT YOU’VE ALWAYS GOTTEN”

Tony Robbins

“SUCCESS IS OFTEN ACHIEVED BY THOSE WHO DON’T KNOW THAT FAILURE IS INEVITABLE”

Coco Chanel

“IF YOU PUSH THROUGH THAT FEELING OF BEING SCARED, THAT FEELING OF TAKING RISK, REALLY AMAZING THINGS CAN HAPPEN”

Marissa Mayer

“IF YOUR ACTIONS CREATE A LEGACY THAT INSPIRES OTHERS TO DREAM MORE, LEARN MORE, DO MORE AND BECOME MORE, THEN, YOU ARE AN EXCELLENT LEADER”

Dolly Parton

“I NEVER DREAMED ABOUT SUCCESS. I WORKED FOR IT.”

Estee Lauder







*THINK GLOBALLY,  
ACT LOCALLY...*



Serba Dinamik is an international energy services group providing engineering solutions to the Oil and Gas ("O&G") and power generation industries with operational facilities in Malaysia, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates ("UAE"), Bahrain and the United Kingdom ("UK").

Under engineering solutions, we provide Operations and Maintenance ("O&M") services and Engineering, Procurement, Construction and Commissioning ("EPCC") works. Under O&M services, we provide Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul ("MRO") of rotating equipment which includes gas and steam turbines, engines, motors, pumps, compressors and industrial fans; Inspection, Repair and Maintenance ("IRM") of static equipment and structures including boilers and unfired pressure vessels, piping systems and structures, as well as maintenance of process control and instrumentation. Our O&M services for, O&G production platforms, crude O&G refineries, petrochemical manufacturing plants and LNG plants.

We have the capabilities to carry out EPCC of plants, facilities, road infrastructure and buildings, as well as other related systems and solutions including design and installation of process control and instrumentation, auxiliary power generation and firefighting systems.

As an extension of our core competencies in providing maintenance services, we have started to embark on our asset owner business model strategy with our first Compressed Natural Gas ("CNG") plant in Muaro Jambi, Sumatra in Indonesia. Moving forward, we will continue to expand on this strategy through the development of small gas power plant and water utilities in Indonesia.