

THE BRAND LAUREATE BUSINESS WORLD REVIEW

**INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY**

Women Leaders Press for Progress

YEB SAÑO :

Rainbow Warrior of Greenpeace

RIUH! IN THE CITY :

Bringing Back Weekend Gathering

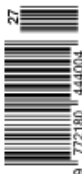
SAY YES2BRAND :

The World is Our Oyster

Alan Koh
RISING TO STARDOM
WITH STAR RESIDENCES



RM15 WM
RM18 EM





THE BRAND LAUREATE

THE TEAM

ADVISOR

Dr KKJohan

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Chew Bee Peng

ASST. MANAGING EDITOR

Ain MC

SENIOR WRITER

Ian Gregory Edward Masselamani

WRITERS

Nurilya Anis Rahim

Justin Chew

Gerald Chuah

CONTRIBUTORS

Anu Venugopal, Tony Thompson, Sean Tan

CREATIVE MANAGER

Ibtisam Basri

ASSISTANT CREATIVE MANAGER

Mohd Shahril Hassan

SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Mohd Zaidi Yusof

MULTIMEDIA DESIGNER

Zulhelmi Yarabi

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Kalwant Kaur

Lau Swee Ching

For suggestions and comments
or further enquiries on

THE BRANDLAUREATE BUSINESS WORLD REVIEW,
please contact info@thebrandlaureate.com.

All information herein is correct at time of publication.
The views and opinions expressed or implied in
The BrandLaureate Business World Review
are those of the authors and contributors and do not necessarily
reflect those of The BrandLaureate, its editorial & staff.

All editorial content and materials are copyright of
THE BRANDLAUREATE BUSINESS WORLD REVIEW
No Permit KDN PQ/PP16972/08/2011/(028331)

The BrandLaureate Business World Review is published by
THE BRANDLAUREATE SDN BHD (690453K),
39B & 41B, SS21/60, Damansara Utama, 47400 Petaling Jaya.
Tel: (603) 7710 0348 Fax: (603) 7710 0350

Printed in Malaysia by
PERCETAKAN SKYLINE SDN BHD (PQ 1780/2317)
35 & 37, Jalan 12/32B, TSI Business Industrial Park, Batu 6 1/2,
Off Jalan Kepong, 52000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



THE BRANDLAUREATE BESTBRANDS AWARDS 2017 - 2018

**INSTITUTIONALISE YOUR BRAND
TO INTERNATIONALISE THE BRAND**

“Position Your Brand on a World Class Platform”

PUBLISHER'S NOTE |



CHEW BEE PENG
PUBLISHER / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

BPCHEW@THEBRANDLAUREATE.COM
FACEBOOK.COM/BRANDLAUREATE

A recent article on leadership highlighted the 5 Qs that are inherent in successful leaders. What are the 5 Qs, you may ask? They are IQ (Intelligent Quotient), EQ (Emotional Quotient), CQ (Curiosity Quotient), PQ (Passion Quotient) and AQ (Adversity Quotient).

Having a high level of IQ and EQ is important for leaders; but CQ, PQ and AQ are the attributes that differentiate ordinary leaders from successful and great leaders. You cannot be a great leader if you do not have the 'curious streak' in you. The popular idiom, Curiosity killed the cat, does not hold true for great leaders as not knowing what is currently trending in the world (or amongst competitors) will surely kill a leader's business and brand.

Passion is what drives great leaders and it is passion that forms the underlying force that pushes these leaders to achieve their dreams and goals. Passion without the capacity and strength to overcome adversities is futile too. The hostile business environment necessitates leaders to have strong AQ to swim against tide of adversity; and at the same time 'fish' for opportunities the sea of adversity.

In this issue of The BrandLaureate Business World Review, we highlight successful leaders who possess the 5 Qs and how they have helped them build their brands and careers. From Alan Koh, the COO of Alpine Return, who is featured on the Cover Story, to Dato' Maimunah Mohd. Sharif, the Executive Director of the United Nations' Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Dr. Soraya Ismail, Managing Director of Boost Malaysia, and Yeb Sano, Executive Director of Greenpeace Southeast Asia – they share with us their leadership journeys and how their achievements have contributed to a better community and environment.

Alan Koh's curiosity of the top Singaporean Hotelier and Resort Developer, Ho Kwan Ping, led him to write numerous letters to Ho, seeking for an opportunity to work with his organization, Banyan Tree, and the rest, as they say is history. It was the start of Alan's journey into the property industry; and today, as the COO of Alpine Returns, he is literally the star behind the development of Star Residences – the latest luxury condominium project in the heart of Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC).

We are proud of Dato' Maimunah Mohd. Sharif, the former Mayor of Penang, who has been appointed as the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, the first Malaysian to hold the position, and her passion for the creation of smart cities and eco-friendly environments will most assuredly ensure a better future for generations to come. Not forgetting Yeb Sano who has spent the prime of his years championing environmental sustainability and climate change. It is their passion for their respective vocations and causes which has made a discernible difference to communities all around the world.

We celebrate International Women's Day in March and this issue would not be complete without featuring some of the great ladies of the nation. They are the same blessed hands that rock the cradle and rule the world shaping the growth of the country with their strength, resilience, principles and values. As a matter of fact, the Founder of Alibaba, Jack Ma, once said that hiring women is good for businesses and he admits that 'women power' has been the bedrock of Alibaba's success.

To women of the world, may we continue to PRESS FOR PROGRESS and rock the world with our 5 Qs!

THE BRANDLAUREATE BUMIPUTERA BESTBRANDS AWARDS 2018

SOARING TO GREATNESS

MAY
2018

"thebrandlaureate"™
THE AWARDS FOR BRANDS AND BRANDING

MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE |



AIN MC
ASST. MANAGING EDITOR

AIN@THEBRANDLAUREATE.COM
FACEBOOK.COM/BRANDLAUREATE

We were taught from a young age that “no” symbolizes rejection and evokes negative feelings in the person making a request. It is easy to think that if you say no, these negative feelings will be redirected at you as a person, or that the other person’s disappointment is a reflection of your capability, commitment, trustworthiness, or self-worth. But, always putting other people first is not necessarily an act of respect—for them, or yourself.

This whole notion itself reminds me of the ever rising issues of sexual misconducts toward women. Day by day, we are bombarded by news of high-ranking male celebrities being charged with sexual assaults. How women were not able to say no to the wrongdoings being done to them. To be honest, it is not something new. But there is something definitely different about how women are responding and reacting to all these commotions this year.

After a year dominated by an alarming newsfeed, it seems we have hit a turning point in 2018. Silenced voices are becoming amplified and media outlets are shining a spotlight on the people and groups challenging for change. Arguments that have simmered for years – about the importance of championing women, new voices, people who come from a wide range of ethnicities and backgrounds – are finding an audience. As the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements take center stage, I feel like it’s fitting for this issue to be a celebration of 2018 International Women’s Day theme that is #PressforProgress.

This issue celebrates women being women, beautiful, brave and strong women. We’ve got empowering stories from inspiring women leaders who have walked the talk and are also the perfect embodiment of “women too, can do”. For this issue so dear to my heart, my team and I have been fortunate to meet and speak with a diverse powerhouse of women paying it forward around Malaysia and the world.

These are the women of exemplary leadership whose mission requires a strategic culture that elevates their organization in the face of mergers, regulations and management charges. What these unapologetically fierce females have taught me is that femininity is a strength, not a weakness, that your priorities are your prerogative, and that there is a seemingly endless supply of young, smart, talented women bent on creating a better and fairer world.

It was also a chance, I thought, to spotlight some of the issues that really do still need acknowledging, areas in which we can all make improvements to help make the world a more equal, accepting, sustainable and kind place.

This shout out does not only go to the female species out there. Yes, I’m talking to you too my fellow male readers. Strong men – men who are truly role models – don’t need to put down women to make themselves feel powerful. People who are truly strong lift others up. People who are truly powerful bring others together. The whole world will indeed be a better place if we are in this together. Let’s support women who are now striving to be something because in the past they couldn’t.

We still have a long way to go to achieve gender equality and although more people are now talking and discussing about our right, let’s not let that make us idle. We must remember to keep progressing and push for change – big and small. Let’s make space for one another, and continue to do so in years to come.

I hope this issue will inspire you to think differently and remember, always press for progress. Go forth and smash the patriarchy. Happy reading!

THE HAVEN®

RESORT HOTEL SUITES
LAGOI BAY • BINTAN ISLAND



THE VACATION HOME
YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED
AN ALL-INCLUSIVE FAMILY RESORT
IN A MOST RARE AND PRECIOUS LOCATION

Artist's Impression of the Blue Dancing Crab Water Park

Artist's Impression of the Clubhouse

Malaysia Office
Jalan Haven, 31150
Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia.
+605 546 6666
Enquiries Welcome

Singapore Liaison Centre
#01-18B/C, Singapore Cruise Centre
@ Tanah Merah 50 Tanah Merah Ferry
Road, Singapore 498833.
www.thehavenlagoibay.com

Singapore Office
138 Robinson Road, Lobby 1, #13-02
Oxley Tower, Singapore 068906.
+65 6909 7777
mgt@thehavenlagoibay.com

Indonesia Sales Gallery
Jalan Gurindam 12, Lagoi Bay,
Kawasan Pariwisata Lagoi, Bintan
Resorts (Kepri), Indonesia.
+62 77069 7777

WHAT'S INSIDE

issue #46
March - April

*This issue celebrates,
clockwise from top,
Yeb Saño of Greenpeace,
PropertyGuru, Rihuh! In the
City, the city of Melbourne
and World Urban Forum
2018.*



EARTH HOUR

#CONNECT2EARTH

24th March 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02 PUBLISHER'S NOTE
04 MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE
06 WHAT'S INSIDE
08 CONTENTS

THE BRIEF

24 COUNTRY & WORLD

Get yourself informed with the hottest and latest news on business and branding

34 SMES RECAP
A look back at The BrandLaureate SMEs BestBrands Awards 2017-2018

30 TRIBUTE: AMPANG PARK
Bidding Farewell to Malaysia's First Shopping Mall



WHAT'S TRENDING

50 WORLD URBAN FORUM
Cities 2030, the Cities for All

56 #TIMESUP
for Women Discrimination

58 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
Inspirational Females who Press for Progress



“

Women around the world must always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.

”

ON THE COVER



Whether by accident or pure coincidence, his foray into Malaysian shores started long time ago before joining Alpine Return as COO of Star Residences. Alan Koh, the ace of luxury living shares with The BrandLaureate on his journey of great success.



124
FILM REVIEW

A guide to help you decide to watch or to bail on latest movies in the cinema

88
BRAND
VOICE

Discover the story with Yeb Saño of Greenpeace

92
BRAND-IT-
RIGHT

Lotte: Busting the Myth of Chewing Gum

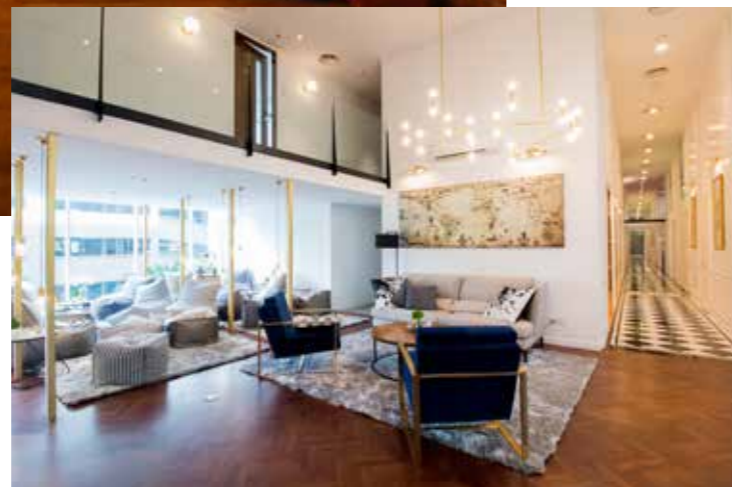
94
COLONY

Every Millennials' Dream Working Space

106
PERSONAL
BRANDING

How to Step Up Your Personal Brand

COMPASS



118

RIUH! IN THE CITY

A vibrant festival where arts meet fun



Introducing Malaysia's latest news channel



Channel W

LIVE DAILY NEWS
ON AIR ONLINE



Channel 420 Unifi TV



@channelwmy

Online Dynamics (M) Sdn. Bhd. (540286-H)

A-5-07 Block A, Neo Damansara, Bandar Damansara Perdana, Jalan PJU 8/1, 47820, Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia.

+6 03 7727 6554 www.channelw.my

Rising to Stardom with Star Residences

ALAN KOH, THE ACE OF LUXURY LIVING SHARES
HIS JOURNEY OF GREAT SUCCESS.

BY ANU VENUGOPAL

For Alpine Return's Chief Operating Officer Alan Koh, life is a Celebration of Finer Details.

A charismatic personality with a beaming smile, his entrepreneurial journey and rise to the top reads like a well-crafted script – a life peppered with challenges, hardships, humour, perseverance and endurance. These elements and his positive, pioneering and persevering qualities have led him to the successful and glamorous lifestyle he leads today.

Growing up in the rustic Chua Chu Kang village in suburban Singapore, Koh was an ordinary boy who helped out with endless chores at home but always managed to find time climbing durian trees and shaking mango trees to get fruits. Koh spent much of his time observing his father who had his own coffee shop and a plastic factory – a father's spirit of entrepreneurship inspiring the son to create his own success later in his life.

After completing his National Service duty at age 20, Koh held dreams of pursuing tertiary education in the United States close to his heart. However, he faced his first major hurdle – as his father was against him “going so far away”. With the idea of making his dreams a reality, Koh had to seek his own funds for his studies in the island of Hawaii.

“My education was partially self-funded. My mom subsidised me in my first year while my sister in London chipped in to fund my entire studies. Not wanting to rely completely on my sister, I also took on part-time jobs to fund myself in order to complete my studies,” he recalled.

Not one to allow challenges get the better of him, Koh took everything in stride. He worked in the United States and earned his first Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Marketing. He subsequently pursued his MBA in Finance, armed with the belief that it would help him in his career.

Fate had other plans in store for Koh. When he returned to Singapore, he found it difficult to get a job in the finance industry because he lacked the finance experience. He decided to try a different route by writing in to property developers and other marketing firms dealing with sub-consumer products, believing that his short term experience in the US in property management and leasing would prove beneficial to them. However, he was rejected more than 100 times.

“I felt rejected and down but ultimately, I brought myself up again to be stronger – much, much stronger than before. I knew it wasn't the end of the world, and whatever that comes along would just be challenges and not obstacles. This positive thinking is something that I practiced then and I continue to practice today,” said Koh, at the contemporary styled Star Residences showroom in Jalan Yap Kwan Seng, Kuala Lumpur.

Thanks to his sheer determination and never give up attitude, Koh who was born in the year of the Ox and is also a Taurus, stood strong in his perseverance in attaining his dreams – a respectable job in his home country.

His efforts were not in vain. Koh joined consultant firm Jones Lang Wootton Singapore as a Property Manager, responsible for the property management of the Orchard Road Shopping Centre in the Lion City. It was also there where he had initial brushes with celebrities, meeting local Singaporean Chinese drama personalities and having “yum cha” sessions together.



Creating Winds Of Change

A man with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, he came across a magazine one day, with The Banyan Tree Hotel & Resorts Chairman Ho Kwon Ping on its cover.

“I picked up the article and read about him and how he was so particular and passionate about what he does. He was very detailed in his explanation of how he turned around the project from a useless tin mine to a healthy, profitable resort,” Koh said.

The article made a lasting impression on him and prompted him to want to work for Ho. In the span of a year, the young Koh wrote unsolicited letters to Ho every few months, requesting to grant him an interview. His continued efforts finally got the attention of the Chairman who granted him an interview and hired him. Ho revealed that the reason he hired Koh was that he knocked on the door so hard that he didn’t have any other choice but to open the door for him. The resilience shown by Koh in the early years of his career gave him a competitive edge, a quality he holds to when he faces challenges even now.

Starry-eyed and passionate about the out-of-the-box company and his unconventional mentor, Koh was responsible for the marketing of branded resorts. From 1994 to 1997, he oversaw the photo shoots for the resort, handled layout details of the brochure

and supervised the photographer on backdrop settings. It was also there when he understood and appreciated the finer details of a building.

“Ho was my inspiration and also my mentor. I was inspired by him, his personality, passion and charisma. He was not just the head of the company but also the brand. Like the late Lee Kuan Yew, when he speaks, people want to listen, and that is something I could connect with,” revealed Koh.

It was also at Banyan Tree, when he learnt the importance of being innovative and creative, and using these elements to stand out from others in the market. He also picked up an eye for detail; a quality that would prove to be extremely useful in future projects including Star Residences.

Crossing Borders, Exploring New Frontiers

Whether by accident or pure coincidence, his foray into Malaysian shores started long time ago before joining Alpine Return as COO of Star Residences. Back then, he was Senior Vice President at CapitaLand Limited, a government linked company (GLC) that had shares in two projects in Malaysia – Citibank and MRCB – The KL Sentral Project. He was sitting on the Board of Directors when he was tasked to turn around Suasana Sentral condominium, which owed RM20 million to the contractor .

“Together with the team I managed to turn around its cash flow to become positive and profitable after that. It was my first taste of the Malaysian property market and got to know more about it. My real involvement came about when I was asked to do the second phase of Suasana Sentral, Suasana Sentral Loft, which was also inspired by my experience at Banyan Tree,” said Koh, who later took on the role of Senior Vice President at Pacific Star Group, a real estate fund management company.

After his encounter with the real estate development in Malaysia, the ever enterprising Koh joined SP Setia, in the well-known KL Eco City project. There he lent his expertise in investment and real estate as Head Group Investment and Development, for the RM 6 Billion integrated development comprising of boutique offices, grade-A offices, retail, hotels, and luxury apartments.

A Star Is Born

Just as King Midas is known for his golden touch, Koh is recognised as the one who has the ability to turn developments into golden ventures. He continues to create history by raising the benchmark of luxury living and shopping, now in the heart of Kuala Lumpur’s Golden Triangle. As his projects have a knack of attracting capital appreciation, one can’t help but wonder if his success in the industry is written in the stars.

His latest venture and treasured project is the Star Development - a mixed-use development comprising Star Residences, a development by Alpine Return Sdn Bhd. Soon to be an iconic 57-storey tower and two 58-storey towers, the development’s most-exciting phase is the Ascott Star KLCC, with 471 units in 58-storeys land. Star Boulevard, consisting five blocks of six-storey units for retail, food and beverage as well as lifestyle entertainment outlets.

His journey with Alpine Return started in 2007, although the land at Jalan Mayang was acquired seven years earlier. During that time, CapitaLand Limited, the company he previously worked for owned shares in the joint venture. Joining forces with UM Land and Bolton (now Symphony Life), Capital Land sold its share to the other two companies, and Alpine Return consists of the recently-formed partnership today. The four-acre (1.62 ha) development with a gross development value (GDV) of RM3 billion (USD700 million) represents Koh’s comeback project undertaken by the joint venture company.

“When I first came in, the development was called Jalan Mayang, and there was no other identity.

I was tasked to look at challenges of doing away with the proposed mechanical car parks, which I managed to do, while separate the building so that all units would have a good view of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre.” explained Koh.

Armed with a keen interest in hotels and resorts since his student days In Hawaii and his experiences at Banyan Tree close at hand, Koh enhanced his vision and conducted research on other W hotels in Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Beijing, Taiwan and Bangkok. Based on the research, he then created a 40-page design concept for the development – and the future of Star Residences was sealed.

“Ho was my inspiration and also my mentor. I was inspired by him, his personality, passion and charisma. He was not just the head of the company but also the brand. Like the late Lee Kuan Yew, when he speaks, people want to listen, and that is something I could connect with.”



STAR
RESIDENCES

“The star logo itself carries a lot of meaning. In order to have all these elements of good luck and good Feng Shui; I developed a star logo using 65 circles with 5 sides having 13 circles on each side. What came out was a lucky clover in the middle that forms the heart of star.”

“The inspiration for the birth of Star Residences came from W hotel in Taiwan when I was invited to have lunch by a friend at one of its Chinese restaurants. That was my first time stepping into a W hotel, I immediately fell in love with the concept. I was inspired by the bold colours, sexiness, artistic and flamboyance of the hotel,” admitted Koh.

Koh chose the name Star because it was easy to pronounce, understood and has international appeal. Absorbing ideas and concepts during his travels, he knew that he wanted a project that is not an ordinary apartment but one that is distinguishable and have an element of sex appeal. A talented artist on his own right, Koh created the development's logo, a special star that also includes a love star.

“The star logo itself carries a lot of meaning. In order to have all these elements of good luck and good Feng Shui; I developed a star logo using 65 circles with 5 sides having 13 circles on each side. What came out was a lucky clover in the middle that forms the heart of star. The special star also has a five-sided clover leaf, which represents good luck and prosperity. I give the dots or circles bold colours to give its sexy and youthful look. The final result is a super lucky and prosperous Star that has elements of sexiness, boldness, and flamboyance,” added Koh.

“The star (sing) emblem, made of gold finishing reflects elements of huang ching (gold) which denotes good Feng Shui. It signifies that buyers are buying into a gold development and is all linked backed to the star, radiating luck, success and opulence.”

The star element is incorporated in the concept and details of the development and is reflected in the ambience, environment and warmth of the upcoming 5 Star luxury condominiums.

Star residents will be able to take advantage of the developments class, 100,000sf contemporary facilities, including an Olympic length swimming pool, KTV room, Sky Park, with the added bonus of gorgeous views of the world renowned PETRONAS Twin Towers.

While there are no requirements for green building features for the property, Alpine Return's grand project has several features in place -including rainwater harvesting, solar panels for common lighting and most impressively, recycling air condition heat that will empower water heater in common areas. Koh's philosophy of working with nature will also be reflected in the creatively designed development, with two large trees being preserved and relocated once the development is completed.

The star development will also feature a huge artistic mosaic feature wall at all the 3 Towers of the Sky Park, measuring 20 metres wide and 20 metres high. This adds an artistic flare to the development.

Star Tributes

Koh's artistic and creative talents will also be demonstrated in the development's 6-storey high podium facade. In a six months project of love, Koh himself designed and created an artistic star kinetic for its podium, taking into account the right material used for stars, its movement, weight and shine. Once ready, visitors to the site will be able to see thousands of stars wrapped around the building shimmering on a windy day, truly a sight to behold. The aesthetically 'alive' concept will be a meaningful one, especially for those who visit the boulevard and walk through another of Koh's extraordinary idea – the Star Walk Of Fame.

“When I first looked at this development, I noticed that it has got a very long frontage so I knew it could be turned into something very special. I know that within KLCC – besides the PETRONAS Twin Towers and Aquaria KLCC, Malaysia lacks tourist landmarks especially in the city so there aren't any tourist spots for





visitors to visit so I came up with the word 'Star' and incorporated a 200-metre Star Walk of Fame akin to the Hollywood Walk of Fame or Hong Kong Star Avenue. That's how the name came about," he said.

The first celebrity featured on Malaysia's own Star Walk of Fame is none other than our own Jimmy Choo, illustrious shoe designer and international celebrity. Choo's friendship with Koh began as an introduction by a common friend at his previous office at KL Eco City at The Gardens Mall. The two shared similar interests and their friendship blossomed.

"The Datuk Jimmy Choo equation came about as he is someone I have chemistry with, having talked at length about the interior design when I first met him eight years ago. He just asked me "Is it size eight? I'm going to make you a pair of shoes," recalls the beaming Koh on the delightful incident.

Upon joining Alpine Return, Koh invited Choo to view the development and the shoe-designer extraordinaire took a liking to the creative STAR brand. He was happy to be associated with the brand and agreed to be its Brand Ambassador. Choo is the first celebrity to endorse and lend his hand imprint to the Star Walk of Fame.

"I have always admired Datuk Jimmy Choo as being the pride of Malaysia. He is not just creative, but is able to brand himself into what he is today," Koh revealed further.

Koh shares that by the end of the year, a few international celebrities will also have joined in this line-up. In all, he hopes to have 36 world-renowned celebrities leave behind their hand imprints on the glamorous walkway which residents and the public alike can enjoy visiting and taking pictures.

Once the development is completed, the Star Walk of Fame will feature three to four celebrities every year, and the company plans to have numerous international and local stars from different arenas to fill the spaces.

Koh has ambitious plans of creating a one-stop destination for tourists, who will be able to explore the star boulevard, be star-struck by the Star Walk of Fame and

enjoy themselves at the F&B outlets. The COO believes this will not only provide public relations and branding mileage for Star Development but also for Malaysia as a tourist destination.

"We have also talked to the Kuala Lumpur City Hall about land setback. In every development there is always a land setback of 6 metres. DBKL gave most of it back to us because they believe this will create something for Malaysia, a must place to visit apart from KLCC and Twin Towers in the city," said Koh.

The star appeal of this project is evident in the number of units sold. Already, Tower 1's 557 units that was launched in November 2013 is already completely sold out while the take-up rate for Tower 2's 482 units that was launched last year recorded over 90 percent sales. The recently launched Tower 3 - witnessed a tie-up with international serviced residence operator The Ascott Limited being engaged to manage the project. Slated to be completed by 2021, the Ascott Star KLCC has its share of admirers, and is experiencing brisk sales – with the strength of the Ascott brand creating credibility and assurance of quality.

Positioned as a developer of quality residential and commercial properties, Alpine Return's link with The Ascott Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Singapore's CapitalLand Limited has grown to be one of the leading international serviced residences owner-operators. Engaging The Ascott was a natural choice for Koh as it pioneered Asia Pacific's first international-class serviced residences since the opening of The Ascott Singapore in 1984.

The first phase to be completed will be the retail sector, scheduled to be completed in Quarter 3 this year. Koh and his team are currently sourcing for premium tenants with quality first-rate brands as the design concept is looking at providing a platform for future Michelin star restaurant, with the aim of putting Malaysia's finest chefs on the culinary map of the world.

"When we first launched, the market was experiencing a downturn, so our target was 50 percent locals and 50 percent international. We went into new markets like China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea. We also employed Samsung C&T Engineering & Construction Group as the contractor for Star Residences to give 5 Star quality for the development.

“Koh has ambitious plans of creating a one-stop destination for tourists, who will be able to explore the star boulevard, be star-struck by the Star Walk of Fame and enjoy themselves at the F&B outlets.”



“We are not copying but rather reinventing the design and ideas. Using a little bit of concept from here and inspiration there, I put it all together. Hopefully this will sell and so far it has been going successfully.”



Samsung is a Korean developer known for the construction of the world's tallest buildings including the PETRONAS Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur; Burj Khalifa in Dubai and now Merdeka PNB 118, formerly known as KL118 or Warisan Merdeka, which will be Malaysia's tallest building," said Koh.

This year Alpine Returns focus on launching the last and most premium tower - Ascott Star overseas including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and China. The move is advantageous for the developer as Hong Kong's property prices are up the roof and many are looking at buying a reasonably priced home outside the bustling city. Similarly tensions between the vastly different South and North Korea have raised the level of Korean property interest to invest overseas.

Many investors in Korea want to diversify their portfolio to other Asian country. In South East Asia, Malaysia is still the cheapest in terms of price per square foot," said Koh.

The Malaysian Property Market

Despite popular opinion that the property market is weakening, Koh believes the economy will continue to improve. The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is hovering around 5 percent and the ringgit has stabilised lately.

"The export market is revving up so I think that overall, Malaysia has stabilised unlike a year ago when the currency dropped a lot. I think the currency has improved quite a bit now so the property market should remain stable. With the uptrend, I think that next year until 2020 onwards will see the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) link being completed. Malaysia is also building the High Speed Rail (HSR) train from Singapore to Malaysia which will augur well for the country to attract more tourists from Singapore over here," he added.

With the ringgit strengthening recently, Koh feels the market will continue, with a possibility of an uptrend in two years, once the MRT infrastructure is done and for Star Residences it is bound to bring better rental and capital value for property owners. He also lauds the government's plan to freeze the development of a million ringgit properties in the country, which is implemented on a case to case basis.

"There are projects that are not feasible but they go ahead anyway and this adds supply to the market. When a project cannot carry through in terms of sales and cash flow, it becomes an abandoned building and it is no good for the city. However, the market as it is now is still alright, I don't see signs of projects going bust so far, the other projects I know off are moving, said the hands-on Koh.



Branding, A Marriage of Creativity and Innovation

Koh is a strong believer that branding will deliver great success to the brand and business and with branding, Koh has been able to overcome challenges in positioning Star Residences as a must have luxury condominium amongst house and property owners. This is no easy feat as the entire KLCC area is filled with other projects coming up, due to its sought after location.

Throughout the entire process, Koh's branding strategies has differentiated Star Residences from the rest of the development with its creative and innovative concepts, unique styles, excellent quality and workmanship which meet the needs of demanding and fastidious property owners.

Innovation is the secret to success and Koh takes a leaf of Steve Job's quote that "Apple is nothing new but a borrowed idea from other (products) which was further re-invented". To this, he sees wisdom in reinventing the wheel of excellent offerings already in existence and elevating the concept to revolutionary results.

"We are not copying but rather reinventing the design and ideas. Using a little bit of concept from here and inspiration there, I put it all together. Hopefully this will sell and so far it has been going successfully," said Koh.

The Inspiring Visionary Master Developer

Like every task or project undertaken, the visionary Koh experienced his share of challenges as he creates the Star brand to its peak.

"Before any project that takes place, it is only a blank piece of paper. The challenge is how to make it into a beautiful building, a landscape that sells, and a concept that sells. At the end of the day, this equals to value creation, the appreciation of a property over time, something that all investors want after purchasing a property," said Koh.

Koh believes that to be successful one needs to think differently, not particularly outside the box but creativity is the most important factor, and the ability to reinvent, not just a product or service but also a person.

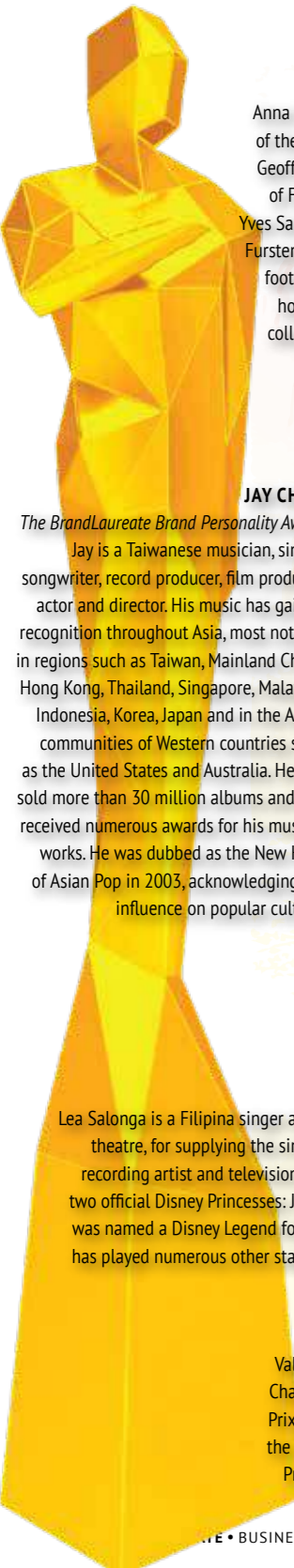
"Be inspired keep an open eye when you're travelling around the world. Take photos about things you can learn from. Once you have knowledge, it is also important to share these views with others, because there is a lot you can learn from the world. I may not be able to teach young entrepreneurs how to draw or be creative, but I'm happy to share my knowledge with the younger generation," added Koh, who draws and goes for runs over the weekends to get away from his busy and productive lifestyle.

Koh's knack of attracting capital appreciation for the projects that he undertakes makes him well respected in the industry and it has been said that his sterling reputation precedes him. But what is most impressive of this man is his passion and commitment to his work that makes him stand out like a star. Indeed, the Star Residences has the right star behind its success.

“Koh believes that to be successful one needs to think differently, not particularly outside the box but creativity is the most important factor, and the ability to reinvent, not just a product or service but also a person.”

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!



ANNA SUI

The BrandLaureate Brand Personality Award

Anna Sui is an American fashion designer. She was named one of the "Top 5 Fashion Icons of the Decade" and has earned the Geoffrey Beene Lifetime Achievement Award from the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA), joining the ranks of Yves Saint Laurent, Giorgio Armani, Ralph Lauren, and Diane von Furstenberg. Her brand categories include several fashion lines, footwear, cosmetics, fragrances, eyewear, jewelry, accessories, home goods and a gift line. In 2006, Fortune estimated the collective value of Sui's fashion empire at over \$400 million.



FRANCES YIP

The BrandLaureate Brand Personality Award

Frances Yip is a Hong Kong Cantopop singer. She is best known for performing many of the theme songs for television series produced by TVB in the 1980s and early 1990s. In her 45-year career, Yip has released more than 80 albums, mostly of songs in American English, Indonesian, Thai, Malay, Mexican Spanish, Japanese, Tagalog, Cantonese, and Mandarin. She has performed on television, and in films, concerts and cabarets in more than 30 countries on five continents.



JAY CHOU

The BrandLaureate Brand Personality Award

Jay is a Taiwanese musician, singer, songwriter, record producer, film producer, actor and director. His music has gained recognition throughout Asia, most notably in regions such as Taiwan, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, Japan and in the Asian communities of Western countries such as the United States and Australia. He has sold more than 30 million albums and has received numerous awards for his musical works. He was dubbed as the New King of Asian Pop in 2003, acknowledging his influence on popular culture.



LEA SALONGA

The BrandLaureate Brand Personality Award

Lea Salonga is a Filipina singer and actress best known for her roles in musical theatre, for supplying the singing voices of two Disney Princesses, and as a recording artist and television performer. She provided the singing voices of two official Disney Princesses: Jasmine in Aladdin and Fa Mulan in Mulan. She was named a Disney Legend for her work with The Walt Disney Company. She has played numerous other stage, film and TV roles in the US, the Philippines and elsewhere.



VALENTINO ROSSI

The BrandLaureate Brand Personality Award

Valentino Rossi is an Italian professional motorcycle road racer and multiple MotoGP World Champion. Rossi is one of the most successful motorcycle racers of all time, with nine Grand Prix World Championships to his name – seven of which are in the premier class. Rossi owns the Sky Racing Team by VR46 which campaigns in the Moto3 and Moto2 categories of Grand Prix motorcycle racing. Rossi is first in all-time 500cc/MotoGP race wins standings with 89 victories and second in all time overall wins standings with 115 race wins.



DR EDWARD DE BONO

The BrandLaureate Brand Personality Award

Dr. Edward de Bono is the world's leading authority on conceptual thinking as the driver of organizational innovation, strategic leadership, individual creativity, and problem solving. Since 1970 his exclusive tools and methods have brought astonishing results to organizations large and small worldwide and to individuals from a wide range of cultures, educational backgrounds, occupations, and age groups. Dr. de Bono delivers the advanced training solutions that are greatly needed for success in these challenging times.



SIR CLIFF RICHARD

The BrandLaureate Brand Personality Award

Sir Cliff Richard is a British pop singer, musician, performer, actor and philanthropist. Richard has sold more than 250 million records worldwide. He has total sales of over 21 million singles in the United Kingdom and is the third-top-selling artist in UK Singles Chart history, behind the Beatles and Elvis Presley. Richard dominated the British popular music scene in the pre-Beatles period of the late 1950s to early 1960s. His 1958 hit single, "Move It", is often described as Britain's first authentic rock and roll song.



PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD YUNUS

The BrandLaureate Brand Personality Award

Professor Muhammad Yunus is the founder and managing director of Grameen Bank, which pioneered microcredit. He became actively involved with poverty reduction after observing the famine of 1974, and established the Rural Economics Programme as part of the department's academic programme. In October 2006, Muhammad Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, along with Grameen Bank, for their efforts to create economic and social development.



ANTON MOSIMANN

The BrandLaureate Brand Personality Award

Anton Mosimann is known throughout the world for his culinary expertise, and has held many prestigious positions, and received many accolades during his career. He was Maitre Chef des Cuisines at The Dorchester Hotel for thirteen years, during which time its restaurant achieved a rating of two stars in the Michelin Guide. At that time, it was the first hotel restaurant outside of France to do so. After leaving The Dorchester Mosimann created a private dining club called Mosimann's, a cookery school, and other enterprises in the hospitality industry.



THE BRIEF

*COUNTRY



AIRASIA CONTRIBUTED RM837B TO MALAYSIA'S GDP: FERNANDES

AirAsia Bhd group chief executive officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes said the low-cost airline has contributed RM837 billion to Malaysia's gross domestic product.

This was based on the 12 times multiplier effect since AirAsia's inception in 2001, Fernandes said at the launch of its RedQ headquarters.

He said AirAsia will carry 89 million passengers on over 300 routes to more than 130 destinations in 26 countries, making it the fourth-largest airline in Asia. The airline carried 71 million passengers last year.

Fernandes also said AirAsia aims to turn Kuala Lumpur into the "Dubai of the East" for low-cost air travel. – NST



MAYBANK'S NET PROFIT SURPASSES RM7 BILLION FOR FIRST TIME

Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank), South-East Asia's fourth-largest bank by assets, boosted its net profit by 12 per cent to a record RM7.80 billion for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2017, on stronger revenue from all business segments and key overseas markets as well as much lower impairment losses.

In a filing to Bursa Malaysia, the bank said, its net profit surpassed the RM7 billion level for the first time, as revenue increased to RM45.58 billion versus RM44.65 billion in the previous year.

Net interest income and Islamic banking income rose 9.6 per cent to RM17.05 billion while net earned insurance premiums jumped 18.2 per cent to RM5.25 billion.

"Our strategy in managing risks well, maintaining a diversified portfolio, improving efficiency across the network as well as leveraging on digital capabilities have helped us to continue creating value for all our stakeholders," chairman Datuk Mohaiyani Shamsudin said in a statement.

She said this achievement not only underscored the bank's resilience but had also given it a sound platform to sustain the group's performance in today's disruptive environment.

On its prospects, Maybank said, it expected its financial performance to be satisfactory for 2018 against the expected growth prospects of its key home markets.

The group's key priorities for this year, it added, included maintaining pricing discipline across its products, focusing on attaining cheaper funding sources to support loan growth, growing its loan portfolio within its risk appetite, while proactively managing its asset quality. – BERNAMA



TNB COMPLETES RM417.75M ACQUISITION OF TWO UK "GREEN" COMPANIES

Tenaga Nasional Bhd's wholly-owned Tenaga Wind Ventures UK Ltd has completed its acquisition of 80 per cent stake for £77.37 million (RM417.75 million) in two United Kingdom renewable energy companies; GVO Wind Ltd and Bluemerang Capital Ltd.

TNB said the acquisition is part of its Five-Year International Expansion Roadmap and is funded through a combination of internally generated funds and borrowings.

TNB intends to grow its RE portfolio to an optimal size via greenfield development or acquiring other RE portfolio of similar or complementary technology. The company also intends to develop its human capital as part of this acquisition by accelerating the training and exposure of its personnel in RE operations, particularly in wind turbines operations.

TNB said the average revenue is about £223 per MW hour, significantly higher than the average values of other similar RE support mechanisms across the UK and Europe. – NST

MDEC BELIEVES DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY WOULD DRIVE ECONOMY

Closer cooperation between the government and private sectors on artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and big data would raise Malaysia's competitiveness, said Malaysia Digital Economy Corp (MDEC).

Chief Executive Officer Datuk Yasmin Mahmood said it is important for the government to leverage on digital technology to improve efficiency and productivity for a business model.

She said businesses can also capitalise on digital technology to maximise their earnings, which in turn would provide tremendous impact to the growth of the local economy.

"IoT is not about job replacement, but it is to augment the job

scope. IoT, AI and other forms of innovation is not only about the government's role. Instead, it is to ensure there is an enabling ecosystem leveraging on all forms of innovations," she said at a forum titled 'How can Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things Supercharge Growth, Innovation and Job Creation?' in Kuala Lumpur.

MDEC said government's role is to enable young talent to have exposure in technology, provided by the connectivity and availability of the policy framework that are flexible enough to nurture and encourage innovations.

"One of the areas of IoT that we feel has immediate potential of great impact in terms of IoT and AI is to reduce foreign workers dependency in Malaysia, which is becoming a social economic issue. – NST



AIRASIA APPOINTS NEW LEADER FOR ITS LOGISTIC ARM

AirAsia Bhd has chosen Datuk Mohd Shukrie Mohd Salleh to lead its newly-formed logistic arm, Redbox Logistics. In a twitter posting, AirAsia group chief executive officer (CEO) Tan Sri Tony Fernandes announced that the former group chief executive officer of Pos Malaysia Bhd was joining the airline.

"Great to announce that Datuk Shukrie formerly CEO of Pos Malaysia Bhd has joined AirAsia in our

new formerly logistics arm, Redbox Logistics. A very powerful e-commerce Asean and Asian logistics company. Huge upside and value. We have the planes," he tweeted. Shukrie left Pos Malaysia in December last year, after serving the postal delivery service company for five years. He has also been serving DRB-Hicom Bhd for 12 years.

Shukrie then said Pos Malaysia's subsidiary Pos Aviation and Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd would facilitate the pilot phase by Lazada, which is 83 per cent-owned by Alibaba Group and Cainiao. – NST



MEDIA PRIMA ON PATH TO BECOME LEADING DIGITAL-FIRST CONTENT AND COMMERCE COMPANY

Malaysia's leading integrated media group, Media Prima Bhd (MPB), is confident that results derived from strategic initiatives undertaken in 2017 would accelerate the group's transformation into a leading digital-first content and commerce company.

In the financial year ended Dec 31 2017, MPB recorded an 89 per cent increase in total digital and commerce revenue to RM193 million. The strong revenue growth was driven by increase in demand for digital advertising, rising popularity of digital content and growing e-commerce among consumers. Media Prima Television Network's tonton, Malaysia's pioneer over-the-top (OTT) service, expanded its reach to Brunei

and Singapore, with more plans to expand regionally. Revenue generated from tonton increased 38 per cent last year, on the back of higher user subscription to the service. Tonton has over 7.6 million registered users to date, and recorded 84 per cent increase in hours watched and 104 per cent increase in average watch time. The year under review saw MPB ranking third in Malaysia behind Google and Facebook in digital reach after the acquisition of Rev Asia Holdings Sdn Bhd, one of Southeast Asia's leading digital media companies.

The rapid increase in digital reach is also attributed to the implementation of digital-first strategies across the Group, which benefitted The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Bhd (NSTP) as it aims to capitalise on the growing demand for digital news content. – NST



NZ WHEELS INVESTS RM12M TO UPGRADE TWO AUTOHAUS

NZ Wheels Sdn Bhd, a unit under Naza Corp Holdings Sdn Bhd, has invested a total of RM12 million to upgrade two of its Mercedes-Benz dealerships.

"A total of RM6 million was invested in upgrading the NZ Wheels Klang Autohaus and another RM6 million for NZ Wheels Johor Bahru Autohaus.

"The two outlets are upgraded to be compliant with the Mercedes-Benz Presentation System II autohaus concept, which is the global Autohaus benchmark of customers experience, complete with the new Mercedes-Benz corporate identity," said its group chief executive officer for the automotive group Datuk Samson Anand George at the launch of the newly

upgraded NZ Wheel Klang Autohaus.

Also present at the event were Mercedes-Benz Malaysia president and chief executive officer Dr Claus Weidner and Naza Group executive chairman and chief executive officer Nasarudin Nasimuddin.

With a total built-up area of 32,000 sq ft, the NZ Wheels Klang Autohaus has a total display capacity of 17 vehicles - three of which are Mercedes-AMG cars at the AMG Performance Centre.

This is managed by around 70 personnel across sales, technical services and spare parts functions. Touted as a full-fledged 3S centre, the Autohaus is equipped with 30 work bays, capable of servicing up to approximately 650 vehicles a month, providing general and specialised repair solutions. – NST

MALAYSIA TO CONTINUE DOMINATION OF WORLD RUBBER GLOVES MARKET

Given the strong export performance in 2017, Malaysia is expected to continue dominating the world market for rubber gloves, especially medical gloves, for use in the healthcare sector.

Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong said the industry is confident of achieving the target of securing at least 65 per cent of global exports of rubber gloves in 2020.

"In 2017, global exports of rubber gloves were estimated at 228 billion pieces and is projected to reach 287 billion by 2020," he said in a statement. Last year, Malaysia's exports of rubber gloves hit an all-time high, benefitting from the synchronised recovery in global growth and demand. For 2017, exports grew at a robust pace of 19.4 per cent year-on-year to RM15.9 billion compared with RM13.3 billion previously.

He said his ministry, via the MREPC would continue to vigorously undertake marketing efforts at increasing awareness of glove use, and promote the high quality gloves from Malaysia. The other potential growing markets for rubber gloves that the ministry is currently targeting are ASEAN member countries, particularly the Philippines and Myanmar.

Malaysia is currently the world's largest supplier of rubber gloves, capturing more than 60 per cent of the global market in volume. – BERNAMA



MALAYSIANS THIRD MOST VACATION-DEPRIVED PEOPLE IN THE WORLD: EXPEDIA

Malaysians are the third most vacation-deprived people globally, Expedia.com.my has revealed.

The top online travel portal recently released its 17th annual survey on vacation deprivation, in which almost two-thirds of Malaysians questioned said that they are "very" or "somewhat" vacation-deprived.

Expedia Southeast Asia and India General Manager, Simon Fiquet, said the primary reasons for the deprivation are budgetary or affordability issues, the desire to save up vacation days for longer holidays, and the inability to get away from work.

He said the survey, which involved 15,000 full-time working adults in 30 markets, revealed that vacation deprivation is on the rise worldwide, with 53 per cent of respondents feeling vacation-deprived in 2017, compared to 49 per cent in 2016.

"Compared with America and Europe, the Asia-Pacific region is leading the pack as the most vacation-deprived region, with South Korea topping the list, followed by France and Malaysia.

"Malaysia has been in the top five of most vacation-deprived countries since 2015," he said at a media briefing on the survey findings.

Fiquet said that the survey also showed that one out of three Malaysians still check their work-related e-mail or voice mail at least once a day while on vacation; and find it hard to detach themselves from work – thus corroborating another finding that they do not get to fully enjoy their vacation.

Across the sectors, Fiquet said the survey found that those in the marketing and media-related industries are the most vacation-deprived globally, followed by those in the food and beverages and agricultural sectors. – BERNAMA

TESCO COMPLETES \$5.5 BILLION TAKEOVER OF BOOKER



Tesco, Britain's biggest retailer, has completed the 4 billion pound (\$5.51 billion) takeover of Booker, the country's largest wholesaler, the companies said.

The cash and shares deal, originally worth 3.7 billion pounds when it was first announced in January 2017, was implemented through a court-sanctioned scheme of arrangement.

Tesco and Booker said the scheme was now effective after court approval. That followed the backing of both sets of shareholders and the regulatory green light in December. – REUTERS



THE 2018 OSCARS: WINNERS AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 90TH ACADEMY AWARDS

The 90th Academy Awards ended without the chaos and controversy of last year's ceremony, but it still had a fair share of surprises. Jimmy Kimmel hosted the movie industry's most prestigious awards ceremony, and it was Guillermo del Toro's dark fantasy film The Shape of Water that finished the night as the Oscars' big winner. Del Toro was given the Oscar for "Best Director" and The Shape of Water took home the year's coveted "Best Picture" award in the show's grand finale.

Going into the 2018 ceremony, The Shape of Water garnered the highest number of nominations of any film, with 13 nods across various categories, including "Best Picture" and "Best Director," but was still regarded as an underdog due to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' traditional aversion to horror and fantasy fare. In the end, the film won four of the 13 Oscars it was nominated for, adding awards for its original score and production design in addition to the aforementioned categories. In a surprising turn, the tense drama Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri came into the ceremony having swept most of the awards ceremonies leading up to the Oscars, but left with only two awards. As expected, Frances McDormand won the "Best Actress" category, and Sam Rockwell won the "Best Supporting Actor" category, giving the acclaimed film its only two wins of the night.

After arriving with quite a bit of pre-Oscars buzz, writer-director Jordan Peele's Get Out earned its talented filmmaker his very first Oscar. Peele took home the award for the year's best original screenplay, which capped a night of records for many nominees. This year's ceremony was the first time an African-American filmmaker (Peele) was nominated for directing, producing, and screenwriting in the same year, and Peele seemed as shocked as anyone that he was taking home an Oscar at the end of the night.

Also taking home a pair of Oscars was Blade Runner 2049, which beat a crowded, competitive field in the "Best Visual Effects" category, and also took home an Oscar for cinematography. – DIGITAL TRENDS



The company set up a massive distribution warehouse on the outskirts of Melbourne city, on the country's east coast where four-fifths of the 24 million population live.

The decision to launch FBA in the world No. 12 economy is a show of Amazon's confidence in its main delivery partner, government service Australian Post, which has so far struggled to meet Amazon's shipping time estimates in hard-to-reach parts of the vast country. – REUTERS

ALIBABA SETS UP AI RESEARCH CENTRE IN SINGAPORE



Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba opened an artificial intelligence research institute in Singapore in partnership with a local university, as the battle to develop AI technology heats up.

The institute, a tie-up with Nanyang Technological University (NTU), is Alibaba's first joint research centre outside mainland China. It aims to develop cutting-edge AI technologies in areas such as elderly care and urban transport.

The institute will carry out research on artificial intelligence technologies for an initial five years, starting with a pool of 50 researchers from both organisations, according to a joint press statement.



AMAZON LAUNCHES DELIVERY BUSINESS FOR MERCHANTS IN AUSTRALIA

Amazon.com Inc has launched its signature delivery business for third-party sellers in Australia, the company said, marking the latest phase of its expansion on the continent.

The world's largest online retailer said it would pack and ship products on behalf of Australian merchants through its new Fulfillment by Amazon (FBA) program, and it aimed to launch its fast-shipping club Prime for shoppers by mid-2018, according to a statement.

THE MOON WILL SOON HAVE ITS OWN MOBILE PHONE NETWORK

The moon will get its first mobile phone network next year, enabling high-definition streaming from the lunar landscape back to earth, part of a project to back the first privately funded moon mission.

Vodafone Germany, network equipment maker Nokia and carmaker Audi said on Tuesday they were working together to support the mission, 50 years after the first NASA astronauts walked on the moon.

Vodafone said it had appointed Nokia as its technology partner to develop a space-grade network which would be a small piece of hardware weighing less than a bag of sugar.

The companies are working with Berlin-based company PTScientists on the project, with a launch scheduled in 2019 from Cape Canaveral on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, Vodafone. – REUTERS



GEELY CHAIRMAN BUILDS US\$ 9 BLN STAKE IN GERMANY'S DAIMLER

The chairman of Chinese carmaker Geely has built up an almost 10 percent stake in Mercedes-Benz owner Daimler, making a US\$ 9 billion bet that he can push through an alliance to access the German company's technology.

The purchase by Li Shufu means Geely, China's largest privately-owned automaker, is now Daimler's biggest shareholder.

Only two or three manufacturers will likely survive in the auto industry going forward, a source familiar with Li's thinking told Reuters, prompting Geely to seek access to carmakers with a technological edge.

Zhejiang Geely Holding has been on an expansion drive. It owns Volvo Cars, LEVC, the maker of London's black cabs, and last year took a majority stake in sports car maker Lotus, a 49.9 percent stake in Malaysian automaker Proton, a US\$ 3.3 billion stake in Volvo Trucks and control of flying car start-up Terrafugia.

Geely said there were no plans "for the time being" to raise the stake further. Instead, it will seek to forge an alliance with Daimler, which is developing electric and self-driving vehicles, to respond to the challenge from new competitors such as Tesla, Google and Uber, which are all working on their own new technology cars.

Its move on Daimler poses a challenge to the German carmaker, since Mercedes-Benz already has an industrial alliance to develop cars and trucks with Renault-Nissan, which owns a 3.1 percent stake in Daimler, and has announced plans to build electric cars with existing Chinese joint-venture partner BAIC Motor Corporation. – REUTERS

LEGO FOLLOWS THE GREEN BRICK ROAD TO COMBAT PLASTIC WASTE

Danish toymaker Lego will start making several of its products from plant-based plastic this year in a bid to tackle waste and environmental damage. The family-owned maker of colourful plastic bricks said botanical pieces such as leaves and trees would now be made from polyethylene, a type of plastic derived from sugar cane, to replace materials sourced from fossil fuels.

The announcement is part of Lego's commitment to reach zero waste in operations and use sustainable materials in its core products and packaging by 2030, the company said.



Eight million tonnes of plastic – bottles, packaging and other waste – are dumped into the ocean every year, killing marine life and entering the human food chain, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has said.

Tim Brooks, vice president of environmental responsibility at the Lego Group, said the change was a "great first step in our ambitious commitment of making all LEGO bricks using sustainable materials."

Lego said the sustainably-sourced items would account for only 1-2 percent of the total amount of plastic pieces it produces, adding that it has joined a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) programme to ensure the raw material is sustainable. – Thomson Reuters Foundation.

SPOTIFY FILES \$1 BN IPO, EYEING STREAMING GROWTH

Leading music streaming service Spotify announced a long-awaited initial public offering, seeking up to \$1 billion as it lists its shares on the New York Stock Exchange. In its filing, the Swedish company expressed confidence the streaming revolution it spearheaded will keep up its soaring growth, but also acknowledged that Spotify is still deep in the red.

The papers filed with the Securities Exchange Commission offered the most detailed look yet at the finances of the decade-old company. It said it had 159 million monthly users including 71 million paying subscribers – twice that of closest rival Apple Music. Revenue jumped by more than 38 percent in 2017 from a year earlier to 4.09 billion euros (\$4.99 billion), and the company said its shares price in private transactions were trading for up to \$132.50 each this year, meaning the company is worth as much as \$23.4 billion.

But the eye-popping rise of Spotify has yet to translate into a stable bottom line. The company said its net loss widened sharply last year to 1.24 billion euros (\$1.51 billion).

Spotify in its filing called the advertising-backed service a crucial part of its business model, saying that the tier's revenue grew 41 percent last year and has helped bring in 60 percent of the users who eventually buy subscriptions. – AFP



THE LUXURY LABELS COMING OUT OF AFRICA

The global luxury goods industry is worth more than \$1.5bn (£1bn), according to research by global business consulting firm, Bain & Company. This market is expected to grow by up to 5 per cent annually over the next three years.

That said, a look at the top luxury goods companies shows European countries and the United States still dominate the industry. The question is, how soon until we

start seeing African brands take a place alongside the leading luxury powerhouses?

"African creators, designers, entrepreneurs and innovators are beginning to take advantage of the new access to international markets whether through e-commerce or social shopping or international travel. They're beginning to gain a real footprint in the international market space," says Ms Pezard, Founder of Luxury Connect Africa. – BBC NEWS



SAUDI ARABIA HOSTS FIRST MARATHON FOR WOMEN

Saudi Arabia hosted its first marathon for women as the conservative kingdom seeks to boost female sports in a far-reaching modernisation drive. Hundreds of women runners, many of them dressed in traditional Islamic attire, raced in eastern Al-Ahsa region.

"The aim of the marathon is to promote running and introduce the concept of sports for all, for a healthier way of life," Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya News quoted the marathon's supervisor, Malek al-Mousa, as saying.

Sports authorities are set to organise another marathon for women in the holy city of Mecca on April 6, pro-government Okaz newspaper reported. Long known for its ultra-conservative mores, the kingdom has embarked on a wide-ranging programme of social reforms that includes allowing women to drive from June. – AFP



#theCOVERAGE

want your event to be in #theCOVERAGE? send your press release to info@thebrandlaureate.com



INTRODUCING THE NEW VOLVO XC60

Volvo Car Malaysia has unveiled the long-awaited successor to its highly-successful Premium Mid-Sized SUV with the introduction of the new Volvo XC60 T8 Twin Engine, fully imported from Sweden. Scoring a near perfect score of 98 per cent in the Adult Occupant category and 95 per cent in the Large Off-Road vehicle class, the new XC60 has been awarded Best Overall Performance by the prestigious Euro NCAP 2017. This score was possible thanks to the new XC60's ability to benefit and improve on the safety technologies of Volvo's 90s Range –

the first range of cars built on the SPA platform. Volvo calls its safety technologies which includes its driver support and active safety systems, IntelliSafe. Customers are free to choose from five exterior colour options which includes Ice White, Bright Silver, Osmium Grey, Onyx Black and Maple Brown. In response to customer demands, Volvo Car Malaysia has also added a second leather upholstery colour for the locally assembled variant – Maroon Brown – which will complement the usual Charcoal.



JCORP UNVEILS FIRST URBAN TREE OF MALAYSIA

Johor Corporation (JCorp) officially unveiled the Eco Cornerstone sculpture within the Southwest Gateway of Ibrahim International Business District (IIBD). The Eco Cornerstone, representing the Eco-sustainability lens of IIBD, is the first of four key cornerstones to be unveiled within IIBD, the other three being Heritage, Opportunity and Mobility. The Eco Cornerstone encapsulates the preservation of Johor's eco legacy through design, with eco-sustainability ethos clearly embedded in different elements of the making of the cornerstone. The metalwork sculpture takes shape as the majestic yet endangered Pokok Meranti Johor (*Shorea johorensis*), which made it to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species in 2013. Its branches extend into wind chimes to produce melodious music that resonate the 'Songs of Nature', as a reminder to appreciate the presence of nature's wonders. The IIBD Cornerstones form an integral part of the masterplan blueprint to elevate the liveability of citizens and businesses of IIBD.

GOING CARLESS WITH SOCAR

SOCAR makes going car-less a reality by completing the multi-flex transportation model in Malaysia. After serving nearly three million users in South Korea and building a fleet of 9000 cars over the past five years, the car-sharing startup makes its way to Malaysia as their first overseas expansion market. SOCAR Malaysia aims to change the landscape of Malaysian transportation by bringing in a new era of multi-flex mobility. KL-ites can now have full flexibility of choosing their desired mode of transport to achieve their individual needs when they want it, where they want it. The smartphone app allows users to book their car of choice with just a few taps on the smartphone. With the SOCAR app members can now run multiple errands such as a last minute grocery run and dropping off a parcel in a single go, at affordable rates and according to their own schedule. With their clear vision of offering Malaysians more flexibility and affordable choice, SOCAR is now available across 100 locations within Kuala Lumpur with a fleet of 240 cars.



LOVE HARBOUR SETS TO BOOST TOURISM INDUSTRY IN MELAKA

Malaysia's first love-themed harbour, Love Harbour Melaka was recently launched. The harbor is a collaboration project between Mythas Legacy Sdn. Bhd., a Malaysian-based property management and tourist attraction development company, and First Avenue Partners (Asia) Sdn. Bhd. Promising to be a game-changer in Melaka's tourism, the entire area of five acres has 100 units. RM15 million is planned to be invested to promote the area. The latest integrated tourism locale which features classical European architectural design houses extensive businesses, including boutique hotels, a wide range of F&B establishments and various retailers including bridal shops and other specialty shops. To find out more about Love Harbour Melaka, you can check out Love Harbour Melaka at Facebook,



MAGNUM CORPORATION MARKS 50TH ANNIVERSARY WITH REBRANDING

Magnum Corporation revealed its new corporate identity in conjunction with its 50th anniversary. Since 1968, Magnum has been setting the benchmark for the gaming industry on both the local and international front. The first in the country to modernise the gaming operation through the computerisation of 4D ticket sales in 1988 and in 2009, Magnum continued to innovate the industry by introducing the world's first 4D game with a jackpot element – Magnum 4D Jackpot. As the company looks forward to the future, the rebranding includes an updated brand identity across all Magnum's touch-points nationwide. All Magnum storefronts will undergo the facelift in stages to improve overall brand image and experience for both customers and sales partners.



#theTRIBUTE: AMPANG PARK



AMPANG PARK: RETAIL TRAILBLAZER

It ain't over until the fat lady sings. This is a famous proverb from German opera meaning one should not presume to know the outcome of an event which is still in progress. Sadly, this proverb is prescient in that Ampang Park is already closed. After 44 years of glorious history, Ampang Park is being shut down prior to demolition to make way for the second MRT Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya SSP line. Ampang Park was compulsorily acquired under the Land Acquisition Act 1960 to facilitate the integration of the Kelana Jaya LRT line with the MRT SSP line underground station. This would have ensured a seamless transfer between these major inter city transit lines for the commuters' convenience.

Early beginnings of Ampang Park

Ampang in the early 19th century was well known for its tin mining. It made Malaya famous by its rich alluvial tin deposits. To mine the tin required copious amounts of water to run the gravel pump thus Ampang which means "dam" in Malay is in reference to the many miners' dams located in the surrounding area.

Ampang Park Shopping Center, overlooking the old Selangor Turf Club opened in March 1973. This iconic shopping center was the first purpose-built 5-storey shopping mall in Malaysia. Located at the intersection of Ampang Road and Circular Road (renamed to Jalan Tun Razak in 1983), Ampang Park's opening was a precursor to the boom and proliferation in the construction of shopping complexes, which continues unabated until today. Developed by Low Keng Huat Brothers Realty Sdn Bhd, the retail shoplot design was pioneering. The shopfront faced internally into a long atrium corridor in the center of the complex. This unique design template was subsequently copied by Campbell and Pertama Shopping Complexes. Both these complexes opened in rapid succession within three years.

This landmark mall was the first to house a cinema and an entertainment complex on the rooftop. It pioneered the trend for one-stop shopping and was a lifestyle destination. In the early days, the rooftop was eye-catching with four protruding structures akin to a ships funnel. Incidentally, the first beauty pageant was also held in the mall too.

A portion of the shopping mall was initially sold to individual owners with strata titles. The developer wanted to monetize their cash-flow and recover part of the capital investment versus the current trend of mega developers owning the entire shopping mall.

The earliest Fitzpatrick Supermarket was established on the ground floor. It catered to the Embassy Row's well heeled clientele. The families of the embassies' staff, High Commissioners and expatriates would shop during the weekends in air-conditioning comfort, pushing their trolleys and selecting imported foodstuffs and groceries. It revolutionized the retail industry. In the early 70s, retailing for groceries was commonly done in mom-and-pop shops and fresh produce was bought at wet markets which are often crowded and smelly. A popular destination for freshly-baked breads in Fitzpatrick was Baker's Fare.

Eighties and nineties trends

During the mid-80s under the Look East policy initiated by the then Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad, foreign direct investments by Japanese firms were pouring into Malaysia. Well-known Japanese retailers were invited to transfer retail technology to upgrade the departmental store scene. Retailers like Jaya Jusco, Kimisawa, Yaohan and Hankyu Jaya established shops in Kuala Lumpur - offering retail know-how to upgrade the local shopping scene. In 1986,

Hankyu Jaya was established at Ampang Park to cater to the rapidly expanding Japanese expatriates. Japanese food and culture was the in-trend thing - introducing ramen noodles and sushi bars to the masses. Hankyu Jaya's staff had to go through comprehensive service training. Japanese retailers introduced convenient pre-packed ready-to-eat food portions, catering to patrons with hectic lifestyles. These concepts prove to be an instant hit with consumers. Sadly, except for Jaya Jusco which has been rebranded to Aeon, the latter Japanese retailers have all gone bust due to competition.

In 1986, an overhead pedestrian bridge was constructed to ease the crossing of Jalan Pekeliling to the newly opened Plaza Yow Chuan. As more glitzy shopping complexes nearby opened like Suria KLCC and City Square, business in Ampang Park Shopping Center took a nosedive - playing second fiddle to the newer designed malls. A portion of Level 2 was invariably converted to a foodcourt. Hard to believe that it was once the hub of shopping in its heyday. There was hardly any retail competition then!

When the LRT Kelana Jaya line opened in June 1999, it gave the mall a big boost. KJ 9-Ampang Park's underground station managed to revitalize the area bringing the throngs of office crowd to the numerous fast-food eateries like KFC, McDonalds and Dunkin Donuts. With the opening of the LRT line, the stage was inexorably set for Ampang Park's untimely closure. The boon would subsequently turn into bane: altering the course of history.

Long-term tenants

Some yesteryear tenants still trade with their old fashion and tacky signages despite the onslaught of modern neon signs. Many have been in business for many decades: regular customers have become firm friends. As there are numerous strata titled owners, it is not uncommon to find shops being leased to vendors and businesses offering the same selection of products, lured by the relatively lower rentals in that area of the city.

Jasa Dental surgery was one of the pioneer shops to open together with the mall. Staff and patients are apprehensive, knowing this clinic would soon close for good.

A favorite restaurant in the mall is Cozy Corner with the tagline 'Western cuisine, local delight'. Cozy Corner was a restaurant with four decades of history behind it offering delicious western fare at affordable prices. It was a frequent dating place too. Many generations of families had celebrated at the restaurant throughout those memorable years, the wonderful memories firmly ingrained in their minds. Cozy Corner's signature chicken chop was a must try!

Ampang Park Shopping Center was also a favorite destination for Raya shopping. With many retailers offering an extensive selection of Malay clothing, Raya shoppers had a field day bargain-hunting in a bazaar-like environment. In fact, the mall was also known as the 'indoor Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman', a moniker to its wide selection of Malay



Ampang Park in the 70s

The Grand Old Dame

Text: Elm Noor Rawa

Images: Sahar Misri / Jimmy Khoo

fashions available there. Patrons who shopped there are mainly loyal clientele, less affected by the vagaries of modern retailing. For older patrons of the mall, walking through the labyrinth of corridors is like travelling back through the years, a microcosm of past retailing trends captured in time and invoking nostalgic memories.

The clubbing rooftop scene

In the early 80s, one of the grandest Discos opened on the rooftop of Ampang Park after a lengthy conversion. It was called Hollywood East. The disco dance hall was inspired by the famed Hippodrome in London. It was the grandest disco in Kuala Lumpur with strobe lighting, 4 satellite lights and spaceship hydraulic lighting. Colored lasers would shoot spectacularly onto revolving glass-mosaic balls. Sometime after the disco craze, the premise was converted into the Hippodrome Nite Club. The De-Lux Nite Club karaoke eventually took over the premise vacated by the Hippodrome and continued to be a party haunt for KL metropolis revellers for the next decade.

Final closure

Being a pioneer mall with an illustrious history and a bygone-architectural layout does not guarantee perpetuity. In early 2017, the Court of Appeals upheld the High Court decision to dismiss the judicial review by appellants in June 2016. The three-member panel found that the land acquisition was made lawfully. The government may eventually pay upwards of RM400 million in compensation to the mall owners and tenants.

One week before closure, many shoppers took the opportunities to interact with the shop owners on personal levels and to bargain hunt; some could be seen taking selfies or just dine and relive childhood memories. As consolation, Guardian Health and Beauty (a 50-year brand icon) and McDonalds is relocating to Intermark- a stone's throw away.

At the stroke of midnight of 31st Dec 2017, the curtain drew to a close; alas the final swan-song as the fat lady sang the last note. The name Ampang Park will live forever in the hearts and minds of KLites despite being demolished, indelibly etched in the annals of Kuala Lumpur's history where change is the only constant companion.

#theTRIBUTE: BILLY GRAHAM



A TRIBUTE TO BILLY GRAHAM

The greatest evangelist of the century, Reverend Billy Graham passed away on February 21st, after a long battle with cancer, pneumonia and other ailments. He died at his home in Charlotte, North Carolina. He was 99.

Family members and well-wishers gathered at the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte to pay their last respect.

His body was later brought to the U.S. Capitol so that more Americans can pay their respects to a man who ministered to presidents and millions worldwide, including President Trump, his family, and other lawmakers.

America's Pastor
Known as 'America's pastor,' Reverend Billy Graham has preached to more live audiences than anyone in history and rose to prominence as a spiritual adviser for almost every U.S. president.

For over 60 years, Graham has preached the gospel to more people in live audiences than anyone in history.

According to his biography, Graham preached to more than 215 million people in more than 185 countries in his lifetime. And he reached others with his message through television programs and webcasts.

It may be hard for the younger generation to appreciate the degree to which Graham mattered, or appeared to matter, from past to present.

The Fox documentary: "Billy Graham: An Extraordinary Journey" highlights the milestones throughout Graham's personal and professional life, from his start as a dairy farmer's son to his involvement in the civil rights movement.

From authoring countless sermons, to bringing the Bible's message to hundreds of nations, Graham's life was dedicated to his family and work, he would travel to multiple countries and across the U.S. to preach the Gospel.

He is also a devoted husband to Ruth and a loving father and grandfather to his five children and grandchildren.

God's Calling
Graham became "Born Again" after hearing an evangelist at a tent meeting in 1934. His missionary work began in 1944 at rallies for the Youth for Christ Campus Life ministry. His first crusade was held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1947. In 1957, he preached at Madison Square Garden in New York for 16 straight weeks to a packed audience.

His "Last Crusade" was held in June 2005 in Queens, New York. The three-day mass event which drew 230,000 people, was most likely his last in the United States.



Evangelist Billy Graham, preaches the Gospel to thousands of believers as part of his worldwide crusade.

Graham also delivered his message via a weekly Sunday radio program called "The Hour of Decision" and wrote an advice column, "My Answer." In 1956, he founded the magazine Christianity Today, a leading evangelical publication.

Graham took Christ literally when he said in Mark 16:15: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," his biography states.

His lifelong dedication to God's calling on his life, his blameless character, and honorable reputation, his love for God and his straightforward, uncompromising proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ has profoundly impacted the lives of millions.

According to senior pastor Chuck Swindoll, in every season of human history, God has seen fit to raise up a man to take a powerful stand for Him, and evangelist Billy Graham has been God's man in our generation.

"A man of unquenchable passion for reaching the unsaved with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, Billy Graham was one of the most remarkable men on the planet—bold as a lion with a Bible in his hand... yet humble under God's mantle of service," to proclaim His truth to multiple millions of souls across the globe," he said.

Early Life
Born on November 7, 1918, as William Franklin Graham, he grew up on a dairy farm near Charlotte, N.C... He would become ordained in 1939 by Peniel Baptist Church in Palatka, Florida, which is part of the Southern Baptist Convention.

He earned a bachelor of theology from the Florida Bible Institute in 1940 and a bachelor of arts in

anthropology from Wheaton College in 1943.

Graham met his wife, Ruth, while they attended Wheaton College in Illinois. The pair married in 1943 and had five children. The couple married in 1943 and later moved to Montreat. They had five children.

His children have all gone on to become speakers or involved in ministry in some form or fashion. His son, Franklin, is the president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), which his father founded in 1950.

Originally headquartered in Minneapolis, the BGEA started the weekly "Hour of Decision" radio program, a syndicated newspaper column and television programs shown on Christian networks.

Lifetime Legacy
A Presidential Medal of Honor recipient, Graham was knighted by the British ambassador, Sir Christopher Meyer, on behalf of the queen, at the British Embassy, December 6, 2001 in Washington.

During his six decades of ministry, Graham repeatedly asserted that the Bible provided answers to every human He insisted that to have their sins forgiven, enjoy an intimate relationship with God, and go to heaven, individuals must accept Jesus Christ as savior and Lord and be born again.

During his lifetime, Graham has persuaded more than three million people to commit their lives to Christianity.

He helped launch three major enterprises – the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, "Christianity Today" magazine and Youth for Christ, a ministry to high school students. He helped shape numerous evangelical colleges, seminaries and organizations including World Vision, World Relief, and the National Association of Evangelicals.

He is also the author of dozens of books, sermons. He authored 32 books in his lifetime, including his autobiography, "Just As I Am."

The final words in the autobiography, reads:

"I know that soon my life will be over. I thank God for it, and for all He has given me in this life. But I look forward to Heaven ... to seeing Christ and bowing before Him in praise and gratitude for all He has done for us, and for using me on this earth by His grace—just as I am."

The evangelist declared, "One day you'll hear that Billy Graham has died. Don't you believe it. On that day I'll be more alive than ever before! I've just changed addresses."



SMeS

THE BRANDLAUREATE BEST BRANDS AWARDS 2017-2018

**SENSATIONALISE YOUR BRAND
TO SUBSTANTIALISE THE BRAND**

The winners of The BrandLaureate SMeS BestBrands Awards 2017-2018 were announced by the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation (APBF) at its gala dinner that was held at The Majestic Hotel, Kuala Lumpur on 8th February 2018. Over 800 guests comprising Malaysia's top corporate leaders, brand owners and leading personalities were in attendance. The prestigious event was graced by prominent figures which includes YBhg Tan Sri Dato' Seri Megat Najmuddin bin Dato' Seri Dr Hj Megat Khas, President of Federation of Public Listed Companies Berhad; YBhg Tan Sri Aseh Che Mat, Chairman of Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) and YBhg Tan Sri Rainer Althoff, Chairman of the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation.

SENSATIONALISE YOUR BRAND TO SUBSTANTIALISE THE BRAND was the chosen theme of this year's The BrandLaureate SMeS BestBrands Awards. With the deluge of brands in the market, brands must stand out and stand tall amongst the competition. The key mantra in branding is to be different but with changing times and trends, being different is no longer enough. Brands need to be **SENSATIONAL** and to do that it needs to **SENSATIONALISE**.

The Asia Pacific Brands Foundation chose this theme as it strongly feels that for small medium enterprises (SMEs) to rise up and be seen, the most effective way is to **SENSATIONALISE** and **SUBSTANTIALISE** their brand. SMEs must adopt bold branding strategies if they want to stand up and break into the league of big boys.

Each winners received a 24k gold plated trophy and a glass-framed certificate. The trophy reflects the theme which reflects the brand's journey to achieve brand success and leadership position. Rising from the broad base of the trophy which is heavily competitive, the brand navigates upwards and moves away from the rest of the competition with its bold and sensational branding strategies. The two spirals in the trophy indicate the brand's mission to achieve a wider target audience and to establish its presence and footprint, locally and globally.

In his welcome speech, Dr KKJohan, President of The BrandLaureate congratulated the champions of SMeS Brands for their win and spoke on the Award's chosen theme,



"In branding, you need to add colors to it and make it alive. You need to make your brand a sensation and it must be brimming with vigor to attract customers. That is why we choose the theme of this year's Award – Sensationalise Your Brand to Substantialise Your Brand. Always remember, that people like to talk about new things and trends and if the story is more juicier or sensational, the stronger the gossip and chatter. And when that happens, the focus is always on the person or the brand."

"In branding, you need to add colors to it and make it alive. You need to make your brand a sensation and it must be brimming with vigor to attract customers. That is why we choose the theme of this year's Award – Sensationalise Your Brand to Substantialise Your Brand. Always remember, that people like to talk about new things and trends and if the story is more juicier or sensational, the stronger the gossip and chatter. And when that happens, the focus is always on the person or the brand."

I also like to remind you that while you sensationalise your brand, do not forget to substantialise it. What is the point of having a nice, pretty brand but has no substance? Make sure that your brand has positive attributes, is synonymous with quality and excellence and delivers on its brand promise."

He then concluded his speech by urging SMEs, "stay true and loyal to your brand, be protective and guard over it, you will have a good year ahead. And don't forget to make your brand, your customer's best friend, that will be a double bonus. As the brand leader, you must be ferociously protective of your brand, if not you will find your brand going to the dogs and 2018 a dog gone year. That is my word of advice to you."

During the night, over 70 companies and individuals received The BrandLaureate Awards which were divided into 10 Award categories. The highlight of the night was the presentation of The BrandLaureate SMeS Man of the Year and Women of the Year Award to Peter Chan, Chief Executive Officer of The Haven and Noor Neelofa Mohd Noor, Director of NH Prima International Sdn Bhd. The Haven also received the highest honor of the night with the Brand of the Year Award for Nation Branding - Outstanding Resort Concept.

The night was followed by a presentation of The BrandLaureate Business World Review Cover February-March issue by Assistant Managing Editor, Ms Ain MC to Peter Chan, Chief Executive Officer of The Haven. The prestigious event also saw the launch of Dr KKJohan's Quote Book Volume 3: Show Your Brand Leadership by Building A Great Brand. During the gala dinner, guests were presented with an exquisite dinner spread and entertained with exciting performances by Malaysia's renowned, Datuk Ramli Sarip or better known as "Papa Rock", a powerful performance by the highly talented May Mow and a lively lion dance performance during the event's opening and closing by Kun Seng Keng Lion Dance Association, Kuala Lumpur.



BRANDPRENEUR AWARDS



SIGNATURE BRAND AWARDS



BRAND OF DISTINCTION AWARDS



STRATEGIC BUSINESS PARTNERS AWARD



MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD



WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD



BUSINESS COUPLE OF THE YEAR AWARD



BUSINESS & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARDS



BESTBRANDS AWARDS



EMERGING BRAND AWARDS



THE WORLD IS OUR OYSTER!



“
Hype up your Country Brand...EXPRESS the change your country longs for.
Hype up your Country Brand...Make Country Branding as EXPRESSIVE as
you can in your motherland and beyond.
Hype up your Country Brand...Make Country Branding the ultimate
EXPRESSION of passion for Brands and Branding!
”

START BY CLEANING UP YOUR LIFE FIRST

REPEAT, REWIND & REPLAY VS STOP, ERASE & REPLACE
What a great start! The new *Gregorian* and *Lunar* calendars have come into effect only recently. And speaking of calendars, my favourite letter of the alphabet has always been ‘C’. Why, you may ask? It represents ‘Change’. Indeed, change can do wonders!

Ironically enough, a fresh start, which is essentially a process, also has to begin somewhere. But where and when should it begin? I always remember the wisdom that radiated from the late Michael Jackson’s hit song, *Man in the Mirror*. I can think of no better place to start than at status quo – me, myself and I. It is said that longest journey one has to make is from the head to the heart. It is true, that in order to bring change, one must first embrace the change within oneself. One cannot give what one does not have; nor can one teach what one does not know.

If you ask me honestly, the hardest part (of anything) is getting started – the transition from a state of being stationary to one of motion and action requires the greatest effort. Once there is movement, it is not so difficult for things to progress naturally. And in order to move freely, and with least effort, we need to be light and nimble. The less burden we carry, the quicker we will be able to jump to our feet. But alas, contrary to popular belief, the path to becoming ‘light’ is actually not a light one... As a matter of fact, it takes a lot of effort to empty a container that is already full; where things are spilling over and there is hardly any room to move, where one is being smothered into a state of breathlessness by hoarding more than one’s fair share in life, where life becomes uncomfortable because we have too much of stuff that serves no purpose (or have lost their purpose as time went by). Imagine how much more happier life would be if all that excess space was freed up for actual living (i.e. living space)?

Imagine what sort of country we could build if we simply clean up every aspect of it. There are a good number of things which require mobility and space in order to grow healthily and develop into maturity. Just envisage the glorious brilliance of a country that removes all its vestigial

aspects and focuses on the HERE and NOW with a keen eye on the future... all in the illustrious name of *Country Branding!*

“Don’t belittle, befriend; don’t make a booboo, build your Country Brand!”

START THE DAY ON A RIGHT NOTE

MALLEABLE FROM DAWN TO DUSK
Where mobility is at its minimum and work seems at maximum, often one loses the sheer will to go on; more often than not falling back into the routine trap of habit. After all, isn’t it easier to go on doing what we have been doing all along because we have had so much practice at it; day in, day out?

But then again, we cannot do what we are doing indefinitely. As there is a sunrise and sunset in a day, the rising and receding of the tides and the changing of seasons, human beings will have to embrace change as life goes along – if not for anything, just for the sake of setting a new pace to the humdrum of existence. Part of this process is that practical realities will either sooner or later set in and if we do not embrace change by choice, we may be put in a spot where we either have no choice but to change or the choice will be made for us.

I have learnt in life that there are two things that always seem to run out: Time and Space. Both are similar in that we have to make time to have more time and make space to have space for more. The catch is we need time to make space, and we need space to occupy our time. Conversely, time works against space as the more time passes, the more space runs out. In the grand scale of things, even if space runs out, we will run out of time as we become suffocated or sacrifice our range of mobility greatly. We simply cannot allow this pseudo-existence to go on perpetually. Something’s got to give – and more often than not, it is time, because time is the only resource that can never be truly recovered or replaced; and all our days are numbered ultimately.

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY...

Imagine if as a *Country Brand*, we take astute measures to clean up any mess as a start. How can we hope for guests, tourists and investors to see the best of our homeland if our very streets are filthy and the toilets are unsanitary? How can we create a deep enough positive impression in their hearts and minds which they will take back with them to the four corners of the world if we do not get our house in order? A *Country Brand* that is 'cleaned up' has a greater potential of imprinting the 'right message' (the desired Branding factor) about the nation on the blank canvas of the globe and define our motherland in a way no inert map can ever hope to achieve...

"Change your habit and change your behaviour!"

START THE YEAR WITH A 'NEW YOU'

RESHAPING DESTINIES

What you do in a day affects that day. But what you do every day affects your week, month, year, decade, century and so forth (even extended, by way of legacy/succession). Regardless of our own lifespan, redefining one's existence can be done in many ways. It can be inward and outward. There are no limits really. It is always admirable if the change is wholesome i.e. something visible as well as felt – simply because both these dimensions reinforce each other and propel the change to become real, faster, and remain in a more permanent manner in our lives. In truth, the more aspects of our lives are involved in a particular endeavour, the more real the move becomes. This is akin to a concerted effort where each facet seeks to reaffirm the other.

Basically change sparks from a decision. A decision to change – and that is to change for the better (for not all change is necessarily good). Timely amendments, which mean a transformation at the apt moment, can have a significant impact on one's life. If one decides to change on the first day of the year, then it is only natural that the year will be different (maybe even significantly) from the others that came before it. All things considered, this is a good chance to make this a definitive year for yourself and your brand!

There are years when certain themes are applied to a country. The purpose behind it is to create *Brand Awareness* for the country, first and foremost, followed by the idea, drive or move the event specifically with aims to

promote the specific endeavours. In essence, this is *Country Branding* in one form or another – where the year is begun with a 'new' spirit. Such an approach will create due eagerness for the occurrence and spark a course of preparation that will in the end support and see it through. Reality is made possible by anticipation thereof. So let Country Branding take a fresh step forward with abounding newness!

"Can you make 2018 your BEST YEAR EVER?"

START THE 'MAGIC' NOW – SEIZE THE MOMENT

THE POWER OF 'NOW'

NOW is a good a time as any to start. In fact, if you really ponder about it, NOW is the BEST time to get things rolling! In case you are wondering why I seem to be stressing on NOW, just think...NOW is the beginning of the rest of your life!

The magic of NOW is so formidable that if one was to seize the moment and run with it, things can move from impossible to probable to possible. When will the 'world be your oyster'? When we act on the NOW!

The raw power and drive of the NOW aspect grants motion to any endeavour one sets his heart on. Anything! So why not apply it to change? Change is powerful; but change plus NOW is even more formidable – so impactful that it will blow your mind!

NOW is the time to usher in change for the *Country Brand* – significant enough a change that the entire world will take notice of it! This notion is proven effective when the very desire to change for the better is taken notice of and appreciated (even respected). In truth, the desire to change in itself already evidences an outlook which seeks to lay a sound enough foundation for something better/great/brilliant that is to come.

Driving on the power of change and the force of NOW, let us reach for that precious pearl that is epitomic *Country Branding*. Never look back at the old things being left behind but at the wondrous treasures that lie before us.

"Change is constant. Change is a must. Change is good."

“*The world is our oyster – GO FOR IT!*”

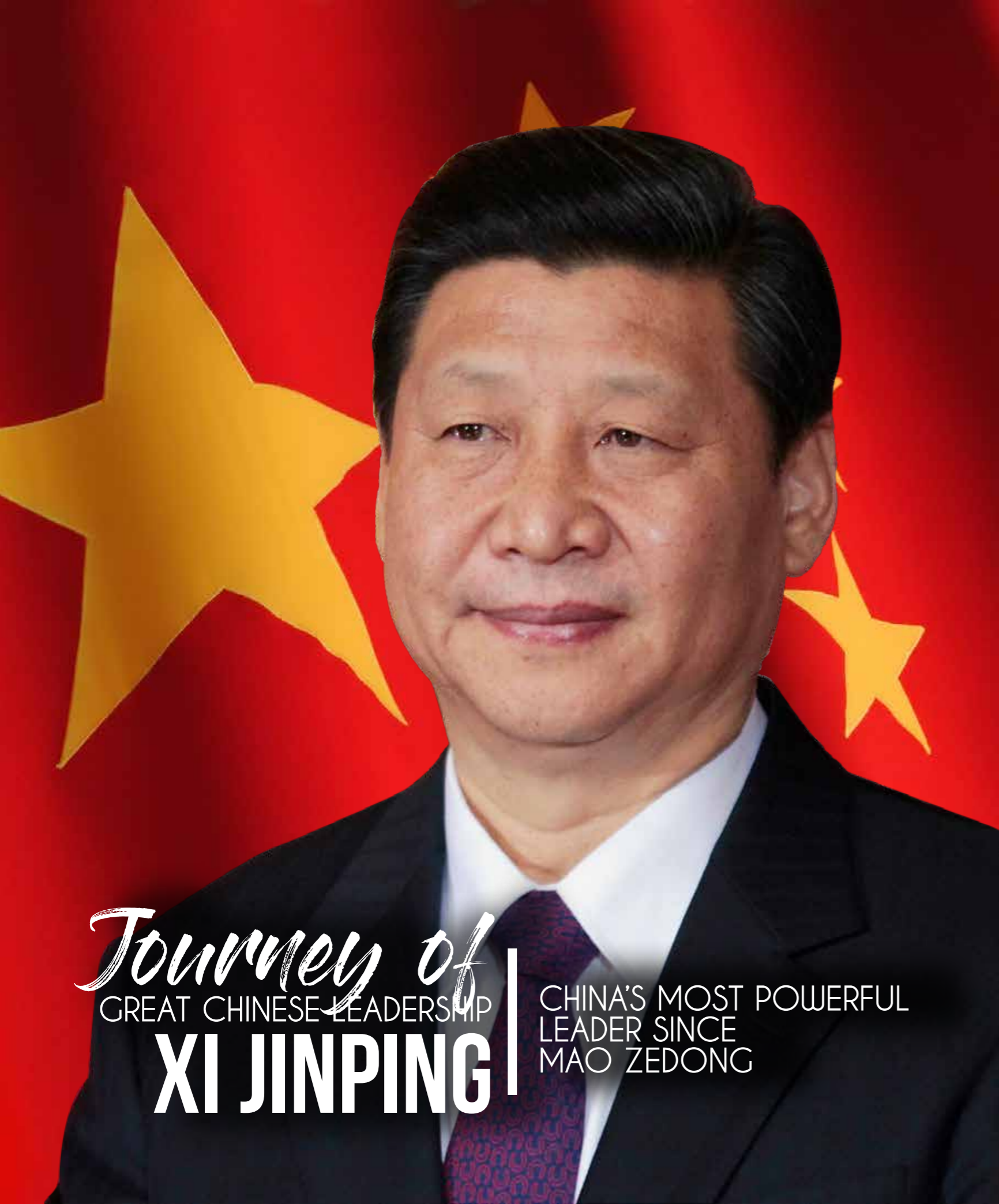


Serba Dinamik is an international energy services group providing engineering solutions to the Oil and Gas ("O&G") and power generation industries with operational facilities in Malaysia, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates ("UAE"), Bahrain and the United Kingdom ("UK").

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.



Journey of GREAT CHINESE LEADERSHIP XI JINPING

CHINA'S MOST POWERFUL
LEADER SINCE
MAO ZEDONG

For President Xi Jinping, who is also the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the past five years have been a period of sweeping reforms and daunting challenges. He has made his mark through new thoughts and policies that have dramatically transformed China. When Xi took office five years ago, he made a big promise.

"We'll continue to strive for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. This grave responsibility is for the well being of the people," Xi Jinping.

Xi's top priority is to maintain growth, as economic performance is a key measure for good governance but China's reforms have entered deep waters. Any change should come from the top leadership, and this could mean challenging entrenched interest groups going heads-on. Xi also knew that to deliver change and maintain stability is a difficult balancing act.

One of Xi's ground-breaking reforms is the redefinition of the government and the market. It was a major decision to depart from a planned economy. The focus of reform is to allow the market forces to play a decisive role in the allocation of resources.

"Reform can be regarded as the igniter. We need to take more effective measures to launch the innovation engine at full speed," Xi Jinping.

Ending Corruption to End Poverty

To boost stability, Xi put a priority on ending poverty. He asked Party officials to stay true to the mission and go to the grassroots to win the people's trust. According to Xi, the Party's survival relies heavily on the people's trust but he also knew that the biggest threat standing in the way is within the Party itself.

In order to end poverty, he has waged a ruthless war on corruption, punishing more than a million corrupt officials at all levels. He has broken some tacit rules and established new guidelines. To Xi, the Chinese wealth must be divided equally among all and this is fundamental for China to retain its position as the world's powerhouse.

"We must do what we must, and punish those who deserve it. If we didn't dare offend hundreds of thousands of corrupt officials, we would have offended 1.3 billion people," Xi Jinping.

Gearing Up for the World

China is now playing a bigger role on the global stage, from providing solutions and boosting globalization, to its exercise of soft power. Whether or not China's road of socialism with Chinese characteristics is good depends on the facts and will be judged by the Chinese people. The CPC members and the Chinese people have the full confidence to provide China's solutions for the exploration of better social systems for mankind.

The "Chinese Dream" now has comprehensive theories and content. And Xi's thoughts are the basis for China's overall development in the long term. It is undeniable

that China has made great progress in many areas under Xi's leadership. The Party believes reforms will continue, as China is on its way to a well-off society.

After five years of leadership, President Xi Jinping has been granted a second term as the top leader of China's Communist Party. Here is an overview of what he has done during the first five years:

Politics

After coming to power in 2012, Xi launched a relentless campaign to crack down on corruption and enforce loyalty. More than one million officials have been disciplined, including a number of prominent party and military leaders. Xi took aggressive steps to tighten the party's control over Chinese society. His calls to strengthen grass-roots "party building" have seen weak party branches in 77,000 villages and communities become active again. He also ordered state media and universities to serve the party.

His administration put forward strict rules regulating non-government organisations, religious practices and online speech. Hundreds of rights lawyers and activists were detained or interrogated during his first term.

Society

Xi made environmental protection a priority. Numerous officials and companies were penalized in the crackdown on pollution, but environmental problems remain a serious threat, especially in the country's industrial regions. Beijing has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to the Paris Agreement on climate change, which it ratified in September last year, despite US withdrawal. The government's spending on eliminating poverty has also doubled during Xi's first term. China is said to have lifted more than 55 million people above the poverty line from the years 2013 to 2016, although the country's wealth gap has widened in during those years.

Another revolutionary move by Xi was to put an end to the decades-old one-child policy to address a drop in birth rates but the shrinking labour force and ageing population are still long-term threats to China's economy.

Economy

Xi has managed to keep China's annual economic growth rate above 6.5 per cent, but it still largely relies on government investment. Xi has made limited progress in making the economy more market-oriented. Private capital was brought into a few state-owned enterprises, but many companies continue to rely on government support. Industrial overcapacity remains high, while corporate and government debt is rapidly piling up.

Following the Chinese stock market rout in 2015 that wiped more than US\$3 trillion off the value of mainland shares in just three weeks, Beijing unleashed a crackdown on market manipulators – so-called crocodiles – and corrupted financial regulators, as well as setting up the new Financial Stability and Development Commission.

"Reform can be regarded as the igniter. We need to take more effective measures to launch the innovation engine at full speed."

To make innovation the next driver of growth, Xi's government has invested heavily in scientific research and technology. A larger share of the world's patent requests and research papers now come from China. The number of tech unicorns – start-up companies valued at more than US\$1 billion – now stands at more than 50. It was fewer than 10 three years ago.

Diplomacy and Defense

Under Xi's ruling, China has become more assertive in handling territorial disputes while avoiding armed conflicts with other states. Beijing stepped up the building of artificial islands in the South China Sea, and set up regular naval patrols in the disputed waters of the East China Sea. China and India had their most tense border stand-off in decades in 2017.

Xi has emerged on the world stage as a defender of globalisation. He has extended China's influence abroad. Under his signature "One Belt and One Road Initiative" trade plan, China has invested more than US\$60 billion in Asia, Europe and Africa. Where national Defense is concerned, the People's Liberation Army has undergone a sweeping overhaul to make it more combat-ready. Xi restructured the army's command system and announced plans to cut 300,000 troops.

New Vision of Development and Developing a Modernized Economy

As Xi looks forward to his second term as President, he plans to deliver on two century goals, realise the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, and steadily improve people's lives. His party must continue to pursue development as the Party's top priority in governance; they must unleash and develop productive forces, continue reforms to develop the socialist market economy, and promote sustained and sound economic growth.

China's economy has been transitioning from a phase of rapid growth to a stage of high-quality development. This is a pivotal stage for transforming their growth model, improving the economic structure, and fostering new drivers of growth. It is imperative that they develop a modernized economy. This is both an urgent requirement for getting them smoothly through this critical transition and a strategic goal for China's development.

MELBOURNE

CITY FOR STARTUPS

BY FRANCIS LEONG

From a business perspective, where would be an ideal location to launch a startup? London? New York? Singapore? Hong Kong? Shanghai? Or maybe Silicon Valley?

Well, according to Scott Hansacker, the cofounder and CEO of Attendly and interim CEO of Startup Victoria, the best location is none other than Melbourne, Australia.

Home to over 4 million inhabitants and located in the Yarra River valley in the state of Victoria, Melbourne provides a great standard of living in a city the right size to create some scale, while still being small enough to be able to access all the right people.

World's Most Livable City

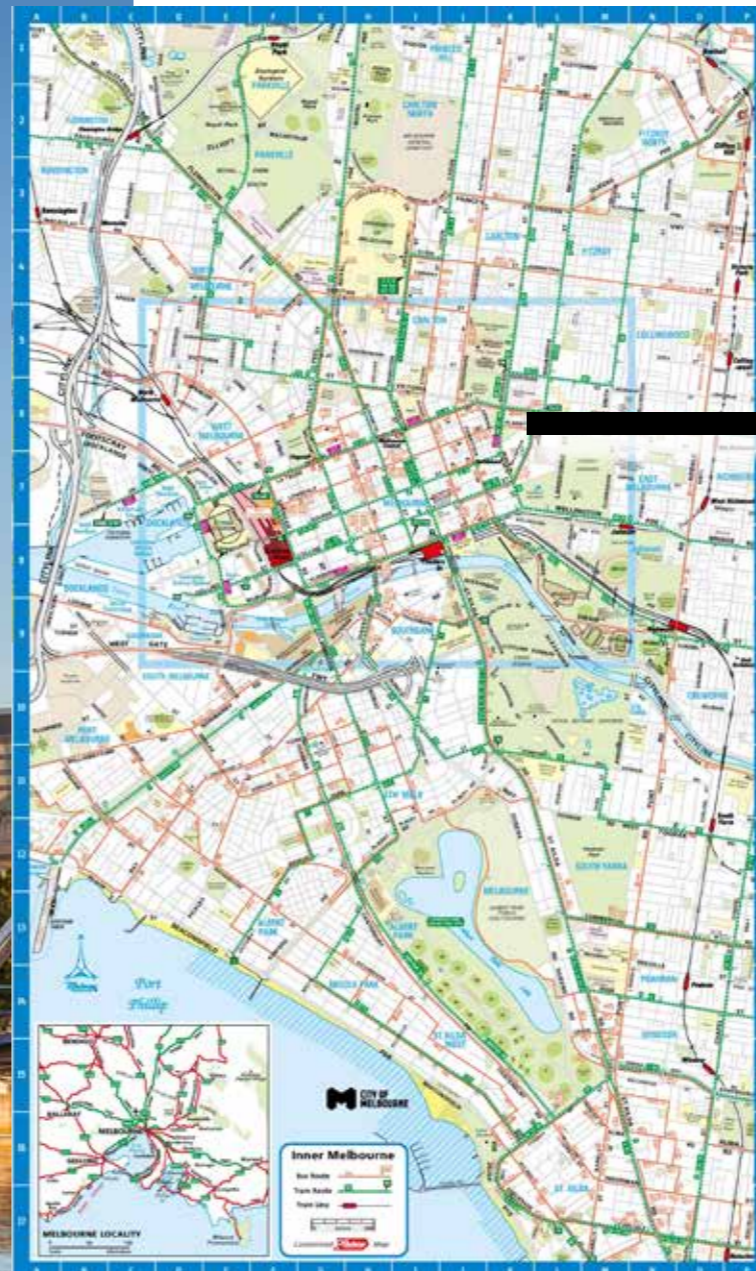
"Startups are difficult. If you are going to attempt three or four of them, which is usually how many it takes before you find success, you may as well do it in one of the world's best cities," noted Hansacker. In 2017, Melbourne was voted the world's most liveable city for the seventh year in a row by the Economist. The survey rates cities on a number of areas, including healthcare, education, stability, culture, environment and infrastructure. Melbourne scored an almost perfect 97.5 out of 100.

"Those in the know understand that startups are immensely challenging. If you are going to tackle the hardest thing you've ever done in your life, you may as well do it in a city that has your back," he added.

Community Support

No stranger to startups, Hansacker has observed that though there are many parts to a successful startup ecosystem, it's hard to go past the 'founder community' as a single measure of strength. Without a supportive, growing and dynamic community of people involved in founding startups, it can be hard to survive the years of toil that a startup requires.

As recently as 2009, the scene in Melbourne was fragmented, but much has changed over the last five years. Multiple co-working spaces have sprung up to house the growing Melbourne scene, with new ones opening their doors almost every month. With a good mix of business and technical skills, the Melbourne community embraces startups at all stages of their journey, be they newbies or seasoned veterans.



Startup events

Events are one of the strongest aspects of the Melbourne scene. Lean Startup Melbourne (run by Startup Victoria) is the biggest regular startup event in the country drawing between 400 and 500 people every month.

Startup Grind, Silicon Beach Drinks, Startup Weekend and Startup Healthtech are strongly attended and run on a monthly basis. A number of the co-working spaces around town also run their own events, focusing on workshops that educate and inspire the startup community.

On the 10th May 2018 at the Royal Exhibition Hall, Melbourne will again play host to Above All Human, a world class tech conference that draws speakers from all over the world. Past speakers included Steve Huffman (CEO of Reddit), Martin Hosking (CEO of Redbubble) and Mike Monteiro (Head of Design, Mule Design). Above All Human is now a fixture on the Melbourne calendar.

Success Stories

A number of Melbourne startups have been incredibly successful over the years, with a select few listing on the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX). Seek, REA Group, Aconex and CarSales have all built very large business empires, generating a return for their investors by floating on the ASX in past years.

In recent times, growing Melbourne startups have either bootstrapped (used their own resources) or raised money from external investors to supercharge their growth. Envato remains a powerhouse, with one of their websites breaking into the top 100 most visited websites in the world, ahead of Netflix and Dropbox.

Lifx are riding the 'internet of things' wave to reinvent the light bulb, raising more than \$1 million on Kickstarter in less than five days. They have since raised \$12 million in funding from Sequoia Capital, setting up offices in both Silicon Valley and the UK.

Culture Amp toiled away for four years in the suburbs of Richmond, making absolutely sure they had built something customers wanted. With a customer

DID YOU KNOW?

Melbourne was named in honour of the British Prime Minister, William Lamb, Second Viscount Melbourne in 1837 and became the capital of Victoria in 1851.

The inhabitants are called Melburnians.

Prior to its current name, it was called Batmania after the explorer John Batman who claimed to have purchased some land on the northern bank of the Yarra River in 1835.

During the Victorian gold rush in the 1850s, Melbourne was transformed into one of the world's largest and wealthiest cities.

Melbourne became the de facto capital of Australia in 1901 when the country became a federation. It was only in 1927 that the capital was moved to Canberra.

Melbourne is often referred to as Australia's garden city.

It also served as the host city for the 1956 Summer Olympics and the 2006 Commonwealth

BRANDS OF MELBOURNE



list that now includes Airbnb, Uber, Adobe and Warby Parker, they recently raised \$6.3 million to accelerate their growth.

There are of course no guarantees of success, and the maxim of high risk equating to high returns is as true today as ever. But Melbourne is a city that rewards effort and there is a growing and supportive community here to help. US startups looking for an Asia Pacific office to setup are increasingly coming to Melbourne as well, including Zendesk, Eventbrite and Stripe.

Further Insights

Virgin had an interview with Ryan Trainor, co-founder of Republica and Kon Karapanagiotidis OAM, CEO of Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, both based in Melbourne to get a better understanding of the city's startup culture.

Here is an excerpt of the interview:

How would you describe the business culture in Melbourne?

Ryan Trainor (RT): The business culture in Melbourne supports people who are willing to build their business, but ensures that humility is a key factor and value that remains at the forefront. People within Melbourne would rather come across a secret, rather than be screamed at with a brand. The subtleties of this ensure that brands that have a strong sense of community, offer a clear value proposition that creates strong word of mouth.

Kon Karapanagiotidis (KK): The business culture is community-minded, accessible, and keen to harness their human social capital to build capacity and opportunities for asylum seekers and other marginalised communities; businesses who want to be market leaders and see that their brand stands for something more than just commercial outcomes.

What are the best aspects of doing business in Melbourne?

RT: With a population of a little over four million people, in terms of size Melbourne is big enough to create some scale and small enough to access the right people for your ventures. In Melbourne, networks are important, as business is very relationship driven and there needs to be a high level of authenticity to build trust. As the creative hub and cafe/food capital of Australia, business is usually done over a coffee and once trust within networks are built, Melbourne can provide terrific opportunities for entrepreneurs who wish to not only expand around Australia, but also review opportunities in Asia.

KK: Melbourne is an entrepreneurial city where people are more open than other cities to new ideas and innovations, there is a culture of giving it a go and taking strategic risks. The diversity of the business community, its high desire for engagement, a robust appetite to bring its networks and skills to improve the lives of asylum seekers to enable them to fulfil their potential; all these are contributing factors that attract startup entrepreneurs.

What are the downsides to doing business in Melbourne?

RT: As Australia is still a relatively small market compared to the rest of the world, private equity or access to startup capital can still be challenging as our risk profile compared to other countries remains conservative. The challenge for Australia in general and Melbourne in particular is to continue to invest in the next wave of entrepreneurship and in the future generation of ideas and businesses.

KK: While Melbourne would lead the nation in terms of its entrepreneurship and innovation, the business community still



“With a population of a little over four million people, in terms of size Melbourne is big enough to create some scale and small enough to access the right people for your ventures. In Melbourne, networks are important, as business is very relationship driven and there needs to be a high level of authenticity to build trust.”

remains deeply conservative and inwardly focused. Most still don't see the branding and culture-building opportunities for their business by aligning themselves with human rights.

Too many are driven by fears of consumer perceptions and backlash rather than by owning the space, reshaping the landscape and standing for something. They are too scared to be businesses that have values and support causes that are politically unpopular missing the amazing opportunity to be market leaders. More and more people want to give their money to companies with ethics, values and a mission beyond simply making money. Companies should shape the terrain, disrupt traditional business outdated models rather than wait for the consumer.

What are the costs of doing business in Melbourne?

RT: As with any state in Australia, Melbourne has its challenges. Labour costs and cost of living often make it hard for startups to grow, but as with any city, the harder you work, the luckier you are and this remains true in Melbourne. The city provides opportunity if you are willing to work hard with a number of incubators, startup educators, shared office space and an active creative community who are willing to support people who engage within the network.

KK: The greatest cost is the time cost of relationship building. It takes a huge amount of time to build business relationships, to keep them engaged and to become meaningful partners. People invest in people before they invest in any business or charity. Time spent building those relationships takes you away from delivering on the rest of your strategy and sometimes for little reward.

What's your advice for anyone thinking of starting up in Melbourne?

RT: Really seek out support from people who have gone down a similar path that you are planning to go. My experience is that people genuinely want to help others and I think there is a real culture of this within Melbourne. On my journey, I have really sought people and asked for advice and now when I am asked to catch up for a coffee, I always do, as we are all part of the same ecosystem. We are really fortunate in Melbourne to have some terrific success stories, a wonderful city that provides opportunity for those willing to work hard for it.

KK: You need to have a really thick second layer of skin, you need to be resilient, leave your ego at the door, never take no for an answer, have industrial-strength self-determination to succeed, master your narrative, be clear of your vision and the needs of your audience, tailor that vision, don't compromise on your core idea or dream, diversify your risk and investors, start small, master the business model and its risks before scaling, be adaptive and flexible in recognising your business idea needs to adapt to the market.

Silicon Valley's Support

In March 2017, it was reported in Business Insider Australia that Silicon Valley's legendary accelerator program, 500 Startups, is opening up in Melbourne after the Victorian government's LaunchVic program agreed to tip \$2 million into its launch.

The deal will see the organisation get behind at least 40 Australian startups over the next two years, also offering them access to the organisation's global network and other Silicon Valley venture capitalists. The 500 Melbourne core acceleration program will accept 20-25 startups annually from Australia and the APAC region.

500 Melbourne will also be looking to invest in startups alongside angel and VC investors from the local market, working outside the accelerator program with year-round events from host pitch coaching sessions, to customer acquisition and growth marketing, and local tech investor education programs as part of a new hub for the Australian startup ecosystem.

500 Startups founder Dave McClure said they "had our eye on Australia" for a while after already investing in 20 local startups. "Partnering with Melbourne and LaunchVic helps us bring a slice of Silicon Valley to Australia through our startup, investor, and corporate programs," he said.

500 Startups is a global venture capital seed fund that launched in 2010 and now has more than USD\$330 million (AUD\$428 million) in capital invested in 1,800 technology startups in 60 countries.

In a 500 Startups blog post announcing the plan, the organisation said Australia's ecosystem "is at an inflection point, with more venture funding available than ever before and government championing an innovation agenda to legitimize and support startups".

The deal pushes Melbourne's credentials as the nation's tech and startup capital, with other global businesses such as Zendesk, Square, Slack and Cognizant basing themselves in the city.

Victoria's innovation minister Philip Dalidakis said 500 Startups was one of the best accelerator programs in the world. Startups can register their interest in the 500 Melbourne program via email: Melbourne@500startups.com.





9TH SESSION OF THE WORLD URBAN FORUM

The ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9) took place with the theme “Cities 2030 – Cities For All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda.” WUF9 was the first Forum to convene since the adoption of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) at the Habitat III conference in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016. The Forum accordingly focused on arrangements and actions for implementation, with many delegates and participants emphasizing the importance of public, private and civil society cooperation in order to fully achieve the NUA.

Ministerial-level roundtables and many special sessions convened to discuss concerns and share examples of good policies and practices toward sustainable and inclusive urbanization. Some of the important topics discussed are as follows:

CITIES FOR ALL WITH HOUSING AT THE CENTER

On addressing inequality in cities, Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar, CEO, Khazanah Nasional, Malaysia, stressed that “prevention is better than cure,” and highlighted that basic infrastructure and accessible markets are key. Dato’ Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, stated that well-designed urbanization plans contribute to inclusiveness and generate economic value. Countries highlighted national initiatives, including: an energy-welfare partnership in Seoul that has created jobs in retrofitting homes for energy efficiency and Thailand’s “cities without slums” housing development strategy that is working with civil society partners. On the critical factors for affordable housing, the Netherlands and Morocco specified green growth, spatial design and cooperation across sectors, including with citizens. It concluded that location, public spaces and access to services need to be considered when providing housing to all. They warned that inequality leads to anger and violence, and makes cities uninhabitable. India stated that housing is fundamental to human existence, and that “we must act to provide it.”

URBAN DIMENSION OF CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

William Cobbett of Cities Alliance, introduced the session by saying cities will be key to implementing the global agendas of sustainable development, climate action and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). Datuk Seri Dr. Ir. Zaini Ujang, Secretary General, Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water, Malaysia, presented Malaysia’s Green Technology Master Plan that identifies 16 sectors as areas with high potential to transition the economy towards sustainability. He stated that to move from reform to delivery capability requires boldness and quality of execution. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Deputy Executive Director, UN-Habitat, identified strategies to scale up city climate action plans, including: strengthening mid-level governance; building networks of local officials such as the Global Covenant of Mayors; and providing the scientific basis for

climate action through giving local officials understandable tools. Kobre Taitai, Minister for Internal Affairs, Kiribati, said addressing climate change will involve changes in people’s social values, ethics and morals. He urged achieving “the bold scenario” envisioned by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

URBANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT: INVESTING IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE OF CITIES

Hajia Alima Mahama, Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Ghana welcomed urbanization as “a positive force” and highlighted Ghana’s policies for leveraging the potential of industry as well as for developing synergies with the Sahel region. Referring to the Roundtable theme, Corina Cretu, European Commission, noted that investing in the transformative force of cities means empowering them. She outlined the EU’s Urban Agenda, which takes an integrated approach based on “equal partnerships” with diverse stakeholders, tangible action plans, and a limited set of priorities. The World Bank highlighted the challenge to provide coordinated infrastructure development while countries are still at an early stage of urbanization, and the need for two billion more jobs by 2050 for rapidly rising urban populations. Participants made suggestions, including: producing a “state of the world’s cities” report, urban leadership training, knowledge exchange among cities, promoting gender equity in public leadership, and ensuring accountability at all levels of government, including the fight against corruption.

INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE FOR OPEN AND INCLUSIVE CITIES

Mohammad Mentek, Secretary General, Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government, Malaysia, highlighted the government’s establishment of 14 Urban Transformation Centres that are providing low-cost, rapid and high-impact public services close to where citizens live and work. Raf Tuts, UN-Habitat, said the NUA is a governance-oriented framework that requires urban leadership based on subsidiarity, multilevel governance and continued learning. He described open cities as places where inclusivity and trust, built at the local level, implies “the Right to the City” and its services. Sandeep Chachra, Executive Director, ActionAid India, warned that overcrowding, with 70-80% of people currently living on 10-20% of urban land, will lead to large-scale illegal occupation of land and empty buildings, unless policies to address urban migration are prioritized. In comments from the floor, Denitsa Nikolova, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, Bulgaria, highlighted critical factors in improving urban governance, including digitalization, decentralization and enabling local leadership to become more efficient.



LEVERAGING DIVERSITY AND CULTURE, SHAPING THE CITIES FOR ALL

Jyoti Hosagrahar, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), highlighted UNESCO’s focus on “the operational aspects of culture,” which, she said, are those on which concrete interventions and policies can be devised. She then stressed that culture is a cross cutting issue for the SDGs and the NUA. Some participants drew attention to the NUA’s acknowledgement that culture is essential to “humanizing” cities and empowering citizens to play an active role in the development agenda. Panelists highlighted good practices in leveraging cultural diversity in cities, for example, through creating “urban laboratories,” which are participatory experiments in including citizens in the urban planning process. Panelists and participants discussed the importance of, inter alia: defining culture as dynamic and hybrid, rather than fixed, in order to avoid considering an influx of new and diverse cultures in cities as a threat; and valuing both high and low-brow culture, considering that both have an important role to play in a city’s dynamism and creativity.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTIVITY AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Panelists from the International Labour Organization (ILO), Interloc Development, The New School, the Municipal Council of Nicaragua and Cardiff University called for a broader understanding of productivity that takes into account social and environmental implications, and for harnessing urban citizens’ capacities to achieve a variety of broadly-defined productivity objectives. All acknowledged the important role of local actors in development and decent job creation, with many underscoring the importance of organizing workers, and of creative partnerships between workers and all levels of governments. Audience members highlighted the lack of jobs for youth and employment challenges caused by “the machine economy” and called for a paradigm shift to address these issues.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

Joan Clos, former UN-Habitat Executive Director, delivered introductory remarks, during which he said that lack of access to affordable housing is a symptom of global inequality. Clos argued that urbanization implies compact cities, and that affordable housing must be near the city and close to jobs, rather than in city outskirts. Panelists described their countries’ main challenges, gave examples of good practices, and proposed frameworks to conceptualize affordable housing. One speaker suggested affordable housing can be addressed through innovative thinking, governmental policies and public-private partnerships, while another suggested that affordable housing ought to add value by promoting economic growth, in addition to being socially inclusive and environmentally sound. Several interventions underlined that governments need to implement a public regulatory framework in order to finance affordable housing at a large scale rather than through a few scarce projects. In concluding remarks, panelists pondered how affordable housing can contribute to the SDGs, and Clos stressed that housing affordability should be embedded in the process of urbanization, as opposed to being an afterthought.

ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES FOR ALL

Representatives from companies and organizations in the basic services sector in India, Algeria, Argentina, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Japan and China discussed approaches to measuring and delivering access to basic services. Zamri Fazillah Salleh stressed the importance of planning to ensure adequate service delivery, and outlined his government’s new urban development initiative to create a quality living environment for people at all levels and ages, including through providing environmental services, education and recreation facilities in public spaces, and access to fresh water. During the first panel, speakers discussed: how basic services can reach the “furthest first,” thus focusing on the most vulnerable urban households; mobility challenges and “smart transport” technologies, including electric vehicles, bicycle sharing and smart vehicle innovations in China; and the application of technologies such as remote sensing and water point mapping to monitor services. In the second panel, a speaker from Argentina described urban expansion patterns that lead to socio-spatial fragmentation within and between cities, and highlighted consensus building as a key strategy for tackling the phenomenon of structural poverty.

THE RISE OF THE MACHINES

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE VS ROBOTICS

BY GERALD CHUAH

ARTIFICIAL intelligence (A.I.) is arguably the most exciting field in robotics, and certainly the most controversial. The rapid advancement of A.I. and robotics in 2017, heralds a new age of digital transformation in the subfields of robotics, which include machine learning, expert systems, general intelligence and natural language processing.

Robotics and artificial intelligence serve very different purposes. Robotics involves building programmable machines, whereas A.I. involves programming intelligence. In short, artificial intelligence is a software that learns and self-improves.

A SHORT HISTORY OF ROBOTICS

In 1954, the first commercial robot was built by George Devol and was named the Unimate. It was sold to General Motors in 1961 where it was used to lift pieces of hot metal from die casting machines.

In 1999, Sony released AIBO home entertainment robot which represented a bold challenge in A.I. providing new experiences using cutting-edge technology.

Enter Sophia in 2016, the social humanoid robot with eerily realistic facial expressions developed by Hong Kong-based company Hanson Robotics, which is the latest and most advanced robot to date.

Sophia has become a media darling and cultural icon, igniting the interest of media outlets around the world. Making her first public appearance at South by Southwest Festival (SXSW) in Austin, Texas; she continued her media tour from the United Nations to the Tonight Show, and even graced the cover of a top fashion magazine.

Besides physical robots, there are also "software robots" which autonomously operate to complete a virtual task. For example, search engine web crawlers which roam the internet, scanning websites and categorizing them. Other examples of A.I. software include Apple's Siri, Google's self-driving cars and Facebook's image recognition software.

THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Everybody agrees that a robot can work in an assembly line, but there's no consensus on whether it can be intelligent. Industrial robots can be programmed to carry out repetitive tasks, but to "think" has proven to be a difficult problem to solve.

Colloquially, the term "Artificial Intelligence" is applied when a machine mimics cognitive functions of the human mind such as "learning" and "problem solving". Generally, there are four types of artificial intelligence -- reactive machines, limited memory, theory of mind, and self-awareness.

"In some cases, robots make use of artificial intelligence to improve their autonomous functions by learning and carrying out a series of actions autonomously, or semi-autonomously."

When A.I. researchers first began developing artificial intelligence, their main interest was human reasoning, which is displayed by quickness of understanding, sound thought and good judgment.

In some cases, robots make use of artificial intelligence to improve their autonomous functions by learning and carrying out a series of actions autonomously, or semi-autonomously. Even when A.I. is used to control robots, its algorithms are part of a larger robotic system which includes sensors, actuators and non-A.I. programming. Today, specific functions are programmed into a computer using sensors to step up the 'thinking' scale and react to the environment and match human intelligence. Learning can also be supervised, semi-supervised, or unsupervised.

THE FUTURE APPLICATIONS OF A.I.

Artificial Intelligence is constantly pushing the boundaries of what machines can do in the modern world. For example, Google searches, Amazon's recommendation engine, and SatNav route finders.

Deep learning also known as deep structured learning (or hierarchical learning) is part of a broader family of machine learning methods – perception, problem-solving, language-understanding and logical reasoning, based on learning data representations, as opposed to task-specific algorithms. Here are more examples of the future applications of artificial intelligence:

1. New Arm mobile chips -- Arm recently announced the launch of Project Trillium to put more chips capable of processing machine learning workloads for IoT devices, wearables and mobiles. The processor is useful for identifying people for security cameras, as it analyzes video stills at 60 frames per second. The initial launch focuses on mobile processors but future products will target sensors, smart speakers and home entertainment systems.

2. After acquiring robotics company Kiva Systems in 2012, Amazon has been using its technology to outfit its warehouses with a robot workforce. Moving forward in 2015, Amazon acquired Annapurna labs, a chipmaker based in Israel for \$350 million. Reuters reported that it has also secretly bought Blink, another startup that specializes in chips for use in security cameras for \$90 million.

The A.I. chips are also used to power Echo, its home speaker device fronted by Alexa, the digital assistant. The accelerator chip makes Echo work more efficiently, to carry out instructions faster than the cloud. Google also plans to do the same with its Cloud TPU chips.

3. Boston Dynamics recently released a teaser video showing robot dogs opening a door – the video shows a headless robot dog approaching a door, and waits for another Robo dog which dispatches a long arm attached to a gripper on its head to open the door for him.

4. Researchers at Facebook have trained neural network systems to pick out human bodies in videos and map different textures to track human movements. After the pixels bodies have been mapped, various skins and outfits can be superimposed onto them, establishing a correspondence from a 2D to 3D, surface-based representation of the human body.

Ultimately, even if a computer seems intelligent and can answer most questions as well as an intelligent human being, it will not have a continuum of awareness and no experience of its own reality or being... at least for now, until the Rise of the Machines.

STORE OF THE FUTURE

SHOPPERS have been promised ‘the store of the future’ for decades now. What will it look like? Will we be served by fleets of gleaming robots, use built-in facial recognition technology? Will there be voice-activated personal assistants to analyze customer’s mood and spending habits, or self-service iPad-adorned kiosks pre-loaded with digital catalogues?

Get ready to say goodbye to checkout waits, and welcome the future of retail, where customers probably won’t ever need cash, credit cards, or smartphone. The store of the future is driven by technology to give shoppers a richer experience, and push the boundaries of customer choices, which hopefully leads to repeat sales and increased loyalty.

AMAZON GO STORE

Retail prototypes like Amazon Go store, which made the news recently, dramatically changes the shopping experience via a virtual shopping cart, rather than an old-fashioned checkout line. The experimental convenience store located in Seattle, United States is billed as a fully automated, cashier-free shop. It is a new kind of store with no checkout required and replaces cashiers with tracking technology.

Inside the 1,800-square foot mini-market is packed with shelves of food that you can find in many convenience stores – ie. soda, potato chips, ketchup and some food. A row of gates guard the store entrance, allowing only people with the store’s smartphone app to enter.

By using an app to enter the store, customers can take the products they want by grabbing the items off the shelves and shoving them into their bags. No lines, no checkout, and no waiting.

HOW IT WORKS

The “just walk-out shopping” experience is the world’s most advanced shopping technology, where customers no longer have to wait in line. The checkout-free shopping experience is made possible by the same types of technologies used in self-driving cars, computer vision, sensor fusion, and deep learning.

It automatically detects when products are taken from, or returned to the shelves and keeps track of them in a virtual cart. When you’re done shopping, you can just leave the store. Shortly after, Amazon will send you a receipt and charge your Amazon account.

In Malaysia, DIY scanning and “self-served checkouts” are now available at selected Tesco outlets. This system is designed to add convenience, as customers can scan their items, swipe their cards, or insert cash into the machine to make their purchase without human contact. Trendy County, the first hybrid store in Malaysia, offers a similar experience by selling toys, gadget, personal care items and phone accessories at busy hotspots throughout the city, while Iris Pay, is another good example of an e-concept store in Malaysia.

THE FUTURE OF SHOPPING

While it’s true that these hybrid stores have disrupted the traditional retail store models, people still like to go shopping. Here’s how companies are making sure this trend continues with cool shopping features coming our way.

AUGMENTED REALITY -- The technology that made Pokémon Go such a huge success can also upend shopping experiences in physical retail stores. Augmented reality (AR) superimposes a digitally generated image over the user’s real-life view, making it perfect for trying on clothes. For example, Swedish furnishing giant IKEA lets buyers see what furniture looks like in their home using their smartphones and tablets, while Snap Tech’s AR dressing rooms use the ‘Magic Mirror’ technology to allow shoppers to try before they buy.

SMART SHELVES – U.S. supermarket chain Kroger has been using smart shelf technology for the past two years. Electronic smart shelves benefit both consumers and retailers alike – by displaying real-time prices, discounts, and keeping track of product inventory.

ROBOTS – DIY store Lowe’s started trials of a moving, talking LoweBot shopping assistant in San Francisco, which essentially acts as an information kiosk that guides shoppers to the product they are looking for. “Staffless will mean the profitability of stores will increase, which in turn make more stores possible,” said Per Cromwell, co-founder of the advertising agency Studio Total.

SELF-CHECKOUTS – Panasonic has been hard at work with its new ‘smart basket’ platform -- a self-checkout automated assistant that removes the need for scanning, and packing items at the supermarket. Shoppers scan their items and place them into a ‘smart basket’. When it comes to paying, they just go to the checkout counter, where the system places the purchased items into a plastic bag and automatically settles the transaction.

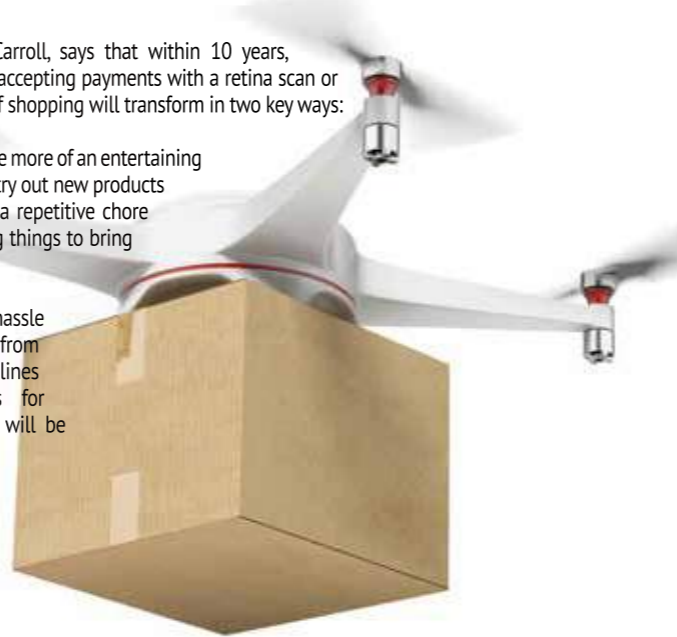
INTERNET OF THINGS (IoT) – This is a broad term describing the glut of devices connected to the internet has attempted to revolutionize our lives at home – making toasters, thermostats, and even fridges “smart”. By using a plethora of cameras, trackers, and other in-store location-based services, retailers are now able to track a shopper, and customize his store visit to suit his shopping habits. But if technology can’t attract more visitors to bricks and mortar stores, why not take the products to them?

DRONE DELIVERY – Amazon started the drone delivery movement with its first successful drone delivery in the U.K. in late 2016. However, it has yet to fully take off, although it continues to be active by filing for and earning patents, while awaiting the authorities to finalize regulations governing drone delivery for another few years.

Renowned futurist Jim Carroll, says that within 10 years, stores will be capable of accepting payments with a retina scan or thumbprint, and the act of shopping will transform in two key ways:

One, shopping will become more of an entertaining experience for people to try out new products and services rather than a repetitive chore of purchasing and picking things to bring home.

Two, every shopping hassle that can be eliminated, from long customer service lines to frustrating searches for items that are sold out, will be eliminated. We simply can’t wait.



THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF 3D PRINTING



3D printers are a new generation of machines that can make everyday things.

Have you ever broken something, only to find that it’s no longer sold and you can’t replace it? With 3D printing, now you can simply print a new one. That world, where you can make almost anything at home, where nothing is ever out of stock, with less waste, packaging and pollution; may sound like something out of Star Trek 20 years ago, but it is a reality today.

3D printing technology is already changing the way we produce objects from tools to toys, clothing and even body parts. Try googling “personalized 3D printed products” and see how you can make different kinds of objects -- from ceramic cups to plastic toys, metal machine parts, stoneware vases, and fancy chocolate cakes; just like home inkjet printers, replacing traditional factory production lines.

3D printing food is also becoming very popular and has allowed for the creation of some pretty intricate treats. In the medicine world, doctors are testing bio-materials for regenerative medicine. By using a patient’s cells, doctors can 3D print small body parts like ears and nose. Researchers at Wake Forest University in North Carolina say they have created a 3D printer that can produce organs, tissues and bones that can theoretically be implanted into living humans.

At The University of Southern California, Professor Behrokh Khoshnevis has built a colossal 3D printer that can build a house in 24 hours, while in China, giant 3D printers have printed 10 houses in a single day at a cost of USD\$5000 per house.

HOW DO 3D PRINTERS WORK

The first step in 3D printing is to create a blueprint of the object that you want to print.

You can use Blender, a professional, open-source 3D computer graphics software to create your own design, or visit websites like Thingiverse to find objects that others have 3D modelled. Once you have finished the design, just press ‘Print’, then sit back and watch.

Objects to be printed can be of almost any shape or geometry, created through rapid prototyping or additive manufacturing (AM), by layering thousands of tiny slices, between 16 to 180 microns, from the bottom-up, slice by slice, to form a solid object.

3D printers can also create moving parts like hinges and wheels as part of the same object. You can print a whole bike-handlebars, saddle, frame, wheels, brakes, pedals and chain, readily assembled, without using any tools.

The time it takes to make a 3D print depends on the size of the model, and the settings you use for printing. A small object with low quality settings can be printed in less than 10 minutes, but printing a large, high quality object can take several hours.

Many types of materials can be used for 3D printing, such as ABS plastic, PLA, polyamide (nylon), glass filled polyamide, stereolithography materials (epoxy resins), silver, titanium, steel, wax, photopolymers and polycarbonate.

USEFULNESS vs COST EFFECTIVENESS

3D printing brings affordable, bespoke manufacturing to the masses. It’s a world where everyday items can be made to measure to your requirements. That means furniture made to fit your home, shoes made to fit your feet, and door handles made to fit your hand. Even medicines, bones, organs and skin made to treat your injuries.

Now, smaller, consumer friendly 3D printers, with popular brands such as MakerGear M2 and LuizBot Mini 3D are bringing this technology to home and businesses. The M2 and Mini which have complementary strengths and weaknesses, will handle most of your 3D printing needs. Follow the instructions in the included booklet and you’ll be printing your own creations in minutes.

Although buying a 3D printer is much cheaper than setting up a factory, the cost per item that you produce is higher, so the economics of 3D printing don’t stack-up against traditional mass production. It also can’t match the smooth finish of industrial machines, nor offer the variety of materials, or range of sizes available. But, like so many household technologies, the prices will soon come down eventually, and their capabilities will improve over time.

Industries that may find 3D printing useful include: Aerospace, Defense, Architecture, Automotive, Education, Consumer goods, Electronics, Medical, and Mold industry.

Like all new technologies, the industry hype of 3D printing is still a few years ahead of consumer reality. It’s an emerging technology, that means most people will remain skeptical about needing one until everyone has got one... and then we will all wonder how we lived without them.



TIME'S =UP

CALLING AN END TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCTS AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The clock has run out on sexual assault, harassment and inequality in the workplace. It's time to do something about it.

A group of more than 300 leading women in Hollywood launched an initiative that promises to not only shake up decades of sexual harassment, pay disparity and discrimination in Hollywood, but also help women in all fields who are struggling with the same problems.

The high-profile organizers – among them producer Shonda Rhimes, director Ava DuVernay and actor Reese Witherspoon – formed Time's Up as the next step to the #MeToo movement, which came amid a national reckoning over sexual assault and harassment and the ousters of prominent men accused of these acts in a variety of industries.

The women announced the new movement in a letter published in the New York Times.

"Now, unlike ever before, our access to the media and to important decision makers has the potential of leading to real accountability and consequences," the letter said.

"We want all survivors of sexual harassment, everywhere, to be heard, to be believed and to know that accountability is possible."

The leaderless initiative is made up of several groups that have different goals – from creating legislation to combat sexual misconduct to ensuring women of color and LGBTQ are represented equally, according to the Times.

The initiative also arises as those in the #MeToo movement have said they recognize it may be more difficult for working-class women to seek justice than those in high-profile industries like media and Hollywood. Time's Up points to an open letter written on behalf of 700,000 female farmworkers in November who said they stand in solidarity with the women in Hollywood against sexual misconduct.

"Time's Up is a unified call for change from women in entertainment for women everywhere," Time's Up's website said. "From movie sets to farm fields to boardrooms alike, we envision nationwide leadership that reflects the world in which we live."

Here is how Time's Up plans to target the issue:

Legal aid to survivors of sexual harassment

Time's Up formed a legal defense fund that currently totals \$13 million in donations to help women from across the world of work to report sexual harassment or assault. The group encourages anyone to donate to the legal defense fund here.

"Harassment too often persists because perpetrators and employers never face any consequences," the Times' Up letter said. "This is often because survivors, particularly those working in low-wage industries, don't often have the resources to fight back."

Wear black to the Golden Globes in solidarity

In a symbolic move, these women wore black to the Golden Globes on Sunday. They encouraged these women to speak out against sexual harassment and raise awareness for the issue at the event.

"This is a moment of solidarity, not a fashion moment," actor Eva Longoria told the New York Times.

"For years, we've sold these awards shows as women, with our gowns and colors and our beautiful faces and our glamour," she added. "This time the industry can't expect us to go up and twirl around. That's not what this moment is about."

Increase gender parity

A "significant increase" of women in leadership across all industries with equal pay and opportunity would foster a better work environment, the group said.

"Unfortunately, too many centers of power – from legislatures to boardrooms to executive suites and management to academia – lack gender parity and women do not have equal decision-making authority,"

the letter said. "This systemic gender-inequality and imbalance of power fosters an environment that is ripe for abuse and harassment against women."

The group also said there must be "greater representation of women of color, immigrant women, and lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, whose experiences in the workforce are often significantly worse than their white, cisgender, straight peers."

Create legislation that better penalizes sexual misconduct

The initiative is also creating legislation that targets how sexual misconduct is treated. That includes hitting the use of nondisclosure agreements, which can be used to silent victims, the group said, according to the Times.





The future is Female

#PRESSFORPROGRESS

WHATEVER THEIR CHOSEN FIELD - FROM POLITICS AND STARDOM TO FASHION AND FEMINISM, INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN HAVE BEEN LEAVING THEIR MARK ON THE WORLD SINCE TIME BEGAN. THE NEED FOR GREATER RESPECT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IS BECOMING AN EVER MORE PROMINENT FEATURE OF THE PUBLIC CONVERSATION. HEADLINES JUST HUMMED WITH DIFFERENT VIEWS OF HOW GREAT LEADERS SHOULD ACT IN ORDER TO EMPOWER WOMEN BECAUSE TRUTH BE TOLD, GIVING WOMEN AND GIRLS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED IS NOT ONLY THE RIGHT THING TO DO BUT CAN ALSO TRANSFORM SOCIETIES AND ECONOMIES.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY HAPPENING IN MARCH, WE CONNECT YOU TO SOME OF THE EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN OF OUR TIME, REMARKABLE PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE MADE IT TO THE TOP IN ALL AREAS OF BUSINESS, ARTS, CULTURE AND MORE. THE AMAZING STORIES OF THESE WOMEN PROVE THAT IT'S POSSIBLE FOR ONE PERSON TO CHANGE THE WORLD. GET INSPIRED BY THEIR STORIES FOR YOUR BEST YEAR YET!



Dato' Maimunah M. Sharif

EMBRACING SHIFTANDMAKING CHANGE

"WE HAVE TO FIRST CONVINCING OURSELVES BEFORE WE CAN CONVINCING OTHER PEOPLE THAT WE CAN DELIVER JUST AS GOOD AS OR EVEN BETTER THAN MEN."



Though warm and friendly, Maimunah is unmistakably resolute and capable. Her determination is apparent within just a few minutes of meeting her, as is her enthusiasm.

In the five years she's been council president, Maimunah has more than proven her worth.

MPSP has achieved many new milestones under her stewardship. As a mayor of a local authority, she has to lead and steer MPSP to attain its vision "To make Seberang Perai cleaner, beautiful, comfortable place to stay, work, investment and tourist attraction by 2018" and in line with the state of Penang's vision which is "Cleaner, Greener, Safer and Healthier Penang".

She inspired MPSP to produce the first Seberang Perai Tourist Map, Heritage Trail and Coffee Table Book of Seberang Perai. It was a successful project done in-house under her guidance.

An Example of "Women Too, Can Do"

Prior to her appointment of Executive Director for UN Habitat, Maimunah is no stranger to the international arena. She has been invited by various organizations to present a paper or be a panellist for forums, one of them being the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat).

"I work very closely in the preparation of sustainable development goals and the new urban agenda that the UN Habitat has been promoting. I attended the meetings in Bangkok, Seoul, Surabaya, New York and Quito," she shares.

Her appointment has been foreseen by the board—by Antonio Guterres specifically—who has been the main force in electing Maimunah to the board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat).

Established in 1978, UN Habitat is the lead agency within the UN system for coordinating activities in the field of human settlement development. It also serves as the focal point for monitoring progress on implementation of the Habitat Agenda - the global plan of action adopted at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul, Turkey in 1996.

In addition to its advocacy and monitoring function, UN-HABITAT also plays an important role in providing technical assistance to countries and cities in the areas of urban governance, housing, environmental management, disaster mitigation, post-conflict rehabilitation, urban safety, water management and poverty reduction.

Under her new posting which she took up in January, Maimunah oversees 400 core staff, up to 2,000 project-based employees, four regional offices and activities in more than 70 countries.

When asked about how she felt about her appointment, Maimunah humbly smiled and express her gratitude.

"I am flattered because I didn't apply for this post. I was headhunted. I was humbled to think the president had confidence in me to take up the position in an organization that would drive reforms."

Maimunah talks of her elation on the night the UN board voted her to take up the responsibility of UN Habitat's Executive Director but she also acknowledges it isn't going to be all smooth sailing.

"I am very happy and proud to lead such an important organization. But of course I realize that in anything that we do, there are going to be challenges but I always promote positive attitude. Fret not, I will

do my best," she said with enthusiasm.

Yet despite her impressive journey, Maimunah remains modest and credits her successes to her parents, mentors and colleagues. She talks fondly about her late mother—the figure who was crucial in moulding her to who she is today.

"My mom was illiterate, but her perseverance, patience and passion to see her children succeed in their education is definitely something else. My mom worked very hard for us. Everytime I think of her, it pushes me forward. And because of her sacrifice and struggle, I feel like I cannot betray her," she confided.

Leaning In as Women

From sharing her story in getting the first job, to getting "the" job, Maimunah shines light on the important values women need to hold on to in order to elevate themselves in business and life.

In a moment of self-reflection as we sit in her former office at the Penang City Council recently, she said:

"As a woman, education is very important. Second is environment. I'm very lucky to have my late parents that had both taught me to value education. We were very poor; my late father used to say, only education can change our life. As a woman, we should not stop learning,"

She continues,

"And then the environment and the culture. We used to say – especially Malays – that women belong to the kitchen. Culture plays a role. It somehow affects our upbringing," she adds.

Maimunah strongly believes in the principle of having to first convince ourselves before we can convince the others that we can deliver just as good as or even better than men. We must not stop getting knowledge and at the same time practice positive thinking.

The Future of Penang

Despite her former seat as Penang Mayor has now been filled, Maimunah still has high hopes for the development of Penang.

"Before leaving my job, I have already listed down 11 programmes that the new mayor will continue. Our aim is to be international and smart city. What I understand by international is not only in terms of skyscrapers. It is more about the international standards of our services, efficiency, cleanliness and also economy,"

"As for smart city, it's not about how many systems you use but more about the fact that the people must be smart and how we can provide our facilities and services at a very low cost but not sacrificing the quality of the services. In fact, we have already rolled out our smart city blueprint. In 5 years' time, I hope we will be able to achieve what we intend to achieve," She concludes.

Maimunah believes in tapping Penang's long history as a tourist city for a successful city branding. Recently classified as ASEAN Clean Tourist City, she looks forward to when Penang will be a collective home for the people, for the investors, and also for the tourists.

Celebrating the International Women's Day this year will bring awareness to the urgent action needed to accelerate women's leadership and gender parity all over the world. To initiate such positive change, it is important for women to keep pressing for progress in their respective field.

One who has been the catalyst of change is Malaysia's own lady of many titles, Dato' Maimunah Mohd Sharif who made headlines and history when she became the first Asian woman to be appointed as the Executive Director for UN-Habitat.

Her appointment helps meet one of UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres' promises to see women in more of UN's senior most positions. Maimunah's inspiring attitude and tireless passion have enabled her to work her way up the corporate ladder where she gained the experience which she shares with us.

The Leading Lady

Dato' Maimunah rose from a humble beginning in Kampung Sungai Dua Besar, Kuala Pilah. Born to a family of rubber tapper, Maimunah – known as 'Adik' to her family and fellow villagers has been an advocate to the importance of education.

She holds a Master of Science in planning studies from University Science Malaysia, Penang and also a degree in Town Planning Studies from University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology, United Kingdom. Her career began from 1985 to 2003 as Town Planning Officer at Municipal Council of Penang Island.

From then on, she was instrumental in Penang's development. Promoted as Director of Department of Planning and Development, she was responsible for preparation of structure plan, local plan, development controls, projects and landscapes. She also headed a team for the planning and implementation of urban renewal projects for Little India and implementation of Penang Gold Bazaar project in George Town.

In 2009, she was entrusted to establish George Town World Heritage Incorporated. As General Manager and a founder of George Town World Heritage Incorporated, a state arm company, she managed the George Town World Heritage Site which was inscribed by UNESCO in July 2008.

Maimunah was also the precursor for the George Town Festival in 2010—now established as a yearly event by the Penang State. With her knowledge and involvement in heritage, she was chosen by the government as one of the experts to represent Malaysia in UNESCO World Heritage Committee Meeting at St. Petersburg, Russia in 2012.

The day she was sworn in as president of the Seberang Perai Municipal Council (MPSP) in 2011, Maimunah was confronted with the mammoth challenge ahead of her – as the first female council president in the township's 18-year history.

"After the swearing in ceremony, a reporter approached three people to gather their reactions on the appointment of a female council president. Two were women heads of departments who said they were happy to see a woman at the top. They were positive and said they were looking forward to the changes I would bring and that they would be behind me all the way. The third person was a male councillor...his response I will never forget. He said: 'I don't mind working with a lady just as long as she can do her job!'

"At that moment, I realised that I would face obstacles and challenges as a woman council president. I knew that I would have to prove my worth. But I wasn't worried or shaken. I was ready. I had a plan and I knew how I wanted to implement it, woman or not," she shares.

Maimunah's plan was straightforward: she would prove herself within the year. As she was appointed in March, she had just nine months to win the trust of her staff at the Municipal Council and her stakeholders: the 980,000-odd population of Seberang Perai, on Penang's mainland.



Freda Miriklis
**EMPOWERED
WOMEN
EMPOWER
WOMEN**

“WOMEN OF FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL KEEP THE MOMENTUM BY TRANSFORMING THE WORKPLACE WITH THEIR VALUES AND IN THE PROCESS ACHIEVE EQUALITY.”



It's time to raise awareness around new initiatives women are taking to help their female counterparts achieve their goals and feel empowered. The concept of women helping other women benefits both parties, while demonstrating just how powerful a force females can be when they support one another.

One particular woman who goes the extra mile to encourage females everywhere to pursue their dreams is Freda Miriklis. With her vast experience in educating and supporting world leaders and CEOs to promote equality and economic opportunities that empower women globally, Miriklis has built an impressive career portfolio for herself.

Currently, she is the Non-Executive Director of Commonwealth Business Women, Gender Specialist of International Organisation of Employers Adviser, United Nations Women Chief UN Representative of United Nations, New York Headquarters. She was also the youngest President to serve the International Federation of Business and Professional Women - known as BPW International worldwide, in the organisation's 80 year history.

She shares her career journey with us:

"My career in the financial services industry evolved over many years, starting from a high school student holiday job with a stockbroking firm that eventually developed into a full time role in the wealth management industry. Since then, my interests in human rights, saw me take on various leadership roles with NGOs, advocating for gender balance at various intergovernmental organisations and United Nations events,"

Miriklis is on the forefront in using the power of the marketplace to solve some of the most pressing societal problems in a financially sustainable way while also emphasising the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community.

Envisioning the Future with WSF

Apart from her already successful and monumental experience in holding important jobs, she is also currently the President of World's Startup Festival. The World Startup Festival (WSF) is a 3-days event celebrating entrepreneurship in the startup ecosystem around the world, focusing on growth opportunities in the Asian region.

"I have always believed in the next generation of youth and their potential to become highly influential and impactful entrepreneurs. So when I first got in touch with the World Startup Festival (WSF), they said that they love what I stand for, and WSF embodies exactly what I have in mind, which is using business to solve much of the problems we face in society,"

"And what's powerful with the WSF philosophy is, they believe that the youth project cannot happen in isolation, and we need to bring into the conversation the big corporations, the community leaders and the policymakers, to build a truly sustainable support structure for these young entrepreneurs to flourish and become future business leaders in their communities, whilst fulfilling some of the pressing United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was thus a perfect marriage of



"This year's theme is timely as there is strong momentum for women's equality globally with movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp driving gender parity. This has been a life time struggle and today's strong global movement highlights that collective actions are making a positive difference for women and that now is the time for us to press forward and continue to Press for Progress."

values, so when they invited me to become the President of WSF, I accepted it wholeheartedly," she adds.

WSF also deals with the disruptive change that is happening in our world today, stemming from the 4th Industrial Revolution, and how these technologies transform the way we live and work. This change is aptly reflected in the annual event, a curious blend of entrepreneurship and creative arts, where creativity and business discipline both form a powerful impetus for new ideas, new businesses and new ways of dealing with the future.

Challenges and Achievements

No success story comes without any form of challenges. To Miriklis, managing client expectations is always a challenge because as an adviser, understanding client psychology is important in order for her to succeed. Managing a client's portfolio can be straightforward but managing their expectations is much harder because many clients have unrealistic expectations when it comes to investment returns and interest rates.

"I always tried to educate clients by showing them how they can add value to the investing equation and maintaining a long-term perspective and keeping them on track. By doing this, it built trust and over time many clients remained loyal," she explains.

Believing that all challenges comes with its sets of successes, Miriklis also shares with us her favourite accomplishment throughout her career journey,

"Spearheading the global expansion of a family philanthropic foundation and establishing 52 projects in 43 countries over 19 months. In the process, I was able to use my high level global contacts and developed a unique model that engages local community participation, NGOs and government to cement a collaborative model to build and deliver educational facilities to poor and marginalised communities around the world," she elaborates.

Initiating For a Positive Change

As someone who has been very progressive and active in steering the efforts to encourage women empowerment, Miriklis is elated in its timely awareness throughout the world as she strongly believes that there has never been a more important time to keep motivated and press for progress.

"This year's theme is timely as there is strong momentum for women's equality globally with movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp driving gender parity. This has been a life time struggle and today's strong global movement highlights that collective actions are making a positive difference for women and that now is the time for us to press forward and continue to Press for Progress," she says.

Despite the accelerating movement, Miriklis reckons that they are some strategies that can help women achieve a more prominent role in their organizations. Some of the most effective performance enhancement strategies

supporting women in senior roles have included offering flexible work schedules and family support.

She also believes that reverse (or reciprocal) mentoring is also a great way to raise visibility of female leaders to top executives while exposing them to the most strategic work at the company. It's an informal method that can help to break down unconscious bias making male leaders aware of female talent that they may have overlooked in the past.

Another effective strategy is for organisations to provide transparent and collaborative career mapping that removes the chances of women not being aware of opportunities for their development in senior positions of decision making. By having an open policy, women can be equal and considered for further career advancement, should they wish to, allowing them to be recognised by leadership and for selection in programs not normally available to them.

When asked for the one leadership lesson that she has learned in her career, Miriklis answers plainly,

"That being right isn't enough. A great idea means nothing unless you can convince others to believe it too. The power of persuasion can help make your idea a reality even when others may not be able to see the bigger vision. The best way to do this is to make the idea theirs," she expounds.

Miriklis also recounts one of the biggest advances in the business world for women over the past five years with us which is the development of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

They are a set of Principles for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community and are informed by real-life business practices and input gathered from across the globe. The WEPs seek to point the way to best practice by elaborating the gender dimension of corporate responsibility, the UN Global Compact, and business' role in sustainable development.

Our Future Starts Now

Despite being an advocate to gender equality and women empowerment, Miriklis holds to the principle of great things can be achieved collectively, and it really depends on the past generations that we had, and also the future generations that we will nurture.

"I hope the next generation of women will be able to take advantage of what has been accomplished by previous generations of women and that challenges of the future will be measured by merit, not gender. Every generation builds on what has gone before, and I hope that future generations will keep the momentum by transforming the workplace with their values and in the process achieve equality," she concludes.

With that in mind, Miriklis looks ahead for a hopeful and a brighter future for everyone, in regard of their gender, race, religion or even age.



Noor Neelofa Mohd Noor
**MALAYSIA'S
MOST
TALKED-ABOUT
PERSONALITY**

"#PRESSFORPROGRESS MEANS THAT WE HAVE TO PRESS THE CALL-TO-ACTION BUTTON SO WE CAN PROGRESS INTO AN ERA WHERE WOMEN ARE TREATED BETTER AND BEING ACKNOWLEDGED FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION AND MERITS. I BELIEVE WHEN WOMEN WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN ACHIEVE SO MUCH MORE. I WOULD LOVE TO SEE MORE WOMEN EXPRESSING THEMSELVES, UPLIFT EACH OTHER AND BEING MORE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS THAT CAN IMPROVE THEMSELVES. BEING A WOMAN SHOULDN'T STOP YOU OR LIMIT YOU BUT IT SHOULD TAKE YOU FURTHER."





The actress, television host and businesswoman has achieved so much from the day she won Dewi Remaja in 2010, a yearly beauty contest which jumpstarted her career in acting to her biggest accomplishment yet, founding the brand Naelofar Hijab.

Beautiful, smart and intelligent, she's the epitome of a young, modern and successful Muslim female celebrity. Neelofa has certainly earned a spot in the upper ranks of the entertainment industry since stepping into the limelight in 2011.

2017 alone saw her achieve some remarkable feats and one includes being appointed as non-executive independent director for listed company, AirAsia Berhad. Her track record in championing women in business has inspired the airline to appoint her on the board; which marked one of the most important milestones for Neelofa.

Another addition to her list of feats is joining the prestigious Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2017 list. No stranger to the spotlight, Neelofa made headlines when she was chosen by Forbes under the Retail and E-Commerce category. With five million Instagram followers and appearances at the United Nations under her belt, she's definitely more than qualified. The icing on the cake was when she found out that she was one of the 10 from among 300 honourees to be featured in the magazine.

The recognition has given her the opportunity to talk to a global audience, both in Manila, the Philippines and in Boston, USA, about fashioning the future through her business and her determination to change the common stereotypes associated with women who don the hijab.

Neelofa also created history recently as she was chosen as the first hijab-donning ambassador for international luxury cosmetics brand Lancôme. Signing a big beauty contract is a major milestone for any celebrity, and she has done just that; something that she would never have even dream of achieving. These are just some of the growing achievements by the 29-year-old tv host, as she is also an ambassador for Austrian jewelry company Swarovski.

In addition to managing her growing business empire, designing her own fashion label, hosting talk shows as well as acting, Neelofa is expanding her impressive portfolio with web reality show #FollowLofa that delves into her life, which mostly revolves around her family members, friends and how she deals with her demanding career and her growing business.

"My platform in the entertainment industry gives me an advantage to market my products and advertise myself as a brand, not just to Malaysians, but to consumers abroad too."

Fashioning The Future

Coming from a business-oriented family and having a passion for fashion, it's no surprise that Neelofa is an influential fashion entrepreneur. Naelofar Hijab is a brand under NH Prima International, a company founded by Neelofa and her sister, Noor Nabila. The move into the hijab business came after Neelofa's personal transformation and her decision to don the hijab in 2014.

Besides Naelofar Hijab, other muslimah fashion and lifestyle brands under the family-owned business are Naelofar (apparel line), Naelofar Abaya, Naelofar Casual, Naelofar Telekung, Bella Vista (beauty supplements) and Lofalens (contact lenses).

"Seeing how people experiment and complement their styles when they wear Naelofar Hijab is so overwhelming. It fills my heart when I see people wearing them while I'm out and about. I believe I've inspired women to express themselves with their styles and to be brave when experimenting with fashion and to always be confident in their own skin."



On what inspired her to go into this line of business and the stepping stone for her to achieve such success at a young age, Neelofa expounded,

"My decision to start Naelofar Hijab is definitely inspired by my family, especially my mom and sister, Nabila. They have been telling me for some time and I finally took the plunge and now here we are. My family already had experience in business and they helped me a lot in the beginning when Naelofar Hijab first started and together with a great team behind me and hard work; those were my stepping stones." Since its establishment in 2014, Naelofar Hijab has produced more than 80 collections of hijab, most of which are sold out within minutes of their launches. In line with its tagline, Effortlessly Chic, the brand strives to be different from other homegrown hijab brands by reinventing the image of the hijab to one that is chic, modern, practical and hassle-free for confident women.

In 2016, the brand registered RM50 million in sales with the international market accounting for 10 per cent of its revenue – a big achievement, particularly for a company which had just set up business for less than two years, but definitely not a surprising feat for Neelofa who has millions of fans and followers who dream of looking like her; they buy whatever she wears or displays on her social media network.

It seems like Neelofa is unstoppable in taking Naleofar Hijab to greater heights. She believes when it comes to fashion, you have to spend time researching and investing in it because it changes very fast and when it comes to producing new designs, you have to always know what the customers want at that point of time. Her dream for Naelofar Hijab is for it to be more achievable and attainable. The brand has expanded to 38 countries through its online platform and she is currently working on opening physical stores all over the world.

Key to Success

So how did the 29-year-old achieve so much at such a young age? Persistence, and she didn't give up. She had her ups and downs in life and in her business, but she kept moving forward. She pushed herself to take risks and challenged herself to do something different every time. As she shared on how she manages a successful career and maintain a balanced life,

"This is one aspect that I am still struggling to master. Sometimes, you have to lose some to get some. If I give more to my career, my life will get less, and if I give more to my life, my career will get less – you need to know when to balance it out. Although, I have learnt that it is okay and not to be so hard on myself on this. I am also grateful that the people around me understand how my life is."

Neelofa also shared her secret to success is consistency in everything that you do and having the right support system. "My key principle is always being consistent. To me, when you are consistent in what you do, you produce great results,

in just about any aspects of your life, in my growing business included. If you succeed, be consistent. If you fail, get up and continue being consistent. Since the market is growing, I also believe in coming out and trying out new trends to accommodate the market's demand."

Inspiring Others

For Neelofa, the best part of being a fashion entrepreneur is definitely the outcome of it all. "Being able to see people wear Naelofar Hijab, how they experiment and complement their styles with Naelofar Hijab is so overwhelming. My heart is so full when I see people wearing them when I'm out and about. I think, in a way, I have inspired women to express themselves with their styles and to be brave when experimenting with fashion and to always be confident in their own skin."

In her current position of being an influential woman icon, Neelofa is the driving force for women to better themselves, "I think, this is important for all women, especially women who wear the hijab. In the past, women with hijab were perceived as old-fashioned and narrow-minded, I hope with all these things that I am doing now, women understand and know that hijab is not a limitation, it doesn't limit you from doing what you want when you put your heart into it. I think women leaders, regardless of their fields, should show perseverance and that giving up is not an option. I am where I am right now because I didn't give up when times were tough and I am sure most women leaders share this sentiment."

Being a strong 'brand' of her own, she wishes to educate and raise awareness on women empowerment. "I believe that when women work together, we can achieve so much more. I would also like to see more women expressing themselves, uplift each other and being more open to new ideas that can improve themselves. Being a woman shouldn't stop you or limit you but it should take you further." For her take on #PressforProgress, she further added,

"To me, #PressforProgress means that we have to press the call-to-action button so we can progress into an era where women are treated better and being acknowledged for their contribution and merits. As with the recent sexual harassment that has taken Hollywood by storm and #timesup campaign, all these are actions that are pressing for changes in our society."

Malaysian women has gone a long way in changing their approach of life and for someone who has set such example, Neelofa shared, "I have so much respect for Malaysian women. I think Malaysian women nowadays are more independent, are more self-sufficient and can make decisions on their own. I also think that most women now are more comfortable with the fact that they are career women. If this continues, our future generation will benefit so much from it."



Datuk Hafsah Hashim
**BUILDING
MALAYSIA'S
FUTURE, ONE SME
AT A TIME**

"BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL MAN THERE'S ALWAYS A WOMAN, BUT BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL WOMAN IS HERSELF."

SMEs play a key role in national economies around the world, generating employment and contributing to innovation.

Due to their enormous role in the economy, the government deemed necessary a specialized agency that could provide infrastructure facilities, financial assistance, advisory services, market access and other support programs to help spur SME development and competitiveness within the global market. Thus was born the Small and Medium Industries Development Corporation (SMIDEC) in 1996, which in 2009 was restructured and renamed SME Corp. Malaysia.

Succeeding in Male-Dominated Corporate World

Behind the successful brand that is now the central point of reference for information and advisory services for all SMEs in Malaysia is Datuk Dr. Hafsa Hashim, the power woman with high spirits in driving Malaysian SMEs to where they supposed to be.

With her vast experience and knowledge, Hafsa is a much sought after personality not only domestically, but also internationally. As the longest serving Chief Executive Officer of SME Corporation Malaysia for the last twelve years, she is responsible in overseeing and coordinating the implementation of policies and programs for the overall development of SMEs in Malaysia.

Her past career experiences include holding several top positions in the civil service such as in the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Primary Industries.

Hafsa opens up about her early experience being in the field and what she has experienced:

“Within the years, I could see the change in terms of the landscape of the business communities here in Malaysia from where it started before in 1996 until what it is today. The focus, attention, and treatments are all completely different now,”

When SME Corp first started, there was no definitive description of SMEs in Malaysia because people only talk about SMIs then. There were no data and it was just about SMI playing their role as the MNC suppliers such as Motorola and Proton. Hafsa needed to do something in order to kickstart the company on the right track.

“When I became the CEO in 2005, I was quite uncomfortable. Being an engineering graduate and having an analytical mind, I need to have statistics. I believe in the principle; what you can’t measure, you can’t plan and when you can’t plan, you can’t manage,”

“For me to be able to plan well, I need to know where I am bringing the direction of SMEs in the country. For the first time ever, the department of statistics and Bank Negara Malaysia did the first census on SMEs. They discovered only 7 per cent of SMEs are in the manufacturing, 80 per cent are in the services sector. Nobody was looking at the services sector,” she explains.

With that information in hand, the journey has begun in trying to create programmes for SMEs in different sectors and of different sizes. Equal attention was given to all the SMEs and that was how SME Corp became the main force in overseeing the whole entire landscape of SMEs businesses.



“ One of the achievements that we had was definitely putting in place a very structured SME Masterplan that has been adhered to by the industry and also by us the policymakers in charting the direction and the target that we set for ourselves. The masterplan was able to attract a lot of international fora.”

Paving the Way for Future SMEs

Ensuring the country's SMEs are on the pathway to success, it is important to understand the potential of innovation and high growth that each SME has. With that in mind, Hafsa came up with SMEs Competitive Rating for Enhancement (SCORE).

SCORE undertakes a diagnostic audit on the companies in order to check on their capabilities, and to be able to link them to the requirements given by banks and potential investors. It was through SCORE that SME Corp are able to address issues on financial constraints faced by Malaysian SMEs.

“If the company has 4 stars, banks would know it's a very good company and it has already got a footprint in the market. While the ones with 3 stars – these are the companies that would be needing help,”

“We have been able to provide a deliberate intervention to companies that are 3 stars and below. For the one with 3 stars and above, they just need a nudge to push them to the export market,” she continues.

Hafsa made it clear that she had never imposed SCORE on the banks but up until today, banks have been requesting all applications by SMEs to the banks must first be scored by SME Corp. This just shows how effective the module is in determining the competitiveness level of SMEs in Malaysia. Other than that, Hafsa also shares one of her favourite achievements that was done with the team behind SME Corp.

“One of the achievements that we had was definitely putting in place a very structured SME Masterplan that has been adhered to by the industry and also by us, the policymakers in charting the direction and the target that we set for ourselves. The masterplan was able to attract a lot of international fora,”

This reflects the crucial role of SME Corp, which is to progressively facilitate the creation of national champions or home-grown companies that can be regionally and globally competitive to spearhead the economic landscape of Malaysia.

Through this initiative, it is hoped that Malaysian brands are developed not just for the local market, but more importantly, that they are able to penetrate international markets as well.

Visions of Progress

Touching on the International Women's Day, Hafsa believes in the strong message that the theme #PressforProgress is trying to send but she deeply hopes that women should not only wait for International Women's Day to realize the importance of doing so—that every day we must be able to press for progress so that we are able to deliver.

Hafsa also shares her notion in the arising problem of the gap in gender parity.

“Women were created from the rib of men. She was not taken from his feet, to be under him, nor was she taken from his head, to be above him. Women were taken from his side, to stand beside him and be held close to his side. If we believe in this quote, there should not be any gender parity,” she explains.

Hafsa also quoted Jack Ma when it comes to the importance of women in his business empire. In Alibaba, 43% are women employees; 33% are mostly in his management, and 20% are in corporate boards. Jack Ma believes that women actually help to drive his business to where it is today and this is why companies should start having the same mindset as well.

“Here in SME Corp, gender parity doesn't exist. If I were to bring you back to the era of Sayyidatina Khadijah, the wife of Prophet Muhammad SAW, she was even given the opportunity to take the lead and become a woman in business, and an entrepreneur herself. She has shown the way that there shouldn't be any gender parity,” she adds.

With such belief instilled in our minds, we should be able to push this agenda of men and women being equal and that they are supposed to complement each other and work together.

Hafsa notes that her gender has never been an obstacle or a hindrance to her work. For as long as a woman is able to deliver and show her commitment and loyalty, she believes those would be ample for women to succeed in their respective fields.

“It's easier said than done but if we are able to show our commitment at home where we fulfill our obligations and our responsibilities, then when you go out to your office, you don't feel guilty and focus on your work. It's really about sharpening their time management and be able to lead a balanced life,” she explains.

Apart from that, Hafsa stresses on the fact that women in Malaysia should recognize the government in Malaysia that is never short of providing them the incentives as well as the opportunities for them to grow. Women should leverage on these opportunities especially now that it has been put in place that 30 per cent of corporate board must be filled with women.

This goes to say that our government today has a lot of compassion and they have also recognized the role of women in the economic development.

“What we hope to do is we should be able to ramp up these women in corporate boards through the various events that we are doing and also to make sure we provide the way for all women to thrive. It is important for us to sow the seeds in women at a very young age,” she concludes.



77

Dr. Soraya R. Ismail
**GIVING
MALAYSIANS A
HEALTHY BOOST!**

"AS WOMEN, WE NEED TO EMPOWER AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER TO PURSUE IN WHAT WE BELIEVE IN. IF YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT SOMETHING, YOU HAVE TO FIGHT FOR IT TO EARN IT. WHEN WE'RE PRESSING FOR PROGRESS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE SUPPORTING STRUCTURE TO ACTUALLY ENABLE THE PROGRESS. I'M PROUD TO SEE HOW MALAYSIAN WOMEN ARE STARTING TO STAND UP FOR EACH OTHER FOR EQUALITY."



The past few years have seen a steady development of the F&B industry with new outlets and restaurants being introduced to the Malaysian market. One of them is Australian chain Boost Juice Bars, which came to our shores at a time when Malaysians were becoming more health conscious. Juices, crushes and smoothies became a phenomenon for Malaysians and this brand would always be the first to pop on our minds at the thought of healthy beverages.

The first Boost Juice booth started juicing in Malaysia in June 2009 when it was introduced by Dr Soraya Rahim Ismail, the Managing Director of Boost Juice Bars Malaysia. She first came across the brand while working in sunny Melbourne, the home of Boost Juice. She became an instant fan of the iconic Australian smoothies.

Dr Soraya had spent most of her life overseas, from Holland to England to sunny Australia. She studied at Imperial College, London for her undergrad followed by a PhD in Chemical Engineering. Upon receiving her PhD, she joined management consultancy, Accenture where she met Nick Tiernan, the man she would go on to marry and become lifetime business partners. With Accenture, she had a high-flying career, travelled from the UK to many locations including Europe, Japan, USA and Australia as her specialist skills in CRM and marketing were in high demand.

During her travels back and forth from England to Australia, she would stop by her home country, Malaysia quite often. This was when she realized how we had lacked in having healthy juices or a specific retail brand here in Malaysia. She then decided to bring Boost Juice to Malaysia. After 10 years with Accenture, she left the corporate world to pursue her true passion in the juicing business.

Launching Boost Juice in Malaysia also meant a return home for Dr Soraya. In 2009, she and her husband became Boost Juice Bars' master franchise owners for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. Given their shared passion for fitness and health, they

fell in love with the brand, not just for the tasty products, but also for the whole brand concept of living healthy and loving life. Together, they bring over 25 years of international business experience in retail and customer relationship management consultancy where they have successfully managed and delivered new business change on a multi-million dollar scale, across a range of industries in the US, UK, Europe, Australia, Japan, Indonesia and Singapore. As Dr Soraya shared with us during our visit to Boost Juice's head office in Kuala Lumpur, "So why juice bars? Well for me, it was really about the brand. I felt like in whatever I do, I need to love doing it and be passionate about it. The brand has always been something that I love. I look at the brand as something fun that isn't so serious; it has that cheeky element with a healthy living aspect to it – it's about that balance. It wasn't all just about the juice but the whole concept of it which was what really appealed to me. Since I've never really lived in Malaysia growing up so I thought it was a good time to come back and contribute to my country with a company that I could be proud of."

The Juiciest Brand in Malaysia

With products that are tailor-made to fit customers' needs, Boost's philosophy has always been to understand and give what the customer wants. In Malaysia, particularly in the Klang Valley, many consumers perceived Boost Juice as a healthier alternative to the common fizzy beverages and fast food. This is more evident for those living in urban areas where the concern for leading a healthy lifestyle is on the rise. The menu offers 'Seriously Healthy' and delicious smoothies, juices and crushes, all developed with the assistance of a nutritionist, all at least 98 per cent fat free, with no added sugar and completely free from any artificial flavours or colourings.

Dr Soraya explained that Boost is about more than a great-tasting product. "Boost is not just another juice bar – the brand is based on the entire 'Boost Experience', which takes place every time a customer enters a store". This is a combination of a fantastic product, served by positive and energetic people, in a bright and colourful store environment.

"Today, even people who doesn't necessarily drink Boost knows the brand. It has moved on to a wider audience as a result of our expansion, quirky marketing campaigns and the utilisation of social media."

'Boost'ing the Business

Under Dr Soraya's leadership, Boost Juice has become a renowned and successful brand. The first store was a roaring success and the brand has grown so much since day one. Although being the largest juice and smoothie bar in Malaysia may have its challenges but the brand knows that they're always ahead of the game.

"By the time things like cold pressed juices came into the market, we already established it here. Our model has always been made to order to keep the freshness of each drink and to control and maintain our quality. Today, even people who doesn't necessarily drink Boost knows the name Boost. It has moved on to a wider audience as a result of our expansion, quirky marketing campaigns and the utilisation of social media."

According to Dr Soraya, franchising wasn't really a model they started out with. During the first three years, all the stores were company operated stores which was the key to their success because it helped them understand the market better as they were able to study what the customer wanted. On her key principle in growing her business, Dr Soraya shared,

"Our business model is sustainability. We only hit 100 stores when we were 7 years in the market because we wanted to build our business slowly to make sure it is sustainable and stays in the market for the long term. Sustainability and integrity in everything that we do is very important to us. We believe in always having the highest quality in our raw ingredients. It's always about doing the right thing and it's not all about quick wins but about the long term success."

Since their first store in Suria KLCC, Boost Juice has since expanded its business to over 100 premises across the region and the figure changes on a daily basis. They now have more than 70 stores in Malaysia, 27 in Singapore and 4 stores in Brunei. Boost is also available in the United Kingdom, Portugal, Estonia, South Africa, Chile, Kuwait, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Macau and Dubai.

Their expansion plan includes further stores at a more regional scale as well as expansions in other brands. Dr Soraya and her husband also runs London Sandwich Co, a grab and go food retail selling freshly made sandwiches and artisan coffee, which now has 4 outlets. They also plan to add on more complimentary brands that provide healthy, wholesome good quality food. As she further added,

"At the moment, our long term goal for the company in terms of growing what we have here is to build a standalone health brand that is well known. I want to build a company that I can truly be proud of. We've definitely come a long way from just one store. We have a fairly good-sized business now but it's not fully institutionalized yet and that is what we are in the process of doing now; work towards having a strong sustainable company, that is (to be frank) not dependent on me to run. I am still very much hands on in every aspect of my business but if I want to think that I've really reached my goal, it is to have a sustainable business that has an appropriate hierarchy and organization structure. My long term goal is to have a company that can run on its own on a day to day basis so that I can focus mainly on strategizing how to grow the business and to bring it to the next, higher level."

Leading by Example

Dr Soraya is determined to change the eating habits of ordinary Malaysians and persuade them of the need for healthy eating and exercise. As a keen athlete herself, (she runs, cycles, swims and kick boxes regularly) she is always encouraging her staff and customers to live healthy and love life.

Today, she oversees the day-to-day operations of Boost Juice, while also balancing health and motherhood. As a wife and mother, managing a successful career and still maintain to take care of her family can be a struggle.

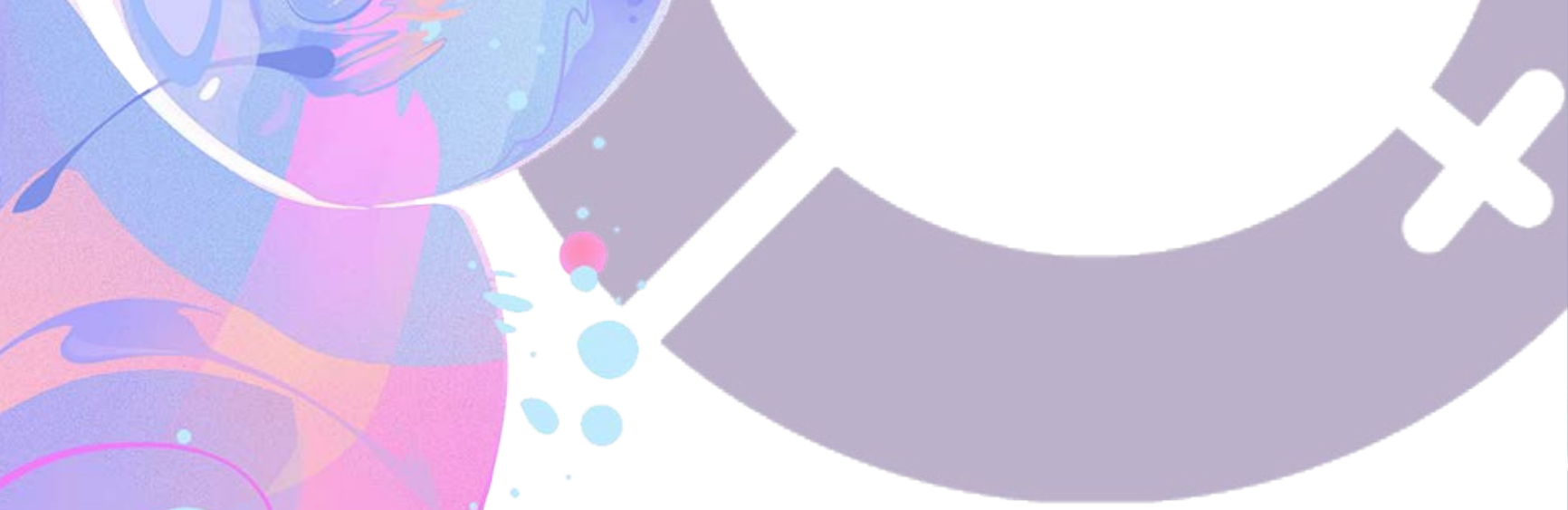
"There's never enough hour in a day so for me it's all about choices and prioritization. The way I manage it is all through my diary. I use my consulting and management background in managing my day-to-day schedule. I'm all about deadlines, time frames and having the right support system around me. You are the master of your own time so you have to learn to prioritize what needs to be done and when you need to do it by."

"Starting a business is all very consuming, be it any businesses. In the beginning it was all about providing for my family and building the brand and it wasn't until three years ago that I started to shift my focus back to myself. I'm a very active person who loves outdoor activities and adrenaline. I left all of it for five years when I started Boost Juice but I'm glad to be back at it now."

Dr Soraya shared her key to a healthy lifestyle, "maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle is all about making fitness regime a part of everyday life, rather than turning it into something you have to do. It's important to find what works best for you. Don't just do yoga because it's supposed to be the best thing; do it because you enjoy doing it. My fitness regime isn't a rigid or set one; I keep it varied and try to make it a part of family activities as much as I can so that it remains enjoyable and never a chore."

Dr Soraya sets herself as an example, she believes, "as a woman, we need to empower each other to pursue in what we believe in. If you're passionate about something, you have to fight for it to earn it. As a female entrepreneur, sharing support is important as well as from the general community. When we're pressing for progress for women empowerment, we need to look at the supporting structure to actually enable the progress. I'm proud to see how Malaysian women are starting to stand up for each other for equality. Women are in advantage in some ways because we can multitask, we're blessed with intelligence and emotional intelligence and we're able to see things on multiple levels. What we can bring into a business is very different from a male perspective."

As of the past years, we see many Malaysian women with strong entrepreneurial spirit who has come out to build their own empires. Malaysia is blessed in a way that the government does a lot to push in terms of giving opportunity, grants and support to female entrepreneurs. We see a lot of Malaysian women who goes out there and try out new things and indeed, Dr Soraya is one lady that Malaysia can be truly proud of for what she has brought for us.



Dato' Azlin Ahmad Shaharbi

A CHAMPION OF WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN MALAYSIA

"WOMEN NEED A LOT OF MOTIVATION. ACTUALLY THERE IS NO 'GLASS CEILING', BUT RATHER THE STICKY FLOOR. IT'S THE WOMEN THEMSELVES - OUR CULTURE, OUR SOCIETY. IT'S NOT EASY FOR WOMEN TO EXCEL. SO WE NEED A LOT OF MOTIVATION. THAT'S WHY WE NEED A SUPPORT GROUP."



Pass for Progress is more than an annual theme for the engine of transformation and champion of women in business that is PENIAGAWATI – it is the very heartbeat of the NGO. The Association of Bumiputra Women in Business and Profession Malaysia is a core mover in the transformation of lives in the country for nearly four decades since its inception on 24 March 1980.

Having over a thousand members throughout the nation, PENIAGAWATI is comprised of female entrepreneurs from all walks of life – ranging from those just starting out and those who have already made it. The members are also representative of the various fields – including manufacturing and service.

The sincerity of this can be seen here where PENIAGAWATI is the first NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) to publish an exclusive guidebook entitled *Undang-Undang Untuk Usahawan* (Law for the Entrepreneur), now into its second edition, which provides legal guidance in the course of business. The purpose this book was published was to impart awareness and skill to entrepreneurs to conduct their businesses effectively and professionally. This book has garnered much support and acclaim from business folk as well as the government and government agencies involved in the development of entrepreneurship.

In the execution of its programs, PENIAGAWATI works hand in hand with several ministries, government agencies, institutions, and other bodies. PENIAGAWATI also maintains good media relations in electronic and print.

With a modus operandi that is centred on the betterment of women (and by default, the empowerment of women) on a daily basis, PENIAGAWATI is irrefutably the bulwark of women's liberty (and this is by way of actual practice as opposed to mere lip service).

The attainment of any goal is made super possible if an organization or institution is in unison in its vision and mission. Where in-fighting and bickering is kept at a minimum, new plateaus of ascendancy can be attained via the remarkable force of teamwork and well-placed symbiosis for optimum results that is beneficial for all parties.

There are varied approaches in the pursuit of success. Generally, success is geared towards the betterment of oneself from a personal standpoint. If one really thinks about it, attaining personal success is a natural consequent of the work put in.

However, a more holistic approach to success is one that is neither inward-looking nor personal-centric, but rather communal. To Dato' Azlin, the success of PENIAGAWATI comes first. In spite of her professional capacity as a lawyer, she derives a truer sense of satisfaction from being able to help and empower women in the realm of business. There is a ripple effect in this which transcends the intrinsic views of personal progress being outweighed by the emphasis on the greater good of the many. To hone such selflessness is no easy task; a feat undoubtedly fuelled by passion of the utmost sort.

A HEART FOR HELPING OTHER WOMEN

The visage and intellect behind the championing of the

PENIAGAWATI brand is none other than Dato' Azlin, its dedicated President.

"I have been the President of PENIAGAWATI for five years now. I am the seventh President of the organization. PENIAGAWATI is the oldest women entrepreneur association in the country. We are 38 years old this year. When we were born in 1980, at that time, you can imagine the Malaysian landscape; there probably were not very many women entrepreneurs either. Actually, most of the successful female Malay entrepreneurs in Malaysia have gone through PENIAGAWATI."

She has brought about positive change within the association – change that can truly be seen and felt with longstanding effects.

"When I came in as President, there were two things I wanted to change in PENIAGAWATI. One thing is the age gap. My focus was on *Gen Y*. I wanted to bridge the gap because at the end of the day, those are people that you are grooming. I started bringing young people to the committee as a member. Five years down the line, the average age of the committee from about 55 has now gone to about 38. I put them in the committee despite people thinking they are young. Today we have the third generation here already. There are lot of young people and it's a good mix. To me it's learning from each other. Even when you are 60 years old, it's doesn't mean that you cannot learn from a young person; it doesn't mean that you don't respect a young person. So to me when we meet up in PENIAGAWATI, it's good that we have the younger generation who can teach a thing or to the older generation; and at the same time, they look up to the successful role models – so it's a good mix where we can all grow together - at whatever age we are."

She also brought about an intrinsic change that continues to impact the lives of many.

"The other one – backbiting. For me, I'm a simple person. I don't believe in having two camps. When I came in, I started this simple thing of 'Love One Another'. At the end of the day, how are we going to get anywhere if we don't support each other? And isn't it a happy thing that when we all meet at AGMs, we are all sisters in PENIAGAWATI?"

Dato' Azlin takes the effort to reach out and talk to those who remain on their own. To break the ice, she is an amicable person who is well liked by most. In fact, ever since she became President, PENIAGAWATI has gone through three AGMs without any contest!

"On years that were supposed to be an election year, it didn't feel like it – but rather as a gathering of friends. So I am very happy with that. Otherwise it's not easy as you got to solve all these problems first so we can get somewhere."

LEGAL EAGLE MEETS EAGER ENTREPRENEURS

"I am a lawyer by profession. Got my own legal firm, Azlin Shaharbi & Associates, which I established in 1990 when I came back from England at 26. It is 28 years old this year. I still use it as a base. We went through a lot of ups and downs and challenges, and I still do legal work – *Corporate Law*. It does sustain me while I do some other things, which I feel at my age, I should do in order to give back to others."



In fact about two years back, PENIAGAWATI was tasked to go around to 20 locations across the country to creating awareness and teach entrepreneurs on the legal aspects of running their business. The most astounding this is when she teaches, she doesn't do so with the view that they will come back and give her legal work, but are aware of what to do.

"I find that in a lot of entrepreneurs, one of the reasons why they fail is because they don't really take care of all the governance and legal framework and all such things. You know, they take it very lightly – either not knowing or not caring. It is actually a very important part of running a business. You can have a killer product, you can have a lot of good things going for you; but if you don't take care of all these things, it will not be sustainable for a long time." When she teaches them, she teaches them to do the contracts themselves through workshops and by providing samples of agreements.

"I wrote a book in 2006 called *Undang-Undang Untuk Usahawan*. It merges my own experience as a lawyer and as an entrepreneur. I took the legal knowledge that I had and saw how it could improve on the legal aspects of a running business."

Dato' Azlin has been able to masterfully bridge the gap between the legal profession and entrepreneurs – a challenging feat in itself – by way of years and years of exposure to the business community. It is not often that a lawyer is able to both understand and be understood by those outside the legal community as they have their own jargon and way of communicating which will leave the layperson in a daze.

"A lot of my friends who are lawyers are lawyers; they won't be able to talk to entrepreneurs. The way that they talk is different. So for me, I think over the years, because I mix with quite a lot of entrepreneurs, and as President of PENIAGAWATI, I have to take care of thousands of entrepreneurs, so I understand them. To me, I can use my expertise in legal and channel it on how to teach them."

THE NGO PATH: THANKLESS, BUT UTTERLY FULFILLING

Dato' Azlin speaks her heart out: "Some people are of the opinion that if I spend more time in the office, I would be richer. Well, they could be right... of course, if I spend more time in the office thinking about

myself, I would be richer! But would I be happier? Maybe for some of my friends, that makes them happy – maybe that's what they want - good enough - that's fine because each person has got their own objective in life and what gives them meaning in life (existence). So for me, I still have my legal firm, I still work, but of course I don't spend a lot of time there because there are other things I want to do in life which brings more meaning to me. (It doesn't bring any money to me – in fact it finishes up the money!)

Still, it's fulfilling. It's a thankless job actually doing NGO work. Sometimes I try to tell people but they cannot understand. Every day, I have to take care of so many people. And they don't know how challenging it really is. Whatever I can do, I will do. It doesn't bring anything to me. As I said, it makes me poorer in terms of time and money. But to me, it's a legacy that I like to leave behind. If I want to think of myself, I think that's easy. Sometimes when they talk about whether a person excels in what they do. But actually, if you just focus on yourself, you have a good chance to succeed; because you spend your time focusing on that. All your time is there...you are thinking about yourself.

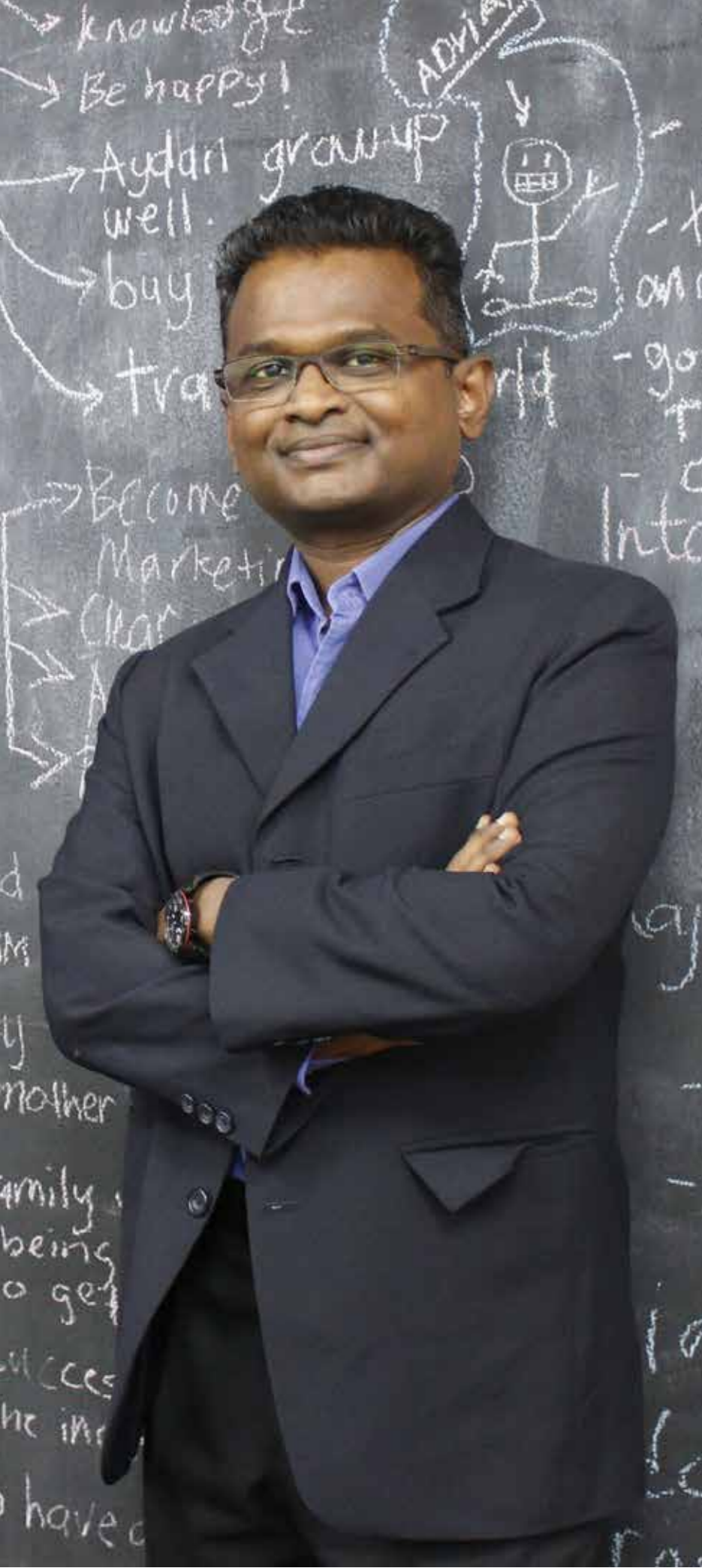
The 'other road' that I'm taking is a sacrifice for me... It's less for me. But the end result for me is priceless. It may not be quantifiable in terms of money, in terms of material things; but the span of people you help has no end.

I think it is required for women, because women need a lot of motivation. Actually there is no 'glass ceiling', but rather the sticky floor. It's the women themselves – our culture, our society. It's not easy for women to excel. So we need a lot of motivation. That's why we need a support group. So when you join an association like PENIAGAWATI, you have like-minded people – people to push you forward. And sometimes it's amazing! Like if I want to know something about one industry, I just need to meet some of my members and ask (it's like a resource centre). For entrepreneurship, you can't learn it from anywhere. Except to do it yourself (hands-on). You will get knocked a few times and learn – there are ups and downs. And if you're down, or facing a challenge like balancing your work and personal lives, at PENIAGAWATI, people can sympathize and empathize with you. Women's networks are usually not as vast as men (so much into the family). That's what I want to cultivate in PENIAGAWATI, to help each other – don't bring each other down.

Sometimes it is not easy being a leader. Every day, I listen to all sorts of things which I should have done which I did not do (or did which I didn't). So I ask myself, do you want to take all these things or not? If you want to continue to be a leader and want to serve a cause, you have to take all these things. You decide to do that...you take this. If you don't want to be a leader, you step down and go. So now I am more accepting of taking the 'whole package' of being a good leader. It's not easy to manage. I must always carry the name of PENIAGAWATI – the Brand and the branding of PENIAGAWATI as a champion of women's entrepreneurship in Malaysia. They are the leaders anyway.

In fact this year is *Women's Empowerment Year*. We set up a task force. This task force has a few NGOs to show our unity, our solidarity, amongst NGOs."

"My work is to empower women. I want them to be able to do some of the things themselves and think."



RAJ KUMAR PARAMANATHAN

REINVENTING THE WORKPLACE FOR GREATER GENDER DIVERSITY

BY AIN MC

With over 17 years of experience in executive search and selection, Raj's expertise covers client advisory, recruitment and talent management strategies across oil & gas, power generation, engineering & construction, manufacturing, automotive and MRO sectors.

As a member of the Global Diversity Practice of IRC Executive Search Partners -- the world's largest search alliance with 300 professionals across 83 member firms located on 6 continents -Raj believes that organizations could benefit from diversity by creating a culture of inclusive opportunities and growth.

He has inculcated that in his role as board member of the IRC Institute for intercultural management, and throughout almost two decades of recruitment.

When Raj first started out in the executive search sphere, CnetG structured a robust placement process based solely on merit and fit to organization culture, while seeking to match individual and company needs.

It soon became evident that this structured process led to an increased diversity in placements.

In 2016, the process of placing a Malaysian female executive as a Global Head of Audit for an O&G contractor led Raj to realise the lack of a gender-balanced organisational approach to recruitment and leadership development.

Fueling a Pipeline

Thus, CnetG's long-term plan is to ensure a future-ready pool of women executives, who can thrive in the workforce and eventually rise to C-suite management. These individuals will be honed through searches, engagements, and training sessions.

Meanwhile, corporates will have the luxury of hiring highly competent women board members with extensive corporate and business experience, making diversity hires not simply for the sake of quotas, but based on actual merit to propel the company forward.



As diversity gained traction, Raj's track record in diverse placements made him the go-to person among governments and corporates, and he was appointed to the 30% Club Committee for Talent Pipeline in December 2017.

CnetG's Diversity Forum in 2017 focused on building a women executive pipeline, and was supported by Human Resource Development Fund Malaysia.

Raj is also often called on to lead diversity roundtables at American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce, IRC, and General Electric, among others.

Supporting Women in the Workplace

Despite more companies having cultures and environments that retain and promotes female executives, they decline these opportunities for various reasons, including lack of confidence, considerations for work-life balance, and job security.

Research by McKinsey has shown that women are only likely to apply or raise their hands for a role or job if they fulfill all of the criteria listed, as opposed to men doing the same when they have fulfilled at least 60% of requirements.

As such, Raj decided to take it a step further and reach out to individuals, to encourage them to step up to the plate, and build the confidence to take on these challenges.

In 2016, Raj became a mentor and sponsor at Lean In Malaysia, in addition to guiding and counselling mid-career women from leading corporates towards planning and building a successful career.



Diversifying within STEM Sectors

Raj has a Master of Science degree from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, and worked with Siemens Power Generation Asia Pacific prior to starting CnetG.

His grounding in a traditionally male-dominated STEM sector, and promotion of diversity led Raj and the Malaysian Gas Association to form a group to advocate for the advancement of women in the energy sector.

Seeking to push the envelope further, CnetG has worked with several international partners in building an international pipeline of capable women executives to close the gender gap and train more future women leaders worldwide.

This will in turn work to bolster a HR community that shares a similar vision, to continue playing the drums on diversity within their own organisations, and be part of CnetG's robust and talented executive network to coach and mentor emerging leaders.



“OUR VISION IS TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING NGOS IN MALAYSIA, SPECIFICALLY HELPING THE POOR AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE ON A MULTIRACIAL CONTEXT. DESPITE WHAT RACE OR RELIGION THEY PRACTICE, IF THEY NEED TO BE HELPED, WE NEED TO HELP THEM,”

Branding Index

WELCOME TO BRANDING INDEX, A PLACE FOR YOU TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE SPHERE OF BRANDS AND BRANDING AROUND THE WORLD.

BRAND VOICE>

Learn more about a brand's success story; told in their own voice.

BRAND-IT-RIGHT>

CSR is a part of what makes a brand humane. Be sure to take it from the best!

BRAND STORY>

Read the story behind a brand's successful journey in their respective field.

BRAND EXPERT>

Get the insights from experts on how they manage their brand.

GRAPEVINE>

A list of new and upcoming brands to watch out for.

BRAND GROOMING>

A guide to creating and maintaining your personal brand.



Yeb of Green Peace

NADEREV 'YEB' MADLA SAÑO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREENPEACE SOUTHEAST ASIA

THE WORLD FROM A FATHER'S EYES APPEARS
MORE IN URGENT NEED OF SUSTAINABILITY.

From the Eyes of a Father

If everyone was to lovingly gaze at the world through eyes that could see its fragility with a heart that might seek to leave a habitable legacy for the generations to come, perhaps this planet might be a more leviathan place. In reality, this very hope is being crushed by the apathy of blatant shortsightedness.

I am married to Eunice Agsaoay-Saño, an environment, community, and university lawyer. We have been blessed with two children, 14-year old son, Yanni, who is an avid football player and 11-year old daughter, Amira, who loves to play music. Among my favorite activities are bird photography, scuba diving, football, cycling, and walking.

It is my firm belief that I have to be the best father I can be. In so doing, my desire to be the best father requires me to firmly stand up for what I believe in, fight for my children's future, and help promote a world that is just, safe, green, and peaceful. Yanni and Amira are my constant reminders of why we need to do what we do.

The world from a father's eyes appears more in urgent need of sustainability.

As a father, it is my duty and responsibility to teach my children how to see the world with openness, with love for humanity, and with hope. It is likewise my duty to learn from my children. Children can teach us a whole lot of values, and the way they see the world can be a truly meaningful window into how adults can find solutions to the world's problems. My biggest desire as a father is for my children to remember me as a loving father, nothing more.

From the Heart of an Activist

I am an activist by heart. Greenpeace is home to me. I do not subscribe to token and incremental change. For me, Greenpeace allows me to pursue transformational change, genuine change that the world badly needs.

This is what Greenpeace means to me. It is an organization that pushes people to take a stand, in the face of flagrant injustice, in the face of the environmental crisis. Greenpeace teaches us to hold dear what is most important to our lives.

I am a product of the *University of the Philippines*, with a *Bachelor of Arts* degree in *Philosophy* and a *Graduate Diploma* degree in *Community Development*. I am a Fellow at the *Oxford Climate Policy Centre* based in Oxford, UK through the *European Capacity Building Initiative*. I studied *International Politics* at the *University College* in *Washington University*.

I served as Commissioner (Vice-Minister) of the *Philippines' Climate Change Commission*, the country's lead policy-making body on climate change, from 2010 to 2015. While Commissioner, I served as the *Philippines' Official Chief Representative and Lead Negotiator* in the *United Nations Climate Change Convention*. I felt very passionate about *Climate Justice*, and while I was the country's Chief Negotiator, I worked closely with communities impacted by climate change and espoused equity in the climate change conversation, always mindful of the issue of injustice brought about by the climate crisis.

My work on the environment spans over two decades. Before being appointed as Climate Change Commissioner, I had been a working with local communities and international bodies, working on domestic and international issues that relate to climate change, clean energy, biodiversity, coastal and marine resources, tourism, disaster risk reduction and local governance. I began working on climate change issues since 1996 and previously managed projects on coastal resources and fisheries conservation, as well as environmental education, working to promote sustainable development and environmental law enforcement. I also actively worked on the development of programs on adaptation of marine ecosystems and coastal communities to climate change and the development of clean and renewable energy for the country. From 2008-2019, I also served as the National Director of the *Earth Hour* campaign in the Philippines.

After five years in public service, I went back to civil society and I currently serve as the Executive Director of Greenpeace, leading the diverse operations of Greenpeace in the Southeast Asian Region, actively campaigning on key issues such as deforestation, climate justice, ecological agriculture, renewable energy, pollution, and urban environmental challenges.



01

From the Soul of a Spiritual Leader

I serve as Spiritual Ambassador for *OurVoices*, a call to people of faith and moral belief, across the world, to engage on the issue of climate change. *OurVoices* is an international, multi-faith campaign for strong climate action and climate justice.

As part of this work, I was appointed Pilgrim Leader of The People’s Pilgrimage, a special journey that highlights communities confronting climate impacts but manifesting resilience and spiritual strength and which culminated in a 1500-kilometer walk from Rome to Paris from September to December 2015.

A pair of shoes I wore during this journey was ‘retired’ beside Pope Francis’ shoes at the *Place de la Republique* in the heart of the city of Paris.

Greenpeace Southeast Asia

Globally, Greenpeace embraces a framework that lays down the key directions and pathways towards the fulfillment of its mission and respond meaningfully to the rapid and profound changes happening around us. It challenges every Greenpeace organization in every corner of the world to be ambitious, to be able to respond to the crucial environmental issues in an agile and effective way.

Greenpeace’s purpose is to help change the world for the better. Greenpeace is a environmental campaigning organization which uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and to force the solutions, which are essential to a green and peaceful future. Greenpeace’s goal is to ensure the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity.

For us in Southeast Asia, that guidance is clear – for us to foster transformative and systemic positive change in order to ensure a viable planet and that we are able to defend the key environmental battlegrounds. Greenpeace, in its earnest effort to build an environmental campaigning organization

that embraces innovation, takes on extraordinary risks, and does it best to respond quickly to the challenges of our times. Together as one global organization, we aspire for increased impact that hope to inspire billions to commit their own acts of courage. We in Southeast Asia are committed to making this happen.

We have also always said that Greenpeace exists because this fragile Earth and the people who depend on a thriving planet deserves a voice. The world needs solutions. It needs change. It needs action.

Greenpeace exists in Southeast Asia because our region is a key battleground, one we cannot afford to lose. As Greenpeace in Southeast Asia, we stand with the people of Southeast Asia in their struggles to confront environmental destruction, social injustice, and economic inequalities. Here in Southeast Asia, we recognize that we need to be bold and ambitious, and that we need to work with people to achieve change. In Southeast Asia, our mantra is *IMPACT: Inspire Movements and People into Action for Change and Transformation*.

Southeast Asia is an environmental battleground for the planet, a battleground we cannot afford to lose. Southeast Asia is home to unique and threatened biological diversity, blessed with teeming oceans and dense forests. It harbours almost the entirety of the renowned coral triangle. The kind of species as well as the vast numbers of plant and animal species in Southeast Asia are simply astounding.

However, the region is also a major hotspot as we see the highest rates of deforestation, which further aggravates global climate change, and massive destruction of the ocean ecosystem. Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia combined account for the largest amount of plastic pollution that goes into the world’s oceans and all these four countries sit in the top 10 countries where ocean plastic pollution comes from.



“Greenpeace exists in Southeast Asia because our region is a key battleground, one we cannot afford to lose. As Greenpeace in Southeast Asia, we stand with the people of Southeast Asia in their struggles to confront environmental destruction, social injustice, and economic inequalities. Here in Southeast Asia”

“Greenpeace exists in Southeast Asia because our region is a key battleground, one we cannot afford to lose. As Greenpeace in Southeast Asia, we stand with the people of Southeast Asia in their struggles to confront environmental destruction, social injustice, and economic inequalities. Here in Southeast Asia”



02



images:

1) Chained to a cause and bound to one another in body, but a sacrifice that frees the spirit to express a united stand for a future emancipated. 2) Homecoming Fiesta 2) A visage on many fronts, championing change for the better, grand in pursuance of a more sustainable future. If one man can make a difference, just imagine what a grand unison of many hearts can do!

Southeast Asia has also been described in scientific studies as one, if not the most, vulnerable region on earth to the adverse impacts of climate change. Already, we are experiencing warmer temperatures, severe droughts, more intense storms, extreme changes in rainfall patterns, and higher than average sea level rise. Here in Southeast Asia, record temperatures brought in one of the worst droughts in decades. Haze, brought about by forest fires, has become an annual event, causing about 100,000 premature deaths every year.

Greenpeace Southeast Asia can be truly proud of many achievements, including our stand to defend the ancient forests of Indonesia as many companies have moved to committing to zero deforestation; the victories from the energy revolution campaign as many communities have embraced renewable energy; our valiant opposition against dirty coal with many grassroots communities being steadfast in the resistance and the social license of fossil fuel industries being eroded; our work protecting fisheries and marine resources and exposing the ills of the commercial fishing industry, especially our investigations into the issue of slavery at sea; the campaign to push governments and companies to respond to the plastic crisis gripping our oceans; our food-for-life campaign that has created communities embarking on ecological agriculture; and the exhilarating little triumphs regarding our call to hold the big polluters accountable, anchored on our petition with the Philippines’ Commission on Human Rights versus 47 oil, coal, gas, and cement companies responsible for the lion’s share of greenhouse gases that have caused climate change. We witness a groundswell of creative actions all over the world running after those who should be held accountable for the climate crisis.

Of course, we are proud of Greenpeace Southeast Asia’s achievements in terms of the number of people who have come to embrace our mission, with at least 50,000 people from Southeast Asia who directly support our work, and about two million people who take action consistently over the years. In Southeast Asia, Greenpeace has been at the forefront of the growing civic movement, supporting grassroots groups and mobilizations across the region. Our work is gradually building a momentum for people to secure the future of this region through the power of many.

Greenpeace is making a big difference in a world where the problems are getting bigger by the day. If not for organizations like Greenpeace, we will all surely be in a much worse world, our world would be so much less safer. This is not to say that Greenpeace is changing the world alone and fast enough. By no stretch of the imagination can Greenpeace do this on its own. We believe in harnessing the power of communities and people to truly effect transformational change.

Reality Check: The Fragility of Our Natural Heritage

It was almost impossible for anyone to imagine that human beings can have such a significant impact on the planet. But we have finally proven that human activity can really permanently alter the natural patrimony. I was in the Arctic a few years back, and it was painful to think that all of that beauty will be gone soon. The Arctic looked really magnificent I felt how powerful that place was. But I also felt how fragile our world is. It was melting before my own eyes. Unbelievable.

Here in Southeast Asia, we are also witness to how fragile nature is in the face of the power of human intervention. Forests are disappearing like we were just mowing the lawn. Vast lands have forever been destroyed with open-pit coal mines which are dark and gloomy as far as the eye can see. I remember standing at the edge of a coal mine in Vietnam and one time in Kalimantan. I could not contain my tears. It was one of the saddest things I have ever seen. And by the day, more and more pristine areas fall to the coal industry. Just very recently, scientists have declared that in the Philippines, the areas with excellent coral cover have gone down to zero per cent. Again, a tragic loss, likely irreversible.

Surviving that Breaking Point

Despite the perception that I tirelessly devote my life to working to create a better future, I do go through moments of doubt. Early in 2017, I woke up one morning and I felt very anxious, I had a tremendously heavy cloud hanging over me and I was asking myself whether all of these things we do to are futile. I was asking myself whether climate change was a problem that humanity can possibly solve. Day in, day out, we put in so much of ourselves into this whole business of saving the planet, and is it really worth all the blood, sweat and tears?

But the biggest question in my head was – are we really truly going to change the world? And by this I meant real change, massive transformation. Not piecemeal successes, not just feel-good campaign wins. Are we really going to see our vision of a safe, more just, green and peaceful world? Or is too much to ask?

In reflecting on these questions, maybe the answer lies on how we actually do things, in how much we believe in that vision of a better future.

Let’s think about the kind of world we live in today. It can really be depressing. But as I will say over and over again, even if we had the slimmest chance, but as long as there is that slight sliver of hope, this planet is worth fighting for, perhaps dying for.

We also want to remind ourselves – let me say, with all of these lawsuits and legal actions happening all over the world against the big polluters... the battle will not be won or lost in the courtrooms – they will be won or lost at the grassroots. These battles will not be won or lost in the chambers of law; they will be won or lost in the chambers of people’s hearts.

Standing Together in Unison for the Common Good

When asked how the organization sustains itself in the erratic challenges of the present-day economy:

The work of Greenpeace is made possible through the gracious support of millions of people who believe in what we stand for. In Southeast Asia, that number is over 50,000 people. It is a proven fact in the non-profit sector that the more you rely on committed individuals for the resources to do your work, the more resilient your organization will be.

Greenpeace is proud of its independence. We do not receive money from corporations or governments. That allows us to speak truth to power and to sustain the work even through the ups and downs of the global economy.

Lotte became the first in Japan to launch a xylitol-based chewing gum. Because xylitol, unlike other sweeteners, did not



Among other targets, heavy promotional activities were aimed at dentists, whose endorsement was imperative if the company hoped to position the gums as a friend of dental health. Reversing the public perception with new concoctions, Lotte has successfully redefined the role of gum as a promoter of dental health. This healthy chewing gum is reversing the age-old myth that chewing gum is bad for teeth.



Mr. Yamada Akihiro, General Director
of Lotte Vietnam



Mr. Kawai Katsumi, Chief Marketing Officer &
Vice President of Lotte Co. Ltd)

“Xylitol is a safe and natural sweetener that also produces a cooling and refreshing sensation in the mouth. Chewing the Lotte Xylitol four to five times a day can help to prevent tooth decay. And they have already been accredited with the official Halal certification. We are confident more people will support the product given its proven benefits

Eating a gum and tablet with xylitol every day, reduce the plaque in 2 weeks, and incidences of tooth decay is lessen within 3 months. But if you quit abruptly, you will face the risk of getting cavities. It is important to take it every day for cavity prevention.

LOTTE

BRANDING

FUNCTIONAL FOOD

FOR HEALTH

COLONY @ KLCC

MILLENNIALS' DREAM WORKING SPACE

BY AIN MC



Gone are the days of dull offices, thanks to the birth of Colony Space. Colony Space is a new co-working space with the new concept of serviced office space, where it aims to change the way everyone works, as well as the offices they work in.

The concept behind KL's latest co-working serviced office entrant Colony is reflected in its design, as it offers various perks to its tenants, including a nap area for some quick shuteye, a massage room where a certified masseuse can be hired on an ad-hoc basis, an exclusive lounge with high ceilings and full length windows, and access to a rooftop gym and swimming pool where tenants can work out with a full view of the KL city skyline.

Espressolab, a home grown and bred coffee chain, will be brewing up coffee alongside Bold Grains, a cafe concept brought by The Healthy Food People, an online food delivery services operator. The estimated 300 members over the 18,000 square feet space will gain access to delectable, nutritious food

and fragrant coffee without needing to leave the office.

Co-Founder Timothy Tiah, who also founded Nuffnang years ago, says "In the past 20 years, our quality of life has improved. We eat better food, live in better homes, drive cars that are getting safer and have better healthcare. However, the way we work has remained the same. We want to change that."

Fellow Co-Founder and popular blogger Audrey Ooi of Fourfeetnine.com says, "We have a strong belief that work doesn't need to be all drudgery, that motivated employees perform best when they are happy. Work takes up at least 40 hours of our lives each week and it needs to feel great for us to do great. This is where Colony comes in."

This statement is especially true to those who works in creative field, where ideas and creativity come along when your mind is at its best state.



offices come in different sizes to accommodate teams of all sizes. Virtual offices and time based passes are also available to allow everyone flexibility in their work environment.

Monthly rental begins from RM528 for each hot desking seat, and a private serviced office starts from RM1,988. To allow you the luxury of flexible usage of the space, time based passes are available and are priced from RM338 for 100 hours. Rental is inclusive of utilities, high-speed internet access and office cleaning services. Colony is move-in ready, and is selling fast.

Colony is located in Vipod Business Centre on Jalan Kia Peng, in the heart of Kuala Lumpur's Central Business District. With Pavilion and KLCC just within 5 minutes' walk, connectivity is a breeze as a large variety of food and public transport options are available in the vicinity.

Having raised over RM8 million for its expansion plans, the company plans to construct at least two more locations within the next 5 years. Head on to <http://colonywork/> for more information.



THE BRANDLAUREATE • BUSINESS WORLD



With Colony, companies that place a strong emphasis on their employees' wellbeing and want them to work in a great environment can do just that. A serviced office where they can achieve a balance of work and play, Colony believes that it will help reduce staff turnover and help companies attract and retain talent.

By 2020, millennials born between 1980 and 2000 will make up half of the global workforce. According to a study titled Asia Pacific Millennials: Shaping the future of real estate' conducted in October 2016 by CBRE Group, 78% of millennials see workplace quality as important when choosing a new employer; and 69% of them are willing to give up other benefits for a better workplace environment. Microsoft, a giant of the tech world, understood the implications of the data, and have started phasing 30% of its employees into co-working spaces.

Colony has a variety of shared workspaces and co-working options available. Open coworking areas are split into a hot-desking area and a reserved desk area; while private





PROPERTYGURU

E-PROPERTY PORTAL

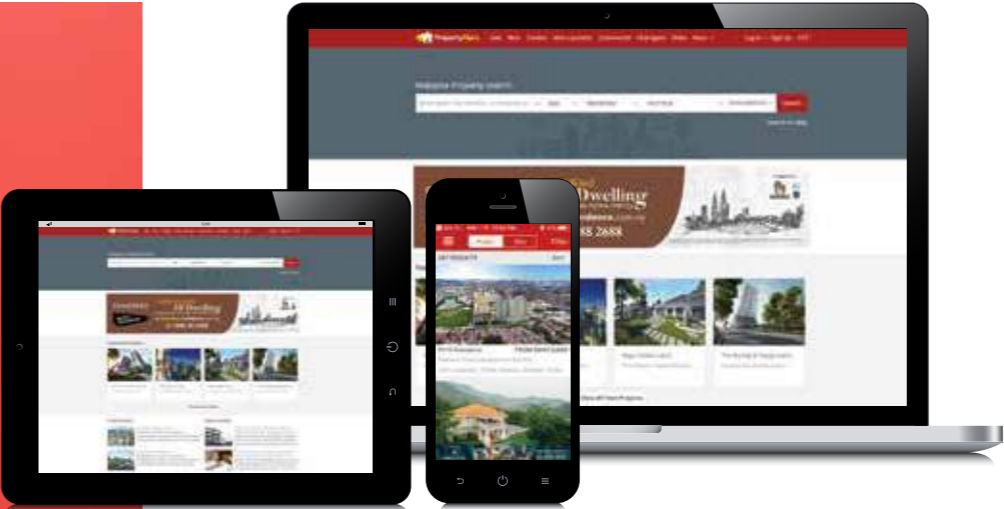
It all started back in 2006 when British-born Steve Melhuish and Jani Rautiainen were each trying to find a new home in Singapore. After spending frustrating and painful hours flipping through the newspapers shopping for properties and obtaining up-to-date pricing information, they felt they were not any closer to their goal.

Steve learned that the property portal market was really big, with leading firms having market capitalizations of anywhere between one to two billion dollars and running with 60 to 70 percent net profit. Based on the feedback from locals which was really positive, Steve and co-founder Jani proposed to start an online property portal in Singapore. Hence, PropertyGuru was born.

PropertyGuru Singapore was launched in May 2007, with its site officially launched in the following December, to let people search for properties to purchase or rent more efficiently online and which quickly grew to become a market leader in the country. PropertyGuru was among Google's 'Top 10 fastest-rising search terms' in Singapore. Facebook and Twitter were the only other companies in the list.

Regional Expansion
Steve raised S\$175 million (US\$123 million) from investors for expansion into Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand in 2015. PropertyGuru's expansion plan was a mixture of acquisitions and organic, self-nurtured teams. In 2016, PropertyGuru agreed to buy Ensign Media in its largest deal yet, adding magazines and websites about luxury properties and architectural content.

PropertyGuru expanded to Malaysia in 2011 and has since become the country's leading property portal, with offices in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor. It has helped over 2 million people find and own their dream homes in Malaysia every month. Since then, PropertyGuru has continued to help hundreds of thousands of people find their dream home and now controls the largest Internet real estate website in the region with 14 million users a month.



Market Dominance
PropertyGuru's website lets users search for properties based on location, type and price, and see photos of interiors along with floor plans. They save time compared with the traditional approach of newspapers and agents, and often save money because they can more easily filter through many options.

PropertyGuru makes money by charging agents a fee to use its platform, by selling advertising online and in printed newsletters as well as supporting the entire campaign for property developers from advertising to sales. In Singapore, the startup holds about 90 percent of the market, more than the next four rivals combined.

Consumer Shift
To keep up with the consumer shift to mobile phones and tablet computers, PropertyGuru has started 15 mobile apps in Southeast Asia for consumers and agents in the four countries, doing everything from allowing prospective buyers to search for property "near here" and enabling agents to upload listing.

Recently, The BrandLaureate team had an opportunity to interview Mr Sheldon Fernandez, the Country Manager of PropertyGuru Malaysia who spoke eloquently and shared his sentiments about the organization.

Could you explain the key role that you play in PropertyGuru Malaysia?

I joined PropertyGuru Malaysia in 2015 as the Country Manager as well as the key representative for the organization in Malaysia. With over 13 years of online and sales leadership experience prior to joining the organization, I now hold the responsibility of leading the company's sales and B2B strategy, driving strategic business deals and cultivating relationships with key industry partners. Essentially, my goal is to lead my team to be the trusted advisor to provide relevant content, actionable insights and world class service for consumers to make confident property decisions.

Could describe briefly the concept of PropertyGuru and how it works?

Basically, we have three audiences, consumers, real estate agents and developers. That being said, our key goal is to empower consumers to make the best property decisions, based on the excellent information available.

For consumers, we have the PropertyGuru online portal which has over 2 million property listings and 50,000 real estate agents. We provide property seekers with a plethora of choices when it comes to property, whether to sell buy or to rent. PropertyGuru also has guides, content, data such as the Price Market Index (PMI), the consumer sentiment survey, new project reviews and mortgage calculator which are all tailored to give insight to consumers when making one of the most important decisions in their life, which is to purchase/invest in a home.

As for real estate agents, we have various agent packages that provide an all-in-one solution tailored to different groups - from new agents to industry veterans. We also equip agents by providing avenues for workshops, regional summits and property reports.

We also have solutions for developers, who are targeting their developments to consumers, by offering integrated marketing solutions and sales solutions. Our new project reviews portion on the PropertyGuru website highlights all the new developments, with iconic photos and full details of the development for consumers to easily digest and make a decision.

As Malaysia's leading property site, what are the attributes that contribute to the success of PropertyGuru Malaysia?

Talent and people make the difference.

Finding the right group of people who are passionate about property, flexible enough to explore and reaching beyond the stars has certainly got us where we are today. I am extremely proud of my team at PropertyGuru. This award would be meaningless if not for the strong efforts shown by all the parties concerned - so credit goes forth to each and every one of them at PropertyGuru Malaysia.

Can you share with us your thoughts on the property industry in Malaysia?

As per our recent consumer sentiment survey findings, 57% of consumers intend to make a property purchase within the next 6 months. It is likely that the improving sentiment may persists going

into 2018, as consumers react positively to issues of oversupply in the market, improved assistance from the government for affordable home ownership and macro-economic factors. These macro-economic factors include the strengthening of the ringgit, rising crude oil prices and better than expected GDP growth among others.

Did the brand face any challenges in maintaining market position and if so, how do you overcome it?

Maintaining market leadership requires constant attention from our team, and this includes strategic marketing, partnerships with various media channels, relevant engagement with media and through PR efforts as well as innovation on our side so that consumers would know that PropertyGuru is the No. 1 online property portal they can rely on to search for properties.

In your opinion, how has the consumer's behaviour improve in searching for properties via the virtual website?

Back in 2006, there was only limited information on the web and the process of making decision on property was overwhelming. In today's environment with easy access to broadband internet and with consumers fast consuming information via desktop, mobile, tablet or any other devices, it is only apt that one would search for properties online. And that's where PropertyGuru fills the gap.

PropertyGuru has created a highly effective portal with highly targeted content that is geared towards empowering Malaysians to make informed and effective property choices.

How does PropertyGuru Malaysia contribute to the country's economic growth?

We are locally incorporated in Malaysia and have certainly contributed to the country's economic growth by providing an excellent platform for Malaysians to rent, buy and sell property.

What are your future aspirations for PropertyGuru in terms of its performance in the industry and also its global expansion?

PropertyGuru set its footprints in Singapore and has since expanded its reach to Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia. Our goal at the end of the day is to help consumers make the best property decision based on excellent content available. Our focus will still be within the region, as this is where we see technology being adopted at such a fast pace, and where there is still room for growth.

What is your advice to those who want to enter the property industry, whether in the capacity of a seller or a buyer?

PropertyGuru offers relevant content about property, whether one is a seller or a buyer.

As a seller, PropertyGuru equips sellers with information about how to best market one's property based on the current price index according to location, as well as information on the legal and banking implications when one sells property.

As a buyer, PropertyGuru has the New Projects Review which gives honest reviews about the projects being profiled with iconic photos and full specifications, so that there is a wide variety of information available for buyers to choose from. We also provide market leading intelligence and insight via our consumer sentiment surveys and Property Market Index (PMI). The latter tracks property price movements to help consumers better understand pricing trends across Malaysia as well as key urban hotspots such as the Klang Valley, Selangor, Johor and Penang.



First get the **Guru View!**

Choose from
over 250,000
property
choices.

Propertyguru.com.my



AMLION

TOWARDS A RECESSION-PROOF FUTURE

There are countless toothpaste brands on the market. But often enough, the public is unaware that some of the international ones are made in the country. One toothpaste manufacturer that is leading the business is AmLion Toothpaste Manufacturing Sdn Bhd, which was set up in 1994 by Datuk Lance Koek.

The Beginning

The company, which changed its name in 2010 from American Lion Sdn Bhd, is an original equipment manufacturer for toothpaste. Seen as a recession-proof product, Koek was determined to make toothpaste manufacturing his business.

Being a new brand with little exposure, it was an uphill climb for the company to secure clientele. With perseverance, Koek mustered direct marketing skills and eventually gained the trust of hoteliers and retailers who were looking to formulate and label their own brand of toothpaste.

"As the business grew, one value stayed constant: our commitment to quality. Customers continued repeating their orders as we always delivered. And word got around that we are constantly innovating while remaining affordable. We are happy to have produced for more than 80 brands in almost 30 countries," Koek shares.

AmLion has since manufactured for almost 80 brands across five continents. They include mass market ones, house brands, and those for multi-level marketing companies and US-based public institutions such as hospitals, prisons and welfare homes.

AmLion's formulation lab is where it comes up with the semi-finished and finished formulations. The lab is equipped with dedicated research teams for personal care and oral care products. The company has since spread its wings and started AmLion Personal Care Manufacturing Sdn Bhd.

Small in Size, Big in Contribution

AmLion has been part of Malaysia's successful export story. Their exports account for approximately 40% of their total revenue. From 2014 to 2016, their total exports has increased by 67.8%

"Our largest export market is the USA, which accounted for 39% of export revenue in 2016. In fact, in just a period of three years, the value exports to the United States doubled (2014-2016). We achieved double digit growth year-on-year for the past five years, and we aim to continue on that trajectory," explains Koek.

On the community front, they have supported various missions to help promote personal hygiene awareness. Last year, they contributed some supplies to the flood victims in Penang through the Malaysian Red Crescent Society. Apart from that, they have also contributed to the flood victims in Pekan, Pahang, in January this year. "Moving forward, we are planning to collaborate with a humanitarian movement to develop a concerted



programme to raise awareness on personal hygiene as well as assist in disaster relief. We will announce that venture soon," adds Koek.

Branding it Right

Koek notes on the importance of branding in establishing AmLion as a key player in the industry but he admits that the whole branding landscape is challenging for them as they do not possess their own consumer brand. Manufacturing 80 brands, it is crucial for them to establish their corporate reputation strongly.

"Being innovative is not limited to the R&D team in the lab. We encourage everyone to develop ideas which would make their lives more efficient. We want to come up with solutions to everyday problems,"

"With that mindset in place, we are always prepared to go out of our way to help our clients. While our core is manufacturing, we are happy to offer value added services. For example, if a client needs help to distribute and market their products, we are happy to lend a hand as we have developed a wide network of distribution channels over 24 years," he adds.

Koek emphasizes on their corporate values where he wants AmLion to be seen and known as a company that is rooted in family values and prides itself in innovativeness.

Future Plans

Living in a fast-changing world, even a recession-proof company would need to have a vision ahead of them in order to stay relevant in the ever-rising demands of the market.

Koek shares with us AmLion's upcoming projects:

"In the first quarter of 2018, we will be launching the full range of the licensing cartoon character products for the licensors. This will cover the entire oral care and the personal care range for children,"

"In line with the launch, we also have very exciting plans on how these products will be brought to the hands of the end consumers. On the other end of the spectrum, we're also looking to roll out a comprehensive Corporate Responsibility programme as we feel we can do more for the society, particularly in terms of raising awareness on the importance of personal hygiene," he concludes.

With a clear foresight of what AmLion is doing in the future and where the brand will be taken, AmLion will definitely continue to surprise the consumers in the market whilst at the same time sustaining their leading position in the market.



AmLion

TOOTHPASTE MFG. SDN. BHD.
PERSONAL CARE MFG. SDN. BHD.

Specialised In OEM
Manufacturing for Brand owners
for the more than 20 years

Internationally Accredited & Quality Assured
Shipping to over 35 countries for over 50 brands since 1994



Lot 4, Gate A, Jalan Teknologi 3/6, Seksyen 3, Taman Sains Selangor, Kota Damansara, 47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia.
Tel: +603 - 6156 9818 • Email: enquiries@amlion.com.my • Website: amlion.com.my



BRAND EXPERT

JEAN-PAUL VALDES

CEO OF CAVEMEN DATA

ON GAMIFICATION IN BUSINESS TRAINING

BY GERALD CHUAH

CAVEMEN ASIA is an award-winning training company, that utilizes cutting-edge immersive learning approach for training. Their two-day Business Excellerator Programme (BEP) teaches entrepreneurs and business owners to discover how to dramatically grow their business without wasting time and money.

It was formed by seven CEOs – Jean-Paul Valdes, Anthony Kong, Garry Chow, Gin Hai Pei, Leon Chan, Soo Hoo and Thomas Yap.

Explaining the concept of gamification, Valdes, who is the leading facilitator, co-founder and CEO of Cavemen Global Sdn. Bhd. said BEP is unique and different from any other ordinary program as it is constructed to give you an 'overall business simulation.'

(The last BEP program took place at Mont Kiara on March 3-4, 2018)

Valdes who has spent the better part of his career organizing workshops and conference in the oil and gas industry has been involved in group programs for as small as 10 people, to as large as 22,000, using immersion learning techniques which has taken him worldwide.

"Our experts are constantly at work to design programs that mimic true-to-life situations where our participants can fully engage in. Imagine if you take several years of experience and condense it into two whole days through games and activities, the learning will take place experientially,

"We educate participants on topics like branding, how to build a brand, and how to tell your story with your brand. Participants also play a variety of business game simulations which highlight different aspects of the business world.

Q: Why are you passionate about the education business, particularly in the field of personal development?

For me, training, education and the whole sector of personal development is about creating choices for people. I am passionate about creating possibilities more than just the idea of conducting training, as I am committed to support them to create new possibilities in their life and business.

We support entrepreneurs who seek to grow their business

and impact the community by shaking up their underlying beliefs and core behavioral fundamentals to create change.

Q: Talk about the concept of "Gamification" as a new trend in the experiential training business.

The term gamification was first introduced in 2008 by Nick Pelling, but the concept has been used in training for decades. Essentially, it refers to the idea of using games with competitive scoring elements to create a result-oriented, or measurable experience that increases engagement the audience.

One of the foremost game designer and facilitator in the world is our mentor Clinton Swaine, the founder, owner and lead trainer of Frontier Trainings – The World Leader in Experiential Business Trainings, who took experiential learning and moved its complexity and depth to a level which has never been seen before.

Q: What is the core purpose and inspiration for this training, and how do you set your company apart from others?

Immersive simulation training extends beyond the transfer of knowledge into a deep and memorable experience for participants, creating an opportunity for reflection and breakthrough. There are a number of possible variations that our facilitators can help support participants to understand, learn from and reflect upon. For example:

- The usage of simple but effective learning technologies to increase relatability and impactful lessons.
- Immediate application of lessons which increase the depth of learning and retention.
- Flexible and broad learning for a wide range of experience levels.

One of our core principle is: "Flexibility creates freedom" and this internal principle allows us to match the game lessons to the need of the room.

When we design our immersive simulations, we take into account the wide array of experience in the room.

As a result, our games are built to engage participants on multiple levels, and are re-playable on different levels, so that many lessons can be extracted from the experience.

Q: How do you maximize the learning capacity of each

game through the foundational lessons and debriefing sessions?

We utilize accelerated learning techniques developed by Dr. Georgi Lazonov, paired with elements of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) to allow us to adjust to the need of the room, so that we can deepen the learning.

The games mechanics lend themselves to learning the lessons and support us to encourage coaching. We simply point to the results they are achieving and reflect on their behaviour.

Likewise, we keep referring to past flipcharts as we debrief, to allow for spontaneity and reinforcement and create layers of learning as we go.

Q: How did Cavemen Asia come about? What is its mission statement to change lives and impact the community?

Cavemen was originally a mastermind intended to support our own members.

Our team create programs and build games, but we have specializations. Hence, our vision is to "bring people together to positively move the world forward".

In Cavemen, we believe in the power of people coming together to create positive, meaningful changes, and to move the world forward.

Our flagship public program, Business Excellerator Programme (BEP) took place in Mont Kiara on March 3-4, 2018. Next in the pipeline are "Tribe Masterminds" and "Group Coaching". The structure and mechanisms of the programs are to help support participants to take their ideas and challenges whether business or personal to drive actions and produce results.

On the fast track, we have "Advanced Business Incubator", which is designed to support business owners to achieve massive and accelerated breakthroughs. We target entrepreneurial startups as well as the internal development of organisations staff. Lastly, Cavemen believe a key to success is finding the right team of people to work with. That doesn't always mean that the team is your organisation. It includes people in your community whom you identify as friends and family.



Gentle on your eyes, brighter for your home.

Philips LED

Inferior LED lights may tire your eyes over time.
Switch to Philips LED* which gives comfort to your eyes.

*Only applicable to selected Philips LED models.

Chat with us now on Facebook Messenger
for the latest news and promotions!



LED bulb
RCP from RM9.90



LED spotlight
RCP from RM15.90



LED tube
RCP from RM12.50

For more information:

philips.com.my/homelighting

facebook.com/PhilipsLightingMalaysia

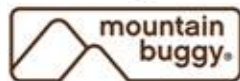
Customer Service Center:

Lot 2C, Jalan Kilang 51/206,
Section 51, Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

Tel: +603 7808 4000
Hotline: 1800-80-2253



PHILIPS



Travelling with Little Ones Made Easy

Bagrider takes the fuss out of family travel, and offers a simple solution for parents travelling with tired toddlers. Bagrider offers dual functionality going from carry on mode, to the travelling seat mode by a simple twist of a dial and comes with an easy-to-attach cushioned seat liner. The back of the seat liner features an elasticated mesh pocket for easy to access storage, perfect for passports or phone! With two sets of wheels (four in total), bagrider can be easily manoeuvred depending on your mode of use. Use all four when used as the travelling seat, and transform to use two wheels when in carry on mode.

www.mountainbuggy.com
[@mountain_buggy](https://www.instagram.com/mountain_buggy)

D A M E.

Bleed Red. Think Green.

Simply called the 'D', it's a sleek capsule-shaped reusable tampon applicator in a striking shade of green. And every woman that uses it will be stopping around 12,000 pieces of single-use plastic waste from making their way to the ocean. With a 2016 Mintel survey finding 60% of women preferred to use tampons with applicators, the D could be poised to offer a serious alternative for many across the country who currently aren't able to access eco-friendly sanitary products that suit them. Made from medical grade mediprene, the little green pill also contains antimicrobial technology that will – in theory at least – prevent it from becoming a unhygienic mess.

www.wedame.co
[@dameforgood](https://www.instagram.com/dameforgood)



Discover Wonders

Talking Books for Children

A new range of STEM talking books has been created by Discover Wonders, designed specifically to fuel curiosity and encourage children to "think like innovators". Talking Books makes learning interactive without screens. "Young children are empowered to find answers on their own without being limited by their reading ability or their parents' availability." User can record messages on the page and you can put audio files onto recording stickers to transform your child's favourite books into a talking book. Young children will be empowered to find answers on their own without being limited by their reading ability or their parents' availability.

www.discover Talking pen.com
[@discoverwonders](https://www.instagram.com/discoverwonders)

The Grapevine.

►► Showcasing innovation for the betterment of the community and surviving in the business-hungry world, many talents continue to shine and rise as entrepreneurs by making their own stage as business-savvy people. Ranging from developers to jack of all trades testing out and improving areas and aspects of social and professional services, here are some startups to keep an eye out for that are doing good in their world.



THE KOMBUIS

The Gear for Travellers

The kombuis is a complete camping/travel cooking set that contains a wood stove, a pot and a pan that also functions as a lid. Kombuis is a Dutch word for the kitchen on a ship. In dutch "kom" and "buis" also are two separate words. That translate to bowl and tube – so it's a kitchen that consists of "a bowl" the pot and "a tube" the stove. The stove is easy to assemble and is made out of 4 parts. The largest part is the base of the stove with the half grill and the hole in the side. In which fits the side tube and this one gets fixed in place with the slide. On top fits the pot-stand.

www.by-arnaud.com
[@byarnaud](https://www.instagram.com/byarnaud)



Personal Air Conditioner

Evapolar is a portable personal device which not only chills but also humidifies and purifies the air around you. The working principle is very simple: you need to fill the removable water tank and plug Evapolar in. Within 2-3 minutes Evapolar cartridge absorbs a huge amount of water. The water then spreads evenly on the surface of the cooling pads. When the air goes through the pads, the water evaporates, which makes the air cool down while getting saturated with water. The in-built fan helps the cool air spread on the area of 3-4 sq m around you. The power control enables you to adjust the cooling effect, creating most comfortable thermal conditions for you.

www.evapolar.com
[@evapolar](https://www.instagram.com/evapolar)

Personal Branding

LORD's
EST. 1974

HOW DOES SUITING ENHANCE A GENTLEMAN?

TIPS BY MALAYSIA'S BEST MASTER TAILOR
AND LEADING MENSWEAR BRAND, LORD'S TAILOR



“Dressing well is a form of good manners.”
– Tom Ford

In the world of branding, one cannot ignore the most important brand of all, which is your own personal branding.

Your branding is the outward-facing communication you give to those around you, including your clothing, hair, accessories, etc. Just like any brand, your branding or “package” should be purposeful and determined.

Regardless of your job or personality, you should have your own personal “dress code.” Every day you should follow your unique look, one that's tied to your personal brand and goals. As my father used to say, “If you want a promotion, then dress like you're the boss.” “Confidence - It is among the most important things that we must master in life.”

When you dress well, it is not just about looking good but also about bringing about a confidence – and having this confidence can make a huge difference in the outcomes of our life. It can have a positive impact on your prospects, your personality and the way the world perceives you.

GENTLEMAN'S ESSENTIALS

The Essential Style

The fashion of menswear has evolved over the years and today, there are a variety of styles that define a gentleman's look. Have a clear idea of how you want to dress, what impression you want to make and where you want to go with your look. A lack of clarity at this stage will result in a lot of wasted time and money. Consider this carefully as you examine everything else in your life.

A great way to define your style is to first build up your basic wardrobe. Every gentleman should have the following basics colours in their wardrobe to mix and match – black, navy blue, light grey, charcoal grey and a black tie tuxedo. Then from there, introduce some pop of colours that you know you will be confident to carry. 80 per cent of your wardrobe should be the essential colours then use colour as accent pieces – try a colourful shirt or sweater to bring some personality to your navy blue suit.

It can be more efficient (time-wise and financially) to invest in several high-quality pieces that you can dress up or dress down for a variety of occasions. This is a case where the adage “quality not quantity” will always win out.



Sometimes, it is good to step out of your comfort zone to experiment on different fabric trends and cut. For example, a double-breasted suit may not be a common choice but if your intention is to stand out in a networking event, then by all means, invest in a well-fitted double-breasted suit. It is also a great conversation starter when you wear a style that is not common.

The Fit

A well-fitting garment is a MUST when it comes to overall image and is the underlying secret to pulling everything together well. You can own a great suit but if it doesn't fit you well, then the result will be very different. Many do not seem to understand this important notion of fit – with many wearing suits that are too big or pants that are oversized. Understand your body shape and get yourself measured to know your size.

This is the biggest plus point about getting your suits bespoke rather than off the rack as alterations can only go so far. Bespoke garments can even take into consideration slight difference in your shoulder height and different arm lengths, which is quite common in a lot of men. Attention to Detail

It is also important to keep everything well-maintained, including bags, shoes, and accessories highly polished. Attention to details is indicative of your approach to business and can make a huge difference when making a first impression.

Accessories such as scarves, ties, pocket squares, tie-collar bars and socks can offset the uniform-like severity of some conservatively cut suits. Certain accessories such as ties also convey the respect you hold for the occasion and the person with whom you are meeting.

Invest in a good quality pair of leather dress shoes – it not only helps to make a great impression, but they will also last longer.

The Occasion

It is very important to consider the occasion when selecting the outfit to wear. For example, for a formal black tie event, it is apt to wear a tuxedo and not go in a sports jacket and jeans.

Tips on Do's and Don'ts

- Ensure that your shoulder is just nice and doesn't droop or have any wrinkles.
- As you button up the suit, you should be able to slide your hand underneath, where your chest is. If there are excessive wrinkles around the buttons when you button up the top button of your suit, then go one size up.
- The length of your suit should not exceed the ends of your pants zipper.
- Ensure your shirt fits you well and that at least half an inch of your shirt cuffs are showing out of your jacket sleeves.
- Pants should fall just above the shoes and shouldn't be too long with folds at the bottom.
- A well fitting pair of pants shouldn't hang loosely around the thighs or the butt area and should form a neat line along the sides.
- Most suits will have two buttons. A number of people are currently opting for a single button, which can look trendy, however if this is your first suit then I would go for a two button suit.
- Go for pure wool for its breathability and it should completely keep its shape when you hang it at night. Cotton is good for smart casual usage or outdoors occasion. If you are thinking of trying velvet, stick to dark rich colours.
- Ties are the most obvious accompaniment to your suit – the number one rule is to pick one darker than the colour of your shirt.
- Match the colour of your belt to your shoes for a neat look.
- A pocket square and socks are a great way to show off your personality – pick one that is a different colour to your tie for a nice contrast.



VIPASS

riuh

IN THE CITY

BY NURILYA ANIS RAHIM

**RIUH! ISN'T JUST ANOTHER BAZAAR IN TOWN —
IT'S WHERE CULTURE, COMEDY AND MUSIC MEETS!**

PEOPLE'S FAVORITE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN BAZAAR

If you live in the Klang Valley area, you must have at least once heard about this weekend carnival called, RIUH – the much talk of the town! Pronounced as *ri-yoh* which means loud festive noises in Malay; it is a creative platform where you'll see a curated variety of pop-up stores selling artisanal goods and food, family-friendly creative workshops and showcases and live performances held at APW, Jalan Riong, Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur. Held every month, RIUH brings local culture and music together all in one event!

Kick-started in August 2017, this monthly affair, held one weekend every month has different monthly creative offerings. It has everything for everyone. For the creative community, it offers a pop-up space to sell, share and flaunt what they do best. While for the urbanites and visitors to KL, RIUH provides you with a weekend of retail therapy, to get your hands dirty and let the creative juices running in the creative workshops as well as to indulge in the arts.

So how did RIUH! in the city came about? Well, it all started with MyCreative Venture, a government arm that spurs Malaysia's creative industry via strategic and innovative funding in a form of equity or debt investment – which is where RIUH was developed.

Affendy Ali, Head of Legal of MyCreative Venture and Melissa Low, Co-Managing Partner of RIUH was roped in to organize RIUH in support of the creative market that are looking for a platform to showcase their work. The focus was to create visibility for the creatives to promote their products.

"When we did the research for RIUH, we benchmarked the idea of RIUH to other creative hub markets that are out there. For example in Bangkok, they have 'The Knack Market', a unique pop-up night market which has almost a

similar concept. We also benchmarked with other creative hubs in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Jakarta and tradeshow in Singapore." shared Melissa.

Affendy, a lawyer by profession, left legal practice and joined a fashion company for about a year before MyCreative Venture fished him over to head their legal department where he later joined the RIUH team. Being one of the brains behind the team, he shared with us,

"Our focus is to provide entrepreneurs with a platform to sell their products. We strive to change the landscape of retail where SMEs are concerned. We want to instill cultural elements where it's not all just about purchasing but there's a whole other cultural experience that we hope to inject into Malaysians.

In terms of how we promote RIUH, we didn't want to brand it as just a normal market, which explains why we call it a 'creative platform' because there's the element of pop-up stores, creative workshops, live acts and showcases – our unique selling point!"

Among the creative workshops held at RIUH includes art classes for kids, woodworks classes for adults, talks on photography as well as showcases like art exhibition, film screenings, fashion presentations and live performances including live music performances, street performing arts, buskers and relaxing DJ sets.

The three identity of RIUH consist of three important elements:

- Pop-Up Stores & Food
- Workshops & Talks
- Showcases & Live Performances

THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY IS GROWING AND MOST IMPORTANTLY THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOW STARTED TO RECOGNIZE THE INDUSTRY. IN ITS OWN CREATIVE WAY, RIUH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA.

MELISSA LOW

"OUR FOCUS IS TO PROVIDE ENTREPRENEURS WITH A PLATFORM TO SELL THEIR PRODUCTS. WE STRIVE TO CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE OF RETAIL WHERE SMES ARE CONCERNED. WE WANT TO INSTILL CULTURAL ELEMENTS WHERE IT'S NOT ALL JUST ABOUT PURCHASING BUT THERE'S A WHOLE OTHER CULTURAL EXPERIENCE THAT WE HOPE TO INJECT INTO MALAYSIANS"

AFFENDY ALI



POP-UP STORES & FOOD

RIUH hosts a curation of homegrown brands with an eclectic range of products ranging from fashion and artisanal pieces to food and beverages and many more. Vendors are provided with their signature pop-up booths and a comfortable space to tell their brand story and importantly, sell products. Its monthly do gives shopaholics an alternative to shopping malls for a weekend of retail therapy.

WORKSHOPS & TALKS

RIUH collaborates with artisans and leading creatives by curating a series of workshops and talks where the community from all walks of life can get their hands dirty and stimulate creative conversations. The team provides a communal space where families can enjoy the weekend together after a hectic week.

Think terrarium-making, candle-making, painting, carpentry, silkscreen printing, cooking classes for both kids and adults – cultivating the creative culture!

SHOWCASES & LIVE PERFORMANCES

RIUH hosts talented artists to showcase and exhibit their art. Visitors would expect live music performances, art shows, screenings and pop-up showcases. Among their previous performers include the duet band Kita:Orang, YouTube musician Wan Imar, classical instrumental band Casa String Quartet and many more. They also once had a medley of upbeat joget performance as well as a Mangunatip, the bamboo dance originated from Sabah.



So is it a market or bazaar? Well it's a yes and no. Yes, it is modeled based on the idea of an art / artisan market or bazaar and no, because it offers much more than just pop-up stores and food. Flea market or just 'markets' in general used to be a big thing, but it somehow died down over the years but RIUH was able to bring back the trend with its uniqueness as shared by Affendy,

"RIUH is a showcase of what the creative Malaysian could offer. We provide a monthly creative platform therefore what we have is consistency and our theme varies every month with fresh batch of vendors, different performances and new activities and workshops offered in every event. Additionally, RIUH caters for every age group from children to the elderly. Base on our demographics throughout August to December 2017, we had all three generations who came to RIUH; the children, the parents and the grandparents. Everyone from all age group can experience something and truly feel the Malaysian culture at RIUH and that's what makes us different from the rest."

The creative industry is growing and most importantly the government has now started to recognize the industry. In its own creative way, RIUH has contributed to the economic growth and the development of the creative industry in Malaysia. Most importantly, they are creating a physical platform for Malaysian talents and local products especially the online businesses to grow.

RIUH is set to bring the look and feel of the festive cheer to visitors through the offerings of a variety of pop-up stores in the categories of fashion, homeware, artisanal produce, and dishes and snacks that would definitely send its visitors into a food coma. On why is it done only once a month, Melissa further added,

"We did an analysis of frequency. What we wanted is to provide a consistent platform for the vendors and with the idea that we had, it was more suited to a monthly curated creative platform. In terms of curating the vendors, there's a lot of factors to look into. We make sure there's a balance in terms of varieties and to provide what the market wants at that moment of time."

SO WHAT DOES RIUH HAVE IN STORES AHEAD?

"For 2018, RIUH is expanding to other places and Borneo is one location the team is currently eyeing. We want to grow and help the current homegrown. Keep it fresh and relevant. We want to create a new system to make purchasing more seamless. RIUH hopes more people from the corporate industry sees the importance of arts and eventually gets themselves involved too," - Melissa.

A day filled with awesome live performances, yummy-licious food, and cute knickknacks all around, you can't do better than RIUH on a weekend. It just gets better and better with each edition, so you definitely won't want to miss out! To find out when is their next event, check out their website at www.riuh.com.my or their Facebook and Instagram page: [@riuhinthecity](https://www.instagram.com/riuhinthecity)

The Blues ON SPOTLIGHT

ITO CONTINUES HIS QUEST TO SPREAD THE BLUES TO MALAYSIAN MUSIC LOVERS.

BY ANU VENUGOPAL

“Apo Nak Di Kato” about the blues?

From rain pattering on your roof, to a dog barking late at night and everything in between – blues is a part of it all. A musical journey that expresses life through the combination of lyrics and melody, the blues has the power to comfort and cajole, to incite and inspire.

Armed with an affable personality, a distinctive voice and the ability to inspire is Mohd Arif Kendut. Popularly known as Ito Mohd, the vocalist of well-known Blues Gang has the future of blues on his mind and in his heart – and he doesn’t mince his words.

“I can’t say the Malaysian entertainment scene is dead, because it is not, but right now it is limited. I was hoping the TPPA (Transpacific Partnership Trade Agreement (TPPA) would be implemented because it is good for intellectual property, but that is no longer going to happen. I still hope the government can encourage musical shows of different genres like blues and reggae,” he said.

Deep-rooted in African-American history, the blues is said to originate from the Southern plantations in the 19th century. Blues was invested by slaves, ex-slaves and their descendents, who sang as they worked in cotton and vegetable fields. As time passed the music evolved and soon great names began to perform the blues on stage. From the late B.B. King, John Lee Hooker and Stevie Ray Vaughan, these talented souls bitten by the blues bug have influenced others by their sheer talent, skills and passion. From one generation to another, these musicians and other have spread the melodious beats combined with honest lyrics across the world – including Malaysia.

“The blues have been a part of Malaysia for a long time. When the British came to Malaya, blues was already here. In the swinging 60s Malaysians listened to singers like The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton and Santana as well as our very own pop yeh yeh, which didn’t move forward, unlike the others. In the 70’s there are few bands like Alleycats and the Blues Gang, which has continued until today,” added the 67-year-old from Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan.

Malaysia’s own “King of the Blues”, Ito has been immersed in the world of music since he was a teenager. Listening to both local and international music, he was inspired to write his own songs. Ito’s innate



image :
LADA chief executive officer
Datuk Azizan Noordin,
Mike Thein and Ito



image :
Ito performing at the inaugural LIBRA gathering

talent to create appealing songs drew many to his side, with many wanting to join forces and collaborate with him musically. In the end, Ito decided to partner with Julian Mokhtar, Ghani Dato’ Abdul Talib, Jim Kamdasamy and Shaik Karim and they became the Blues Gang in 1979.

Ito has been instrumental in making Blues Gang a household name since then. Their No 1 hit in 1981, “Apo Nak Di Kato” in the Negeri Sembilan dialect added to the casual, cool rhythm of the Blues and is one of the unforgettable Malay songs until date. Selling over million copies across the country, the group is also known as for songs such as Khatulistiwa”, “Oh! Mama, Saya Mahu Kahwin”, “Malaya Blues” and many other. In 2007, Ito Mohd collaborated with a “Dikir” musician in Kelantan and “Dikir Blues” was made as a result of this collaboration, featuring popular songs are “Lamo Tak Jumbo” and “Tokleh Tokseh”.

The winner of The BrandLaureate Country Branding Award 2013-2014’s popularity peaked in the early to mid 1980’s. Blues Gang’s fervour for the blues saw them open for international bands performing in Kuala Lumpur – including the likes of the Ian Gillan Band, the Climax Blues Band and Uriah Heep. In 2011, Blues Gang and Sweet Charity collaborated on “Konsert Raksasa 2”. Held in Stadium Merdeka, it was equally exciting and huge as their historical concert in 1986.

Ito’s contribution to the Malaysian entertainment scene has not gone unnoticed. He was awarded the Ahli Setia Negeri Sembilan and the Darjah Tuanku Muhriz, awards given to those who have significantly contributed to the country. An inspiration to young and upcoming musicians in the country, he has at least one person following his musical footsteps – his son Kid Afero.

Although he no longer sings full time with the band, (he mostly sings at speciality invited events and occasions), Ito’s love for the genre continues to blossom. Teaming up with different partners through his own company Ito’s Cottage Music Enterprise, he is on quest to share the magic of the blue to the ears and hearts of more Malaysians. In December 2017, through his company Ito’s Cottage Music, he co-organised the first ever Langkawi International Blues and Roots Aseana (LIBRA), together with SB Explorer Sdn Bhd and Langkawi Development Authority (LADA).

“After going to Langkawi for the past few years, I discovered that the beach was full of tourists but there was no music. I decided to talk to LADA to see if we could do a blues concert, which has been my dream for a long

time. Happily, it all worked out after speaking to the Chief Executive Officer – Datuk Azizan Noordin, who also happens to be my university mate at ITM,” explained Ito.

Excited in his first attempt to give blues and blues musicians spotlight on stage, the famous vocalist believes his pick of local blues acts for the concert such as Trigger Finger Trio, Kelvin Thein and Karen Nunis are talented and hopes that recording agencies will give them a chance to showcase their music in the mainstream market.

“There are many Malaysian blues bands but they don’t have a chance to play on TV so they play at bars and clubs like the Blues Gang. They have been playing for so long and still they play at clubs. A blues band is unlike other bands, they mature as they grow older. Blues will never die,” revealed Ito, who names The Rolling Stones, Muddy Waters, the late BB King and P. Ramlee as his favourite musicians.

LIBRA also featured international musicians from Australia, Thailand, Indonesia, England, Iran and Singapore. This time around, the organisers brought in a few blues musicians since but have plans to make it bigger and better. Ito dreams of a LIBRA alike the long running of Bryon Bay Blues Festival in New South Wales, Australia and the Bali Blues Festival in Indonesia.

The concert attracted both local and international tourists, while the highlight of the 3 day event for local blues lovers was Ito sharing the stage with the Blues Gang – consisting of current Blues Gang members were Ito Mohd (vocal / harmonica), Julian Mokhtar (main guitar), Ghani Dato’ Abu Talib (second guitar / keyboard) and Shaik Karim (Drums / Vocal). No doubt fans will be rooting for Ito’s annual blues festival in the soft sands of Pantai Cenang – and so are we.

When not singing on stage or planning his next move for the level up the blues in the local music industry, Ito has been busy writing songs – such as “Damai”, for the popular cartoon series “Upin & Ipin”. Last year he also released a new single, “Apo Kono Eh Milah”, released by Warner Music. While he has no plans of coming up with an album anytime soon, fans can be rest assured that he has a few musical notes up his sleeve.



WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

“

But I ask you, those of you who are with us all day, not to stress yourselves out because of us. When you do this, it feels as if you're denying any value at all that our lives may have - and that saps the spirit we need to soldier on. The hardest ordeal for us is the idea that we are causing grief for other people. We can put up with our own hardships okay, but the thought that our lives are the source of other people's unhappiness, that's plain unbearable.

Naoki Higashida, *The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism*

”

“A Blue” Day

The World Autism Awareness Day has been internationally acknowledged as falling on the 2nd of April each year, whereby the member states of the United Nations are encouraged to take measures to raise awareness about people with autism, especially children, throughout the world. World Autism Awareness Day was first proposed by the United Nations representative from Qatar, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Binti Nasser Al-Missned, Consort of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, and supported by all the member states. It was officially adopted by the UN on December 18, 2007 and was first observed on April 2, 2008.

Since its inception, autism awareness and research around the world has increased as a result. The day itself brings individual autism organizations together from all around the world to aid in things like research, diagnoses, treatment, and overall awareness by featuring educational events for teachers, health care workers and parents, as well as exhibitions showcasing work created by children with autism. Special clinics are also organized for families dealing with autism to obtain consultations with paediatricians, educational psychologists and social workers. The colour blue is internationally recognized as a symbol of support for World Autism Day and it is accompanied by the catchphrase, “Wear blue, April 2”.



Autism Explained

Autism is a developmental disability that remains with a person for his or her entire life. This condition affects the brain's functions. The first signs usually appear before a child is three years old. People with autism normally exhibit what is known as the triad of impairments: impairment in social interaction, impaired communication skills and the demonstration of restrictive and repetitive behaviour. They would also have a limited set of interests and activities.

Autism affects girls and boys of all races and in all geographic regions and has a large impact on children, their families, communities and societies. The prevalence is currently rising in many countries around the world. Autism now affects about 1 in 68 children and 1 in 42 boys worldwide with boys being 5 times more likely to have autism than girls. Caring for and educating children and young people with this condition places challenges on health care, education and training programs.

Autism in Malaysia

Once regarded as rare in Malaysia, the incidence of autism is on the rise. The number of children enrolled in special needs programs has more than doubled between 2006 and 2013 according to the Data Pendidikan Khas 2013 from the Ministry of Education. The Star newspaper reported in April 2017 that there are more than 300,000 people on the autism spectrum in the country.

To help parents cope with autism in the family as well as to improve the lives of individuals afflicted by assisting them to function to the best of their abilities, the National Autism Society of Malaysia (NASOM) was established in March 1987 as a national charitable organization by a group of concerned parents and professionals with the aim of delivering lifespan services to the community of persons suffering from autism. The Society has currently over 20 centres around the country which provide a variety of services and programs which are results oriented and emphasizes on the acquisition of skills and changes in behaviour. Further information can be obtained from their website: www.nasom.org.my.

In December 2016, a US-based special-needs gym franchise called We Rock The Spectrum (WRTS) was opened at Evolve Concept Mall, Ara Damansara where autistic children can play with their friends without worry. The gym offers a variety of uniquely designed therapy-based equipment to address different needs and to help children improve their sensory stimulation and neural development. Co-owned by Nori Abdullah — the wife of Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar, the gym is a labour of love as her son, Timor is on the autism spectrum.

Treatment for Autism

Unfortunately, there is no cure for autism. However, thanks to the advances made in treatment, an autism diagnosis today does not necessarily have negative connotations. Among the many treatments for autism, perhaps the most effective and commonly used treatment in Malaysia is the Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). In ABA, individuals are taught a vast range of skills that enable them to manage problem behaviours such as self-injurious, aggressive, and disruptive behaviours, as well as to learn useful skills that will enable them to adapt effectively in settings that they will live, study, and work. For example, they will be taught skills that will enable them to communicate, develop relationships, learn at school, and play.

Research has indicated that ABA is as an effective intervention programme for individuals with autism. Many children who receive this treatment have shown significant improvements in tests of their cognitive, communication, and adaptive skills. The improvements are even more significant when they begin receiving the treatment at an earlier age.



Malaysia's Wonder Boy

Delwin Cheah Wien Loong is unlike most ordinary teenage boys you will encounter. The 14-year-old's journey of discovering his innate love for drawing started at the tender age of three. Despite managing with Asperger's Syndrome, Delwin is using his talent to make a name for himself as a savant artist. Asperger Syndrome is described as an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) that is characterised by significant difficulties in social interaction and nonverbal communication, so for Delwin to achieve all these is no small feat.

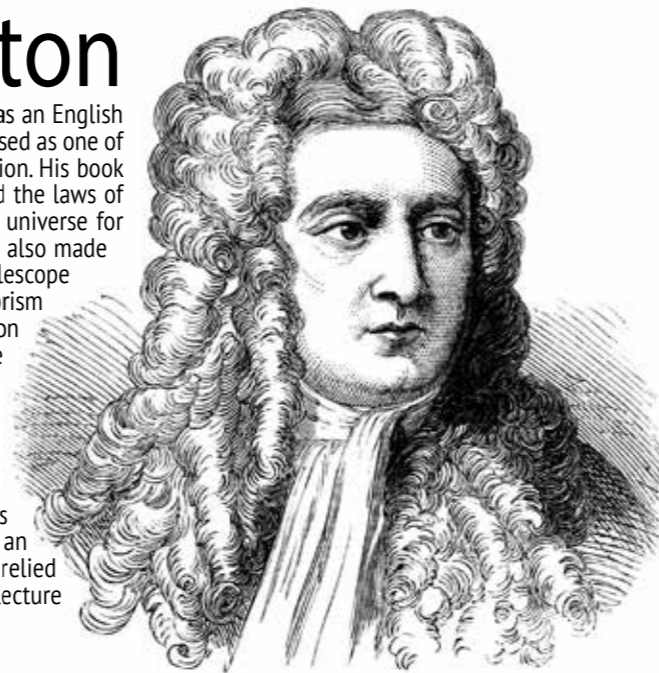
Delwin was accorded the title of “the World's Youngest Savant Artist to hold a solo art exhibition” in the Malaysian Book of Records. His drawing mainly consists of African Safari animals such as the zebra, horse, lion and tiger. He has an ability to draw without needing the use of an eraser and his drawings are owned by well-known people such as Queen Elizabeth II, Barack Obama and Tan Sri Michelle Yeoh.

FAMOUS AUTISTIC CELEBRITIES IN HISTORY

Sir Isaac Newton

Sir Isaac Newton was born on Christmas Day 1642 in Lincolnshire, England. He was an English mathematician, astronomer, theologian, author and physicist who is widely recognised as one of the most influential scientists of all time and a key figure in the scientific revolution. His book *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, first published in 1687, formulated the laws of motion and universal gravitation that dominated scientists' view of the physical universe for the next three centuries and laid the foundations of classical mechanics. Newton also made pathbreaking contributions to optics by building the first practical reflecting telescope and developed a sophisticated theory of colour based on the observation that a prism decomposes white light into the colours of the visible spectrum. Newton's work on light was collected in his highly influential book *Opticks*, first published in 1704. He also shares credit with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz for developing the infinitesimal calculus. He spent the last 24 years of his life in London, serving as president of the Royal Society till his death in 1727 at the age of 85.

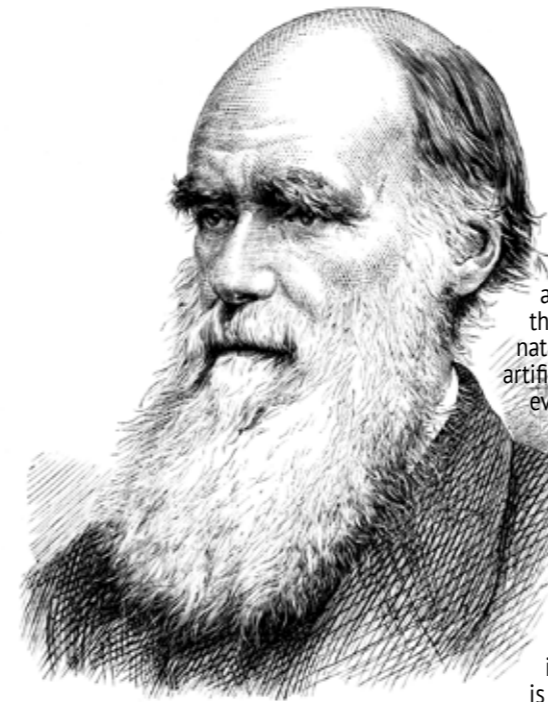
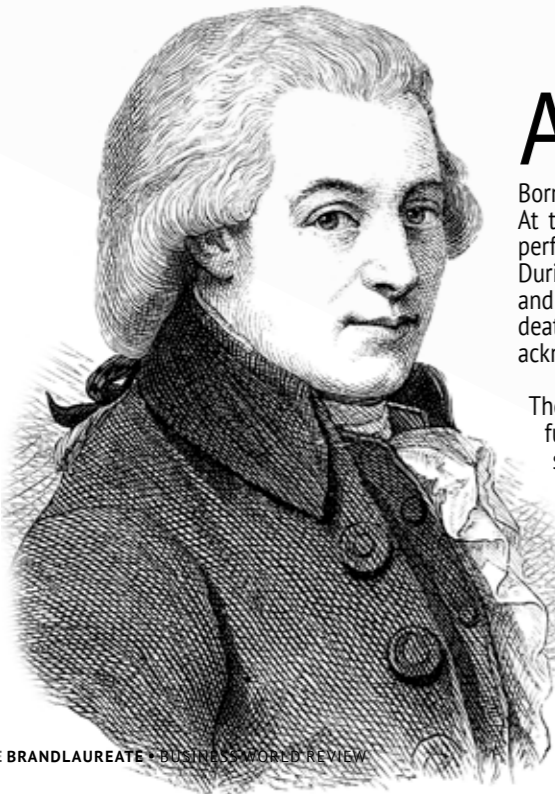
Newton was described as very quiet and extraordinarily focused on his work to the extent of forgetting his meals. This is a trait commonly found among autistics and this extreme focus often blocks out other things that would likely capture an individual's attention. Newton was not good at keeping or making friends and relied strongly on routines. For example, if he had been scheduled to give a lecture, that lecture was going to happen whether there was audience or not.



Amadeus Mozart

Born in Salzburg, Austria in 1756, Mozart showed prodigious ability from his earliest childhood. At the age of 5, he was already competent on keyboard and violin, composed music and performed in front of royalty. At 17, Mozart was engaged as a musician at the Salzburg court. During his final years in Vienna, he composed many of his best-known symphonies, concertos, and operas, and portions of the Requiem, which was largely unfinished at the time of his early death at the age of 35 in 1791. He composed more than 600 works in his short lifetime, many acknowledged as pinnacles of symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic, and choral music.

The genius according to historians was termed as a highly functioning autistic. High functioning autistic people are with great abilities in a key area of skill. Even though Mozart showed dislike of loud sounds, his characteristic led him to be one of the famous celebrities with autism. According to their findings, Mozart had repeated facial expressions and was not able to keep his hands and feet still at any particular time. He was unable to carry on an intellectual conversation and had frequent mood changes. His letters indicated a presence of echolalia - meaningless repetition of another person's spoken words, which may be a way of communicating for autistics. He is among the most enduringly popular of classical composers, and his influence is profound on subsequent Western art music. Ludwig van Beethoven composed his own early works in the shadow of Mozart, and Joseph Haydn wrote: "posterity will not see such a talent again in 100 years".



Charles Darwin

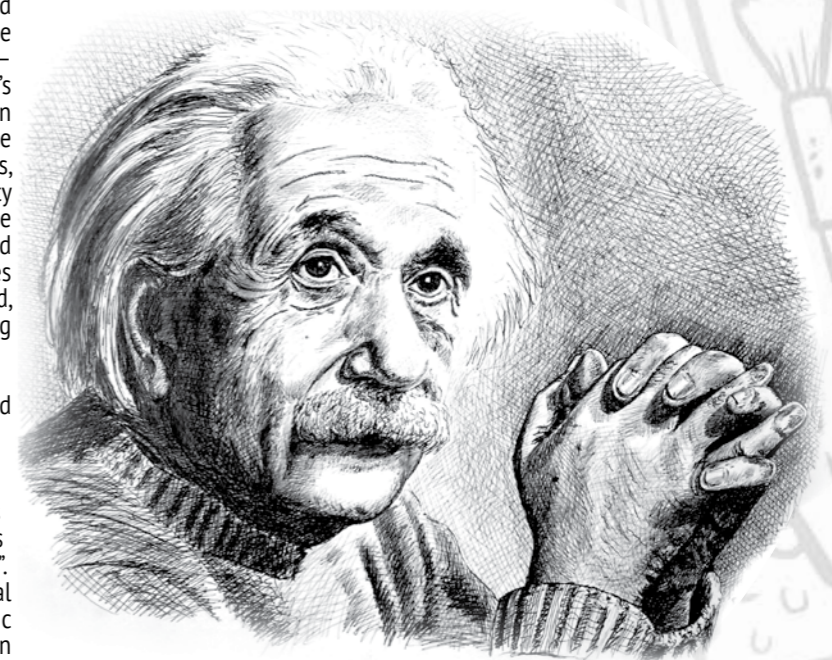
Charles Robert Darwin was an English naturalist, geologist and biologist, best known for his contributions to the science of evolution. He established that all species of life have descended over time from common ancestors and, in a joint publication with Alfred Russel Wallace, introduced his scientific theory that this branching pattern of evolution resulted from a process that he called natural selection, in which the struggle for existence has a similar effect to the artificial selection involved in selective breeding. Darwin published his theory of evolution with compelling evidence in his 1859 book *On the Origin of Species*, overcoming scientific rejection of earlier concepts of transmutation of species. Darwin's scientific discovery is the unifying theory of the life sciences, explaining the diversity of life.

Born in Shropshire, England in 1809, Darwin was a solitary child and even as he grew to be an adult, he avoided interaction with people as much as he could. Writing letters was his preferred means of communication. This is similar to other autistics who adopt other ways to communicate that vary from direct speaking. Darwin collected many things and was very intrigued by chemistry and gadgets. This fixation on certain topics and objects is another characteristic often seen in autistic people. He was a very visual thinker as are many autistic people who think spatially and visually. He was also described as obsessive-compulsive and ritualistic, traits common to autism. Although these traits might be a handicap to some, Darwin went on to become a leading and revolutionary scientist that exhibited great intellect and one of the most influential figures in human history. He was honoured by being buried in Westminster Abbey when he passed on at the age of 73 in 1882.

Albert Einstein

Albert Einstein was a German-born theoretical physicist who developed the theory of relativity, one of the two pillars of modern physics (alongside quantum mechanics). He is best known by the general public for his mass-energy equivalence formula $E = mc^2$ (which has been dubbed "the world's most famous equation"). Born in Ulm, Württemberg in March 1879, Einstein proved to be a remarkable child, so much so that his teachers were not able to understand what he queried. He had difficulty with social interactions, had tactile sensitivity and though he was very intelligent, he had difficulty learning in school. It may have been that Einstein had such a hard time with learning in school because he did not have the accommodations and different teaching styles that many autistic children need. Thus it makes sense that although he was very brilliant and full of ideas about the world, he could still fall behind in school and later in life, had a hard time getting a job because of his lack of social skills.

Scientists from Oxford and Cambridge have retrospectively diagnosed Einstein with Asperger's syndrome. They based their verdict upon the fact that he suffered from a troubled childhood, often having problems with people around him, through the cause of social development issues. In spite of his condition, Einstein published more than 300 scientific papers along with over 150 non-scientific works. His intellectual achievements and originality have made the word "Einstein" synonymous with "genius". He received the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics "for his services to theoretical physics, and especially for his discovery of the law of the photoelectric effect", a pivotal step in the evolution of quantum theory. Einstein passed on at the age of 76 in 1955 in Princeton, New Jersey.



JAPAS ON THE MIND

BABE RESTAURANT

A CULINARY MATRIMONY OF FUN AND FINE DINING

BY ANU VENUGOPAL

“There is no sincerer love than the love of food,” said the famous playwright George Bernard Shaw – but it helps when chefs make their food unforgettable.

Chef Jeff Ramsey Japanese does that with his Japanese inspired tapas (or Japas); a treat not just for the taste buds, but a gastronomic experience that is visually and aromatically appealing to the senses.

A word of caution - dining at Babe Restaurant is not for the run-of-the-mill, ordinary, “I eat to live”, sort of people. Once you have decided on your culinary adventure in the land of Babe, be prepared to abandon all preconceived notions of fine dining and get ready for a palatable escapade of the best kind. Should we expect any less from a co-founder and chef Ramsey, who earned his first Michelin star while working at the Mandarin Oriental in Tokyo?

The dining experience begins the moment the lift door open up to the restaurant, located at the 11th Floor, Work@Clearwater, Jalan Changkat Semantan, Damansara Heights. Stepping into Babe, one is greeted by friendly staff, a backdrop bar as well as a ceiling filled with glass bubbles. In the restaurant area, the deco is cosy yet classy, with mirrors and contemporary artwork, complete with a beautiful modern light chandelier. While the lights dazzle, the spotlight goes to the view of the Kuala Lumpur’s skyline, with the pool deck offering the best seats in the restaurant.

Settling down in the comfortable seats, the friendly host Celina Wu, starts off the evening with ‘Down the rabbit hole’ - a mystery test tube drink that intrigued this writer. Diners are meant to taste them and guess the flavours; which could be a popular Malaysian dish or a sweet drink. The flavours change regularly so diners are likely to get another flavour on each visit. The mystery and fun of this little experiment is the perfect prelude to a dining experience to come.

Setting the pace for the eight course set meal, the first dish was the Lomi Lomi Salmon, Chef Ramsey’s own tribute to his one year in the island of Hawaii. The miniature sushi role stuffed with salted salmon, tomatoes allium in a crispy nori cone is the perfect start to the evening, with light, bright and punchy flavours.

The next on the list was Itoyori Sashimi with Uni, and the dish reminisces strongly with one of Japan’s most famous dishes. Chef Ramsey’s version combines seared sashimi of Amberjack with Sea Urchin, making it a colourful, flavourful dish - a Sashimi lover’s dream come true.



01



02



03



04



05



06

Chef Ramsey’s bold and unconventional use of ingredients in his Japas is seen through the premium produce in his dishes – like the Caramelized Monkfish Liver, with passion fruit Ponzu Slushy. Admittedly, this writer was initially apprehensive upon discovering liver was on the menu – but this changed after the first bite. The “foie gras of the sea” lives up to its reputation and tastes divine when combined with the passion fruit granita.

The next dish Ootoro Crab Mousse is a zesty air bread with cured bluefin tuna belly. The crispy mini baguette, hollowed out and filled with crab meat, is a delectable dish that disappears quickly, thanks to both its size and taste.

Duck and Coke is another small dish, a crispy “sandwich” made out of chicken skin crisps, with foie gras and duck confit. Best eaten with the fingers, the sweet and savoury Coke-infused strip also bears Babe’s imprint.

The Pan Seared Sea Bream in Dashi with Bubu Arera and Roasted Green Tea Froth instantly tastes familiar and comforting. The crispy skin, when combined with the soft rice and green tea infused froth provides a diversion from the regular taste, which leaves one with the sense of complete satisfaction.

Chef Ramsey’s love for good beef, especially the Japanese Wagyu beef takes the spotlight in his own “Roast Beef” and Mashed Potatoes. The MB9 Wagyu is completed with Sichuan Pepper Butter and Yuzu Kosho - looks, feels and tastes like it is roasted, but surprisingly, it’s not.

For those who don’t eat beef, the Charcoal Grilled Alaskan Crab would be an alternative choice. Hot and fresh, the slit Alaskan crab is both smokey and meaty, with a light, zingy taste. While Chef’s Ramsey’s Japas comes in small portions, Babe diners can expect to feel full just before the desert Japas are served.

Do not be fooled. The Lie-Mau might look like a lime, but with the first bite, reality is soon revealed - with a kaffir lime, calamansi and

kasturi lime curd, within a milk team gummy shell. Refreshing, with a tinge of sweetness, the Lie-Mau is a great prelude to the desert end of the meal. Finally, there is the Strawberry Shortcake - pure strawberry sponge, almond cake and liquid sable and pickled rose petals, a fitting finish to the course.

With a menu that changes according to the seasons in Japan, the current winter menu not only gives diners a culinary experience that fuels the foodie, it is also a revelation of the chef’s creative sensors and a reflection of his journey as a well known chef. Starting out as a dishwasher in a Japanese restaurant, he worked his way up to the ranks of a full-fledged sushi chef, and was winner of the “Sushi of the Year” at the Seven Sushi Samurai Competition in 2006, in London.

Staying true to his Japanese-American roots, Chef Ramsey’s Japas are created with much care and creativity, from beginning until the end. The highly innovative dishes are evidently made with passion and devotion, using modern cooking techniques. Each dish is presented by a staff with an explanation of its ingredients, and the best way to enjoy them. Armed with the idea of giving diners a fun dining experience in a fine dining setting – Chef Ramsey and his team do more than just that.

With a selection of wine, sake and juices, Babe’s Japas is a dining experience for food aficionados who enjoy taking culinary risks with the chance of discovering a whole new world of delectable food.

Babe serves ala carte and 3 tasting menu - RM 310++ per person per set for 8 course, RM 460++ per person per set for 11 course and RM 700++ per person per set for 13 course. The restaurant’s operational hours are 6:00pm until 11:30pm, 4 seatings per day - 6:00pm, 7:00pm, 8:00pm and 9:00pm from Tuesdays to Sunday. For reservations visit www.babe.com.my

images :

- 1) Sea Bream and Rice
- 2) Crab Mousse and Toro Airbread small
- 3) Duck and Coke Can uncovered
- 4) Alaskan Crab
- 5) Lie-Mau
- 6) Strawberry Shortcake



APPLE HOMEPOD

The new sound of home. US \$349

HomePod is a powerful speaker that sounds amazing and adapts to wherever it's playing. It's the ultimate music authority, bringing together Apple Music and Siri to learn your taste in music. It's also an intelligent home assistant, capable of handling everyday tasks – and controlling your smart home. HomePod takes the listening experience to a whole new level.



SAMSUNG CJ791 CURVED QLED MONITOR

Ahead of the Game

Samsung Electronics expanded the connectivity and performance capabilities of its signature curved display line-up this year with the debut of its CJ791 monitor, claiming it to be the first curved monitor to feature Intel's Thunderbolt 3 connectivity. A desktop essential for anyone who needs to multitask to get everything done in time, the 34in CJ791 is designed for business audiences, but entertainment purposes, too, thanks to its 3440x1440 ultra-wide QHD resolution display. The Thunderbolt 3 connection provides processing speed of up to 40Gbps, allowing users to enjoy connectivity across a full ecosystem of docks, displays and peripheral devices including Macs, USB type-C laptops, and other desktop accessories like storage drives or external graphics cards.

KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

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!

LENOVO THINKPAD T480

Designed for serious business. US \$1,359

Raise the bar with the ThinkPad T480. Boasting the latest power-packed processors and all-day battery life, this 14-in laptop is robust yet light enough to accompany you anywhere. Practical touches include an optional backlit keyboard and an array of ports, while the enhanced security features help safeguard your work wherever the job takes you. Far faster than its predecessor, the new 8th generation Intel® Core™ i7 processor delivers higher performance and is designed to take your productivity to new heights. Backed by the increased speed of DDR4 memory, the ThinkPad T480 gives you the power of a desktop PC and the freedom of a portable laptop.



MYKRONOZ ZETIME HYBRID SMARTWATCH

The World's First. US \$199

The unique thing about MyKronoz's smartwatches is that they are the world's first hybrid smartwatch combining mechanical hands with a full round colour touchscreen. Using groundbreaking technology to mount watch hands through the center of the high-resolution TFT colour display, ZeTime blends the classic design of a traditional timepiece with the most advanced features of a smartwatch. The ZeTime Petite (39mm) and Regular (44mm) models both feature proprietary 'Smart Movement' technology which is said to enable ZeTime's always-on hands to function for up to 30 days with a single charge



DELL XPS 13 2018 EDITION

Stunning inside and out. US \$1,399.99

Dell kicked off the year by announcing a souped-up version of its XPS 13 laptop, the 2018 edition. The firm's fresh model packs Intel's latest 8th-generation Core i5 or i7 processors, which are offered with a choice of 4GB, 8GB or 16GB RAM and up to 1TB of SSD storage. The device not only boasts a lovely bezel-less display, but users will be able to squeeze a whopping 20-hours of battery life out of it when running in full HD. The XPS 13 2018 edition is also said to offer twice the grunt of the 2015 model, thanks to better power management. This is down to the new thermal design of the laptop, which uses Gore thermal insulation for better heat dissipation. There's also a 'dynamic power mode' that intelligently delivers maximum power when needed, while carefully monitoring system temperatures.



RED HYDROGEN PHONE

The World's First Holographic Media Machine. US \$1,595

In addition to making cameras for Hollywood movies and shows, Red released its first phone. Known as the Red Hydrogen and highly anticipated by cinema and photography buffs alike, the Android phone will feature a 5.7-inch screen with "holographic" display modes and modular capabilities.



FILM REVIEWS

BY: SHAHRIL HASSAN



4-5 An Oscar Worthy/Satisfying movie 3-4 An excellent/good movie 2 Don't have to watch at the cinema Below 1 - Avoid the movie

BLACK PANTHER

4.0



OVERALL SCORE



DOWNSIZING

3.0



OVERALL SCORE



Language: English
Genre: Action / Drama / Science Fiction
Cast: Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o

Synopsis :
Set after the events of "Captain America: Civil War", T'Challa returns to Wakanda as the country's king, but finds his position challenged by a long-time rival and

certain factions within his own country in a conflict that may affect countries outside of Wakanda. The Black Panther is left with little choice but to team up with C.I.A. agent Everett K. Ross and the Dora Milaje, Wakanda's very own special forces, to prevent the country from being dragged into a world war.

Language: English
Genre: Action/Adventure
Cast: Daisy Ridley, Oscar Isaac, Mark Hamill

Synopsis :
This social satire is about a man and his wife who realise that their lives would be

better if they were smaller. They decide to get voluntarily shrunk. Unfortunately for the man, his wife backs out at the last minute. Now, he alone joins one of the many communities of small people that have popped up around the world.

ALONG WITH THE GODS: THE TWO WORLDS

4.0



OVERALL SCORE



Language: Korean
Genre: Action / Fantasy
Cast: KIM Yong-hwa, HA Jung-woo, CHA Tae-hyun, JU Ji-hoon, KIM Hyang-gi, LEE Jung-jae, DOH Kyung-soo, Don LEE

Synopsis :
An ordinary firefighter Ja-hong dies an unexpected death. In the afterlife, he is escorted by three Angels of Death led by Kang-lim, the head grim reaper. Ja-hong

would need to go through 7 trials for over 49 days to prove he was innocent in human life and only then would he be able to be reincarnated. The Angels of Death are not supposed to get involved in human affairs, but because Kang-lim has affection for humans, he unavoidably gets involved in the matter.

THE COMMUTER

3.0



OVERALL SCORE



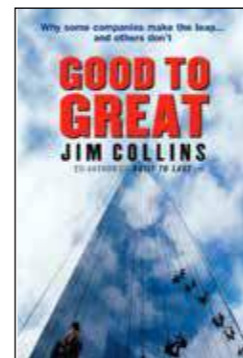
Language: English
Genre: Crime / Drama / Mystery
Cast: Liam Neeson, Vera Farmiga, Sam Neill, Patrick Wilson

Synopsis :
In this action-packed thriller, Liam Neeson plays an insurance salesman, Michael, on his daily commute home, which quickly becomes anything but routine. After being contacted by a

mysterious stranger, Michael is forced to uncover the identity of a hidden passenger on his train before the last stop. As he works against the clock to solve the puzzle, he realizes a deadly plan is unfolding and is unwittingly caught up in a criminal conspiracy. One that carries life and death stakes, for himself and his fellow passengers.



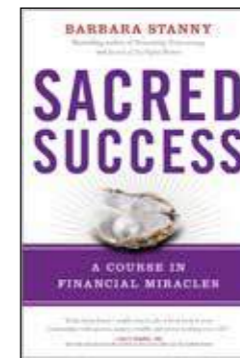
The LIBRARY



GOOD TO GREAT

By Jim Collins

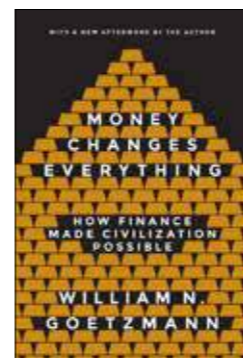
Five years ago, Jim Collins asked the question, "Can a good company become a great company and if so, how?" In Good to Great, Collins concludes that it is possible, but finds there are no silver bullets. Collins and his team of researchers began their quest by sorting through a list of 1,435 companies, looking for those that made substantial improvements in their performance over time. They finally settled on 11 and discovered common traits that challenged many of the conventional notions of corporate success.



SACRED SUCCESS

By Barbara Stanny

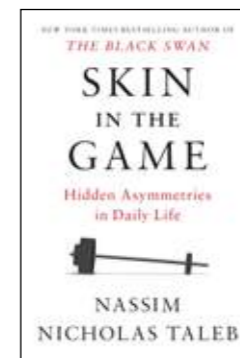
More than a financial guide, Sacred Success is a primer on power for women—a tutorial for taking charge of your life by taking charge of your finances, and not only growing your money but creating a deeper, richer, and more meaningful life. Best described as "A Course in Miracles meets the Wall Street Journal," Sacred Success gives you a proven process that uniquely blends the practical, psychological, and spiritual work of wealth.



MONEY CHANGES EVERYTHING

By William N. Goetzmann

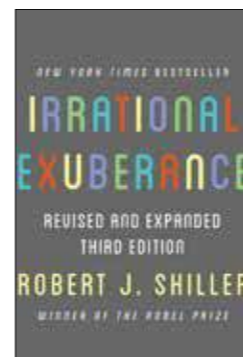
In Money Changes Everything, leading financial historian William Goetzmann argues the exact opposite—that the development of finance has made the growth of civilizations possible. Goetzmann explains that finance is a time machine, a technology that allows us to move value forward and backward through time; and that this innovation has changed the very way we think about and plan for the future. Money Changes Everything presents a fascinating look into the way that finance has steered the course of history.



SKIN IN THE GAME

Nassim Nicholas Taleb

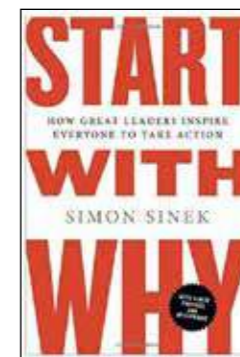
Citing examples ranging from Hammurabi to Seneca, Antaeus the Giant to Donald Trump, Nassim Nicholas Taleb shows how the willingness to accept one's own risks is an essential attribute of heroes, saints, and flourishing people in all walks of life. As always both accessible and iconoclastic, Taleb challenges long-held beliefs about the values of those who spearhead military interventions, make financial investments, and propagate religious faiths.



IRRATIONAL EXUBERANCE

By Robert J. Shiller

In addition to diagnosing the causes of asset bubbles, Irrational Exuberance recommends urgent policy changes to lessen their likelihood and severity--and suggests ways that individuals can decrease their risk before the next bubble bursts. No one whose future depends on a retirement account, a house, or other investments can afford not to read this book.



START WITH WHY

By Simon Sinek

In studying the leaders who've had the greatest influence in the world, Simon Sinek discovered that they all think, act, and communicate in the exact same way--and it's the complete opposite of what everyone else does. People like Martin Luther King Jr., Steve Jobs, and the Wright Brothers might have little in common, but they all started with why. Drawing on a wide range of real-life stories, Sinek weaves together a clear vision of what it truly takes to lead and inspire.

What's HAPPENING



World Taekwondo Malaysia Open G1 Championship 2018

2nd – 4th March

World Taekwondo Malaysia Open G1 Championship 2018 is first World Taekwondo (WT) Ranking-Point Tournament (Grade G-1) and also highest level of Taekwondo championship ever host in Malaysia. This event will expect participants from various countries like Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Singapore and more.

Where: PICC, Kuala Lumpur



Le Tour De Langkawi 2018

18th – 25th March

The 23rd edition of Le Tour de Langkawi 2018 is set to cover more than 1,200 km over 8 stages. All continents are represented at this year's tour which flags off in Kuala Terengganu on the east coast of the peninsula and ends in Putrajaya, the administrative centre of the Malaysian government.

Where: Peninsular Malaysia



Malaysia International Furniture Fair 2018 (MIFF)

8th – 11th March

MIFF is an export-oriented furniture trade show held annually in Kuala Lumpur. It is also a globally leading trade show approved by UFI, The Global Association for Exhibition Industry.

Where: MITEC, Kuala Lumpur



Asia Islamic Fashion Week

29th March – 1st April

The event showcases products like most influential Islamic fashion & lifestyle marketplace, Islamic-inspired apparel, accessories, cosmetics and many more in the Fashion and Lifestyle industries.

Where: MITEC, Kuala Lumpur



KK Jazz Festival

9th – 10th March

The KK Jazz Fest presents a ground breaking experience as it draws a star studded line up of local, national and international artists. One of the striking differences of KK Jazz Festival as compared to the other jazz festivals in the region is that they have more local bands performing.

Where: Sutera Harbour Marina, Kota Kinabalu



The Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS)

4th – 7th March

Respected as a modern, peaceful and prosperous Islamic country especially among OIC member countries, Malaysia has the added advantage of championing the halal cause. With more than 22,000 trade visitors flocking into the MIHAS 2017, it had resulted in total immediate and negotiated trade value of over RM1.01 billion.

Where: MITEC, Kuala Lumpur



MATTA Fair 2018

16th – 18th March

It's back – Malaysia's premier travel extravaganza providing global exposure and endless business opportunities.

Where: PWTC, Kuala Lumpur



World Harvest Festival

27th – 29th April

MIFF is an export-oriented furniture trade show held annually in Kuala Lumpur. It is also a globally leading trade show approved by UFI, The Global Association for Exhibition Industry.

Where: MITEC, Kuala Lumpur

BRAND THOUGHTS & TIPS

“HALF WAY BETWEEN THE EXACTNESS OF SCIENCE AND THE UNKNOWN OF ART LIES THE POWER OF AN IDEA THAT CAN BRING THEM TOGETHER”

Graham Robertson

“THE ONLY WAY TO DISCOVER THE LIMITS OF THE POSSIBLE IS TO GO BEYOND THEM INTO THE IMPOSSIBLE.”

Arthur C. Clarke

“THE ULTIMATE AIM OF THE EGO IS NOT TO SEE SOMETHING, BUT TO BE SOMETHING.”

Muhammad Iqbal

“WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS, ANYONE CAN LEARN TO TELL BRILLIANT STORIES. TIME AND TIME AGAIN, I HAVE SEEN PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T THINK THEY WERE STORYTELLERS LEARN TO TELL STORIES AND SEE THEIR AUDIENCES BECOME TRANSFIXED BY THEIR NEWLY DEVELOPED STORIES.”

Esther Choy

“IT IS NOT ONLY ENOUGH TO STATE WHAT YOUR BRAND STANDS FOR, WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS TO DO THAT CONSISTENTLY AND REPEATEDLY SO THAT YOUR BRAND ENDURES.”

Vani Kola

“YOU HAVE TO CREATE A CONSISTENT BRAND EXPERIENCE HOWEVER AND WHEREVER A CUSTOMER TOUCHES YOUR BRAND, ONLINE OR OFFLINE. THE LINES ARE FOREVER BLURRED.”

Angela Ahrendts

“BRANDS THAT DO NOT SEE THE FUTURE COMING USUALLY DO NOT HAVE ONE.”

Jean-Marie Dru

“A BRAND THAT CAPTURES YOUR MIND GAINS BEHAVIOR. A BRAND THAT CAPTURES YOUR HEART GAINS COMMITMENT.”

Scott Taigo

“KNOW WHAT YOUR CUSTOMERS WANT MOST AND WHAT YOUR COMPANY DOES BEST. FOCUS ON WHERE THOSE TWO MEET.

Kevin Stirtz

“A HOUSE OF BRANDS IS LIKE A FAMILY, EACH NEEDS A ROLE AND A RELATIONSHIP TO OTHERS.”

Jeffrey Sinclair

5-STAR LUXURY ASCOTT LIVING IN KL CITY



Managed By International Ascott Group

6% GRR per annum for 3 years



VISIT OUR SHOW GALLERY TODAY

- 58 storeys with 471 luxuriously-furnished units
- Built-up from 700 sq.ft. – 2,972 sq.ft.
- Complemented with the iconic view of Petronas Twin Towers
- World-class hospitality services
- 100,000 sq.ft. facilities deck with rooftop sky park, 25m infinity pool, gym and many more

Branded as Ascott Star KLCC, this is the final and most premium edition of Star Residences, complementing the success of Star Residences Tower 1 and 2. Ascott Star KLCC will be managed by one of the leading international Serviced Residence owner-operators, The Ascott Limited that offers a refined living with all the value-added privileges and amenities expected from a 5-star luxury residence.

A Joint Development By:

**Symphony
Life**

UMLAND
UNITED MALAYSIAN LAND HOLDINGS

A Trusted Builder:

SAMSUNG
SAMSUNG C&T

Alpine Return Sdn Bhd (645750-M)
A-11-01, 11th Floor Wisma HB, Megan Avenue II
Jalan Yap Kwan Seng, 50450 Kuala Lumpur
General Line: +603 7490 2266 | Sales Line: +603 7490 2211
Fax: +603 2181 8308 | Email: enquiry@star-residences.com

+603 7490 2211
www.star-residences.com

Type of Property: Serviced Residences • Developer's License No.: 13077-S/19-001/001111 • Validity Period: 15/10/2011 – 12/10/2018 • Approving & Sales Permit No.: 13077-S/19-001/001111 • Validity Period: 15/10/2011 – 12/10/2018 • Approval Authority: Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur • Building Plan No.: SP 13/03/2017/0158 • Land: Freehold • Land: Freehold • Land: Freehold • Expected Date of Completion: Sept 2023 • Total No. of Units: 472 • Building Size: 297,200 sq.ft. • Minimum Price: RM1,140,000 • Maximum Price: RM2,972,000 • 1% Bankruptcy Deposit • All pictures and illustrations contained are artist's impression only. All specifications and details are subject to change without prior notice, as may be required by the developer's consultants and/or the relevant authorities. Whilst every care has been taken in providing this information, the developer shall not be held responsible for variations. For avoidance of doubt, please refer to the Sales and Purchase Agreement for the actual specifications and descriptions.