

2019

INTELLIGENT KNOWLEDGEABLE ORIGINAL NEGOTIATOR

IKON

Dato' Ali Majis

On Cover: With his own company as a side income, Ali managed to buy 200 different properties which made him an asset rich millionaire.

5 Things
to Know
About Our
Prime Minister

Build
Your Business
Presence with
Instagram

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER



INTELLIGENT KNOWLEDGEABLE ORIGINAL NEGOTIATOR

IKON

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Editorial's Note
Batrisyia Binti Muhd Farid Jay

“
IKON brings stories of triumph of people from all walks of Malaysian life
”



Entrepreneurship is the act of creating a business and 'grooming' it over the years to generate profit. To become an entrepreneur, one has to take their career and dreams into their hands and lead it in the direction of their own choosing. In other words, it's about building a life on your own terms. No bosses, no hectic schedules — and most importantly — no one holding you back.

As one of the main drivers of economic growth that creates wealth, innovation and technology deployment while also reducing poverty in our country, the Malaysian government has continuously encouraged the involvement of its people, especially the Bumiputera, to venture into entrepreneurship.

With this in mind, IKON Magazine Malaysia aims to highlight the nation's astounding Bumiputera entrepreneurs and to give them a platform for their voices to be heard. With the acronym of Intelligent Knowledgeable Original Negotiator — qualities that any person needs to succeed in any field today — IKON brings stories of triumph of people from all walks of Malaysian life, no matter the background or status of individual, to motivate and inspire our readers with their iconic personalities and stories.

Thus, for our exclusive first issue, we bring to you the story of five extraordinary entrepreneurs as they talk about their success, challenges, and secrets in cultivating the success they have achieved. Apart from those, we also talked about how the new media is changing the marketing game for most brands out there, why accounting is important for your business and the top 10 things you need to know before you start your very own business, among other things.

As Peter Drucker — author, consultant and leader in the development of management education — once said, the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity. On that note, we hope that you will take the opportunity for IKON Magazine Malaysia to inspire you both in life and in your business as you flip through these effervescent pages.

Enjoy!

Batrisyia Farid Jay

+



Cover Story Personality:
Dato' Ali Majis,
For more details see
page 8.

aliyproperty.com



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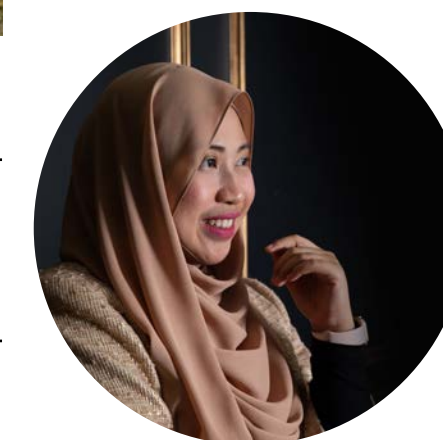
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5 Things to Know About Our Prime Minister

By Batrisyia Jay

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, or better known as Tun M, was officially sworn in at Istana Negara in May 2018, after a victorious win against the previous government in Malaysia's 14th General Elections. Apart from proving that age is just a number, there are many other interesting facts to this 93-year-old prime minister. On that account, we have prepared the top five things you will need to know about our beloved Tun M:

The World's Eldest Leader

Turning 94 years old on 10 June 2019, world's oldest elected leader, Tun M became the eldest elected leader the world has ever since Pakatan Harapan's win on 9 May 2018, thus giving him a remarkable 39-year career as a politician in Malaysia.

Malaysia's 5th and 7th Prime Minister

Tun M was previously the 5th Prime Minister of Malaysia. In May 2018, he officially became the 7th prime minister for our nation. The leader of an alliance of opposition parties, Tun M led Pakatan Harapan to a victory of 113 seats out of 222 seats in parliament against former prime minister, Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Wrote for The Straits Times

Prior to becoming the prime minister, Tun M used to write for The Straits Times under the pen name "C.H.E. Det" as early as when he was still a mere college student. During his third year of college in 1948, Tun M's articles would often circle around his observations of Malay customs, his opinions on Malay issues as well as his political views on nationality and royalty.

Met His Wife While He Was in Medical School

Those who adore Tun M would harbour the same feelings for his relationship with wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Ali. Never afraid to show their affections in public, the duo met when they both attended a medical school in Singapore. Formerly known as 'King Edward VII College of Medicine', the college is now part of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Malaysia's Father of Modernisation

Back in the days, Tun M was the one responsible for various modern infrastructures that can be found in Malaysia. These include the nation's airport, Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and the famous Petronas Twin Towers.

Dato' Ali Majis

By Muhamin Merican

DREAMER EXTRAORDINAIRE: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Dato' Ali Majis always appears very dapperly dressed. Whether in person, or gracing a magazine spread, his choice of clothes is an outward reflection of his illustrious career as a businessman. Further proof is provided by his numerous awards and accolades and a reputation as "Malaysia's very own self-made property coach" – earned by auctioning more than 40,000 properties and selling over a thousand throughout the 13 years of his career. Ali has since solidified his successful career as a property consultant and entrepreneur, but the going was not easy: to achieve this success, he had to fight tooth and nail.



■ Early life

Growing up as the third child in a family of six with just enough to get by, Ali certainly did not have an easy start in life. Ali started his first job at the tender young age of 12, for five Ringgit a day for 2 months in order to pay for his secondary school supplies, uniform, and fees. This spirit was born out of the first and perhaps most important lesson his father taught him: that he had to work hard for what he wanted. While it was tough going, being independent at such a young age would help him succeed later in his business career.



■ The paper trail: chasing paper qualifications

When he was 15, Ali was sent to stay with his grandmother, during which time he worked at a threading factory. He put in 8 hours a day in order to pay for his Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) examinations. He would work there until he completed his Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examinations at the age of 17.

Unfortunately Ali did not get a placement in any of the local universities but instead had to enrol into University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), a private university in Kuala Lumpur. To help him with his daily travels from his home in Kajang to Kelana Jaya where the campus was located, Ali worked for one whole year after his SPM to buy a motorcycle as well as pay his own entry fees into the university. He just didn't want to be a burden to his parents.

Unfortunately, during his second year Ali encountered problems with his Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional (PTPTN) Loan and this inevitably led him dropping out of university without completing his studies due to the financial strain.

After dropping out, Ali partnered with a relative and established a company. Soon, they opened a shop dealing with electronic devices and repair parts for electrical items. The venture did very well, but due to their lack of experience in business, Ali and his business partner eventually agreed to split amicably.

Following this initial foray into business, Ali took another shot at academia, this time pursuing a Diploma in Business Administration at Kuala Lumpur Infrastructure University College, now known as Infrastructure University of Kuala Lumpur. This time, he made the decision not to take any loans or scholarships; instead he worked in restaurants in order to pay for his fees.

“
Ali started his first job at the tender young age of 12 for five ringgit a day for 2 months in order to pay for his secondary school supplies, uniform, and fees.
 ”

About
Ali Majis

36 years old



3rd out of 6 siblings

Experienced a near death experience due to an assault

Millionaire at the age of **27**



“You cannot change what test comes your way, you just have to learn how to manage them”



“Knowledge is power. With it, YOU CAN RUL THE WORLD”



“Don't rely on someone else for your own success”



“Be clear with your goals and only then you can find your destiny”



■ A Life Changing Experience

Ali soon launched a new carwash business to pay for his studies. This business grew to be successful, which attracted the attention of unsavoury business rivals. He was attacked by 30 people, which resulted in him getting about 100 stitches and ending up with a parang scar on his head that is still visible today. Due to the severity of the attack, he spent 2 months in the hospital for his recovery and for the second time in his life, he had to suspend his tertiary studies.

Determined to continue with his life after his surgery and recovery, under the advice of his grandmother, Ali then went on to work for his uncle who was involved in the property auction business. It was during this time that he learnt about the importance of financial literacy and management, and he also managed to clear his name from the

Central Credit Reference Information System (CCRIS).

Using the money earned and knowledge acquired, Ali bought his first ever property at the age of 21. He spent RM 15,000 on a house in Klang, which he paid for by cash at a property auction. Not one to rest of his laurels, he continued to learn everything he could related to money management, including insurance, property and more.

During this period, he worked hard to expand his horizons in his uncle's company. Within 2 years, Ali had worked in every department in the company with the exception of the Accounts department. He proved himself due to his hardworking nature and his tendency to accept any role and job. However, he still was basically a shy person who was

fresh out of Kajang, and he struggled with city life. He purchased maps of the city from Kinokuniya bookstore, so that he could find the places the company was sending him. Ali eventually moved on to become the second highest ranked in the company.

Around this time, Ali came across a Hadith that was shared by a local media company. The Hadith speaks of the four people who would enter Heaven without having their sins and rewards accounted for. One of the aforementioned people was a tycoon and the reason was because he had used his wealth to help the other three in their quest to be closer to God. With this excerpt of the Hadith, Ali then set his mind that he would be rich in order to help those around him, such as his parents and family, as well as the community.

“

With his own company as a side income, **Ali managed to buy 200 different properties which made him an asset rich millionaire.**

”



■ Success at last

At the age of 24, Ali Majis registered his first investment consultant company. He also set his mind to become a millionaire in three years, caused a significant shift in his attitude and mindset. Upon reaching 25, Ali was still working in his Uncle's company, now earning RM 4,000 per month. With his own company generating a comfortable side income, Ali managed to buy 200 different properties, turning him into an asset-rich millionaire.

As happens to many, Ali fell prey to a scam, almost losing thousands of dollars. This spurred him to learn about Islamic financing, including Takaful (insurance) and Amanah Saham Bumiputra. He quit his job at his Uncle's company at 27, deciding to venture into the property industry which soon found him buying, selling and auctioning properties. Finally, he achieved his dream of becoming a millionaire.

These days, in addition to being the father of three young daughters, Ali is a successful investment and property expert and has built his own empire. Ali now owns the ALIY Group of companies, which includes Aliy Property Investments Sdn. Bhd and Ali Net Sdn. Bhd. In the past two years, Ali started working on iMilik, a single platform for property buyers that includes all the government schemes and listings for affordable housing. He hopes to centralise the affordable housing market and iMilik would achieve it, citing it as how he intends to give back to the community as well as spread knowledge to the general public.

Although today he is a successful millionaire, Dato' Ali Majis says that he has never forgotten his roots and past and how it all shaped him to be the person he is today. The harshness of his young life was a motivating factor for him to reach out into the world and chase after his dreams. Although he has long since traded his old motorbike for fancy cars and his scars are no longer as visible as they were back then, somewhere deep down, one can still see a glimpse of a young boy from Kajang who achieved his dreams of being a millionaire. **I**





In the new age of marketing, having a bond or personal connection with audiences takes precedence over everything else. Instead of traditional paid banners and advertisements, digital marketers are blasted with statistics and facts that all leads to one thing — and that is the fact that it is vital for marketers to invest in social media marketing.

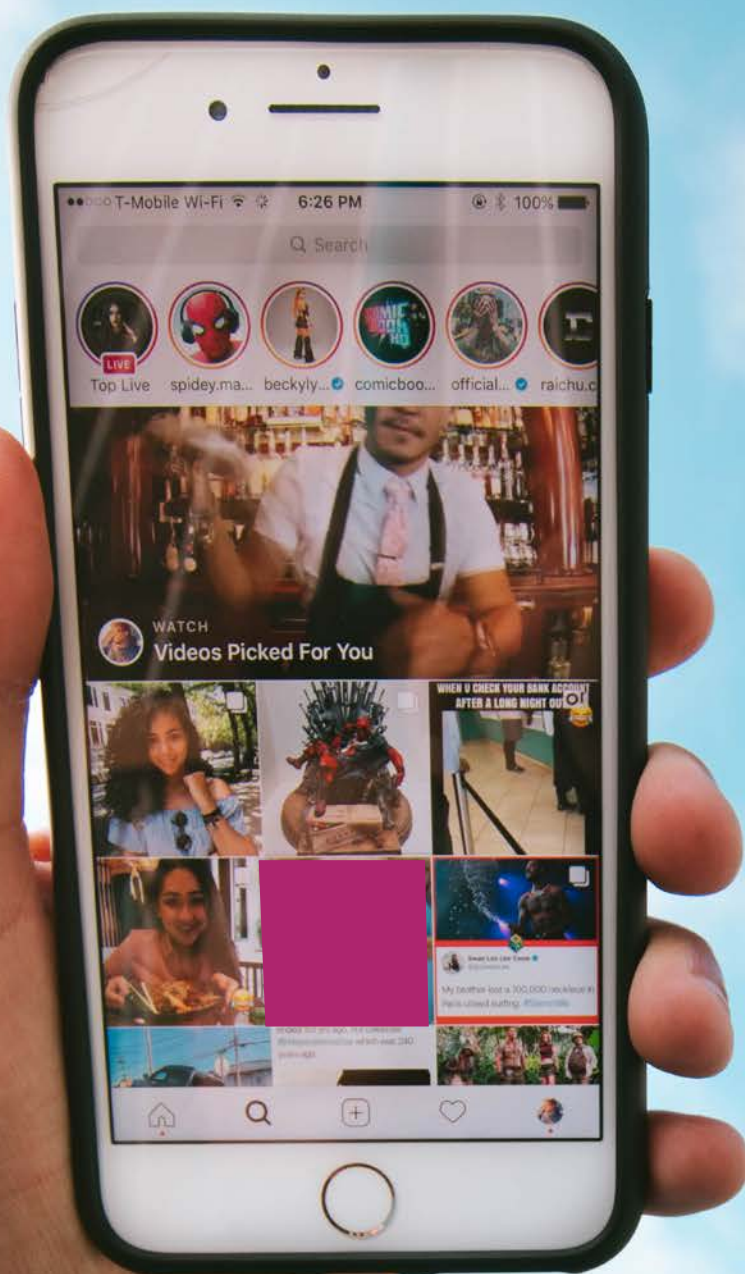
In our New Media section, we will be talking about how the media today is doing wonders in boosting businesses, who are now able to engage its audiences through a single click — particularly through social media networks. Top international brands such as Nike, Victoria’s Secret and Ducati knows the importance of building a brand presence on social media platforms and are using this knowledge to the fullest. On that account, we will be breaking down the top social media platforms that are useful and will be able to boost your business.

Godfather of Social Media

Let us start with every millennial’s favourite social media platform — Instagram. As it’s users typically consists of the younger generation, Instagram tends to be overlooked by most businesses. However, ever since its launch in 2010, Instagram has risen as one of the most influential social media platforms for marketers. This is because it has one of the highest user engagements compared to other social media platforms, and this is the number one reason why it is the perfect platform for businesses to make themselves known — especially for start-up companies who are on a tight string marketing budget as it is a free platform.

Apart from having high user engagement, Instagram’s other uniqueness is its constant update on tools to help businesses to boost their presence in the platform, such as gathering insights and the ability to sell a product straight through it. Thus, with the right marketing strategy, businesses are able to promote their services, products, boost their brand, and even increase their sales without a hitch — all via Instagram. Without further ado, here is everything you need to know on how to boost your business via Instagram:





■ **Switch to a Business Account**

The moment you sign up for an Instagram account, switch it to a business profile account. This will help you to access features and tools that will aid in creating your business or brand's presence on the platform. If you already have an Instagram account for your business, fear not for you are still able to convert that account to a business profile. All you have to do is go to your profile and click on the three bars in the upper right-hand corner. Simply tap on 'settings', select 'switch to business profile' and you already have a business profile account. Once this is done, it is recommended for you to connect this business profile to your business or brand's official Facebook page.

■ **Use Instagram Stories.**

What is perhaps one of the most popular and used features on the platform, Instagram Stories features videos and photos that disappears within 24 hours after being posted. Due to the latest algorithm update, postings are no longer regularly seen by an account's followers, which mean that audiences would most likely miss the postings made by businesses profiles that are targeted at them. On that account, Instagram Stories is the perfect way to ensure that your products, services and messages will still reach your audiences even if your postings have been overlooked by them.

Moreover, what makes this tool exciting is that you are able to add user tags, stickers, gifs, locations and hashtags to your stories in order to make it more eye-catching and also acts as 'conversation-starters' with your audiences. For instance, you are able to post polls, sliding bars (from lowest to highest) to rate a certain product and even allow your audiences to ask questions on your stories — thus making it easier to get feedbacks and to interact with your audiences.

■ **Stream Live Videos**

The beauty of Instagram is that it is a highly interactive platform, which is why it has many tools dedicated for this. Apart from Instagram Stories, you can also shoot a live video and stream it to your audiences. Most businesses use this tool for many purposes such as a chance to show a certain product with more detail to their audiences, answer questions live regarding their business or products, giving audiences a look behind the scenes or the process-making of a new product or even giving audiences a glimpse on the daily going-on of the business. As it is live, audiences are free to ask questions and is able to get an immediate answer.

■ **Interact with Your Users**

As mentioned, Instagram users appreciate constant interactions and updates from an account they are following. Thus, it is vital to interact and engage with your followers as often as possible in order for them to be aware of your business or brand's presence. Below are some of the common ways to interact with your followers:



Liking: Liking is the most common way to connect with other users on Instagram. To like a photo, you can either tap the heart button under the post or simply double-tap the image.



Commenting: Commenting is another great way to connect with others on Instagram. With a business profile, you will often receive more comments rather than the other way around as audiences love to express their thoughts or ask a question via the comment section. Hence, be sure to always reply your comments — no matter how many there might be — in order to engage and bond with your audiences.



Tagging: On Instagram, you are able to include a tag before posting your content. For a business profile, having your followers to tag your account on their posting is extremely helpful as it will help you to generate and to reach out to a bigger audience. However, you can also tag a few of your users to interact and bond with them.

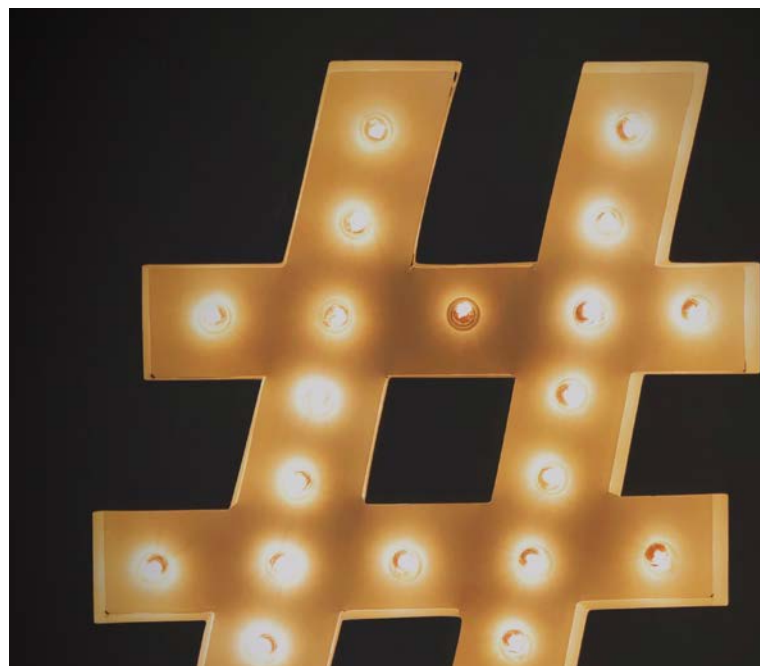


Mentioning: You can use the @ symbol to tag other users in your Instagram comments or post captions in order to engage more with your audiences on the platform.



Direct messaging: Direct Message is a great for your audiences to reach out to you and vice versa. To access this, simply go to the homepage and click on the button in the top right corner, where you will be able to send private instant messages, videos and even photos of your product to a customer.





■ Use hashtags.

Hashtags help users find a specific content on Instagram. On that note, it is vital you to create a custom hashtag for your business in order to gain visibility to the right target audience. This can also be done when you are hosting an event as, via the chosen hashtag, customers are able to know the going-on of the event, even if they are not there at the moment.

Take note that hashtags can include letters and numbers, but not non-numerical characters. If you are clueless as to what to include as your hashtags, simply browse another established account — be it business or personal blogs — that are relevant to your industry to find suitable hashtags for your postings.

■ Advertise on Instagram.

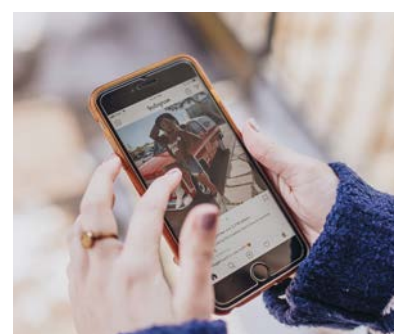
One of the most important advantages of having a business profile on Instagram is having the option to advertise in it. There are three formats of advertising your account or products via Instagram:



Video ads: Video ads look like regular video posts, but with a 'sponsored' label on top of the video you have posted.



Photo ads: Much like video ads, photo ads look like regular photo postings, but with the 'sponsored' label on top. They also have a Learn More button in the bottom right corner under the photo.



Carousel ads: These ads look identical to photo ads but feature multiple photos that users can swipe through.

■ Sell Your Products

On May 2018, Instagram added a payment feature for users to its platform. This enables users to buy things without having to leave the platform. To complete a transaction, users are required to give their name, billing info, email address and shipping addresses, which will then be saved by Facebook — Instagram's parent company — for future transactions. Payment can be made via American Express, Mastercard, Visa, Discover and PayPal.

To use this tool, simply create a product catalogue through Facebook, Shopify or BigCommerce and connect it to your account. Once this is done, simply tag the product and post it up for your audiences. Note that the products you sell must comply with Instagram's merchant agreement and commerce policies.

In 2016, Instagram totalled up to 600 million users since its launch in 2010. Retailers, as well as businesses who uses Instagram for marketing purposes stated a growth of 237 per cent on audience engagement growth. This comes as no surprise as audience engagement on Instagram is reported to be 58 times higher than Facebook and 20 times greater than Twitter. Ergo, Instagram is indeed the ideal social media platform to build and grow a business presence, particularly for start-ups and businesses who are looking to mark their presence on social media for the first time. **1**



5 Facts About Instagram That is Good for Your Business



B2C Businesses Benefits the Most from Instagram

Unbeknownst to many, almost 48 per cent of Instagram users comprises of B2C (business-to-consumer) businesses. People tend to be visually biased; this means that they are more receptive towards a product when they are able to see it in a trendy picture as opposed to hearing or reading about it. This makes Instagram as the ideal platform to sell a product directly to your consumers.

Top Brands Are on Instagram

60 per cent of top international brands are already on the social media platform. They understand that the fastest way to reach consumers in today's age is through social media —particularly through Instagram. Hence, if you are in the midst of starting a new business or is just looking for a new way to market your business and brand, an Instagram account would do wonders for you.

Instagram Is Global

The platform's medium of communication are pictures, which prevents any language barriers between its users —which is what lead it to be a global phenomenon. Due to having a huge international engagement from users, the platform has a tool where you are able to translate any language to English, thus making it easier for its users to interact and understand one another.

In our New Media section, we have talked about how Instagram is a highly valuable platform to boost and build your business's presence to your consumers. As an addition, here are five important facts any marketer and business owner need to know about the social media platform and how it is able to benefit businesses everywhere.

By
Batrisyia Jay

Instagram Has 600 Million Users

Instagram boasts 600 million monthly users who are highly active, with a huge sum of people who constantly check on Instagram numerous times a day, this comes as no surprise. With over 40 billion photos and videos having been shared and posted thus far, Instagram is the second most frequently used social media network in the world.

Instagram Makes Branding Easy

In any marketing campaign, the branding of a business takes precedence over everything else. One of Instagram's most powerful tools, hashtags make it highly useful in making your target audience discover your posts by optimizing it. Numerous top international brands tend to produce their own specific hashtags in order to boost their followers and to reach out to more potential customers. With a maximum of 30 hashtags per post, you can brand your business on the platform simply by using specific hashtags that portrays your brand and business consistently throughout your postings.



By
Muhaimin Merican

SifufBads:

Blazing the Trail of Digital Marketing

If you were driving, there's a chance you've seen a huge billboard with a sharply dressed man smiling. Then, as you move to the words on the billboard you realise it is for an online seminar by SifufBad. But, who exactly is SifufBads?

SifufBads, who is better known these days as Sifu Jamal, is the founder and CEO of SifufBads Sdn Bhd, a digital marketing academy based in Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur.

To date, more than 80,000 people have attended his digital marketing seminars, including such well-known brands as Dian Pixy, Mamadil, Caryazara, De'xandra, Wildan and students from Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei. He is one of the foremost digital marketing gurus in Malaysia and an entrepreneur who has helped many people find success in their business endeavours through his passion for online marketing.



■ Early days

Sifu Jamal was born as Jamaluddin bin Bahari in Temerloh, Pahang in 1981. He was the second son out of four siblings.

Curiously, he started off studying civil engineering, obtaining a diploma and a degree in this field from Universiti Teknologi MARA. After graduation, he joined UEM Builders as a trainee, followed by a three-year stint at Jabatan Kerja Raya, or JKR, as a civil engineer.

As he progressed into the working world as an engineer, he also started reading more about internet marketing as a side interest. He produced his first e-book in 2008 which was a book about self-help book and guide for married couples. His sales started to pick up after only 2 weeks of releasing the e-book.

The success of his first e-book motivated Sifu Jamal to produce a second e-book. Drawing on his experience working in civil service, the e-book was called Rahsia Lulus Temu Duga Kerja Kerajaan (Secrets of Passing Government Job Interviews) and it was published as a self-help book for people to excel in interviews for government jobs.

Around 2012, Sifu Jamal started with what would eventually make him famous – Facebook advertising. He started offering intensive classes on marketing utilizing Facebook Ads. Initially, enrolment was low, with between 20-30 people attending his classes.

He picked up the moniker SifufBads in 2012 when he was asked to speak at a UiTM event and needed a name to brand himself. At the time, the public had already begun calling him Sifu FB Ads and Jamal took the opportunity to rebrand himself as his now famous moniker, “SifufBads”.

From then on, he expanded his course to include Facebook Ads techniques and strategies for training participants. In the meantime, the number of students who attended his classes was rapidly growing.

■ Wider Audience

In 2014, while attending an online marketing event, SifufBads was asked by the students attending the event about the size of the event they were at. The student had playfully asked SifufBads how come other speakers could manage large crowds that reached thousands but SifufBads had not.

Taking it as a personal challenge, SifufBads decided to start hosting larger events than his usual classes. He started by targeting only 1000 students. But, SifufBads found out that once he opened up to a larger audience, his crowds grew by leaps and bounds and started to reach an audience of 3,000.

To date, his biggest audience is a crowd of 3,700; he is, however planning for a crowd of 7,000 for an upcoming Hari Raya slot.

His classes and seminars focus mainly on Facebook marketing. Previously, they also focused on email marketing, affiliate marketing, and Facebook marketing.

However, from 2017 onwards, SifufBads has also included integrated marketing, social media, offline marketing and branding in his courses. In 2018, he decided to position his company as a digital marketing muse, and a learning solutions provider for digital marketing.

Branding is about selling experience to the customer.
What is the best experience that can give value to our customer?



■ Competition and Credibility

There is always competition; however, it does not deter SifufBads as he believes that the way to stand out amongst his competitors was by providing up-to date, tested and proven solutions to business owners.

Another aspect apart from providing top of the line service, he stressed that in order to succeed in this industry is by being credible. Credibility comes in the form of testimony by clients, endorsements and awards from third parties such as ministries and global organisations and leaders.

SifufBads built his credibility when he was invited to do an e-Usahawan program for MDEC. Another programme which he

fondly recalls is back in 2017 when he was selected as a coach for a reality TV show, held under the Ministry of Rural Development Malaysia, where he was included with Dato' Sri Aliff Shukri, Datuk Ahmad Nazim Rahman, Head of Investments MARA and other celebrities. The programme lasted 12 episodes and provided him a platform to build his credibility.

Another factor that helps his company in standing out is trust. In every training session, SifufBads heavily emphasises on the fact that to build trust, you must ensure your product has endorsement from the authorities.

This can be from JAKIM, the Health Ministry, clinical tests and experiments or any other third party that is related to your business.

An important aspect to building trust is social proof; this can be done through reviews from customers on the company's website about their products.

“““

Where there is a relationship, there is also trust. And where there is trust, it is easier to achieve our objective. Build relationships that build trust.



■ Why We Need Digital Marketing?

One of the main objectives of digital marketing is achieving the Return on Investment (ROI) and making the investment worthwhile for the company. A standard ROI is returns of 300% based on advertising cost spent. This is the minimum for online marketing, ideally the minimum is 300% and the best is a 1000% of return.

Another important aspect is engagement for content, and digital marketing would be able to provide that edge for companies. SifufBads defines engagement as any comments, likes, video views, share, survey participations and any form of communication that involves the two way model. Engagement can be taken as a form of feedback from the people. A lot of engagement is actually a sign of a healthy relationship.

A well-known internet personality once said, 'Database is king, content is queen'. But SifufBads has gone on to add his own addition which is: 'engagement is the princess'. According to him, a third part was needed because many people forget that, even with a large database, the lack of content and engagement will cause people to finally forget you and your brand.

■ Social Media Manager must do's

The first and most basic step for becoming a successful social media manager would be to understand the audience they are targeting. This includes age, sex, occupation, location and workplace.

This requires using basic psychology because by determining these factors one would be able to determine other aspects such as what people want, what they like, the brands to follow, and the relationship between the audience and the brand.

By understanding all these about the audience and their needs, a social media manager will know how to approach or reach their audience and to deliver the value desired by his audience.

Secondly, a social media manager must be able to plan and schedule the best content for their audience. In essence, each social media has their own language and it is the job of the social media manager to figure out what is the best way to utilise that in order to appeal to their audience. If a social media manager is able to understand the content and audience well, they will know how to deliver value, and will know how to plan and schedule content for each platform in order to create the best experience their audience.

Moreover, according to SifufBads, a social media manager must be able to create a two way communication with the audience in order to foster brand loyalty. If a social media manager is able to achieve brand loyalty, they are able to create organic engagement and this will result in lower marketing costs for the company.

Social media has become an important aspect of marketing for all businesses and not knowing how to tap into it and make use of its vast audience is a loss that companies cannot ignore. It is here to stay, and no one has mastered it as well as SifufBads in Malaysia.

From engineer to digital marketing genius, Sifu Jamal has come a long way and is further blazing the trail at the forefront of digital media. |

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Viewers will feel disappointed when there is no engagement and they will not come back. Always build engagement.

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Things You Should Know Before Starting That Business



By Batrisyia Jay

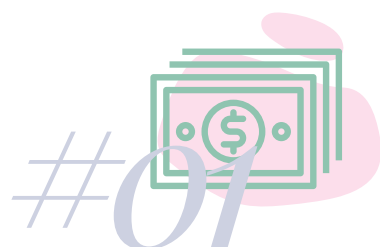
It is almost a given that entrepreneurship is an exciting venture. Most entrepreneurs would tell you that their work is highly enjoyable. With each day filled with new opportunities to challenge your abilities, skills, and determination, what's not to like? When you get to choose a work that involves using your unique strengths and skills, satisfying can't even begin to describe the job.

However, without the right preparation, entrepreneurship can be a tough game. Firstly, almost no college or university level education will ever prepare you for it, as most of the learning happens on the job itself. Secondly, being an entrepreneur means giving up the security of a regular payroll. Simply put, if your business slows down, your personal income can very much be at risk.



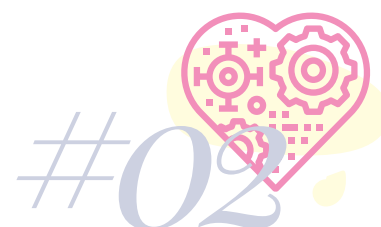
In Malaysia, young entrepreneurs are on the rise as we begin to see the government encouraging the nation's youth to move towards self-employment as part of the efforts taken to overcome the issues of unemployment in the country. These entrepreneurs have the opportunity to be nurtured through the Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) programmes given by the government such as the Bumiputra Enterprise Enhancement Programme (BEEP) and Soft Loans for SMEs by SME Corp Malaysia.

These factors are what made most of the Malaysian youth keen to try their luck in entrepreneurship. While the move is indeed laudable, it is vital to first learn the fundamentals to be an entrepreneur. Here are 10 pointers you should know before starting your business.



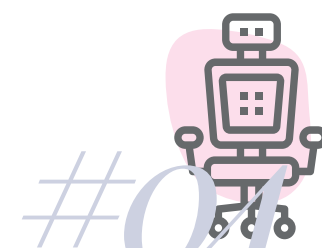
#01 Profit is not everything

The number one thing on most entrepreneurs' mind would be money. When first starting their business, these new entrepreneurs will manage to raise the capital needed early in the game. However, take note that just making money is not enough. Instead of focusing on the profits, put more effort in ensuring that your business generates a consistent cash flow.



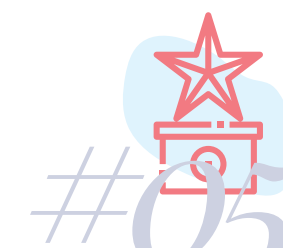
#02 Take good care of your people

Business and people almost always go hand in hand. Some would even tell you that business is all about finding the right people to implement your system. When starting a business, take heed that you cannot manage everything all by yourself, no matter how much of a perfectionist you are. As you are bound to rely on others, give them your time and attention. Focus on people that are helping or working for you. Understand their needs, compensate them adequately, and most importantly, invest in their training. They may or may not stay with you, but it's important to continually train them.



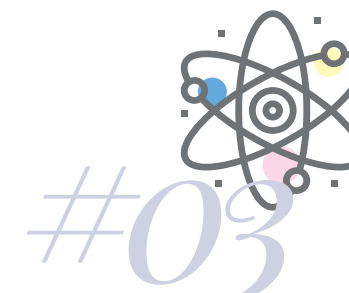
#04 Separate yourself from your business

The most significant thing to keep in mind, is that it is important to separate yourself from your business. Instead of getting brash, look at yourself as merely an employee and shareholder in your business. Only by separating yourself and acting as an employee or shareholder will you have the ability to curb your expenditures. Many young entrepreneurs are known to struggle when it comes to differentiating their personal finances from that of their business. Thus, to have a better hand at managing your finances, practice the act of separating yourself from your business.



#05 Choose the right business for you

The simple trick of knowing whether you will be a success or failure in the world of business is to know how to choose the right business for you. At times, you will come to your wits end, especially when no matter how much you try, things just won't work out because market conditions are simply not in your favour. For instance, airline industries in most countries have a profit margin of less than 2%. What's more, even though most airlines are run by competent people, they are not making profit. So, before you decide to start your business, you must first decide whether the business suits you, and most importantly, whether the market is ready for it.



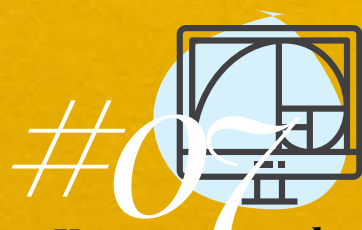
#03 Focus on the customer and understand the market

You will notice that most companies do not have the best product or service to offer to a certain market yet would still dominate the said market successfully. This is because they have mastered marketing and sales. It is imperative for you to understand the market you are targeting. Research the demographics and psychographics of your potential customer base and understand their buying habits. Watch competitors, talk with similar businesses, browse your competitors' websites, and lastly, understand what their customers are saying about them via social media.



#06 Have a balanced work-life

A lot of entrepreneurs spend around 12 to 13 hours a day on their business, especially when it is new. Some have even been doing it for over 10 years. Is this effective? The answer is no. As time goes by, you will be burnt out and will eventually become unproductive. Here's a trick that are often practised by successful entrepreneurs with good habits: the moment you start working lesser hours, you will find other ways to streamline your operations and get things done faster. Nowadays, there are a lot of apps that can help you become more productive. As most of us have a smartphone or two, learn to take advantage of these apps to help you balance out your work and personal life.



#07 Know your numbers

To be good at your business, you need to know your numbers. Have a good grasp of your sales, gross margins, profits, cash flow, and the specific metrics associated with your business. Being an entrepreneur means that your decisions need to come fast and instant. Knowing the numbers, the business economics, will most certainly help ensure you make the right decisions. Look for ways to cut costs where you can and learn how to use cost-effective tools like email marketing and social media to drive awareness, rather than pricier traditional advertising methods.



#08 Manage your debts

Some businesses are built on debts. Now this can be very dangerous, especially if you are a first-time entrepreneur. A start-up is in itself very risky, especially if the business model is untested. Hence, if the business fails, the business owner still needs to pay back their debts because most debts are personally guaranteed by the business owner. Some entrepreneurs use personal loans to start a business due to low interest rates for these types of loans. However, be very careful, less optimistic, and make sure your debt is within manageable limits.



#09 Write a business plan

Starting a business is both difficult and risky. While it is no doubt satisfying, you will find that you will be spending all your time and resources at it. Which is why having a written plan with your projected results and personal goals listed on black and white is the best way to stay on track. For instance, your business may make RM 20,000 profit. But if you live in a large city, while having the need to support a family or maybe elderly parents and are trying to save for your children's college and retirement plan while working on yours at the same time, then most likely RM 20,000 is not enough. A business plan will put your ideas in concrete terms and will help you identify places to change the business model where necessary.



#10 Find a good mentor

When we were first learning how to walk, our parents were always by our side to guide us. Likewise, when venturing into business, you will need a mentor to act as your 'parent'. You will need someone to hold you accountable for your actions and provide guidance through your journey. But, you will need to choose your mentor wisely. It should ideally be someone who has a strong track record of success in business, believes in your idea, and is willing to give you honest feedback without worrying about protecting your feelings.

Before getting absorbed in the nuts and bolts of entrepreneurship, it is extremely vital to ensure that you have done your homework thoroughly. Always remember to take measured, meticulous steps when first starting a business from scratch. Now that you know the 10 most important tips of starting a business, you are all set to become a successful entrepreneur. Just remember to take small but incremental steps one day at a time and see your business grow. After all, strong and steady wins the race. ■



The Visionary



In the 21st century, the Food and Beverages industry, more commonly known as the F and B industry, has rapidly grown and become one of the biggest industries in the world. Competition within the industry can be fierce, and professionals who are tied to it are known to face strenuous work and long hours to intensify customers' experience through their services.

Ergo, most would think twice before committing themselves to the F and B industry. However, for El Azizie, who earns a six-figure profit in 2018 from his four restaurants, a frozen food factory and a processing food factory, these setbacks are merely stumbling blocks to his success and to becoming one of the key players in this highly competitive industry.

■ Determined to succeed

Hailing from Sungai Pinang, Klang, El Azizie Bin Maskam, fondly known as El, was born in 1990 as the youngest of three siblings. His father was a lorry driver while his mother was a factory employee. "Growing up I was often left alone at home, my parents were always busy working so they didn't have the time to spend with us, it was very lonely for me," El reminisced.

The family of five were no strangers to the struggles of life, which was why at the tender age of 15, El started working on his first job. "I worked part time as a waiter at Pizza Hut back when I was in form three. I wanted to earn and have my own money," said El.

Having witnessed the struggles of his parents at a young age, El had no qualms going the extra mile to make a living, which was why during school holidays he would work long hours at odd jobs, determined to become financially independent.

After graduating high school they ventured into their very own business by opening a stall specialising in western cuisine. Working as a promoter at a local mall after graduation, Nadhirah used her savings from her job as the capital to open their stall. "We were 18 years old at the time, and we set up our stall in front of people's restaurants, serving western food like steaks and burgers," said El.



■ **An ambitious spark**

Their first stall was located near Port Klang, with business starting from 4pm till late evening. “I started it late to specifically cater for the night market as there were many shops nearby that was open till late at night,” El explained. Recipes for the food sold were made by El himself, who was the only chef at the time while Nadhirah managed the operations and financial side of the business.

Business was booming for the two, and yet El felt that he should be doing more in order to take the business a step further. Thus, El took a break from business and pursued a Professional Culinary Art Programme in MSU, Shah Alam. “I decided to further my studies purely to know more about the industry. I know that I am a good chef, but there’s more to the industry than just knowing how to cook.”

Despite the positive frame of mind, El’s pursuit for an education proves to be harder than expected. “During my practical, I faced a sort of obstacle. I was told that I wasn’t a good chef to the point where it made me think that I would have to change my career,” said El. During those times, El was pressured into thinking that this line was not the one for him.

Yet deep down, the 18-year-old knew that he had a talent as a chef and decided to continue on the path that he had set up for himself. Thus, upon earning his certificate from MSU, El decided to continue the business he had prior to enrolling himself into university. El’s knack for creating his own recipes for western cuisine proved itself as the stall slowly gained the attention of many passers-by around the area. However, despite the recognition and success, the profit gained from it was not enough to expand the business.



“
Impressed with each other’s entrepreneurial spirit, the duo eventually married and have been with each other ever since
”



■ **The silver lining**

In 2012, El lost his father which made him even more determined than ever to make it big in business and change his family’s fortune. Despite running for a couple of years, his stall business was still not making as much profit as he hoped it would have.

During these trying times, El’s luck took a turn for the better when he was introduced to a restaurant owner. “I can say I was lucky, I met the owner of a steak house restaurant who at the time, was willing to sell the franchise to me for a low price,” said El.

The franchise, known as Polperro Steak House, was a restaurant selling western cuisines. At the time, El had just inherited his share of savings from his late father, which was what made it possible for him to purchase his first restaurant. “That was my capital to start the business,” said El, who saw it as the silver lining to the passing of his father.

El had bought the franchise at a bargain, but with one condition, and that it maintain the name ‘Polperro Steak House’. “I didn’t give much thought to the condition, so I immediately agreed to it. I was just happy to have made a

bargain,” said El. What he did not take into consideration at the time was the fact that the restaurant already had a not so good reputation.

“Customers were not coming in as they’ve already tried out the restaurant before and were not happy with the outcome, so we had no regulars back then,” El confessed. At the time, El and Nadhirah only made a profit of RM200 per day, and with overheads amounting to RM700, that was not enough to sustain the business.



About
El Azizie

28 years old



Born in
Sungai Pinang, Klang

Youngest out of three siblings

Studied Professional Culinary Arts Programme in MSU

Husband of Nurul Nadhirah Binti Ahmad Nasir and father to three children

■ The turning point

As business was running at a loss, El decided that he needed to do some research to find a solution to the low customer turnout. "I took my time to research and observe my target market. I found that they didn't really like the taste, so I changed my recipes and localised the taste for my customers," said El.

Apart from the change in recipes, El also lowered the prices and developed a new look for the restaurant. "I believe that your number one boss are the customers, so I changed a lot of things in the restaurant to suit to their liking, even down to the lighting, just to change the public perception."

Despite the attempt, it took a lot more to alter the public's perception. "The changes were not working, everything that we did, from promotions to new menus, all of it were not much appreciated by the customers, and that was perhaps the biggest challenge that I had to face in the industry," said El.

However, instead of giving up on the venture, he took it as a challenge to motivate him further. "I was determined to make this work, so we went on with the changes and promotions and persevered,". Sure enough, after some time the business started booming and some profit could be seen..

The role of shouldering the responsibility for the business is shared between the husband and wife duo. As it was with the stall, El took on the role of setting up and training the staff at

the restaurant while Nadhirah handled the operations and finance. Due to their booming business, the duo decided to open a new branch in Section 7, Shah Alam, to expand their franchise.

As El's restaurant business thrives, a new obstacle arises within the business. One of the major issues facing expansion was the suppliers, "operating a couple of restaurants meant I had to rely heavily on my suppliers. At the time, my suppliers kept changing the prices of the products, therefore product prices were always unpredictable and fluctuated, knowing that I would still have to pay one way or the other. It felt like someone was controlling me and I didn't like that,". As the price fluctuation started to take a toll on the business, El decided to solve the problem by removing the need of a supplier and become one himself.

With the demand from his restaurants, he opened a frozen food factory as well as a food processing factory. "I could see a tremendous change in the cost of product purchasing for my restaurants after I opened up the two factories."

Produces from the factories are not only used for his own restaurants but also are distributed to other restaurants and F&B businesses. "For instance, my frozen food factory offers a lot of commodities such as raw meat, vegetables and rice, making it a one stop centre for other restaurants," quipped El.

“

I believe that your number one boss are the customers, so I changed a lot of things in the restaurant to suit to their liking, even down to the lighting, just to change the public perception

”





■ Mogul of an industry

Today, the husband and wife duo are running four restaurants under the name of Polperro Steak House. “We have three restaurants within Shah Alam and one in Seremban”. He explained that the branch in Seremban was a test market as the pair is keen to bring their business outside of Selangor.

Despite making a six-figure profit with the restaurants, El’s biggest success, to him, would be the moment he successfully purchased a building for his restaurant. “To me, buying a building is not easy, it needs thorough planning as well as a big budget, which is why I think that was my biggest success to date,” says El.

Purchased for the opening of his branch in Section 7, the building is a three-story building with the restaurant located on the first floor. “We’re planning to open up a second restaurant on the second floor of the building. This one would have a different concept compared to my other restaurants as I’m planning to design it for fine-dining,” said El.

El believes in the philosophy of investing and delving into new businesses that will help support one’s main business, which is why they are currently setting up their very own chicken slaughter house. “My restaurants use lots of chicken meat, so having a slaughter house will once again cut a lot of costs while being another source of income to the company.”

Apart from opening a new restaurant and having a slaughterhouse, El is not taking a break anytime soon. “Next year we will be launching our own line of products such as meatballs, lasagne and sauces,”. The products are already available in the restaurants but have not been officially launched yet, as the restaurants are testing ground.

Beyond establishing other busiessses El’s goal is to see his company being publicly listed. “My vision for the future is to have my company public listed, that way all the hard work will really pay off,”.



In spite of their wealth, both El and Nadhirah felt it unnecessary to splurge and opt to invest the profit gained back into their businesses instead. “We don’t feel as if the profit is ours, as we both opted to have monthly salaries, so this helps to monitor our expenditure,” said El with a chuckle. The now a father of three children, he advises young entrepreneurs to not spend their profit in one go and splurge when first setting up a business. “Avoid spending even when you’re successful if you can, try to invest in a business instead,” he advised, while elaborating that one should only invest into a business and industry that is not foreign to them.

When asked if husband and wife should venture into business together, El answered with a resolute yes. “Don’t

mix personal matters with business, that is how you will succeed in a business together,” he said.

El’s advice to young entrepreneurs is to learn about the nuts and bolts of their business. “A great leader needs to know everything about his business, which is why I will always take the time to teach my staff the proper work system and set up a new restaurant by myself,” explained El.

“The most important advice I have for those who are just starting in their business is to take the risk and be daring to try. When you’re young, you have plenty of time to learn the tips and tricks of the industry, and it’s easier to pick yourself up and start again when you fall, so don’t be afraid to start young.”

A good teacher is a determined person, and El Azizie is nothing if not determined. His progress from a 15-year-old waiter to an entrepreneur was no easy feat as it was riddled with hardship. However, by being someone who is able to see the advantage and being bold enough to take the risk of investing in businesses that aids his restaurant has made him into a self-made millionaire before the age of 30. As Naveen Jain, a business executive, entrepreneur and the founder and former CEO of InfoSpace once said, “A person who sees a problem is a human being; a person who finds a solution is a visionary; and a person who goes out and does something about it is an entrepreneur.” ■

Venture into business while you’re still young as you’ll have the time to learn and will get up easier when you fall

Don’t invest in a business that is foreign to you

Husband and wife should venture into business together, given that they separate business from their personal lives

Do not be a big spender when you strike your first success

Invest into new businesses that will help support your main business

When it comes to business, be daring

Customers are your boss

A great leader needs to know everything about one’s business

Is Accounting Important For Your Business?

By
Muhaimin Merican

It is considered as one of the most basic rule of business to have accountants. Accounting is the orderly and systematic way of recording monetary transactions relating to a business. Accounting additionally includes the process of summarizing, analysing and reporting these transactions to oversight agencies, regulators and tax collection agencies.

Accountants put in a lot of time in order to record a business's financial transaction. But, have you ever sat down and wondered why are you spending so much on an accountant? Is the painstaking effort actually worth it?

Let's see how accounting can benefit your business:



#01 Tracking Income and Expenditures

One of the most important job scope of an accountant is to keep track of a business's income and how much they spend. All business seeks to make profit and in order to make profit they would have to pay statutory taxes like income tax. City, state and federal income taxes are usually based on your business's gross revenue. However, to get the specific amount is where the skills and services of accountants are required.

#02 Plan your budget

All businesses need a budget in order to track and forecast the financial situation of the company; this is not possible without the proper accounting data. This is because the usage of the historical data can help the company to detect similar patterns in the business. All of this data can only be acquired through an accounting system.



#03 Information for the Business Stakeholder

Accounting records act as a form of result to the stakeholders in the company. All of the financial and accounting documents is a representation of the company to stakeholders such as investors, creditors, debtors, government, customers, and employees.

Accountants are able to combine the income statement, the cash flow and the balance sheet statement to produce the business's financial statements. Financial statements are often made public for the viewing of the business's stakeholders.

#04 Financial Health

In order to cultivate a healthy financial plan as business, you need the involvement of banks, lenders and investors. However, to get banks to grant and approve loans, a business would need to prove a handful of requirements set by a bank. But none is more important than demonstrating that the company is not suffering financially and to do this, you would need accountants and their financial data.

#05 Provide professional advice

Moreover, an accountant helps the administration with guidance for the improvement of its business especially in the financial part of the business. In the modern age with the complexities of business, business management also evolved to combat it and one of the most important aspects is that companies now include accountants on the board of management committee. This happens because the proficiency of the business relies upon the productive utilization of accounting information and data. It has largely been accepted that accounting and management are no longer two separate pieces but rather they belong hand in hand.

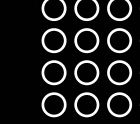
#06 Staffing

Staffing is another area in which accounting can be hugely valuable. Decisions around hiring new staff and setting wages can be a real headache. Among the many tasks of accountants include their ability to help you make the right decision by letting you know exactly how much you can afford to spend on staffing, and the returns you can expect for your investment in staff.



As we can see, most businesses in this age require and need accountants. Not only do accountants help in the day to day operations in the business but they are also pertinent to the business and its future growth.

Also, we can never know when our Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negara (LHDN) might come knocking on your business's door so might as well hire an accountant now to avoid any slippery slope your business might have to navigate through in the future. **1**



AUGMENTED REALITY, VIRTUAL REALITY AND A VAST WORLD IN BETWEEN

Over the past century, technology has evolved extensively. In just 100 years, we have seen from the introduction of new automobiles, radio and television in the early to mid-twentieth century to the introduction of the personally used laptops, fast paced personal internet and mobile phones.

One of the more spectacular innovations in the past decade is the usage of reality modification programmes such as augmented reality and virtual reality. It can be said that almost everyone exposed to the internet in the past decade knows the words but have no idea what both of them means and how they are alike. Although, sounding similarly alike, there is actually a vast difference between the 2 realities.

To begin understanding this technological marvel of tomorrow, we must first seek to understand them.

■ WHAT IS AUGMENTED REALITY (AR)?

Augmented reality (AR) is the when AR devices add a layer of reality to your pre-existing reality. It doesn't create a whole new reality for you but rather projects images over whatever you are looking at in the real world. AR technology is designed to work with free movement of the users.

AR devices and their usage can range from smart glasses to social media filters and surgical procedures to smartphones. One of the most enchanting elements of AR is that it changes how the user sees, hear and feel. AR technology is classified as a mixed reality spectrum as it affects both the real word and a virtual world.

In 1992, Louis Rosenberg of the US Air Force created the AR system called "Virtual Fixtures". Since then, AR has evolved extensively. The Google glasses which were introduced in 2013 had applications that ran in real time and was connected to the internet via Bluetooth.

In 2015, Microsoft released the HoloLens which was a headset that allowed you to create high resolution holograms through the glasses part of the device. The biggest breakthrough for AR came when Niantic released their Pokemon Go application which earned two million dollars in the first week of its release. The release of Pokemon Go set the precedent for the gaming industry to venture into the AR technology.

But AR technology is not only limited to the entertainment sector and gaming industry. AR is currently being developed to be used in the medical field, military, industrial design as well as tourism. One of the main AR developments that are currently being worked on is AR contact lens that would be able to create a seamless transition between the real world and the virtual world.

However, AR has also been criticised for breaching privacy and unethical behaviour. This stems from complaints regarding the Google glasses that were accused of collecting data from private conversations without the consent of its owners. But, unfortunately, that is the price we have to pay for innovation and science.



■ VIRTUAL REALITY: A WHOLE NEW WORLD

If Augmented reality is the when a layer of a virtual world is added to the real world, Virtual reality (VR) seeks to immerse the user into a completely virtual world and incorporates their auditory and sensory feedback but have also been known to allow other types of sensory feedback from the user. Virtual Reality is often used through headsets and often projects the user through multi projected environments.

Virtual Reality often uses a form of haptic technology to make its users to feel vibrations and recreates the sense of touch through force and motions. In addition, VR uses few key components in order to allow the users to immerse into the virtual reality world and these includes, PC, consoles and Smartphones which is used as an engine to power the content. Another component that is used to bring VR to the users is the use of a Head-Mounted display which acts as the visual equipment that will help to bring the immersive experience to users.

The history of Virtual Reality is complicated as VR is described loosely as to define any form of simulated environments but the term Virtual Reality was first coined in the 1980's by Jaron Lanier, founder of VPL Research, who began to develop the gear, including goggles and gloves, needed to experience what he called "virtual reality."

But even before that, VR was already being developed by various industries. A major milestone for VR was when movie maker, Morton Heilig, created the Sensorama which was a device that would allow the audience to feel the movie they were watching through multisensory stimulation.

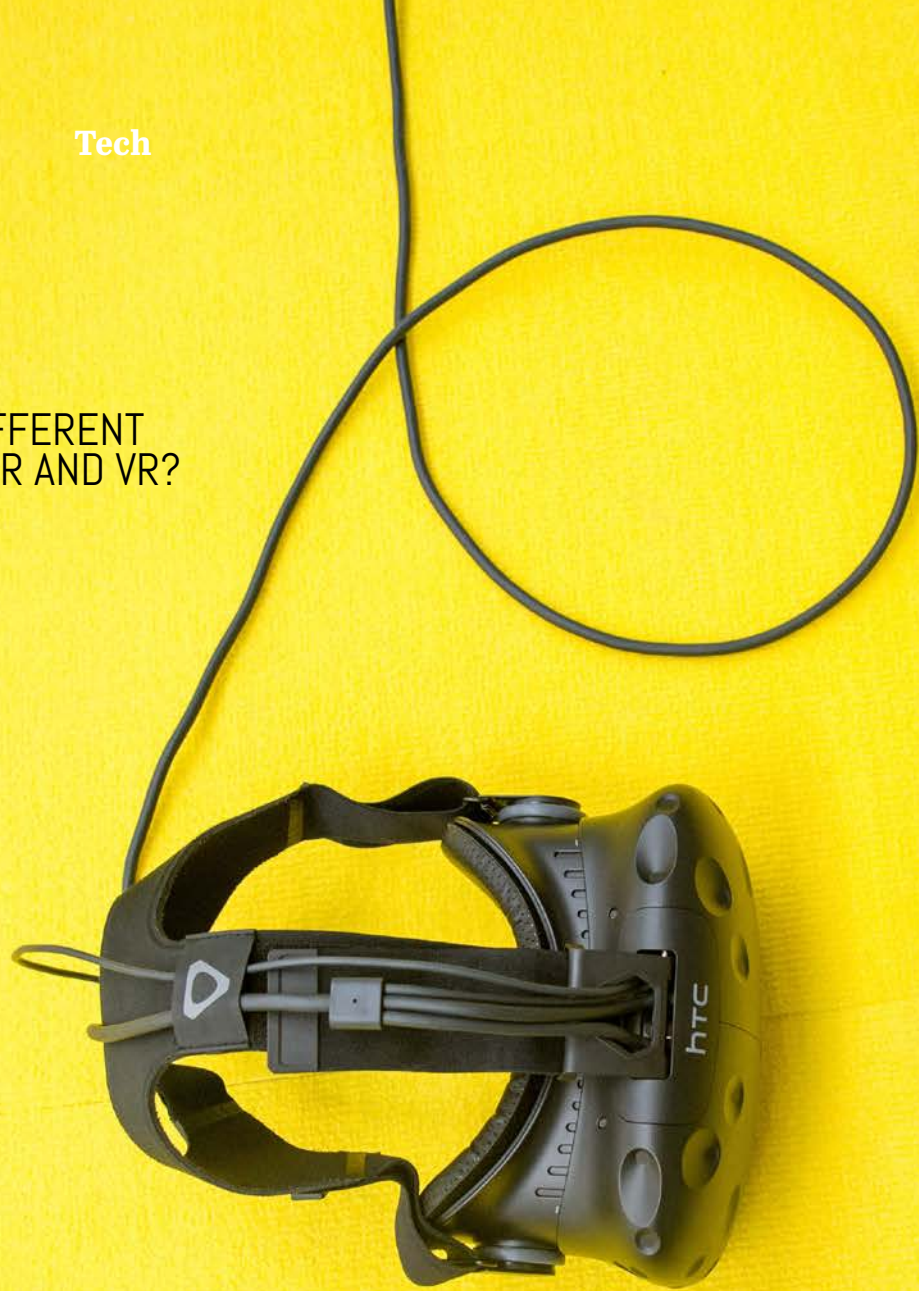
By the 1970's and 1980's, VR was already going through an advanced stage of development. The Optical advancement for VR were developed and ran parallel to projects to develop the haptic devices and other instruments that were developed to allow users a more immersive virtual environment and would allow users to enjoy more than just an optical illusion. In the mid 1980's, the Virtual Interface Environment Workstation (VIEW) was created by NASA and it used a combination of a head-mounted device with gloves to allow the creation of a haptic interaction for its users.

Today, VR is used in most industries ranging from military and healthcare to entertainment and education where the benefits of VR have been translated as the benefit of the industry. One of the most major advancement of VR is the usage of VR to treat mental health issues. VR has become a primary method for treating post-traumatic stress. Utilising the VR exposure therapy, the treatment sees a person entering the re-enactment of their past traumatic event in a safe space. Moreover, VR is also being used to treat patients with anxiety, depression and phobia. VR is apt for this because it allows patients to come into contact with what they are scared of in reality but in a safe and controlled environment without harming the patient.

Although it has been around for a long time, VR has only recently been made available for everyday use. It would be interesting to see how it develops in the future as the technology becomes much more accessible to all.



■ WHAT IS DIFFERENT BETWEEN AR AND VR?

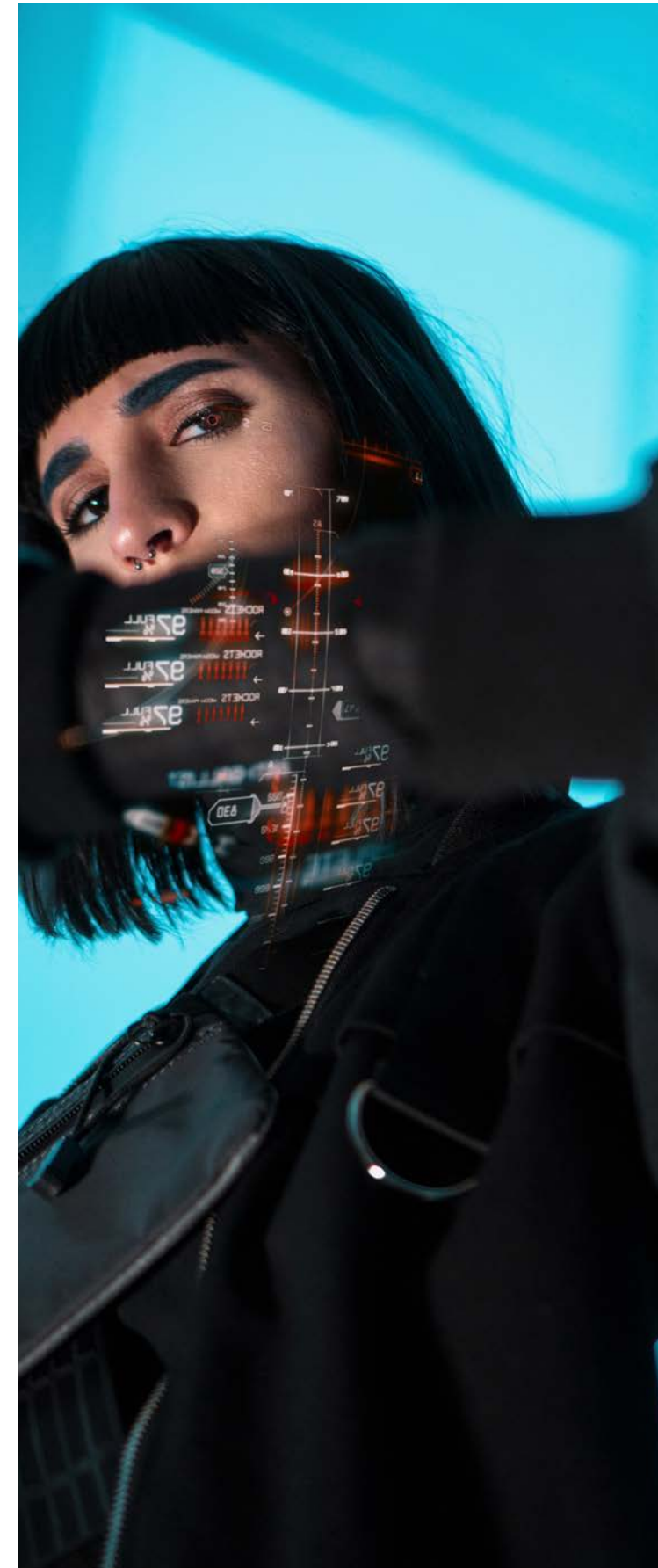


When discussing Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) there is bound to be some confusion due to how loosely the term is used. But, have you ever wondered what the difference between the two technologies is?

Well, with VR you can watch a tiger run in a zoo enclosure but with AR you can have a Tiger walk in the middle of a room during your big business presentation.

It is true that VR provides a more immersive environment but AR is more user friendly as it allows for freedom of the user as it doesn't require as much components such as a head mounted display. According to HP, VR is considered to be 75% virtual with a 25% touch of the real world whereas AR is 75% based on the real world with a 25% touch of virtual reality.

The biggest difference between the two technologies would be the amount of Mbps usage in order to generate the virtual environments. To experience a 720p VR video stream, users would need a bandwidth of 50 Mbps but in order to experience an AR experience, users would need to use 100 Mbps. Due to the higher quality of streaming of AR, it requires a much higher usage of bandwidth in order to give users a smooth experience.



■ FUTURE OF AR & VR

There have been major advancements in both the Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) field. However, at the pace at which the technology is being currently developed, we are bound to see AR and VR take over the world in the next few years.

Benefiting users as much as they benefit organisations, AR and VR are estimated to make a revenue share of 120 billion and 30 billion respectively by the year 2020.

With games like Pokemon Go, teaching aids that use AR and the HoloLens, AR and VR has very much become a household product and made available to almost everyone with a smartphone. We will just have to sit back and wait to see what world of wonders will AR and VR open up in the future. ■

+ Leading Lady of Scents

pg 58

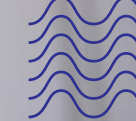
When speaking of a local fragrance brand of class and quality, the name De'Xandra is bound to cross your mind. Known to have made headlines in the past couple of years for its glamorous approach in advertising their fragrances while still maintaining a reasonable price, De'Xandra Eau De Parfum has made its name in the country as the top fragrance company in Malaysia with its array of inspired perfumes.

De'Xandra has proven its success by receiving numerous awards such as the 2015 Selangor Business Award for Industry Class Sector in Fragrance & Luxurious Perfumes, the 2016 Asia Pacific Award, the 2017 Global Responsible Business Leadership Awards and many more. With these awards under its helm, it is no surprise that almost everyone you know today has a bottle or two of these solat-friendly scents in their grasp.

Established in 2015, the young company expanded at a quick rate and was worth RM7 Million in its first year alone. As is with every successful empire, there is always a connoisseur and mastermind behind the curtains working the necessary magic for the rise of the empire. In the case of this award-winning brand, the mastermind is in fact a Prima Donna by the name of Ernayanee Nur.

“
When you plan out your days, you will see that planning your milestones will not be a problem.”

pg 59



■ The mastermind

Fondly known as Erna, this 33-year-old is the brains behind De'Xandra Eau De Parfum, and yet not much can be found on her except for a few promotional videos online and an appreciation note on De'Xandra's official website as its founder. "I prefer to build the brand first instead of myself, as this is my future," says Erna with a chuckle as she tells us of her vision, which is a contrast as to what we are used to of entrepreneurs here in Malaysia.

The brand was born in 2015, where Erna decided that it was past time for her to create her own fragrance line after several years of doing multiple businesses. The high demand for high-quality inspired perfumes allowed De'Xandra to penetrate the Malaysian market successfully. Within a year of launching their fragrances, they had made RM7 million in sales.

Be that as it may, the road for success has been a rocky one for Erna. "Based on my background, I feel like I had nothing, so I decided to build myself up through my businesses," she says.

■ Before success hit

Ernayanee Nur Binti Julaimi was born as the eldest child to four siblings. Her father was a fireman while her mother worked as a nurse. To make ends meet, both of her parents worked two shifts alongside their main jobs. Education was an important aspect in Erna's family, and so she enrolled and was accepted into UKM Bangi for a degree in mathematics after graduating high school.

The Johorean was one of the top students back in her schooling days, and she had taken her streak of intelligence with her into her university days as well. Nevertheless, despite receiving good grades and many awards, Erna was not content. "My parents were extremely hard working, and for that, as a way to repay them I was determined to change my family's life for the better," says Erna. The thought was what had sparked the need within Erna to start her very own business.

"When I told my mother about venturing into the business world, she was against it." Erna's mother, a woman of discipline and rationality, was adamant that she should finish up her studies and work in the government sector once she graduates. "I was in my last semester at the moment, so I understand how she must have felt," says Erna with a rueful smile.

Her mother's advice had been that a person needs to have two income sources instead of just one to really survive and live a comfortable life. However, as someone who is not good at multitasking, Erna wasn't convinced and decided then she would like to focus on doing business. Thus, in early 2006, Erna gave up her studies in pursuit of her dreams in business.

Sadly, fortune was not kind to the budding business woman, and her first venture into the realm of business amounted to nothing. "I started with an MLM type of business, it did not work out very well, but I was adamant in making money, so I continued with it for three years. I wanted to be a millionaire and did not want to stop at nothing at the time," says Erna.

Due to the miscalculation, Erna was deep in debt and found herself facing bankruptcy. "Those were the worst times for me. I used to drive a bus kilang with a charge of RM1 per person, while being a cleaner and a dangdut singer at Malay weddings with a charge of RM50, just to survive."



“
My advice to
women out
there is to be
independent.”



■ Rising from the ashes

Despite the challenges of the business, Erna was not fazed by it and continued to develop her business skills. Therefore, in 2010 Erna decided to make a change, starting with her lifestyle. “I started waking up early and exercising first thing in the morning. My day started as early as 7 am and ended at 11 pm every day and I made sure that every hour was spent doing something meaningful.”

Erna believed in the power of having a balanced IQ, EQ and SQ in life. With this as her new life commandment, Erna took the time to improve herself ahead of her business venture. “I started to be more organised with myself to the point where I would plan out my days one week ahead,” says Erna. Apart from a new lifestyle, Erna had also decided to have a change of environment.

“When I was struggling with my business, I used to be surrounded by people who were like me, people who were not so successful in their lives. We would grumble and complain every day without ever coming up with a solution to our problems. Then one day, I realised how toxic that was, and that none of us in that circle was helping one another or making our situations better,” says Erna.

Determined to make a change, Erna decided to start her life anew. “I moved out from the house that I was living in and cut ties with the circle of people that I used to hang out with. I believe that to be successful, you must mix with successful people. Through that method you will learn how to think and decide like them, and inevitably, become someone who is of the same persona as them,” explains Erna. Leaving behind a few people in her life was hard for Erna, but she sees it as something that was necessary to achieve her dreams.

Through her new circle of entrepreneurial friends, Erna learnt of Irfan Khairi, also known as the ‘jutawan internet’ among Malaysians. A best-selling author, TV and radio personality and a success and wealth coach, Irfan Khairi had made himself a millionaire at a young age purely through the internet. “I was intrigued by the fact that he made millions through the internet, and so I decided to educate myself about the internet that year.”

Eager to follow in the footsteps of the internet tycoon, Erna went full force with her business. “I started to sell many things that year, head to toe products, literally anything you can think of online,” says Erna. In 2010, online businesses were still a foreign concept in Malaysia, so Erna would scout for cheap products at warehouses, buy them for lower retail prices and sell them back online via Facebook.

While in the midst of building up her online market, Erna also attended business classes and seminars. Throughout all the seminars that she had attended, there was only one conclusion that Erna could derive, and that was to stay focused. “At the time I had no idea what they were talking about, I was selling numerous products online, so the word ‘focus’ did not really seem to fit in at the time,” says Erna.

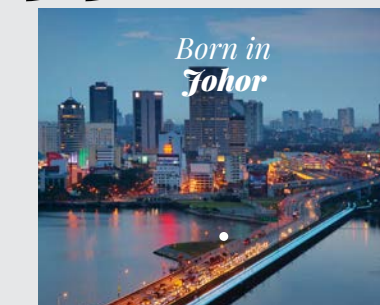
This continues up until 2013, where Erna found herself attending seminars urging individuals to do the same thing “Focus. That word was stuck in my head. For someone who was selling a lot of things online, I didn’t think I had focus,” Erna muses.

After giving it some thought, Erna decided to test out the theory. Thus, after two years of promoting and selling a variety of products, Erna took that focus advice and applied it to only one product, and that was the perfume industry.



About
Erna

33 years old



Mother to
5 children

Eldest child out of four
siblings

Studied mathematics in
UKM Bangi

“

When you stop learning, you will stop earning

*Ernayanee Nur Binti Julaimi,
Founder of De'Xandra Eau De Parfum*

”

■ Staying focused

Perfume is a product that is memorable, a lifestyle you want to portray as you choose a scent that embodies your essence to others. This motivated Erna to dive into the perfume industry. “When I did my research on the market, I found that demand for the product was higher than the supply, which was what made me confident to venture into this industry”. Having shifted from Facebook to a proper website in 2012, Erna started selling inspired perfumes as a stockist, which happened to be a stepping stone for her to ultimately create her own product.

Her life then took a wonderful turn when she married her husband in 2013, a like-minded business entrepreneur who had his own workshop for cars. “Most of the business tips and tricks in business that I acquired, I learnt from my husband. We both had the same

passion in business, which was what attracted me to him in the first place”.

With the support of her husband and her budding online business, Erna decided that she was ready to create her own product. In 2014 Erna held her own seminar to get the ball rolling. “I had around 1000 distributors from the online business that I had at the time, so when I did this seminar in December 2014, I had only 100 participants who came to my seminar out of the 1000 connections, and only 40 out of the 100 participants were willing to follow me in my new business venture.”

Even so, Erna was not deterred. As 2014 came to an end, Erna decided to leave her other business ventures and put all her effort and focus on her new upcoming company, De'Xandra.

Delegate your time and your work wisely

In business, when you stop learning, you will stop earning

Businesses should be small at the start and nurtured as the years go by

To be successful, surround yourself with positive and like-minded people

Business owners must attend seminars

Focus on one product at a time



■ The Empire

Formed in March 2015, De'Xandra Eau De Parfum is today Malaysia's top perfume producer with over 19,000 registered resellers nationwide. Headed by Erna and her husband, the company continues to evolve by focusing on educating their resellers with intensive product and marketing trainings and seminars.

De'Xandra's rapid growth is further enhanced by the company's brand-new look in October 2017, and their partnership with Air Asia which was launched in November 2017. When asked why AirAsia, Erna said it's simple: they are known for their good marketing skills. "I want to be associated with good branding, which was why I chose AirAsia out of the other companies."

The unusual but appealing name De'Xandra has an interesting origin. It is the feminine namesake of Alexander the Great, the 'defender of mankind'. "I took Alexander and turned it into a more feminine entity for my business, resulting in the name Xandra, which then became De'Xandra," explained Erna. Four components; Harmony, Love, Peace and Compassion, these are the four pillars of De'Xandra and its most important elements derived from the name.

De'Xandra's perfumes are segregated into two lines, for him and for her, with each line carrying five series of perfumes: Classic, Elegant, Intense, Luscious and Dynamic. Each of these scents exudes luxury and class that aims to express an exclusive sense of style to the wearers.

"Our vision is to be a key player in the fragrance industry within the Asian market, so I'm planning to release products that are fragrance-related within the next 10 years." Therefore, in 2019, the company is set to release its maiden collection of scented body lotions. Until then, De'Xandra also has other fragrance products to offer, such as car perfumes.

These car perfumes are quite unique due to their packaging, incorporating a small slit opening can be seen under each box while inspiring quotes are beautifully laid out in the middle. "Most people tend to have coins strewn all over their car, so with this product, not only does it serve as a perfume, it also serves as a place to store coins as well as a 'pick-me-up' with its motivational letters

at the front," explains Erna, who tends to apply the Blue Ocean strategy to all her products.

Despite the success, the 33-year-old still takes the time to improve and work on herself by attending seminars and workshops. "For me, business owners must attend seminars and strive to be a better version of their selves, because if you stop learning, you will stop earning".

To stay focused and be at the top of things, Erna advises to plan the whole week ahead of time. "Sunday is the best day to sit down and plan out your day. When you plan out your days, you will see that planning your milestones will not be a problem," says Erna. She is also of the mind that the difference between successful people and non-successful people is how you delegate your time. "Delegate your time and your work wisely. Trust the people around you to handle the things that you cannot do that is what I practise with my staff."

When advising on business, Erna believes in starting small. "I invested in many businesses and focused on many things at the start of my career, and they were all not successful. Which is why I believe that businesses should be small at the start, from there you can grow as the years go by. You should also focus on one product at a time. Only by being focused does the flow of money coming into the business increase and become steady."

Erna is keen in giving a helping hand to the women, especially single mothers, for a chance to build their own career. A mother of five, Erna understands the struggles a career woman must face when a child comes into the picture. This is why Erna has included a nursery within the company's building. "Our nursery is equipped with everything needed to care for infants and toddlers and my staff will not have to worry about choosing between caring for their child and pursuing their career."



As a self-made business woman, Erna urges women to be independent and choose their destiny. "My advice to women out there is to be independent. As women, we tend to be dependent on many things, and for that people view us as weak. Have faith, depend on Allah and believe that you can do many things."

Marge Piercy, an American novelist and social activist, once said, "A strong woman is a woman determined to do something others are determined not to be done". Likewise, Erna's journey into the world of business from a university student in the small town of Bangi to a self-made business woman was riddled with challenges. However,

instead of giving up and taking the easy way out, Erna stuck to her goal and had not wavered, proving that the secret to a successful life can be determined by something as simple as planning your daily agenda and seeing obstacles as the stepping stones to be more determined in achieving your objectives and win against all odds. Being the owner of one of the leading companies in the Malaysian fragrance industry, this 33-year-old is definitely a force to be reckoned with and is a paragon that women can look up to by proving that women can succeed in the entrepreneurial world. ■



What's In a Smell?

The History of Perfumes

We all love a good fragrance. Everyone has their signature scent (or five signature scents) and your outfit is never complete without that final spritz to really complete the whole outfit. Today, we have an abundance of perfume choices in the market ranging from thousands of ringgit to cheaper alternatives. The range of perfumes today go from classy brands such as Chanel, Calvin Klein and Yves Saint Laurent, to sporty brands such as Adidas and Nike. Each offers a different scent and different use to accommodate the customers.

But, do you really know anything about the fragrance industry? Or how the specific ingredients for your said signature scent came to be chosen for your scent? Check out the long history of perfume and how it has evolved into the scent we know and love today.

First use of Perfume

Perfume was first used by the Egyptians as part of their religious rituals. The two principal methods of use at this time was the burning of incense and the application of balms and ointments. They also believed burning incense pleased the gods, grinding up ingredients such as myrrh, sweet rush, wine and juniper each night to ensure the safe return from the underworld of the sun god, Ra.

Perfumed oils were applied to the skin for either cosmetic or medicinal purposes. During the Old and Middle Kingdoms, perfumes were reserved exclusively for religious rituals such as cleansing ceremonies. During the New Kingdom (1580-1085 BC), they were used during festivals and Egyptian women also used perfumed creams and oils as toiletries.

Archaeologists discovered the oldest form of known perfume in Cyprus which dated back to 4000 years ago. A cuneiform tablet from Mesopotamia, dating back more than three thousand years, identifies a woman named Tapputi as the first recorded perfume maker. Perfumes were also found in India at the time.

Persian and Arab chemists helped codify the production of perfume and its use spread throughout the world of classical antiquity. The use of perfume then spread to Greece, Rome, and the Islamic world. It was the Muslim world that kept the traditions of perfume alive during this time and helped trigger its revival with the onset of international trade. Perfume started becoming much more popular in the 12th Century when the international trade started booming and only then did the decline of perfume stop and enjoy much success in Europe.

Middle Ages

If you were anybody in Europe from the 1200s to about the 1600s, you carried a pomander which was a ball of scented materials, kept inside a lovely open case, and used to ward off infection and keep the air around you clean. Since medieval times, Europeans literally thought that bad air could make you sick (it's called the theory of the miasma, which postulated that diseases were thought to be suspended in badly scented, unhealthy air). These little baubles were seen as life-savers as well as charming accessories.

The whole idea of this portable perfume seems to have popped up in the Middle Ages after Crusaders, returning from holy wars in Arabia, also brought back their enemies' perfume-making secrets. Even though the idea of personal oil-based perfumes didn't catch on, they discovered that civet, castor, musk, ambergris and other animal-based products made great bases for scents, and carried scent bags or sachets to perfume their clothes. But the first alcohol-based perfume was created in this period and it was known as Hungary Water, because it was believed to have been created for the Queen of Hungary during the 14th century, and involved distilled alcohol and herbs.

Another serious breakthrough in perfume production came from medieval Italy, when they discovered how to create aqua mirabilis, a clear substance made of 95 percent alcohol and imbued with strong scent. And thus, was liquid perfume born. After this invention, Italy and Venice in particular became the centre of the world for perfume trade for several hundred years.

Changing tastes and the development of modern chemistry laid the foundations of perfumery as we know it today. Alchemy gave way to chemistry and new fragrances were created. The French Revolution had in no way diminished the taste for perfume, there was even a fragrance called "Parfum a la Guillotine."

Modern Day Perfume

Under the post-revolutionary government, people once again dared to express a penchant for luxury goods, including perfume. A profusion of vanity boxes containing perfumes appeared in the 19th century.

With the turn of the century fragrance houses emerged in Europe. The Crown Perfumery was founded in 1872 by William Sparks Thomson. Catering to the high society in London and Europe, he launched a collection of floral fragrances called Flower Fairies. Queen Victoria granted the Crown Perfumery her own crown's image to top the fragrance bottles.

Modern perfumery began in the 20th century, and was dominated by synthetic essences that give unique notes to fragrances and from the invention of aldehydes fragrances. In Europe, as well as in America, fragrances became real artworks and original creations of couturier perfumes were sold worldwide.

In 1921, Couturier Gabrielle Chanel launched her own brand of perfume, created by Ernest Beaux. She calls it Chanel No.5 because it was the fifth in a line of fragrances Ernest Beaux presented her. Ernest Beaux was the first perfumer to use aldehydes regularly in perfumery.

The most famous scents of that era were given evocative names that recall precise feelings, because now what matters is the message that is transmitted with them. The first men's eau de toiles also came out: they were initially used as aftershaves, but only later they became authentic perfumes.

In 2000, the history of perfume came to a profusion of different fragrances that were increasingly aimed at consumers trying to meet their needs.

The most renowned Italian and international stylists begin to realize their own fragrances. The success of Made in Italy as a synonymous of style and elegance contributes to strengthening the influence of the country in the production of perfumes all around the world.

Perfume Today

The recent popularity of celebrity fragrances has also made an impact on the industry although most experts do not expect the trend to last. Today there are over 30,000 designer perfumes on the market and perfumes are no longer for the wealthy. The perfume industry has undergone several changes in technique, material and style. These have all created the modern fragrance industry, one that still incorporates creativity, mystique and romance along with marketing to appeal to the masses.

Although niche perfume makers remain to cater to the very rich, perfumes today enjoy widespread use—and not just among women. The selling of perfume, however, is no longer just the purview of perfume makers. In the 20th century, clothing designers began marketing their own lines of scents, and almost any celebrity with a lifestyle brand can be found hawking a perfume with their name on it.

So just remember the next time you're spraying on your favourite perfume, you're actually involving yourself in a 5000 year old tradition that evolved from flowers and animal fats to chemically induced fragrances. However, as we wait and see what perfume and fragrances evolve into in the near future, let's all take a deep breath and enjoy the smell!



GUCCI
timepieces & jewellery



TAKE A BREATH^{ER} IN KAJANG

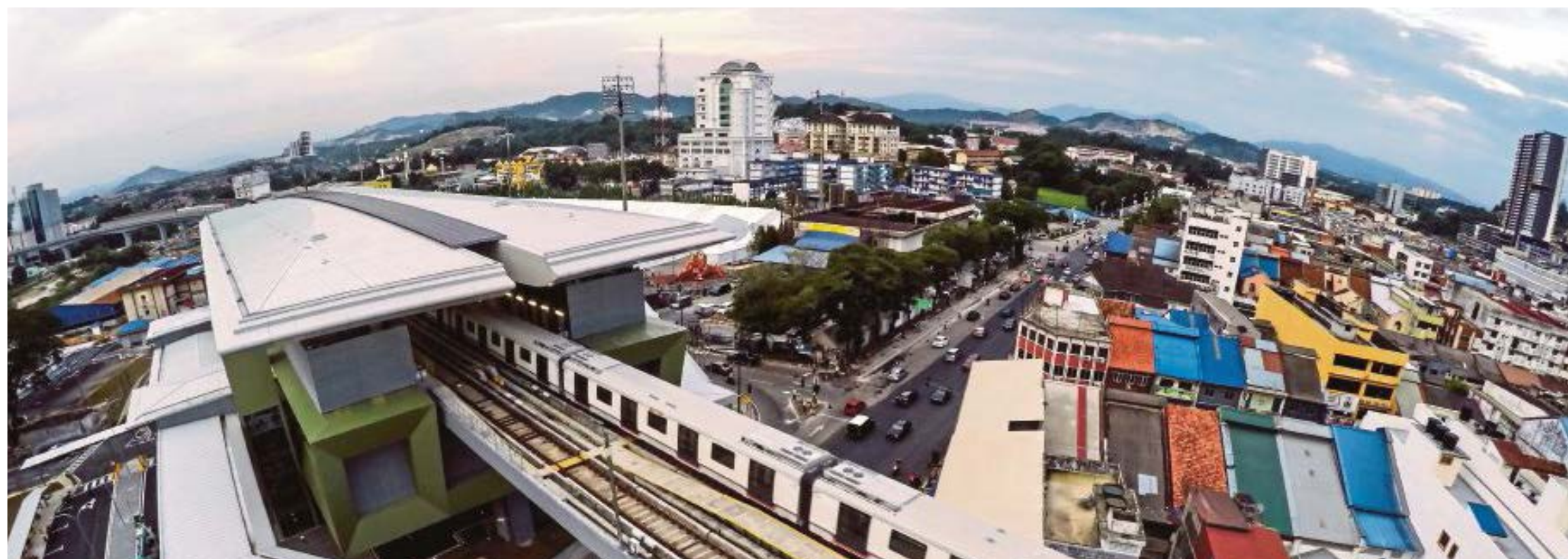
When speaking of the town of Kajang, its local delicacy of satay would instantly come to mind. Malaysians tend to take pride in towns and cities that are known for its delicacies, and thus Kajang — despite being a 30-minute drive from Kuala Lumpur — tends to get its fair share of tourist regularly. One of the many towns in Selangor, Kajang is located on the eastern banks of the Langat River and is surrounded by Cheras, Semenyih, Bangi, Putrajaya and Serdang.

Over the years, the quiet town of Kajang had developed a few townships of its own. These are Taman Prima Saujana, Sungai Chua and Taman Kajang Perdana (Kajang Highlands). Meanwhile, Twin Palms, Sri Banyan, Country Heights, Jade Hills, TTDI Groove, Tropicana Heights and Prima Paramount are amongst the more elite and high-end developments that can be found in Kajang — all of which are accessible through the SILK Expressway.

While it might receive numerous visitors, the town of Kajang is still not seen as a place beyond being the hub where finger-licking good satays can be found. What tourists and visitors might not know is that this town has quite a number of hidden gems within its grasps.

For instance, with institutions such as the likes of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, German-Malaysian Institute, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur, Universiti Kuala Lumpur and Open University Malaysia, Kajang is developing into an education hub with lightning speed.

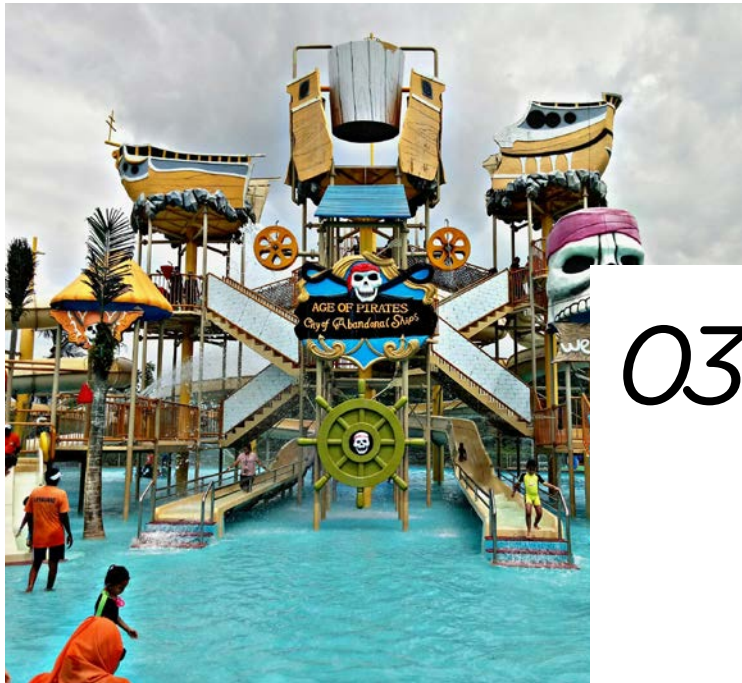
Thus, beyond it being a food hub, Kajang holds various interesting facts and places to be discovered by tourists from all over the country. On that note, we will be listing down the top five exciting and best tourist places that will be useful for your next trip to Kajang.





01 Kajang Jamek Mosque

Kajang Jamek Mosque, or commonly known by locals as Masjid Jamek, is one of the landmarks of the town. Located in the centre of town, Masjid Jamek has turned into an icon of Kajang for its beautifully designed minarets and domes — making it not just a place of worship, but also as one of the main tourist attractions in the town.



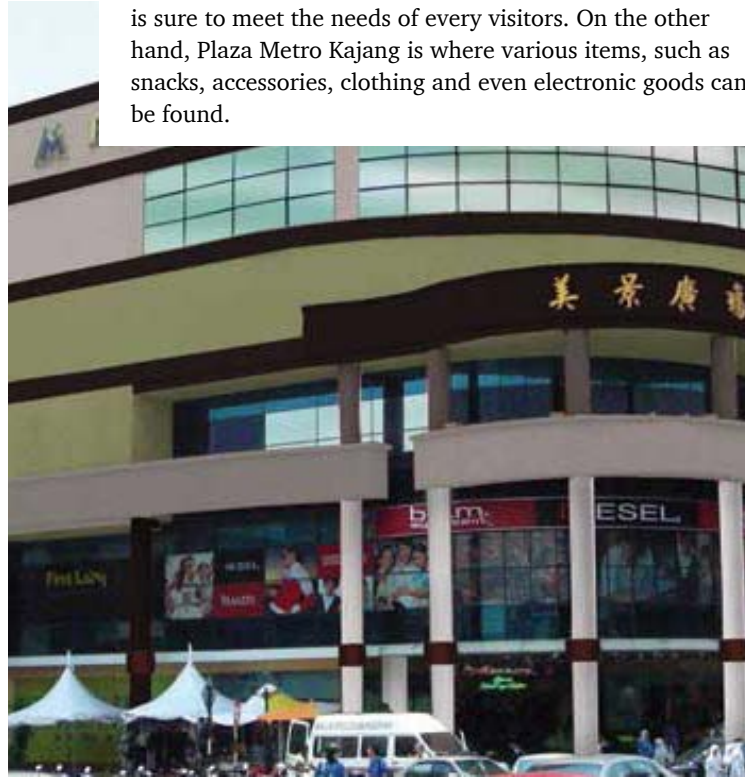
03 Bangi Wonderland Theme Park and Resort

Apart from having its own malls, another hidden gem that Kajang has to offer is its very own water theme park. Officially launched in 2016, Bangi Wonderland Theme Park and Resort boasts a total of 16 rides such as Kids Adventure, Water Cannon, Insane Racer, Pirates Spa and — a favourite of both adults and children alike — the Magic Funnel. The water theme park even offers cosy cabanas for visitors to rest in between rides or to stay overnight in with families and friends.

02 Shopping Malls

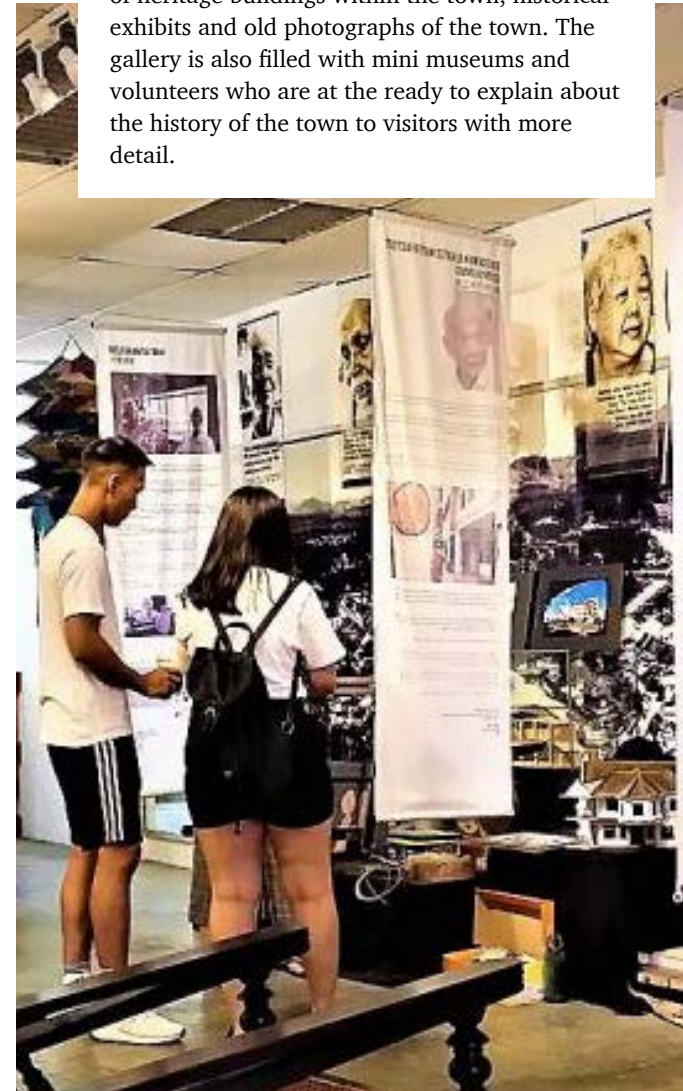
Unbeknownst to many, Kajang has its own array of major shopping centres to choose from — mainly Metro Point Complex, De Centrum Mall and Plaza Metro Kajang. Metro Point Complex is the latest mall to be developed in the town. It boasts entertainment centres that are suitable for both friends and family outings such as Ding Dong Wonderland, Ampang Superbowl, and My Kidz Playground.

Meanwhile, De Centrum Mall houses over 120 stores that is sure to meet the needs of every visitors. On the other hand, Plaza Metro Kajang is where various items, such as snacks, accessories, clothing and even electronic goods can be found.



04 Kajang Heritage Centre

For those who are interested in getting to know the history of Hulu Langat District and the town of Kajang, the Kajang Heritage Centre is just the place for it. The gallery showcases mini models of heritage buildings within the town, historical exhibits and old photographs of the town. The gallery is also filled with mini museums and volunteers who are at the ready to explain about the history of the town to visitors with more detail.



05 Satay Kajang Haji Samuri Restaurant

The list of attractions in Kajang will not be complete without the mention of at least one renowned satay restaurant within the town. Kajang is known for its many satay stalls and restaurants around the area. However, the most talked about and visited satay restaurant would be the Satay Kajang Haji Samuri Restaurant in Kajang. The favourite of many, the restaurant serves an array of meat to choose from. Its menu includes the usual chicken and beef satay, with an exquisite choice of mutton satay, fish satay, rabbit satay, and even beef tripe satay that aims to spoil both tourists and locals alike.



With rapid developments progressing within the towns around it — such as Semenyih and Bangi — Kajang is set to become one of the major metropolises in the southern part of the Klang Valley. With the completion of the Sungai Besi-Ulu Kelang Elevated Expressway (SUKE) in 2020, Kajang is sure to be more developed as a means to increase its growth potential — thus establishing itself as an ideal town where tourists and visitors are able to wind down and have a break from the clutter of the capital city. **I**


100
TOP YOUNG CEO
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-  FOOD & BEVERAGES INDUSTRY

