

SME WEEKLY NEWS

(10 October 2016 – 14 October 2016)

Countries	Highlights
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>Mustapa urges SMEs to register</p>	<p>MITI has urged SMEs which have yet to register their businesses, to do so to qualify for various assistances including capital loan to expand their businesses. By not registering their businesses with the Companies Commission of Malaysia, it had made it difficult for SME Corp. Malaysia to help them. Currently, the SMEs' export contribution to the country is 17% while 24% out of the 645,000 SMEs have successfully exported their products. The figure must be increased through the involvement of more SMEs to capitalise on a bigger market, subsequently increasing their contribution to the country's gross domestic product.</p> <p><i>(Source: The Star Online, 10 October 2016)</i></p>
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>HLB and MBAN team up to help startups</p>	<p>Hong Leong Bank Bhd (HLB) and Malaysian Business Angel Network (MBAN) have announced a collaboration to support local technology entrepreneurs and startups. The bank's focus on SMEs makes it the ideal collaborator with MBAN to support the entrepreneurial and young startups community. HLB and MBAN are also rolling out a mentorship programme called the HLB LaunchPad by the end of 2016 which is aimed at nurturing startups from pitch to grant. While the specific details are still being worked out, HLB is working with MBAN to select about five startups in 2017 (working in the digital banking sphere or related technology) to provide grants with the value of RM25,000 each and help to mentor them from idea to commercialisation.</p> <p><i>(Source: The Star Online, 14 October 2016)</i></p>
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>Help SMEs train workers, Government urged</p>	<p>The Government should give financial incentives or assistance to SMEs to help train their workers. Most of the SMEs were reluctant to equip their workers with skills and knowledge as it involved extra costs. Although the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) scheme was introduced in July 2009, many of the SMEs were not qualified under the scheme. Former President of SME Association, Teh Kee Sin said that SMEs are not looking at the long-term benefit of having skilled workers in their companies. He hoped the Government would come out with a special scheme to assist SMEs in providing training to their workers, especially for those who did not qualify for the HRDF. In order for the country to become a high-income nation, between 50% and 60% of its workforce should be skilled workers like in Germany, Japan, Singapore and South Korea. Also, private sector should be allowed to open technical training centers with financial assistance and recognition from the Government to provide training.</p> <p><i>(Source: The Star Online, 13 October 2016)</i></p>
<p>THAILAND</p> <p>Jack Ma eyes Thai e-commerce, e-payment, tourism</p>	<p>Alibaba Group founder and executive chairman, Jack Ma is eyeing Thailand's e-commerce and e-payment businesses and offered to help screen Chinese visitors. He eyed SMEs, which make up more than 90% of Thai operators, planning to provide them with chances to export their products through a jointly developed platform. Alibaba would train Thai business people and SMEs on e-commerce. He will also introduce e-commerce courses together with the Thai government and local schools to enable Thai students to develop their start-ups. He also expressed his intention to develop an effective e-payment system with the Thai government, focusing on fraud prevention.</p> <p><i>(Source: Tempo.Co, 14 October 2016)</i></p>

<p>SINGAPORE</p> <p>UOB to launch online marketplace for SMEs to buy business essentials at bulk prices</p>	<p>UOB will launch an online marketplace for its SMEs customers to purchase a wide range of business essential which includes travel, stationery, general insurance as well as courier and logistics services. Key benefit of this marketplace is the cost savings which SMEs will be able to enjoy from bulk-purchase deals negotiated by the bank with suppliers. UOB will be working in partnership with cloudBuy, a global provider of cloud-based e-commerce and business-to-business (B2B) solutions, to create this one-stop virtual shop in the first quarter of 2017. This marks the first time that a bank in Singapore will create a B2B marketplace. Through this new virtual marketplace, customers will be able to enjoy good bargains with collective bulk purchases. This will help them to address the challenge of rising business costs. As the B2B marketplace will showcase products and services from different suppliers, SMEs will also be able to make purchases online conveniently without having to request for numerous and separate price quotations.</p> <p><i>(Source: Straits Time, 13 October 2016)</i></p>
<p>PHILIPPINES</p> <p>Loanpinas.com gives SMEs access to credit</p>	<p>Banks can now peek into the database of more than 300,000 SMEs in the Philippines, via a newly launched portal aimed at helping the SMEs gain access to finance. Lack of access to financing, technology, raw materials and markets have been a perennial problem of SMEs – with very few able to survive beyond three to five years. The business-to-business online portal, Loanpinas.com, gives SMEs the opportunity to register and post loan requests online. The database will be made available to banks and other lending institutions that subscribe to Loanpinas.com. The portal has a one-click loan request that goes straight to a lender. It also has an accessible repository of company documents. Premium members also get access to markets.</p> <p><i>(Source: Manila Times, 11 October 2016)</i></p>

WHERE THERE'S A WILL



Ho Yew Pun, the founder of Bodibasixs Manufacturing, knew nothing about making personal care products, and yet he managed to build a company that exports to over 20 countries and makes over RM50mil in revenue every year. Before he started the company in 1995, Ho spent umpteen years as the branch manager of a finance company. Then, his familiarity with the hardware business naturally prompted him to consider going into the manufacture of hardware goods like nuts and bolts. But after spending five years doing research into the manufacturing processes as he worked for his father, Ho decided that it would be much better to make personal care products instead.

Ho had a big hurdle to surmount, but he had the people to help him make it happen. A key person who helped him was Goh Ser Heng, who is today the company's non-executive director. Then a factory manager at a pharmaceutical company suggested that Ho go into contract manufacturing for personal care products. He was also the person who helped Ho to set up his manufacturing line.

Bodibasixs was formed in 1995 and operated out of a one-acre factory in Shah Alam with a staff of eight. The company began with just one manufacturing line for talcum powder. To try and secure their first orders, they brought over 10 potential clients, including multinational companies (MNCs), to tour the factory. Bodibasixc has since grown from strength to strength. In the financial year ending 30 June 2016, the company achieved revenue of RM58 million, compared to RM50 million previously.

Today, Bodibasixs has over 60 brand owners as clients, including hypermarkets, pharmacy chain stores, MNCs and local brand owners. They manufacture over 12 type of products and export over 40% of their products to Australia, New Zealand, Japan, India, the Middle East and South-East Asia. Moving forward, Lee says they are looking at automating more of the processes at the factory, while maintaining the room for customisation for their diverse clientele.

(Source: The Star, 10 October 2016)

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