

theSME magazine

THE BUSINESS TIMES

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“IT’S MORE ABOUT
INCREASING THE REACH
THAN INCREASING
THE RANGE.”

– ESTHER LOO, MARKETING MANAGER OF
TAI SUN (LIM KEE) FOOD INDUSTRIES

Photography: Ching, GreenPlasticSoldiers Styling: Dan Foo Hair & Makeup: Granel Loh, using Clinique Wardrobe: Jacket stylist's own



THE IMPORTANCE OF INNOVATION

THE term “innovation” has been raised time and again. In an increasingly difficult business environment, companies need to innovate in order to succeed.

What is innovation however? And how can SMEs employ innovation to thrive? In Top Story, Charlie Ang of The Innovators Institute posits that the business models of Singapore’s small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are on their last legs. Process innovation – aka improving productivity – is no longer enough to set a business apart from its competitors, says Mr Ang. Businesses need to scale higher and faster, and innovate their product/service offering. Startups are already at the business model innovation phase, and are light years ahead of SMEs.

The good news is that this is something that both the public and private sectors are aware of. Indeed, with the ground work – why it is important to innovate – firmly established, they are now kicking the “how” into high gear. DBS Bank has, for instance, through its Disrupt@The Bay series made matches between SMEs and startups. Triple, which manages the Under Armour franchise in South-east Asia, is one such benefactor. It was introduced to Australian startup, arcade, and now uses game theory to motivate staff.

Meanwhile, our Budding Entrepreneur Outofstock is an example of how business models are being reimagined. The founders of the company work out of three different cities around the world and are actively disrupting the way that designers usually do the job.

The other mega trend that SMEs need to be aware of is big data. Indeed, some SMEs have already started taking considerable initiative in applying data intelligently in business decisions.

In Smart Capital, we look at some of the ways where big data can be less daunting to implement, and be a stepping stone to increase your market share and outmanoeuvre your competition.

Legal Adviser and Space meanwhile delve right into services that SMEs may think they can skip on. After all, with the plethora of information available online, is it not cheaper to simply collate the data on your own? Not so. When businesses create their own documents such as conditions of sales or invoice terms by cutting and pasting from various sources, they may find themselves in a dispute in court. The source of the dispute? A poorly drafted document, or because the parties used a document meant for another purpose.

What about property valuation? Despite the easy availability of property and transaction information online, businesses need to realise that online data is meant only to act as a general guide and not replace professional opinion. Read more in Space.

And then there is our *Towkay*, homegrown brand, Tai Sun. Family businesses have been in the limelight in recent years as succession becomes an increasingly pertinent issue. Apart from the ordinary stresses that companies face, family businesses have the added relationship tangles that families bring. Tai Sun has all three generations working together under one roof. Find out how they make it work.

These are some of the big trends in the market today. We hope you find this overview useful.

Mindy Tan
EDITOR



ON THE COVER

Photography: Ching, GreenPlasticSoldiers
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