

PERSISTING DESPITE DISRUPTIONS

WE ARE now in the second half of 2017. By any measure, it has been quite a mixed year for Singapore's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The economy seems to be on the road to recovery, but the uncertainty on the international front such as the fate of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact and the One Belt One Road initiative has caused businesses to keep a wary eye out for any potential disruptions that may throw a spanner in the works.

In business, there are many factors that we cannot control. But enterprises which choose to set aside their immediate concerns about the bottom line to make a positive social impact in their community by giving their time and resources should be applauded.

In this issue's Top Story, we showcase some ways that SMEs here choose to do good, be it through a social media platform to make donations easier, a social enterprise that employs disadvantaged women, or even an impact investment fund. One thing that these inspirational entrepreneurs have in common is the will to persist when progress is slow.

In the same vein, our Towkay this issue is Kuik Shiao-yin, co-founder and director of The Thought Collective, a group of social enterprises. She may be best known as a current Nominated Member of Parliament, but her entrepreneurial journey which started in 2002 is quite an eye-opener for those interested in what it takes to sustain a business without funding. She candidly shares

her experiences, challenges and mistakes made along the way.

This issue offers a variety of different topics that matter to the local SME. In Budding Entrepreneur, we take a look at blu, a Singapore-based startup specialising in retail technology and logistics, and find out how the company is competing with the big boys. In Cutting Edge, two early childhood education centres share how they differentiate themselves from the pack.

In Space, we explore the future of the workplace where office developments are expected to become more flexible, efficient and sustainable, while promoting employee well-being.

And as always, we have practical advice from our specialists. In Smart Capital, we examine how SMEs can move beyond traditional risk management to take a holistic and coordinated approach that optimises risk management performance. In today's increasing need for compliance, this should come in handy.

In Legal Adviser, lawyers from Rajah & Tann look at what lies ahead for the Asean Economic Community. For companies keen on internationalisation in the region, don't miss their take on whether a truly single, integrated market is likely to happen.

We hope this issue comes in useful for you.

Vivien Shiao
EDITOR

Photography: Ching, GreenPlasticSoldiers Styling: JC Hair & Makeup: Sharon Poo from Living Beauty Wardrobe: H&M



ON THE COVER

Photography: Ching, GreenPlasticSoldiers
Stylist: Jonathan Chia
Grooming: Hongling using Schwarzkopf Professional OSIS+ and MAC cosmetics
Wardrobe: Kuik Shiao-yin's own

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EDITOR **Vivien Shiao** vsiao@sph.com.sg CREATIVE EDITOR **Adeline Woon** ART DIRECTOR **Gareth Chung**
DESIGNER **Hyrie Rahmat** PHOTOGRAPHERS **Yen Meng Jiin, Kelvin Chng** CONTRIBUTORS **Rachel Mui, Claudia Chong, Jonathan Ho, Lim How Kiat, Duncan White, Chester Toh, Tan Jen Lee, Chuang Peck Ming**

EDITORIAL PROJECTS: GENERAL MANAGER **Michael Chua** chuamc@sph.com.sg

MARKETING: SENIOR GROUP ACCOUNT MANAGERS **Lam Wy-Ning** lamwn@sph.com.sg **Jaclyn Sim** simahj@sph.com.sg

Contributions/feedback should be sent in via email to btnews@sph.com.sg

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