

Good brand key to SMEs competing globally

PETALING JAYA: A good brand is key to forging globally competitive small and medium-scale enterprises (SME), said [SME Corp](#) Malaysia [chairman Datuk Mohamed Al Amin Abdul Majid](#).

Speaking at the fourth Malaysia SME Congress here, he urged local business owners to apply for certification by the National Mark of the Malaysian Brand, which would “lead to the growth of your business and ultimately bring about a positive impact to our nation's economic progress.”

The certification scheme was developed by SME Corp together with [Sirim QAS International Sdn Bhd](#) to enhance the visibility of Malaysian products and services and to change the perception that they were inferior.

The country's SMEs form the backbone of the economy, making up 99% of total active businesses, which contribute to 32% of gross domestic product.



Mohamed says local business owners should apply for certification by the National Mark of the Malaysian Brand.

SMEs also command a 56% share of total employment as well as 19% of exports.

At the conference, entrepreneur John William Xavier, who is managing director of The [Big Rajah Food Caterers Sdn Bhd](#), had the audience in stitches when he touched on the topic of innovation.

What he lacked in resources, Xavier made up for in inventiveness by asking his driver to take the company truck back and forth on the highway in a bid to increase his brand visibility.

When he later owned three trucks, he sent them all out on the highway at the same to make a big impression.

On the importance of customer service, Xavier recalled that his dad had a poster on the wall that read: “If you don't take care of your customer, somebody else will”.

“Basically running a business is not that difficult. If you follow some basic principles, you can achieve all that you set out to do.

“I also realised, if you don't take care of your wife, somebody else will,” he said to hoots of laughter. “It's the same principle.”

Staffing, he added, was the “heartbeat of the company.”

“You've got to love the guys. You are where you are because of them. Without them, you are nobody. I try to make good deposits' with them. Take them out for lunches, dinners, appreciate them,” Xavier said.

He cited the story of a man who gave a dog a treat after the animal fetched his morning paper. The next morning, the man found that the dog had brought him eight newspapers, which it took from the neighbours, because he had made a “good deposit”.

Chatime Malaysia [managing director Bryan Loo](#), meanwhile, stressed that persistence was an important quality.

“Two years ago, if you told me I was going to sell bubble tea, I would not have believed you,” he told conference participants.

Nonetheless, he saw a gap in the market for tea beverages and decided to cultivate a tea drinking culture in Malaysia.

Loo, who opened his first Chatime outlet at the Pavilion shopping centre, stressed that the “challenges were numerous”.

“All the malls were so reluctant to give me a permanent space and only rented out their low traffic areas,” he lamented, adding that the first store was only a “pitiful” 150 sq ft.

There are now 53 outlets of the Taiwanese bubble tea brand across the country.