

WOMEN IN ECONOMY CONFERENCE

**Rethinking
Entrepreneurship
for Today's
Women**



Conference Proceedings

24th–25th September 2018

**Ixora Hotel
Seberang Perai, Penang**

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Executive Summary



Women in Economy Conference

**Ixora Hotel,
Seberang Perai**

24th–25th September 2018

The Women in Economy Conference held at Ixora Hotel, Seberang Perai, from 24th–25th September 2018, was jointly organised by the Penang Women's Development Corporation (PWDC) and the Penang State Government, in collaboration with the Bahagian Perancang Ekonomi Negeri Pulau Pinang (BPEN), City Council of Penang Island (MBPP), Seberang Perai Municipal Council (MPSP), Sunshine Wholesale Mart Sdn Bhd, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Penang Institute (PI), WomenBizSENSE, National Association of Women Entrepreneurship of Malaysia (NAWEM) and Junior Chamber International Pearl (JCI Pearl). The Conference attracted more than 600 delegates, invited speakers, panelists, facilitators, and exhibitors from leading members from the government, private sector (small and medium enterprises), academia, expert practitioners, civil societies and communities.

Focusing on the theme of "Rethinking Entrepreneurship for Today's Women", the Conference achieved its aim to be a meeting place for the various stakeholders to strategise policies and develop programmes that support and empower women in the economy. The conference created space for interaction and action planning, as well as tools sharing, lesson learning, new working collaboration and platform building with the aim to engage more women and advocate for gender equity in the economy. Each participant paid a registration fee of RM100. With more than 88 percent female participation, a majority of the delegates attended by invitation. About 200 participants were members of the public, whereas the rest were from the private sector. The breakdown of delegates by ethnicity is as follows: 51% Malay, 38% Chinese, 9% Indian, and 2% Other.

About the Women in Economy Conference

Women make up half of the world's population. Yet, according to UN Women, the world Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for women in 2015 was 49.6% in comparison to the men, which was 76.1%. In Malaysia, data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia showed that the Female LFPR has gradually increased from about 46% in 2010 to 54.7% in 2017. However, Malaysia still has one of the lowest Female LFPR among ASEAN countries.

Many factors including globalisation, digital innovation, climate change, socioeconomic and cultural issues will continue to affect the way we work. Although many more women are likely to enter the global labour force in the near future, is their economic potential fully realised? Imagine a world where women played an identical role to men in the labour markets. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2017 by World Economic Forum, the world, as a whole, could increase global GDP by US\$5.3 trillion by 2025, by closing the gender gap in economic participation by 25% over the same period.

To help bridge the gap, the Women in Economy Conference was held to convene influential stakeholders and leading members from all public and private communities working towards the common aim of building a sustainable economy for the women in Penang.

Besides looking at getting more women to participate in the economy, the Conference also attempted to better understand the main barriers to improving and optimising women's full potential, and how to overcome those barriers. The Women in Economy Conference was guided by the



United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; Goal No. 5 to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” and Goal No. 8 to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

Throughout the conference, two keynote speeches, one panel discussion, three panel presentations and two working sessions with three concurrent breakout groups were held to promote participation, engagement and contribution from all delegates. A business mapping platform was also held to allow delegates to meet and discuss potential collaboration. The conference concluded with two plenary sessions on the sharing of the tools and methodologies to support women in the economy, as well as consolidation of participants’ recommendations to empower women in the economy in a sustainable manner.

Objectives

Building on the theme “Rethinking Entrepreneurship for Today’s Women” within the context of developing women’s potential to achieve sustainable economy development, the Women in Economy Conference succeeded in fulfilling its objectives of exploring what is economy to women. The Conference also raised awareness on current and new initiatives and partnerships that enables the access of women in the informal sector to income generating opportunities. Another objective was met in the sharing of best practices and lessons learned, where the collective knowledge on women in the economy was advanced. Lastly, the working sessions provided opportunities for the organisers, strategic partners and collaborators to identify the current gaps and challenges that women face in trying to contribute to the economy, which are instrumental in the formulation of strategies to overcome the barriers to gender equity in the economy.



Welcoming Speech



**Yang Berhormat
Puan Chong Eng**
EXCO for Women and
Family Development,
Gender Inclusiveness and
Religions Other than Islam

YB Puan Chong Eng warmly greeted the room of potential game-changers who can make a difference to Penang's economy in the near future, especially the first woman Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Dato Seri Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

According to Puan Chong, having a woman Deputy Prime Minister is one of Malaysia's most significant milestones in achieving gender parity, and she hopes that our country will continue to progress in this aspect, for she believes that when a society acknowledges the contributions of women, the nation will prosper to even greater heights.

Puan Chong stated that when the idea for the conference was conceived, she had no doubt that it would be one where successful entrepreneurs could get together to share their experiences in the world of entrepreneurship. She then explained the main objectives of the conference, which are to expand the discussion on what economy means to women, to expand existing businesses, to explore initiatives, and to form partnerships in order to generate more lucrative business opportunities.

Through the platform that had been established by means of the Conference, Puan Chong stressed that the community of women entrepreneurs should be able to identify the gaps and challenges, and then formulate strategies to overcome these barriers to enable even more women to succeed equally in the economy.

Puan Chong then expressed her hope that the Conference will effectively chart the course to uplift women into financial independence. This was followed by an expression of deep appreciation to all of the collaborators and strategic partners of the Conference, for without them, none of it would have been possible.

Puan Chong cited the 2015 economic census by Department of Statistics Malaysia, which states that one in five companies are owned by women, but many are micro-enterprises with limited capital. This is tied in with the societal perception that women play the traditional role as homemakers, and as such, the lack of resources and being tied down with unpaid work remain the main inhibitors for women to participate actively in the economy.

The gender disparities impact women negatively, limit their entrepreneurial activities and depress economic growth. Therefore, unleashing the economic power of women is key to achieving growth, sustainability, and gender equality.

Thus, she says, this mission is guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, where Goal No. 5 is to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" and Goal No. 8, which is to "promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."

Puan Chong then mentioned that for women to succeed and for us to achieve gender equality, men must be willing to give their support. She called to memory the old adage that "beside every successful man is a supportive woman", likewise "beside every successful woman is a supportive man". Puan Chong took the opportunity to thank the Chief Minister of Penang, The Right Honourable Mr. YAB. Tuan Chow Kon Yeow, for being gender-sensitive and fully supportive towards women initiatives in the state.





Continuing with the speech, Puan Chong then remarked on the versatility of women when it comes to surviving. She stated that many women begin their small business ventures such as selling nasi lemak or providing babysitting services out of a necessity to survive. Thus, it is established that women naturally have the ability to think creatively, which is exactly what is needed in entrepreneurship.

The gender parity can be achieved in the family when women are able to have their own source of income, which will enable them to have a bigger role in household decision making, including managing the household income, investing with the surplus, and ensuring that their children's education is secured.

Puan Chong emphasised how greater gender parity can have a profound impact on the well-being of the family, in addition to increasing per capita household income and expenditure. She stated that engaging in economic activities allow women to step out from their homes and have a wider social support and network, and that will have a positive impact on their self-esteem and outlook, which is the strongest form of empowerment.

Puan Chong then invited the audience to spend the next two days together to share and learn from each other. She urged them to discuss new ideas, suggestions, examples, hopes and aspirations to achieve the common goal of Rethinking Entrepreneurship for Today's Women.

She also stated that for many of the attendees, the theme of the Conference will help us reflect and adjust our own way of thinking and working, enabling us to be more open, responsive and creative in our collaborations and entrepreneur pursuit.

In the final moments of her speech, Puan Chong expressed her hope that through the Conference, the attendees will be able to build and strengthen their networks and form lasting partnerships with the different organisations and business people in attendance.



Opening Address



**Yang Amat Berhormat
Tuan Chow Kon Yeow**
Chief Minister of Penang

YAB. Tuan Chow Kon Yeow began by warmly greeting every delegate with great pride because of the opportunity to be in a hall bustling with entrepreneurs, especially women entrepreneurs, who are strong players in Penang's economy.

He then introduced Dato' Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, the first woman Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia whom he held with high regard, and with whom he shared historic milestones with in Malaysian politics.

YAB. Tuan Chow called to attention the words of the renowned psychologist, Albert Bandura, who believed that a person's behaviour influences and is influenced by personal characteristics and the social environment. Known as the theory of "Reciprocal Determinism", he shared that this theory suggests that a person's behaviour can be conditioned through consequences in the environment, which then changes the way one thinks and acts, and impacts one's surroundings in a reciprocal way.

In simple terms, he explained, once the barriers for women to succeed are removed, there will be a substantial shift in realizing what women can contribute as equals. If, for instance, women are hesitant to participate in the economy due to various challenges, providing a positive environment that is conducive for development and growth will definitely encourage them to step up and lean in. This positive action will reciprocate a change of behaviour and will allow women to contribute actively to the economy.

YAB. Tuan Chow then referred to a report published by the McKinsey Global Institute, which stated that by advancing women's equality, US\$12 trillion could be included to global GDP by 2025. In a "full potential" scenario, as much as US\$28 trillion, or 26%, could be added to annual global GDP.

He also read out the following statement from the report: "Gender inequality is not only a pressing moral and social issue but also a critical economic challenge. If women – who account for half the world's working-age population – do not achieve their full economic potential, the global economy will suffer."

YAB. Tuan Chow went on to define sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Sustainable development is upheld by three pillars: economy, environment and society, which are informally referred to as profits, planet and people. These three pillars, together with the discussion on realising gender equality have equivalent and interrelated importance in achieving sustainable development goals, which are the aspiration of the United Nations and certainly, for Penang as well.

YAB. Tuan Chow reiterated that the Penang State Government has continuously addressed many issues with a people-centric stance that is based on the principles of competency, accountability and transparency. The State government is extremely committed to achieve sustainable development goals, which includes promoting decent work and economic growth. He cautioned that many competitive forces will continue to demand competencies in entrepreneurship skills. In order to attain these competencies, efforts will be engineered to drive the focus on learning, quality of delivery, strategic partnership and gender inclusiveness, to achieve growth and sustainability.





He next referred to the World Economic Forum's 2017 Global Gender Gap Report, which stated that Malaysia was ranked 87 out of 144 countries for gender equality in economic participation and opportunity, which means that the nation is at the 60th percentile. Regionally, Malaysia only ranked higher than Indonesia.

YAB Tuan Chow continued to report that Malaysia's male labour force participation rate in 2017 stood at 80.1% while female labour force participation rate was at only 54.7%, which indicated a huge gender gap in labour force participation rate. However, women represent a huge pool of talent, and the Penang Government is steadfastly putting in place policies and programmes to ensure that more women are able to participate in the economic sphere. He qualified his statement by pointing out the presence of state and local government representatives at the Conference to identify, plan, implement, facilitate and enable women to succeed in entrepreneurship.

In the demographic structure of modern society, as more women receive higher education, the percentage of Penang's highly educated labour force has quadrupled over the past 30 years. In order to enable and empower well-educated women to move effectively into this space too, the Penang Government needs to create, fine-tune and strengthen the ecosystem.

YAB Tuan Chow shared that the state government had recently launched Penang 2030, an action plan that focuses on improving liveability, economy, civic participation, and societal resilience to achieve "A Family-Focused Green and Smart State that Inspires the Nation". One of the four themes had specifically called for upgrading the economy, that is to raise household incomes. Having more women in the workforce or be entrepreneurs will augur well in realizing this objective, which would also spur progress in social development.

Penang 2030 calls for the involvement of stakeholders from all levels of representation from the government, corporations, community, and public, in unison to push for economic, infrastructural and socio-cultural development in Penang.

The Penang Government is open to affiliating with like-minded associates to create awareness to build capacity and collaborate to empower women for entrepreneurship roles. Thus, all human resources available are needed to grow the state economy.



In closing, Chief Minister YAB. Tuan Chow Kon Yeow expressed his view that every delegate's presence was very consequential as they all embarked on a new journey of hope in supporting the Penang Government in implementing changes that will impact the future of the state and the country.

Keynote Address



**YAB Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah
Dr. Wan Ismail,**
Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia
cum Minister of Women, Family and
Community Development

"Behind every successful man, is the wife."

Dato' Seri Wan Azizah began her welcoming address about the many expectations of the new government since there is more freedom, less restriction on the press, politicians are openly criticised, and everyone is looking for a better Malaysia.

Fajr is dawn, the moment when the sun is about to rise, ushering in a new day. With this, she presented the Fajr Doctrine, which had been discussed and is a concept that is gaining traction. This doctrine frames how the new government sees the future of Malaysia and the future role of women in economy. As government, there is a need to strengthen democratic institutions and develop our society based on strong institutions. The strength of these institutions will come from their independence and the involvement of the people.

The current development approach, which has a strong partnership between the public sector (that creates the required policies and conditions and steps into areas where there are no profit incentives) and the private sector (that is profit driven and they create economic value). The public sector provides education, healthcare, public order, and security.

However, the strong public-private partnership comes with limitations as the public sector creates enormous bureaucracies, is criticised for being inefficient and is fiscally burdensome. The private sector will not go into areas with no profit potential, which often results in a vacuum in certain areas.

Dato' Seri Wan Azizah also pointed out that the current model of development results in the emergence of various social changes such as urban migration, the rising cost of living and the breakdown of the extended family structure that has led to many social ills and the creation of new challenges. Neither the state nor the private sector has been able to provide an effective response to many of these problems.

The Fajr Doctrine is presented against the image of a rising tide of a just and equitable development, as depicted by writer, Bakri Musa, which is a rising storm tide that leaves nobody behind but brings up the small as well as big vessels in the port. She emphasised that Malaysia Baru has to be able to plug the holes that currently leaves some people behind.

The emergence of non-state actors, which are non-governmental organisations, individual volunteers, local communities and social enterprises that provide services to marginalised segments, is important for the future of the country. The Fajr Doctrine envisions a future where non-state actors will be the third pillar of development. Driven by altruism and the desire to help others, they have shown that they can do more with less, and they are more responsive than state bureaucracies.

Dato' Seri Wan Azizah noted that resources are a key concern for non-state actors, which are often run by volunteers. Capital constraints can be an issue even for social enterprises. As such, the role of the state and the private sector is to provide more support for the non-state actors in the form of funding, volunteers and ideas.

Resource mediators, in the form of foundations, mediating technologies as well as other non-banking sources of funds, are an important component in the Fajr Doctrine. These resource mediators will be at the centre of the triangle linking the state, private sector and non-state actors. Dato' Seri Wan Azizah believes that the Fajr Doctrine provides an overarching framework in translating the ideas expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in empowering women and girls.

**“Be yourself,
be a woman,
and let’s go
and
change
the world.”**

Non-state actors have an important role to play as part of the mechanism for empowering women and girls, allowing them to migrate out of dependency and poverty to become prime movers of social change by the way of working together to create employment. Emphasizing on the need to progress from a dependent, handout culture or welfarism to one of a sustainable nature, she considers the Fajr Doctrine a guiding principle in enabling the people to take charge of their destinies. While helping people through welfare programmes will continue to be necessary, the ultimate goal is to get recipients to graduate out of welfare programmes.

Social entrepreneurship programmes will play an important role in this approach. With this approach, poverty reduction is not just about giving welfare handouts a la BR1M. Poverty reduction will be more about employment and wealth creation through social entrepreneurship and other programmes, whose primary aims are to get people out of poverty.

She then recounted her meeting with the Nobel prize winner from Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus, whose concept of “social business” is about pro-social goals and not profit, which to him, is the solution to social and environmental problems caused by a capitalist economy. For her, entrepreneurship holds a particular advantage for women, whose family duties make normal office hours sometimes difficult. Not surprisingly, business activities that rely on social networking such as Tupperware parties, Avon’s direct selling model and tontine schemes, more commonly known as main kutu in Malaysia, are popular among women.

Dato’ Seri Wan Azizah highlighted that in an innovation-driven work environment, leaders need to manage the team’s creative effort and work. Leadership is not simply about compliance and conformity. Managing creativity requires leaders who are able to provide a sense of direction, facilitate creative discourse, manage conflict and tap into the diversity of their team. Such a work environment requires leaders who are more empathetic, willing to listen and who value non-conformity.

Women are encouraged to embrace their femininity, their strong social networks and their sharper sense of emotional empathy, which makes them better leaders. She acknowledges that maintaining a work-life balance is difficult for most women, but they should not shun motherhood because of this challenge. The daily pressures and stress mothers experience can make them intellectualise their problems and trigger creative thinking.

To truly develop our society based on strong institutions, Dato’ Seri Wan Azizah restated that women play an important role in the economy, and more women are needed at the decision-making level. She calls for more capable women as activists to lead non-state actors and also for women in government as enablers for private and non-state actors.

Dato’ Seri Wan Azizah ended her keynote address with the following invitation: “Be yourself, be a woman, and let’s go and change the world.”



SESSION 1

Economic Pie - Every Woman Can Have a Share

The first session kicked off with a panel discussion made up of a moderator and speakers from a United Nations agency, the state government, the technology industry and the training industry, who shared their personal journeys as entrepreneurs.

Addressing the groups of women and men who are contemplating on starting a business, growing their businesses or who are interested to be products and services suppliers, the panel focused on how the federal and state governments, a corporate culture and the entrepreneurs themselves can create an enabling ecosystem with an emphasis on helping women in the informal sector to participate and have a fair share of the economy.

In the panel discussion, the speakers provided insight on business financing resources, developing a family-friendly corporate culture and the importance of emotional strength as women entrepreneurs.

Moderator: **Ms. Jun Fredda A Jabar**
Programme Manager, Inclusive Development and Growth, UNDP

Panelist 1: The Honourable Dr. Hajah Norlela Ariffin
Penang State Assemblyperson, Penanti



Penanti is a rural area, which has 33 traditional kampungs and about 8,000 people living in housing estates. As an assemblyperson, she is concerned about how to reach out to the rural economy, especially mothers and grandmothers who take care of children.

The premise is that the frugal economy, increasing cost of living, loss of jobs, unemployment, a slow job market, stagnant salaries, increasing costs of childcare and market downturn will last another 30 years. Her primary concern is how do you ensure the financial security and financial independence for women under a frugal economy?

By empowering women, Dr. Hajah Norlela did not refer to simply getting women into the workforce, or making it easy for women to have a piece of the “economic pie”. She believes that we empower women by listening to them and by problem solving specific issues they face through mentoring, technological innovation, automation, market creativity and by making the best product that captures the market. She then focused on the following key points:

The availability of financial support

Dr. Hajah Norlela suggested various initiatives such as:

- Program Usahawan Belia dan Wanita, which provides RM20,000 start-up grants to young entrepreneurs ages 40 years old and below;
- Rental grants up to RM2,000 per month for a year by SME Corp and
- Micro-credit loans by TEKUN, at 4% interest per annum, which are lower than loans by PDC (www.pdc.gov.my), which charges 8 percent interest in the second year.



She encouraged WIE participants to look up the various incentives available, and to approach the officers at the Ministry of Agriculture (MAHA is a grant-providing programme with a focus on women), MIDA (www.mida.gov.my) and MARA (Majlis Amanah Rakyat).

Small entrepreneurs should focus on one product and excel in it

Dr. Hajah Norlela presented the profiles of small entrepreneurs who found success with a single product offering, such as Sambal Garing Che Nor, who came up with the innovative idea of cooking batches of sambal garing (selling at RM10 per bottle), as an accompaniment for rice. She became a market leader in two years, and she had achieved a sales volume of RM6 million.

Another “mom-preneur” featured is DelimaQueen, who is a mother of seven children but managed deliveries and orders for pomegranates (buah delima) from Egypt, by using Facebook as her main platform. Working through social media, she can coordinate deliveries of up to 6,000 boxes of pomegranate.

Look for genuine technology and creative innovative mentors as guides

Dr. Hajah Norlela recommended Program Agropreneur Muda, Geran Mikro dan Geran High Impact Product (HIP) for interested entrepreneurs, because mentors are available to guide them.

Technology innovations for entrepreneurs

Marshita, who operated a car wash while selling *kuih badak*, is one of the successful entrepreneurs who benefited from technological innovations. Waking up at 4:00 am, the solo entrepreneur had been selling her handmade *kuih badak* for 20 years but after switching to automated production, she is now able to produce 5,000 pieces of *badak berendam* in 15 minutes.

Another successful female entrepreneur is Nur Diyana (Makmur Bakery Sdn Bhd) who makes butter cookies and faced a problem of sizing in packages. In the end, technology is her solution and she now has a custom-built packaging machine.

Short shelf life is another problem for home-based entrepreneurs, but retort technology is the solution to fresh soy milk for Muhamad Uzair from Megah Jati Resources.

Panelist 2: Ms. Goh Ai Ching

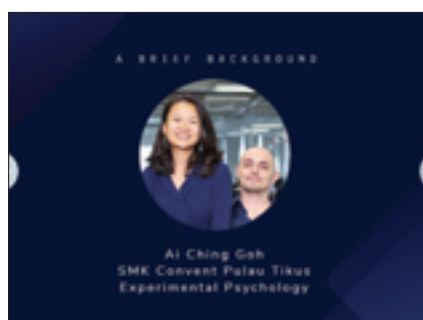
Co-Founder and CEO, Piktochart.com



At the beginning, Ms. Goh Ai Ching referred to Dato’ Seri Dr. Wan Azizah’s point that as women, “we can be ourselves and we can complement others in different organisations.”

Then, she recollected her career history in P&G but her “wings were clipped” due to the presence of red tape in big companies. Since she found varying corporate cultures in big companies, she thought, “Why not build my own?”

Her husband was in the technology industry while she was in marketing and sales. The husband-and-wife team are first time entrepreneurs but



are proud of the fact that it has been seven years since they started their own business.

The purpose behind Piktochart

With the motto “Create Beautiful Visuals Using Piktochart”, the company offers over 100 templates for non-designers who do not have the tools or skills. Based on research that communication design translates into increased revenue, profit and increased exports for companies, Piktochart offers design alternatives, which makes visual storytelling accessible to everyone.

Piktochart is developed to be user-friendly. The company employs 58 people overall, where 17 people work from customer service centers in North America, Europe and Singapore, because the bulk of their customers are from the United States, while the technical team is based in Penang.

Ms. Goh shared that this is a fast-moving industry with global competitors, and their main competitors are in the United States and Europe.

Lessons in scaling a start-up

Innovation is important because customers will constantly be expecting new products and services. Ms. Goh referred to “The Innovator’s Dilemma” by Clayton M. Christensen where you cannot expect what the market needs. For her, the three ingredients for success are: a safe environment (good culture), brilliant minds (good people) and data-informed decision making:

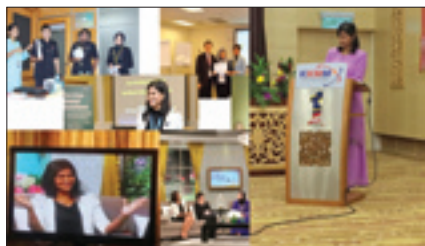
- **Good culture** – There is no right or wrong culture, but only the culture that the founders want to have e.g., at Amazon, Netflix and Google. As an organisation, Piktochart is not about having a set of core values. Instead, Ms. Goh affirmed that the consistency of the management in handling difficult cases, such as the relationships between colleagues, the way people treat one another and the way people describe the working environment are what that matters.
- **Good people** – Ms. Goh referred to a quote by Jim Collins, author of “Good to Great”: “A company should limit its growth based on its ability to attract enough of the right people.” Since Piktochart employees are made up of 45% women and 55% men, she provided a babysitter for her and her employees’ babies on site at the office. To date, she reported that 15 babies, including her own 15-month old daughter, have been born since Piktochart began its operations.
- **Data-informed decision making.** In the fast-paced technology industry, Ms. Goh shared that a combination of trusting your instincts and using available data at that point in time is important for entrepreneurs to make the best-informed choice.

Panelist 3: Ms. Sangeeta Kaur

Founder, Emerging Journey Asia (EJA)

Ms. Sangeeta Kaur began her session about being emotionally strong in any situation during her early career days. Unsure of what she wanted, she did not follow the traditional education and career path. As she enjoyed communicating with people, she took on a job posting flyers and banners at





a supermarket after her SPM examinations. Pushing her trolley around, she received a lot of negative comments from friends about her menial job.

Journey of healing

Later, she furthered her studies and also embarked on a journey of self-discovery. She started "Shopping Journey Asia" but since she had to keep stock and do promotions, she discontinued it. Next, she started "Mummy's Journey Asia" that focused on baby products when she had her first baby. While pregnant with her third child, she studied her Master in Counselling and wanted to become like Oprah Winfrey. Next, she is planning on pursuing her PhD.

Ms. Sangeeta advised the participants to always remember the reason for starting anything. She also added that women should not be "katak di bawah tempurung" but to get involved in personal development activities or social work. She also encouraged everyone to find out about available grants for entrepreneurs and to learn from Piktochart's success.

When there's conflict between emotion and thinking, Ms. Sangeeta believed that you are going through a journey of healing. As a parting note, she told the women to, "Let Go – you do not need to control your husband, your kids or your employees. Control yourself, and you will control the world."

Questions and Answers Session

Question 1: How does Piktochart attract the young generation and retain them?

Answer: An organisation's culture always has room for improvement. For instance, a start-up organisation may adopt the culture of having a ping pong table or bean bags at the office. At Piktochart, one of the important lessons we learned is that the average 30-year-old employee wants meaningful and impactful work. There is no need to be a social enterprise – they just want their ideas to be heard, and they want to have a say. Different organisations start with a different culture but some will have ways to make the work meaningful. Consistency in management practices of hiring and firing, a reward system and creating trust in leadership is also important.

Question 2: What does Piktochart think about giving share options to retain the younger generation?

Answer: In Malaysia, it is legally challenging to give stock options. It is much easier in the United States and many companies do it.

SESSION 2

What's In It For Me?

Following up from the discussion on empowerment strategies and the key roles played by society and the government in creating an enabling ecosystem. The Conference progressed with a working session for three concurrent groups.

The working session on Day 1 focused on the theme “What’s In It For Me?” where delegates were divided into three working groups based on common portfolios: New Entrepreneurs, Business Owners and Product and Services Suppliers.

Led by expert panel practitioners, the delegates took inputs from the panel discussion on “Economic Pie – Every Women Can Have a Share”, and engaged in interactive dialogues to deliberate and worked through a set of guiding questions on key indicators and success measurement or factors to enable sustainability to be put forward.

WORKING GROUP 1: New entrepreneurs – women and men who are starting new businesses

Lead Facilitator: **Ms. Krista Goon,**
Co-Founder, WomenBizSENSE

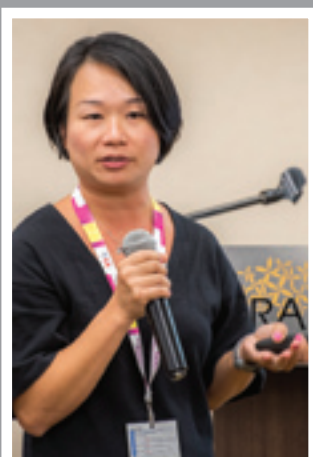
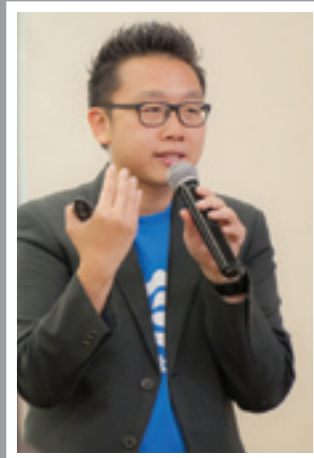
Speaker 1: **Ms. Elizabeth Hor**
Founder and CEO,
Elizabeth Image Branding



The working session for new entrepreneurs began with Ms. Elizabeth Hor, a certified image consultant who established her own image consulting firm, ‘Elizabeth Image Branding’ since 1994. Holding on to her motto “You can be... when you can see”, she is known for her signature programme “Your Image Speaks”, where she focuses on the nine non-verbal cues that speak on your behalf. Besides training and coaching, Elizabeth is also a Personal Stylist.

In her presentation, Ms. Hor illustrates on the 5P’s for turning dreams into a reality:

- **Passion:** On starting a business, Ms. Hor advised the delegates to always remember: ‘What is the dream? What is the dream for? What value do you want to bring to other people?’ Some may not have or know the dream yet, and while that is fine, the delegates should always be thinking about their goals and dreams.
- **Plan:** “If you do not have a business plan, it is like going on a journey without a map”. Ms. Hor stated that plans may constantly be changing, but it is still important to have a business plan. Some things delegates should consider when coming up with a business plan are:
 - What is the mission?
 - Who is the target market?
 - Where to find them?





- What are the financing options?
- How to market your product/service?
- What are the short term and long term goals?
- Branding? (What do people think about when they hear your name?)
- How do you give back to society?

■ **People:** When it comes to people, Ms. Hor pitched the question to the floor: "What value do you want to give to people?" It is important to learn to value one another. She also recommended the building of trust, and that success is measured by how much you leave as an impact on other people. She used a quote from Zig Ziglar, "You don't build a business. You build people. And then people build the business".

■ **Persistence:** Always remember your "why" or the reason you want to start the business.

■ **Profit:** On the question: "How do you increase profits?", Ms. Hor suggested the following techniques:

- Increase prices.
- Don't give discounts.
- Lower costs.
- Look for strategic partners who can lower cost, which will also benefit them.
- Increase your business performance.
- Come up with a business strategy.

Speaker 2: Mr. Chan Kee Siak

Founder, Exabytes Network



Mr. Chan Kee Siak began the second presentation for new entrepreneurs with an introduction of his company, Exabytes Network, which was founded in 2001, and formerly known as hostkaki.com. He tried to establish his own technology business since his teenage years, and the idea of web hosting came naturally when his part-time business was not promising. He studied web hosting and was awestruck by the power of the web and its possibilities. He started his business by selling for other web hosting companies before he founded Exabytes in 2001. By 2005, the company became the biggest web hosting provider in Malaysia, and remains so until today.

Mr. Chan shared that technology is a tool for new entrepreneurs, because people now utilises a lot of technology for communication and thus, technology is a platform for people to start their business. He presented a few success stories as a starting point for new entrepreneurs to explore ideas.

■ **Grabcar** is a platform where people can easily earn some money just by driving. The concept is almost similar to a taxi where people can request for drivers through the application. It is a good start for those who want to start a business, have a flexible schedule and be self-employed.



■ **Fiverr** is a good website to explore the marketplace, where people can look for freelance projects such as writing, translation, and many others projects where jobs start as low as US\$5 each.

■ **Lokalllocal** is a platform that allows local experts to share about a culture, place or tradition, and earn from it. This is a good opportunity for people who are very well-versed about interesting places, cultures or traditions.

■ **AIRBnB**: Hosting or co-hosting an Airbnb is also popular, especially in western countries, where people open their homes to travellers or tourists as a place to stay. Alternatively, people can host an experience on Airbnb or offer pet sitting services.

■ **E-commerce&E-business**: E-commerce have helped many successful entrepreneurs turn their passion into a business, such as Christy Ng, a successful businesswoman who started off by selling shoes on Facebook. Another example is Jobbie, who sells peanut butter.

Other budding entrepreneurs use their talent or skill and turn it into a business from home such as copywriters, home caterers and internet businesses via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other online social media.

■ **Tech start-ups** are a huge part of entrepreneurial success stories, such as Piktochart, where the founder grew a web application of up to 5 million users without external investment. Those who have technological skills may want to venture into the business world by using this pathway.

■ **Social influencers**: Mr. Chan also mentioned that many people nowadays do not need an office or a base to work from, such as social influencers. Social influencers often have good communication skills, and they promote themselves on social media such as YouTube and Instagram. They create content, post it online, and are usually paid based on the number of views the content receives.

According to Mr. Chan, starting a business does not have to be something outwardly difficult as it can be something you do every day and it's doing something you like. Furthermore, it is also important to pay attention to your surroundings and ponder on some important questions:

- ▶ Are there problems?
- ▶ What are the problems?
- ▶ What is the solution? You can then turn the solution into a business.

Mr. Chan ended his presentation with a survey, which revealed that only a few of the delegates have started their business but a majority of them were looking forward to obtaining knowledge on how to embark on an entrepreneur's journey.



Working Session Guiding Questions and Responses

Question 1: What do you need to start a business?

- Individual:** Four important elements that new entrepreneurs need when starting a new business include passion, confidence, creativity and family support. Firstly, in order to start a business, one must have the passion or interest to do so. Next, confidence is needed, which is a positive mind-set and a belief in one's abilities. Creativity, which is the ability to come up with fresh ideas, turning problems into solutions, and the solutions into business, is also important. The most important element is family support, be it moral or financial support.
- Resources:** Acquiring resources is an important aspect of starting a business. Resources can be in the form of capital, talent, raw materials, as well as tools and systems. To start a business, one must be able to come up with some money for capital, which can be either savings, funds or loans in order to start a business. Resources also include talent, therefore, hire or work with people who have the expertise that you need. Sourcing for raw materials is the heart of a product-based business. Finally, there is a need to identify tools or systems that can help to start or promote the business.
- Plan:** New entrepreneurs need to come up with a marketing plan that will work best for them and their company. A good marketing plan acts as a guide to the business. For example:

Know the business → determine target market → analyse competitors
 → set goals → outline strategies → set a budget → get to work!
- Knowledge:** Without sufficient knowledge, it may be difficult to start a business. Hence, it is important for new entrepreneurs to be equipped with knowledge on business by reading and conducting research. Other than that, one also needs the knowledge of law, the proper procedure to start a business, and technology, which are the tools to help your business. Analysing what one wants to sell (product/service) will help to provide a clearer vision on the workings of the business. Finally, one must understand the target market, and/or the people who will be buying/using the products/services.
- Network:** Networking is very important to start, survive or grow the business. Contacts such as other successful business owners who could be a partner, supplier as well as mentors, are very resourceful when it comes to guidance and advice.

Question 2: According to statistics, 5 out of 10 business fail in the first five years. How do you avoid becoming a part of the statistics?

- Individual:** Having moral or financial support from family members is crucial. Without proper support, it is difficult to be consistent. Other than that, as a business owner, it is important to continue learning for personal and leadership development, and to be updated with the latest business trends. Having the right attitude traits such as patience, persistence, self-



discipline, willingness to learn and adapt will help an individual who does not want to fail their business in the first five years.

- Plan:** Having a well-thought-out plan will help new entrepreneurs. Astute financial planning is crucial for the management of the business. Another important plan that every business needs is a marketing plan (strategy and innovation: continuous production). Without a good marketing plan, it will be difficult for a business to survive. Finally, it is also crucial to keep up with, as well as understand, the current market trends and needs.
- People:** The failure of some businesses can be attributed to the inability to acquire and retain talents, inability to build trust with customers and the lack of strategic partnerships and networks. In terms of acquiring and retaining talents, one should be careful and meticulous in finding ways to retain such talents. Building trust with customers is an important key. Customers will not buy from a company that they do not trust. Additionally, strategic partnerships and networks will be most important for business growth.
- Consistency:** Being consistent in the implementation and workings of the business is crucial. Once the business has stabilised, one needs to work hard to retain consistency in performance. Other than that, recognise mistakes and ask for feedback regarding the products or services, carry out R&D and use it to improve the business. The key is to be open and responsive towards accepting criticism.

Question 3: What would motivate you to start a business?

- Personal:** Passion, skills and talent are among the reasons or factors that would motivate someone to start a business. Some entrepreneurs feel a sense of achievement or satisfaction in owning a business. Some people start a business because they want the freedom and flexibility of becoming their own boss. Another motivating factor is to challenge oneself by breaking out of the comfort zone. Finally, some choose to be entrepreneurs because they want to become a market leader.
- Financial:** Finances can also be a factor that motivates someone to start a business. Some entrepreneurs want to earn a side income. Additionally, others may want to contribute to society (CSR) or to help/give back to society with the profit earned.
- Role models and family members:** Other people may influence others to start a business. For instance, some are inspired by role models – seeing other people succeed in their business makes them want to embark on the same journey. Another reason is to become a role model for family and children, either to set an example or to inspire family members. Finally, some wanted to expand or transform a family business they had inherited.
- Societal needs:** Society is also a factor why people start a business. They want to solve people's problems where they have identified a problem, and they want to turn the problem into an opportunity for business. An example would be a business that offers food delivery services.



WORKING GROUP 2: Business owners – women and men who want to grow their businesses

Lead Facilitator: **Ms. Yeap Ai Li, Chairperson, NAWEM Penang**

Speaker 1: Mr. Hare Krishnan
MD, Sri Ananda Bahwan
Restaurant



Mr. Hare began his presentation with the history of his late mother Radhabay's efforts in making the business what it is today. He believes in empowering women and gender equality as it is the essence to his success story.

Radhabay was the daughter of an estate mandor from Kulim, Kedah. She married at 18 years old, but her husband then passed away, leaving her pregnant and responsible for seven children. She worked long hours but rubber tapping caused itchiness as well as wounds on her hands. In search of a better opportunity, the family left the rubber estate and moved to Butterworth, Penang. Living above an Indian restaurant, Radhabay worked double shifts: a general worker at a warehouse by day, and a dishwasher in the restaurant by night.

10 years later, Radhabay acquired the restaurant and rebranded it to Sri Ananda Bahwan. Due to Radhabay's fine cooking, the family restaurant enjoyed bustling business with new and returning customers. More family members started working in the restaurant; both of her sons left school to help her. Selvaraj helped with the cooking as he had experience from working as a cook and serving priests at a Hindu temple. Her other son, Hare Krishnan, helped to manage the restaurant.

Sri Ananda Bahwan's Expansions

In 1996, the expansion of Sri Ananda Bahwan branch when the government allowed the hiring of foreign workers by local operators. The family purchased the shop lot and two additional adjacent shop lots, making it the largest banana leaf restaurant in Butterworth. The restaurant grew steadily with expansion of the business to other states.

High demands, unexpected crowds and competition caused Radhabay to encounter several challenges. Before she passed away in 2003 at the age of 74, she reminded her family members to work hard and stay united as a family for the business' greater success.

Until 2018, Sri Ananda Bahwan operates over 12 banana leaf restaurants in Penang, Kedah, and Kuala Lumpur. The restaurant franchise is now expanding to overseas markets such as Bangkok in Thailand. They have also started to engage themselves in agricultural activities in order to supply fresh produce to their restaurants. Another business venture is in textile trading. The family business has also won a myriad of awards from the local authorities for their entrepreneurship. Sri Ananda Bahwan is now the largest and leading banana leaf restaurant chain in Malaysia.



Speaker 2: Ms. Gina Koay

Founder, Director and Chief Pharmacist,
City Wellness Pharmacy



Ms. Gina Koay is an Australian educated pharmacist with the experience of working in both small and big chain pharmacies in Australia. Moving back to Malaysia after a long career in Australia, she worked in a pharmacy in Jitra, Kedah before starting her own pharmacy business called City Wellness Pharmacy in Penang.

As a business owner, Ms. Koay believes that a pharmaceutical practice should be operated in a professional manner, because the customers are from various ages, races, and conditions. City Wellness Pharmacy currently has 12 staff, including both part timers and full timers, and 90% of the staff is female. In the first two years, the challenges she faced was in maintaining their fundamental mission, which is “to help people to smile again”.

Iceberg Illusion

Ms. Koay introduced the Iceberg Illusion to illustrate the seven “underwater” or submerged skills needed for success in doing business. The tip of an iceberg is regarded as the successful business that are visible to external parties but the seven “underwater” skills are the essential elements in an individual’s business.

- ▶ **Dedication** involves making a commitment to the company that an individual owns. Although it is difficult trying to maintain the commitment to the plans made, once one has started a business, one must strive not to give up.
- ▶ **Hard work** includes putting in effort, doing the best, and setting goals. Ms. Koay hired staff and had the help of her family members in daily operations of the company, but she herself also worked 11 hours daily. Other than that, she joined business programmes, built networks, and found trusted friends to support her in developing her business.
- ▶ **Good habits:** Maintaining good habits is imperative to good health so business owners should adhere to these habits the best they can. Although these habits may not always be fun, but they may impart a sense of accomplishment to the individual at the end of the day. Smiling is the key to other people’s hearts as it makes people feel better even though they are sick or having a bad day.
- ▶ **Disappointment:** When a business owner is facing difficulties, Ms. Koay strongly advised them to sit with the problem, learn from the issues addressed by reflecting on them, or by talking to others. Instead of bottling up the problem within oneself, sharing with family members and friends will be most helpful.
- ▶ **Sacrifice:** Sometimes it is vital to give up on something for the good of the business, as it may result in getting something back in return for the sacrifice made. It is akin to an investment on the company’s future.
- ▶ **Failure** can be considered as a gift to treasure, as it makes an individual grow and mature. Ms. Koay stated that it is alright to for a business to fail, but it is important to reflect on yourself, and to look for ways to overcome the failures.
- ▶ **Persistence:** Finally, Ms. Koay encouraged business owners to persist, and do what is right and best for oneself to sustain the company’s success.



Besides that, finding a different area to work on can help you to stay committed to yourself in your business.

Questions and Answers Session

Question 1: How do you work smart in the food business?

Answer: Mr. Hare manages staff overhead costs by hiring both local and foreign cooks.

Question 2: How do you sustain the business succession?

Answer: In the case of Sri Ananda Bhawan, since Mr. Hare Krishnan's sons are not yet ready to take over the family business, the staff would temporarily run the company until the children are, hopefully ready, to manage operations in future.

Working Session Guiding Questions and Responses

Question 1: What are the basic and advanced tools required to expand your business?

The tools that are needed to expand a business were split into two categories: online tools and offline tools.

- ▶ **Online tools:** Social media platforms are a basic online tool that are crucial for business expansion. Business owners need to have the knowledge in operating social media networks such as Instagram, Whatsapp, Wechat and so on. Running Facebook ads and building an online brand are also important in growing a business. With the existence of social media, the business owner must be readily available in responding to clients. Social media also helps in providing credible contents and in-depth elaboration of the products or services for prospective clients and buyers.

Business owners should know of the ways to market their websites because a website is a basic tool for promoting the business services or products. Additionally, special knowledge on maximising traffic to the business website and attracting customers is vital.

- ▶ **Offline tools:** Offline tools including print advertisement and participation in events are some ways of expanding a business. In order to succeed, business owners need to find relevant events to market their products or services.

Business owners also need designers to design and produce posters and flyers to promote their business. Other than that, drop ship agents can be extremely useful in business expansion. Drop shippers are able to help business operations by driving sales of the products to the customers.

In order to develop a brand with a notable reputation, one should create partnerships and network with other business owners. Advertising is also a good form of promotion for a business, and helps to encourage business expansion. For example, an advertisement on a warehouse sale can attract a big crowd for the event.



Lastly, organising marketing road shows and obtaining referrals are other methods used to expand an organisation's reputation.

Question 2: How do you use the tools to measure your success in your expansion?

A selection of tools is available for business owners to measure a business' success, which include the number of shares and views of the posts on social media, for example, Facebook, could determine the organisation's success by monitoring the number of people that had interacted or shown interest in the post. Responding to comments and responding to customers in a timely manner can also improve the service of the organisation.

Pamphlets and flyers can be used to enhance readers' understanding of the business, by providing content in different languages, thus reaching out to individuals from different backgrounds.

Other than that, the delegates also suggested that income statements, testimonial and feedbacks, referrals, and repeating customers are other means to measure the company's success, because these factors affect the company's sales volume.

Lastly, by achieving the targeted KPI and producing positive results through data analysis, as well as maintaining the retention rate of the organisation would lead to an increase of investment from local or international investors.

Question 3: What are the external key factors needed to expand your business?

To expand a business, business owners need to identify or determine the product's identity, and promote the product continuously with funding sources from the company and other investors. Small businesses with modest funds could explore bank loans for business expansion.

Business owners should attend seminars or trainings, in addition to organising mentoring and coaching programmes to train employees in increasing their skills and productivity.

Networking is another external factor for business expansion as it allows business owners to use this platform to share about their current or new products to potential customers or investors. This can help entrepreneurs by allowing them to be one another's support system through knowledge sharing.

A solid marketing strategy is also vital for business expansion, because a good marketing strategy can create more awareness for a company's product.

Question 4: What are the internal factors/skills needed to grow your business?

The internal factors or skills that are crucial in growing a business are the development of employees' strengths, being innovative and constantly upgrading the business. Training sessions for the business owners or for the staff are important for business growth. Business owners need to also take note of business planning and succession planning.



WORKING GROUP 3: Products and services suppliers – women and men who earn income through supplying products or services

Lead Facilitator: **Ms. Wendy Wong Bee Kee, Past Chairperson, NAWEM Penang**

Speaker 1: Ms. Ann Wong
Co-Founder, Penan Women Project



Ms. Ann Wong is a Co-Founder of the Penan Women Project, a non-profit social enterprise. Hailing from Sarawak, she is a former designer that has formerly worked in the United States. She joined the Penan Women Project as a volunteer to give back to the community, but eventually she became the co-founder.

The Penang Women Project plays a middle person's role by teaching Penan women, a minority of Orang Asli, how to create bags, and to "bring them out (to) the open market", in addition to providing the materials needed. The rattan bags are made in Sarawak, and the project leveraged on the women's weaving skills for employment.

Being hunters and gatherers, the Penan people lost their only source of livelihood due to the deforestation of rain forests. The weavers are Penan ladies, who come from low income families with little or no formal education. They live in poor conditions with no access to basic needs such as water, electricity, school, or hospitals. The hand-woven Penan Bag is created using plastic, and the Penan women used their weaving skills to design the bags.

As of now, 60 weavers have contributed two to three years of commitment to the project. The Penan Women Project sees the potential of this traditional handicraft to create quality, modern, and fashionable bags. They are currently working with the fashion brand WYNKA Goldwyn X Kaelg to open more opportunities for the Penan people to market their skills. The project is a non-profit social enterprise that gives them a chance to generate income, to improve their lives, to create awareness about their tribe and to make a name for the Penan people.

One of the major challenges faced by the Penan Women Project is the problem of communication due to the lack of phone lines, and the great distance between the town and the settlement, which is located in the interior of Sarawak. Together with Shida Mojet, the creator of the Penan Bag since 2008, Ms. Wong says that they often travel as long as eight hours on logging roads, on a 4-wheel drive, to visit the settlement.

Language and cultural barriers posed as further challenges. Communication is difficult, because the Penan people do not understand the Malay language. Since the Penan people live in remote areas, they do not understand the concept of chic fashion, and are unable to innovate much, only producing bags with traditional Penan designs. Usually, Ms. Wong assigns group leaders to fill individual bag orders, and instructs them on "what colour or what to make". Miscommunication can sometimes happen, such as in the case of producing a 'Bakul Kebun', where the final product was different from the picture due to different cultural perceptions.





Another issue is that the Penan people do not understand the concept of trademarks, thus weavers from other villages had copied the original designs, thus creating unwanted competition for the commissioned weavers.

Before wrapping up her presentation, Ms. Wong's advice was: "Be passionate in what you do, and take on the challenges."

Speaker 2: Ms. Norliza Othman

MD and Principal Consultant,
TES Consultancy



Ms. Norliza Othman began her presentation by stating an important, current statistic: the spa industry makes up only US\$99 billion out of the global wellness economy of US\$3.7 trillion, which is a significant market. Currently, she has five spa outlets under Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (PNB), namely Bayan Baru (Penang), Kuala Lumpur, Bangi Sentral, Cameron Highlands (Pahang), and Kota Bharu (Kelantan), and she has plans to expand to Terengganu, Selangor, and potentially the mainland of Penang.

Her spa, known as Teratak Spa, employs only local workers to provide the wellness services. Ms. Norliza emphasises that as a franchise that focuses on selling value, Teratak Spa offers premium services, and never participates in a pricing war because "when you bring down the price, the consumer will buy (the product) because of the low price, not because of the product value."

Ms. Norliza's advice to service providers was "If you want to be successful in business, you have to be in associations". She is actively involved in associations, and was the former president of the Association of Malaysian Spas (AMSPA). She has also contributed to state-level spa associations such as PenSpa, KOSPA, SISPA, ENESPA, WeSpa, Johor Spa Association, and PUSPA. She has also been working closely with government training institutions and centres of excellence since 2013.

She also reminded the delegates to stay focused, have confidence, have a big heart, and to always think positively. A successful person must be a calculated risk taker, and be open minded, creative, innovative, proactive, progressive, productive, and have the right mind-set. A successful company needs the right system (e.g., SOP, management, teaching, HR, marketing and sales team), and an effective team to run the whole system.

Ms. Norliza concluded with the following quote from Jack Ma, CEO of Alibaba:

"When you are 20 to 30 years old, you should follow a good boss [and] join a good company to learn how to do things properly,
When you are 30 to 40 years old, if you want to do something yourself, just do it. You can still afford to lose, to fail,
When you're 40 years old, do what you're good at;
When you're 50 years old, work with the young ones."





Working Session Guiding Questions and Responses

Question 1: What are the basic tools required to offer your products or services to the market?

- ▶ **Networking:** Companies must collaborate and work together to survive in the competitive market. Businesses can also find potential partners by exchanging business cards, joining associations, becoming influencers, gaining referrals, and working with strategic partners.
- ▶ **Marketing:** Companies can market their products and services via advertisements through the mass media. Examples of printed media include flyers, banners, e-mails, newsletters, listings (e.g., Yellow Pages), catalogues, brochures, magazines, and newspapers. Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube) and internet shopping sites can target internet and smartphone-savvy customers.
- ▶ **Direct Contact and Sales:** Products and services can be offered through physical stores and shopping malls. Companies can connect with their customers by conducting talks and conferences, organising free sessions, workshops, distributing samples, and by demonstrating products and services.
- ▶ **Finance:** A company can only survive and prosper with sufficient capital and a good financial system. Financial assistance may also be needed during key turning points in a company's growth.
- ▶ **Training:** A successful company needs an operating system, efficient logistics and skilled personnel, thus coaching and mentoring staff members are essential elements of staff training.
- ▶ **Technology:** Research and Development (R&D) and automation allow products and services to be more cost-effective. Multimedia tools are used for building websites and operating systems. New strategies and trends based on data analysis can also be used to increase profits.
- ▶ **Product and Branding:** A company can inject value into their product by providing proper certification, product guarantee, and brand protection through labelling and packaging. Product quality can be improved through knowledge and innovation while loyalty programmes and coupons help to promote continuous sales.

Question 2: How can the tools be used to measure your success?

- ▶ **Feedback:** Feedback and testimonies through surveys and social media (e.g., Messenger) can be used to show a company's success in marketing. A well-known product or service has good customer reviews, increased compliments, and decreased complaints. The number of referrals may increase as the product achieves acknowledgement in the market.
- ▶ **Data:** Numbers are a valuable asset to monitor sales growth. Data analytics can be used to determine the company's key performance indicators (KPI), return on investment (ROI), ratings and outreach on social media (e.g., 'likes', 'shares'), in addition to providing an in-depth analysis of sales, figures, audience reach, and website hit rates. Process technology can be used to measure customer satisfaction and personnel competency.



- ▶ **Recognition and Awareness:** A popular product or service is a successful one. Awards and certificates are able to give credibility to a product. Effective branding can lead to brand and marketing awareness, resulting in increased referrals, and the establishment of good reputation.
- ▶ **Profit and Loss:** A company can measure its success in the market through its profit and loss. Profits from exhibitions and referrals, increase of sales and transactions, introduction of joint packages, and increased followers are indicators of a successful company. The fulfilment of demands and supplies also show the company's productivity and a sound financial system.
- ▶ **Expansion:** A successful company is able to penetrate the market by expanding internationally (e.g., Bursa share market), which can result in repeat business and an increase in strategic partners.

Question 3: Please provide key indicators and success factors to be a successful supplier

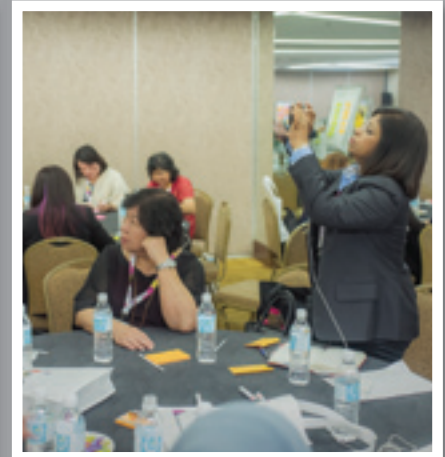
- ▶ **Growth:** A successful supplier constantly looks for ways to expand his/her business in order to stay competitive. By upgrading to a franchise business model and increasing franchises, the supplier sets a benchmark for others, which will result in higher profit and value, increased customers, as well as an increase in sales and market share.
- ▶ **Values:** Strong company values will help the supplier in achieving his/her goals. Such values include being flexible, having goodwill, integrity and trust, and maintaining a good relationship with the community through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes.
- ▶ **Consistency:** A supplier should be consistent by maintaining his/her quality of services, reliability, sustainability, and employee retention rate. This will ensure a healthy profit and loss ratio, good KPI, steady cash flow and revenue.
- ▶ **Time Management:** Good time and resource management further indicates the success of a supplier. By monitoring the time from development to product launch, and the time to market, the supplier can make improvements to increase overall cost-effectiveness.
- ▶ **Satisfaction:** A win-win situation between product and service providers and their customers can be achieved by paying attention to customer feedback, testimonies, and promoter scores that allows the supplier to determine customer satisfaction. Providing good after-sales services or follow-up, on-time delivery system, and optimised pricing can ensure the satisfaction of returning customers.
- ▶ **Reputation:** A supplier is considered world-class and an exemplary representative of the industry if it has an excellent reputation. Having an established brand or image recognition as well a high recommendation and referral rate are signs that a supplier has achieved that reputation.



Question 4: What are your top three best practices to encourage more women to offer their products or services to the market?

- ▶ **Product Quality:** Offer quality products or services with added value such as a personal touch and good after-sales services. Continuous quality management can also ensure product quality in the long run.
- ▶ **Policy and Culture:** Company policies should be developed to improve competition, encourage continuous product training, and boost system duplication. The company must also adopt an empathetic company culture to encourage women's involvement by broadening the understanding of certain cultures, in addition to providing time flexibility. Challenges must be overcome together as a team.
- ▶ **Incentives:** Companies can create opportunities for employees to utilise their potential and talents through business incentives such as profit sharing. Agents and brokers can provide financial assistance, training, education, and exposure through networking and referrals.
- ▶ **Interest:** Interest drives motivation, so motivational speeches that highlight the role model's passion for products and services can inspire employees. A company that is motivated will stay focused, and become self-sustaining in the long run.





SESSION 3

What's In It For Me

The Working Session Report Out is a platform for the lead facilitators to present a summary of the best practices, critical elements, tools for success and recommendations that delegates from the three breakout groups had discussed during the working session; What's In It For Me?

New Entrepreneurs Ms. Krista Goon

Co-Founder, WomenBizSENSE



Ms. Krista Goon started the reporting out session with Working Group 1 – New Entrepreneurs' first guiding question, "What is needed to start a business?" where the delegates found that it is important for an individual to have passion, confidence, creativity and family support in order to start a business. Of the four elements that were discussed, the delegates agreed that family support is the most important element when starting a business venture. Without family support, be it moral or financial, it may be difficult for new business owners to be successful.

Other than family support, resources such as capital, raw materials, tools, talent, and business systems are needed to start a business. A solid business plan as well as knowledge in industry, technology, products/services and the target market are also crucial.

Networking is another important criteria for new entrepreneurs, because mentors and other business owners can act as guides or even referrals for the new business.

The second guiding question was on how new entrepreneurs could avoid contributing to the unwanted statistic of failed businesses. The first important element that new business owners should have is family support. The next two elements are leadership skills and having the right attitude, which means being patient, persistent, self-disciplined and adopting a willingness to learn.

Besides the new entrepreneur's personal characteristics, Ms. Goon further clarified that businesses without a proper marketing plan and financial management are bound to fail. Some businesses also fail because they are unable to manage people, thus business owners should be able to not only acquire talents, but also retain them.

Building trust with customers and forming strategic partnerships and networks are important to facilitate growth for new businesses. Finally, Ms. Goon reported that consistency is key. Businesses should maintain consistency in their implementation plans, identify their mistakes and ask for feedback to take corrective measures. Successful businesses are those that are open to criticism, and are able to accept and adapt to changing environments.

The third guiding question was on what would motivate new entrepreneurs to start a business. The delegates classified the motivating factors into personal factors, financial factors, people factors and societal factors. First, some people start a business for their personal benefits, because they want to challenge themselves to become a market leader. Second, financial factors such as making a side income as well as contributing to society with the profit that they earned would motivate them. Third, some



of the delegates were motivated by other people, such as other successful business owners. Some even wanted to become role models themselves to motivate other people to start their own business. Finally, society is a motivating factor for new entrepreneurs because they could identify a problem, come up with a solution for it and turned it into a business of their own. Out of the four elements, the delegates found that exemplary business owners were the biggest motivator for them to start a business, because they were inspired and in turn, they wanted to inspire others.

Ms. Goon ended her report by highlighting the important elements for each question. Family support is very important to start a business. Some new entrepreneurs asserted that lack of support from the family posed as the biggest setback. Other than that, an efficient and effective business plan will start the business on the right track. Finally, other role models and the need to become a role model oneself plays an important role in motivating some to start their own business.

BUSINESS OWNERS

Ms. Yeap Ai Li

Chairperson, NAWEM Penang



Ms. Yeap Ai Li began the session for Business Owners with the first question; "What are the basic and advanced tools required to expand a business?" by categorising the tools into two groups; which are online and offline tools. To grow a business, business owners need sufficient knowledge in online tools, for example, social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Whatsapp, Wechat, and Facebook, in order to expand a business. In building a company's online brand, the company's website must be able to attract visitors in promoting the business or its products and services. Nowadays, business owners are able to manage their businesses from their smartphones, for instance, responding to a client immediately. Additionally, blog content can be planned and written for the purpose of adding value to their business, by providing product information and "how to" articles.

As for offline tools, Ms. Yeap reported that business owners placed importance in printing banners, flyers and posters in various languages. Therefore, they wanted information on where to produce them and where to find vendors to produce them. Business owners also believed that participation in events is useful in gaining information to grow their businesses. For certain businesses, dropship agents were seen as an example of a supportive offline business tool. This is because business owners then do not need to manage their stock, but could partner with logistics companies to manage this aspect of business operations.

Creating partnerships and networking at events like the "Women in Economy" conference, where business owners meet with like-minded people e.g. associations like WomenBizSENSE, NAWEM or JCI are also important offline tools for business expansion. Lastly, business owners recommended investing in advertisements, holding warehouse sales, obtaining referrals and conducting roadshows, for the purpose of promoting the company's brand among the public.



For the second guiding question: “How do you use the tools to measure the success in the business expansion?”, Ms. Yeap shared the shortlisted answers gathered, which consisted of responding to customers’ feedback on their products or services, producing social media content and monitoring the number of shares, views and likes on the business’ promotional posts on Facebook. Knowing how to analyse social media analytics is also important to business owners. Besides that, the success in growing a business can also be seen through the increasing number of testimonials a company’s website or social media account receives, These are linked to the number of referrals made, that can lead to a high number of returning customers, which can determine their customers’ overall satisfaction. Business owners also need to analyse the income statement when doing business planning. It is important to review the business’ key performance indicators (KPI), client retention rate, and talent retention rate to measure the efforts in business expansion.

The third guiding question was “What are the external factors needed to expand a business?”, and Ms. Yeap presented that some of these factors include building a product’s or service’s identity, carrying out different promotions in creative ways, and identifying the best location for the business, especially for retail businesses for the purpose of business expansion. In terms of capital, it is vital to have continuous funding through either government funds or joint Networking with potential investors, clients, and business partners at seminars is another important element of business expansion. Business owners also felt that seminars, training, coaching and mentoring programmes are beneficial, in terms of staff training.

New marketing strategies are able help business owners in alerting potential customers with regards to a business’ products or services. Business owners also wanted business matching sessions, and funding or technical support for exhibitions, especially for events held overseas. They also needed information on business support services like Easy Pack, which provided automated packaging solutions. In addition, they also felt that meeting industry experts and even competitors will help in setting benchmarks for themselves and their business expansion. Women entrepreneurs wanted business support systems, which included child care and family services.

The fourth guiding question was “What are the internal factors needed to grow your business?”, Ms Yeap presented the three key points emphasized, which are, developing human capital or their employees’ strengths, having innovations, and upgrading other knowledge and skills in developing a business. In summary, business plans, accounting skills, public relations and communications skills, time management skills, personal branding, social media marketing skills, especially training on how to close a sale, presentation skills, and leveraging on business partners were important in expanding their businesses.



Products and Services Suppliers

Ms. Wendy Wong Bee Kee

Past Chairperson, NAWEM Penang



Ms. Wendy Wong Bee Kee was the lead facilitator for Working Group 3 – Products and Services Suppliers.

For the first question, “What are the basic tools required to offer your products or services to the market?”, technology in the form of mobile applications and the internet is crucial, as customers nowadays rely on their mobile phones for information. According to Ms. Wong, marketing could be done via social media in the way that brands of quality products and services such as Samsung, iPhone, Huawei, Oppo, and Vivo have succeeded.

Next, she said that Ms. Norliza from Teratak Spa emphasised loyalty programmes as they can help with retaining customers and earn higher profits. The company’s owner and staff members are the important talents and in particular, service industries such as spa, wellness, and retailers need to be able to recruit and retain the right talents.

Strategic partnering is another “tool” that companies can use, citing the example of Odyssey, a wellness brand, partnering with a pillow company.

For the latter part of the first question, “What are the advanced tools required to offer your products or services to the market?”, she said that mentoring and coaching (e.g., ActionCoach) can “provide (companies) with a guideline, or a direction”. Creativity and innovation are also important as in the case of Nirvana, a funeral service company, which presented their staff professionally with uniforms and provided a variety of packages for customers.

Data analytics can also be used to identify new strategies and trends. Research and development also enable a company keep their products updated and sustain in the market such as Fuji Electrics Semiconductors Malaysia.

For the second question, “How can the tools be used to measure your success?”, Ms. Wong highlighted that an entrepreneur’s tools are the equipment or measurements used to detect a company’s “dollars and signs”. An increase in sales volume and profits demonstrates the performance the services and products. Besides, a company with increased gross profits but decreased net profits will also encounter increased operating costs, which will pose as a major problem.

Increased competitors and productivity are also indicators of a company’s success, for as emerging businesses mimic the successful company’s sales tactics, higher volumes of similar products and/or services are produced to fulfil the increasing demand. Brand loyalty can ensure the retention rate of the company’s customers. Other strategies include referrals and market share analysis, therefore companies should engage a business consultant to ensure that they remain competitive.

The third question for discussion was “Key indicators and success factors to be a successful supplier”, and Ms. Wong used her exhibition business to illustrate the importance of returning customers, such as a customer who has supported her company for 10 years. Good quality service or after-sales service can also encourage returning customers, such as Penang’s own Sunshine brand, whose business practice is to ensure happy employees because they will, in turn, produce satisfied customers.



Integrity and business ethics are also important, as the lack of values will cause the company to lose its customers, such as the Mengniu milk scandal in China in 2008, which resulted in a great aversion to milk products from China. Company culture is linked to business ethics and integrity, as presented by PiktoChart's speaker, Ms. Goh Ai Ching, where a staff who is loyal to both the company and customer will ensure the business' operations run smoothly.

For the fourth question, "What are your top three best practices to encourage more women to offer your products or services to the market?", Ms. Wong reported that incentive programmes, which involve money and franchising opportunities is the first best practice.

Mentoring is another example of best practice, for instance, how she learned from NAWEM's former president, Mr. Shamsimar on how to overcome challenges in business and Dato' Hooi Lai Lin's a tip for problem-solving, which is by approaching the problem after a good night's sleep.

Lastly, Ms. Wong cited that many ladies invest money 'below the eyebrow', referring to materialistic items (e.g., make-up, clothes), but they should invest more in 'above the eyebrow', as in developing knowledge and skills by attending conferences and training courses.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2: Current and future economy

Ms. Cynthia Hwang Siew Peng

**Executive Director, Suiwah Corp and CEO
Sunshine Wholesale Mart**



"If there's a will, there's a way."

Ms. Cynthia Hwang Siew Peng started her presentation by posing a question to the audience: "How many of you here are mothers?", which prompted a high percentage of the female delegates to raise their hands. She smilingly thanked the delegates and announced that she is a mother of 6, and she also manages a large organisation, which is Suiwah Corporation.

'Suiwah' is a combination of the founders' names 'Sui' (wife) and 'Wah' (husband) and is now celebrating its 58th anniversary, since its humble beginnings in Ayer Itam, Penang. Recently in July 2018, Suiwah Corporation was first listed in the second board, and has since moved to the main board of Bursa Malaysia.

With regards to women entrepreneurship, Ms. Cynthia said that the company has always had women at the helm and in the staff. 60 percent of the 500 staff members are women, making the ratio of women in the office higher than men. Her own office consisted of only one man, while her commercial team consisted of mostly women (except for three men) and they called themselves the "Powerpuff Girls".

For Ms. Hwang, people can actually accomplish whatever they want to if they put their mind and efforts into it. She shared video snippets of Rohaya or 'Aya' who started as a clerk and is now Assistant Manager of Sunshine Jelutong. A single mother of four, Aya had shown good performance at work despite having three daughters to take care of. She learned a lot while working with Sunshine and had the chance to venture into many fields. She believes that women can carry important roles and big responsibilities in the



working world, and she is proud of the fact that one of her daughters will be able to do exactly that.

Another notable female employee is Angie, a mother of two, who is actively involved in NGOs dealing with children with emotional issues and learning difficulties. She initially stopped working for 12 years due to family commitments, but she is now a manager for Sunshine's newest business venture, an Ayurveda Wellness Center. Now, she manages her social life well, hikes and jogs often, and is also a homemaker whilst being involved in the workforce. She wants to make an impact in her life, and she encouraged women to take up the challenge and join the workforce again because "it's really good to be back."

Through the employees' personal stories, Ms. Hwang fully related to the essence of the Deputy Prime Minister's speech in Session 1. She constantly reminded everyone and herself that being a female entrepreneur with many other responsibilities is not easy, but it is not impossible. Family trust and support, especially from her husband and family, are the essential elements for the success she enjoys today.

Interest is also very important, because "if it's not something that you want, you would most likely not strive in achieving it." Ms. Hwang had just completed an 8-month MIT online course consisting of participants from all around the world. As the course is based in Boston, in the United States of America, she had to attend midnight classes. Therefore, she believed that it is all about the determination: "If you want it, you can actually do whatever it takes to have it."

In conjunction with Suiwah's 58th anniversary, Ms. Hwang introduced the Biz-Buddy Programme, which is a platform for Sunshine Card members to promote their business and to sell their services or products. She invited women entrepreneurs to join this program and to pitch their business ideas, so that both parties can work together on any available opportunities. Sunshine also provides training for women entrepreneurs. To date, Sunshine has marketed a customer's tilapia fish in their supermarkets. The company also obtains their staff uniform from a customer's print shop that supplies T-shirts and uniforms.

Besides owning a warehouse, Sunshine is also open to new products to be made into house brands such as a.s.a.p., their latest in-house fashion label. Sunshine has also started venturing into food and beverage by trading with Korean companies, and has opened a new Italian food branch. She then enthusiastically shared about a new upcoming project by Suiwah Corporation; the Sunshine Centre in Ayer Itam. Sunshine has also partnered with Ramaiyah from Bangalore, India, by sourcing physicians that perform authentic massages. These are the examples of how women entrepreneurs can expand their business through the Sunshine retail network. Women entrepreneurs are also able to use Sunshine Online, an online retailing system, to list their products.

Sunshine has also been actively involved in trading with countries such as Pakistan and China. They are also doing a lot of e-commerce all over Southeast Asia, and they are opening up a new division next month that would take Southeast Asian products, and sell them to Europe and US via e-commerce.



To Ms. Hwang, Sunshine is a small name compared to corporate giants such as Aeon, Mydin, Eonsave, and Giant. As a home-grown brand, Sunshine also organizes corporate social responsibilities events, where they recently worked with the Malaysia Retailers Association (MRA) in flood relief by helping people within five to 10 km radius of the outlets.

In closing, Ms. Hwang welcomed women who are interested in starting a business at the upcoming Sunshine Square, and suggested looking out for other women's stories to gain enlightenment and motivation to strive in the entrepreneurship world. In relation to future projects, Ms. Cynthia invited every woman in the conference "to work together with Sunshine to make Penang outstanding."

Panel presentations

After the Day 2 keynote speech, the Conference continued with three panel presentations with the central theme "From Start to Finish".

One male presenter and five female expert practitioners presented their personal business experiences focusing on the topics of the know-how on running a business, creating and maintaining a supply chain, and marketing and sales. In summary, each presenter provided insight into developing an effective entrepreneurial ecosystem for women to find success in their economic space.





SESSION 4

From Start to Finish – Business Support System



This session provided the end-to-end know-how to run a business with insights to live case studies. The first area of interest is the support system and the importance of a basic functional structure to conduct a business.

Moderator: **Dr. Florence Sinniah, Director, PWDC**

Panelist 1: Ms. Tong Bee Yoke
Co-Founder, QQ Holistic Education Programme



Ms. Tong began talking about her own background of a Bachelor of Science degree in Food Technology, and a career in research and development and business development. She wants a career, a family and her own time, which is why she became an entrepreneur.

When starting a business, she faced many challenges, and Ms. Tong sees her business journey progressing in two phases: Starting Up and Expanding.

During Phase 1 of starting up, finances are a crucial element to support the business and money was obtained from personal savings and a micro credit loan from Bank Simpanan Nasional (four percent interest per annum). Money could also be borrowed from family members as start-up capital.

In terms of company registration, Ms. Tong presented that the new entrepreneur has the option of registering as a sole proprietor or a private limited company, which requires audited accounts and a company secretary. If entrepreneurs opt for a partnership, she recommended that they choose a partner who can complement them. Similar areas of expertise in partners will create “two tigers in a cage”, and the partnership should be 51-49 percent in holdings, so that one partner will have the decision-making power.

Besides financing and company registration, Ms. Tong also highlighted the importance of legal procedures and requirements for starting the business. For instance, the procedure for setting up a kindergarten in a housing area required approval from the local municipal council, the fire department, the health department and the welfare department (JKM). Details and agreements for employee contracts, rental contracts and even agreements with neighbours are important. Knowledge in the industry is also essential unless a franchise system is adopted, since the entire business support system is readily available to the franchisee. In any case, one will still need to learn and work very hard.

Passion is the key criteria to sustain yourself during this challenging phase. Ms. Tong shared that business owners need a positive mindset, because they need to think that they are going to be successful. They also need to switch from an employee mindset to an employer mindset. In the case of a kindergarten, the business owner needs to take care of the children, clean and sweep the floor, wash toilets and hang banners for marketing. He/she will be the boss, so it is up to him/her to come up with creative solutions for problems encountered.

Ms. Tong then continued with Phase 2, which involves ways on expanding the business. An example of spatial expansion is a restaurant that expands



space to accommodate more customers. In her case, parents from areas further away want to enroll their children at QQ Kindergarten, so she looked into plans to establish another outlet.

Some valuable advice she shared with the delegates included ensuring proper legal contracts and agreements, and the support and dissemination of information to employees and customers. Ms. Tong also stressed on the need for standardisation, which is the provision of the same quality of services across different locations.

To ensure that business support systems are intact, Ms. Tong stated that delegates need to continually improve their knowledge in their field. For example, she allocated a month per year for her personal training. She also encouraged them to be innovative and creative to add value to their services. Listening to internal and external customer feedback is also vital. Finally, she reminded them to remember to have passion for the business: "Every morning, ask yourself – what makes you happy?"

PANELIST 2: Puan Hajjah Fatimah Anis Ibrahim **Founder, Fatimah Frozen Food**



Recounting an earlier presentation that recommends that we focus on only one product, Puan Hajjah Fatimah chose to go the route of diversification, proudly announcing that her brand, including household names like Royale Paratha, Popia Sayur and Karipap Crispy, has more than 20 product offerings due to customer demand.

She first conceptualised the idea for her business from her home-based business of selling curry puffs. After a visit to the United Kingdom, she noticed that frozen food was common in British supermarkets. With the idea of starting the first brand of frozen food in Malaysia, she started delivering curry puffs to government offices. Her house was the "factory" where production was conducted on the ground floor while the upper floor was the living area. As she cannot drive, she would take taxis and Grabcar to buy supplies. Marketing was by word-of-mouth and deliveries were done with one motorcycle. Eventually, she invested in another two motorcycles. Packaging was constructed from simple cardboard. Within 3 days, she could earn RM7,000.

She almost failed three times, and she also faced a lot of professional and personal problems. She once faced the problem of not having capital for product development and business management. Subsequently, she did not have enough capital to upgrade her product packaging. She was hesitant about rebranding her package, because she was worried that her loyal customer base in Brunei may not recognise the new packaging.

To add on to her problems, her husband left her suddenly without paying alimony and she was left to fend for three young children. Today, she is proud to say that one child is a doctor, while another is a marketing manager. Another child, unfortunately, stopped studying at Form 1 but is her right-hand man in the business.

It was also a challenge to place her products in supermarkets but today, her products are in hypermarkets like Mydin and EconSave, as well as in private hospitals, private schools, halal marts and hotels. Puan Hajjah Fatimah said that label certification is important if business owners want to expand



their market. For her business, she rented a factory with the help from MARA, and obtained HACCP and halal certification. Today, her frozen food products are exported to Brunei, Singapore and Saudi Arabia.

30 years ago, she made murtabak from popiah skins and today, she has customers all the way in Brunei, who started eating her curry puffs when they were children. Ultimately, Puan Hajjah Fatimah found that if you want to succeed as a frozen food entrepreneur, an organized production, delivery and marketing business system is the key to survival in the industry.

Questions and Answers Session

Question 1: How do you maintain the quality of frozen food?

Answer: The curry puffs do not contain preservatives but they are frozen at -32°C or -38°C (blast preserve) and then, they are packed and delivered.

Question 2: You failed three times in your business. Is that a normal scenario for an entrepreneur to expect or are you an extraordinary businesswoman?

Answer: Failure can be seen as a child who falls down while learning to walk. As an entrepreneur, imagine yourself as a child who has no choice but to get up and keep walking. Personal interest is important and most importantly, do not copy others.

Question 3: I have an order of 300 but I have problem packaging them for delivery to Kuala Lumpur. Can you advise me what to do?

Answer: Fatimah Frozen Foods owns only one truck in Klang Valley and the delivery service is outsourced to a company called Cold Trucks. If you need to outsource, choose the cheapest option, which is either based on weight, or by carton with a minimum order quantity.





SESSION 5

From Start to Finish – Supply Chain



This session provides the end-to-end know-how on the supply chain process; from the raw material sourcing, to the management of the goods movement and to the final step, where the finished goods are ready for market.

Moderator: **Dato' Dr. Marina David, Dental Surgeon, Marina Dental Consortium**

Panelist 1: Ms. Surinder Kaur
Founder, SG Sales and Services



Ms. Surinder Kaur was a successful career woman where within two years, she was promoted from Admin Manager to Director. At the same time, she was a mother of two, who was learning to manage an office and do sales and services.

In 2008, she conceived twins and ended up taking a lot of medical leave for her children, leading on to her eventual resignation from her position. In the next three years, she was a full-time mother and wife who ended up sending her children to a childcare centre because she had “lost herself”, and felt that she was not being a good mother.

She then to enrol herself in a personal development course, and asked herself an important question: “Do I want to take up a job again?”. As she wanted a flexible schedule, she started a small business by reselling organic foods and learning about the food manufacturing process.

As she continued with her business, Ms. Surinder was motivated to sell her own new and unique product. One day, an idea struck when she served her friend fresh coconut water and 3-in-1 coffee: “Why not produce powdered coconut water?” With that idea, she approached a biotech company in Kuala Lumpur who could potentially produce it. She discussed it with her husband, who agreed to sell off their second home in order to fund her start-up.

In 2011, she set up an enterprise for the trading and distribution of organic products. In 2016, she upgraded the company from an enterprise to a private limited company with headquarters in Juru, Penang. Research and development was completed in collaboration with a factory in Technology Park Malaysia in Raub, Pahang. In 2017, she started to promote and sell the product to local and international markets such as South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, China, USA and Middle East. “Tender Coconut Water” liquid and water was available in bottles, sachets, pouches and drums, and she also supplied to restaurants.

Ms. Surinder then explained the definition of a basic supply chain entity, which consists of three parties: a seller or a supplier, who is a) an individual or an organisation that provides goods or services (usually in the form of raw materials) whom the buyer does business with; b) the producer, or an individual or an organisation who receives component or raw material from a seller and converts it into a finished good and c) the customer or end user, who is an individual or an organisation that receives the finished product or service. As a Tier Two supplier in the supply chain, her company manufactures coconut powder and sells them to wholesale producers.



Some of the challenges faced include uncertainty about the future and the fear of failure. Monitoring her business performance and maintaining balance between work and family life were also mentioned as challenges, in addition to encountering distraction by other product offerings as she developed her product. To counter such challenges, Ms. Surinder's strategy for success included reducing client dependency in one territory and maintaining strong links with the market. She also asked the delegates to decide on the positioning of their company within the supply chain – are they a producer, wholesaler or retailer?

Finally, she encouraged entrepreneurs to see other business owners as collaborators, and not purely as competitors. "Take part in local and international exhibitions to promote your product and network with other entrepreneurs," Ms. Surinder said.

Panelist 2: Ms Patrina Tang

Co-owner, Tedboy Bakery



Ms. Patrina Tang started Tedboy Bakery, which sells freshly made breads and pastries, from scratch. A pharmacist by training, she started the bakery because she wanted to the supply of freshly baked breads and wholesome pastries she had baked for her son to be available to other people.

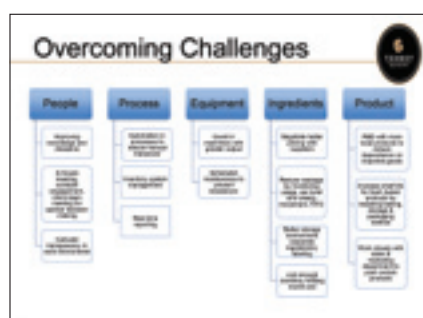
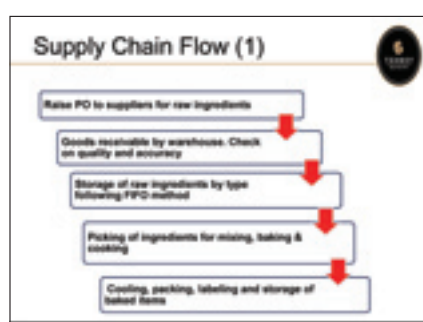
As an entrepreneur, Ms. Tang learned the importance of a smooth supply chain. In one instance, she had to purchase the raw ingredients from the local supermarket herself when the flour supplier failed to deliver her order. The lesson learned from the fateful incident prompted her to design a supply chain system, beginning from the sourcing for raw ingredients and ending with the delivery of finished products to the end consumer. Every stage involved careful planning and continuous process improvement in order to optimise efficiency and maintain product quality.

The 7-step chain flow for Tedboy Bakery is as follows:

- 1 First, stock is ordered once a week, unless there is a need to top up in middle of the week.
- 2 Second, cross contamination is avoided by separating raw and cooked foods, as well as dry and wet foods.
- 3 Third, as the business scales up, the employees must be guided to follow certain procedures, e.g., FIFO (first in, first out) method for the storage of raw ingredients. For instance, baked goods need to be cooled down before packing to prevent mould. The daily standard operating procedures need to be accurate and efficient, because customers will start coming in, expecting to purchase fresh bread. In addition, TedBoy Bakery also supplies to boutique hotels. Therefore, drivers have a checklist during pick-up time at 6 am, and opening hours are set at 7.30 am, and latest by 8.00 am.
- 4 Fourth, the business needs to continually improve supply chain management.
- 5 Fifth, inventory holding should be minimised, as products incur cost, regardless of the 30-day credit facility available.

What is Supply Chain

- Supply Chain definition varies according to industry
- For Tedboy, essentially the baked goods supply chain starts from raw ingredients and ends with delivery of finished products to end consumer
- Each stage needs careful planning and continuous process improvement to optimize efficiency while maintaining quality





- Sixth, operating costs can be reduced by optimising production cost and minimising wastage from production. In avoiding wastage, TedBoy Bakery packs and delivers unsold products to orphanages.
- Seventh, flexibility and customisation in the production timeline should be enhanced.

In overcoming the various challenges as a bakery owner, Ms. Tang shared the following solutions:

- Employees need continuous information to ensure commitment and to inculcate discipline, so she holds a monthly meeting for the purpose of updating her employees. For constant engagement, Tedboy Bakery has a micro team meeting for quick decision-making (45 minutes during coffee) and to cultivate transparency in the work environment.
- Then, the production process is enhanced with automation and a sophisticated inventory system management, which is connected to real time reporting. Investment in equipment is vital, because scheduled maintenance can prevent breakdowns, especially in machinery responsible for greater output.
- Better pricing for raw materials can be negotiated by building long-term relationships with suppliers. Wastage can also be reduced by monitoring usage, and by establishing systems for inventory management e.g. FIFO method.
- Ms. Tang also recommended that research and development be carried out with more local producers to reduce dependence on imported goods. She illustrated that the shelf life for fresh baked products can be improved by tweaking the baking, storage and packaging methods.

In conclusion, she recommended that business owners should work closely with sales and marketing departments to promote the sales of their products.





Questions and Answers Session

Question 1: How do you protect your intellectual property for SG Sales and Services?

Answer: The products are open to modification for unlimited promotion of the brand, which also makes owning a factory unnecessary.

Question 2: Were there any offers to take over SG Sales and Services?

Answer: When the business was ready for expansion, investment was required but the business proposals unfortunately put her (Ms Surinder) in a passive role. Ms. Surinder advises entrepreneurs to review investment agreements carefully, and to focus on collaboration.

Question 3: What triggered TedBoy Bakery's expansion?

Answer: The expansion was triggered by high customer demand e.g. hot menu items for cafes, and also via the retail section in supermarkets. In reality, a business needs to expand in order to survive in the long run.

Question 4: Does Tedboy Bakery have any intention to expand in Penang or start a franchise programme?

Answer: Tedboy Bakery is focused on a "healthy and wholesome food" concept. Frozen dough has not been explored due to the "baked fresh daily" concept. In terms of a franchise model, Ms. Tang personally feels that it only benefits the franchisee, and she may not be able to manage and control their product. Currently, she is looking for active partners, and are open to partners who will open and manage their own operations.



SESSION 6

From Start to Finish – Marketing and Sales



This session provides the end-to-end know-how on products or services marketing and sales, the critical area identified for entrepreneurs to succeed.

Moderator: **Ms Ong Bee Leng, Chief Executive Officer, PWDC**

Panelist 1: **Dr. Tan Cheng Wooi** Founder, Nukleuswear



Dr. Tan started his presentation by sharing with the audience that his vision for starting a business is beyond maximising profit, as in the case of Walt Disney starting Disney Productions.

Globally, there is a decline in clothing prices but the clothing industry is still profitable. Dr. Tan mentioned that the owners of famous fashion brands are incidentally some of the richest people in the world like Amancio Ortega, the founder of Zara; Stephan Persson of H&M, and Tadashi Yanai of Uniqlo. He believed that declining prices in clothing can be offset by stimulating demand, rising volume and creative branding and marketing.

Unfortunately, the clothing industry is the second most polluting industry in the world, which happens in the agriculture field e.g., cotton fields, because the cotton used to produce a t-shirt needs 150 gm of fertilizers and pesticides.

Besides polluting the environment, the clothing industry is a highly competitive industry where every quarter, the buyer asks for cost down. In view of these two factors, Dr. Tan sees that the world needs creative and environmentally ethical fashion brands.

Started seven years ago, Nukleuswear specializes in sustainable clothing, specifically sustainable underwear and basics, which are sold online and offline, and is now available in 50 countries.

In 2016, Nukleuswear started with LeVerne, which is anti-microbial underwear that helps women prevent vaginal infections and urinary tract infections. Tagged as “Guardian of the most intimate part of a female’s body”, Dr. Tan worked with a European research house to produce LeVerne.

Dr. Tan shared that clothing can have an adverse impact on people and the environment. For instance, our underwear is in close contact with delicate and sensitive areas of our bodies. Women may experience discomfort if the wrong type is worn, especially since underwear is worn for up to 12 hours a day.

Nukleus offers smart and sustainable choices in underwear and basics, which are produced from the finest eco materials certified by Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), which is the world’s leading textile processing standard for organic fibres. The core components are certified Oeko-Tex Standard 100 that is known as the world’s highest standard for human ecological safety. This makes Nukleuswear great for all skin types and suitable for all-day wear.

The packaging for Nukleuswear is also eco-friendly since its paper is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, a globally trusted organisation that promotes responsible forest management. Vegetable-based ink (i.e., soy ink), which has low levels of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) is used





to print the boxes. VOCs are unstable compounds that vaporise into the air and react with other compounds or elements to produce ozone that causes air pollution and health problems such as breathing difficulties, headache, and nausea.

Initially marketed to men, Dr. Tan found that female consumers were also buying Nukleus men's boxer shorts due to its breathable, comfortable and eco-friendly cotton. Women are more aware of the environmental damage fashion causes due to agricultural chemical use, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and production-related hazardous waste. Ethical fashion resonated strongly with women, and the eco-friendly brand of Nukleuswear helped to increase sales among female consumers when they realized that they had the option of buying eco-friendly underwear.

In conclusion, Dr. Tan shared the ideology of "Built to Last" by Jim Collins, author of "Ideology and Profit is Possible" to the delegates, and encouraged them to reject the tyranny of "or" (competition) but to embrace the genius of "and" (collaboration). By working with partners who share the same values as them, Nukleus aims to reduce its global carbon footprint.

Panelist 2: Ms Peggy Tan

Co-founder, CG Computers



In 1995, Ms. Peggy Tan co-founded CG Computers, and is now the company's Marketing Director. The company has a presence of 55 locations in Malaysia, and they merged with Indonesia's retail giant, PT Erajaya Swasembada (Erajaya) in 2014. CG Computers holds brands such as Switch, Huawei, Samsung, Xiaomi, Honor and Erafone. In 2018, they gained RM400 million in revenue, and currently has 700 employees.

Ms. Tan began her presentation with the question: "What is marketing?" which is to get more sales. She further explained that the success of a retail business is highly dependent on the volume of sales. The engagement, management and usage of data analytics is vital in marketing for new and returning customers. Additionally, data analytics also plays a role in the monitoring of customer service engagement.

Engagement is about driving traffic to the business' websites and social media to ensure returning customers. Ms. Tan explained that good content is crucial, such as giveaway contests, and communicating with customers for continuous engagement. Like other companies, CG Computers makes use of social media platforms such as Facebook, WeChat, Instagram, Whatsapp, Email, and Twitter thus, they allocate a staff of 10 in the Marketing Team to be responsible for these accounts. They receive about 9,000 messages from customers through Whatsapp, and they ensure that queries are responded to in a timely manner. Email is another way to engage with customers, and CG Computers sends out about half a million emails every month. According to Ms. Tan, emails is a good option in tracking customers' interactions, and she advised that it is important to send and track emails. If they are specific and relevant to customers, there is a 30% higher chance that the email will be opened and read.

Ms. Tan shared that some businesses, like CG Computers, may use more than one social media platform so she recommends using Hootsuite to



manage, schedule, find and report on all the social media accounts. CG Computers has over more than 50 social media accounts, and 20 of those accounts attracts a large volume of activity. She uses Hootsuite for all of them since it only costs her about RM20,000 per year to manage all the active accounts. She reminded the delegates that Hootsuite is free for the first three accounts, therefore it is suitable for companies with one Twitter, Facebook and Instagram account.

One of the reasons why she likes using Hootsuite is because it allows the scheduling and measuring of the best time to blast out postings, which is helpful for advertising on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and etc. Hootsuite also provides business owners with sufficient data to show when the audience is the most active, be it in the morning, afternoon, evening or at night. Hootsuite also captures what people mention about the business owner and the business in the form of hash tags, measures all the data and then compiles them together with statistics.

Ms. Tan then presented the following data analysis tools used in her business:

First, CG Computers uses SAP and C4C for their data analytics, which is one of the cheapest and smallest in the market. C4C records more than 400,000 customers' data for them, and the benefit of using C4C is that it allows business owners to engage with customers online and offline. For instance, if a customer emails the company to inquire about a product in the store, the system will capture the email address, and the staff can respond with regards to the product's in-store availability. The same thing happens when the customer visits the physical store and buys a product there. Customer engagement is captured by the system so the business owner can track the entire process as well as the customer's behaviour, which helps them identify which the best tool to use.

Ms. Tan also mentioned that Google Analytics is a tool that should not be missed as it informs business owners on numbers of visitors to the business website, the duration of the visit, and the content browsed in the website.

PRISM Data CCTV is another form of data analytics that Ms. Tan uses as an offline retailer. Unlike a normal CCTV which captures the images of people, PRISM Data CCTV senses and tracks people's body heat waves. Therefore, retailers can see the direction the customers are headed for in the store and the highly frequented areas, which is useful for the retailer to know the areas for placement of the best or the least noticed products. She further explained that statistics have shown the majority of customers will often walk straight into the store, therefore placing a table in the centre will give them a "shock". Ms. Tan concluded by sharing that statistics have shown that online businesses are successful for products priced RM800 and below. If the product is priced RM800 and above, Malaysians may not purchase them online, preferring a brick-and-mortar store. She also stated that businesses that sell clothing could use an online platform in order to engage with the customers, which can be done with the right tools.



Questions and Answers Session

Question 1: What if you have a small budget for marketing?

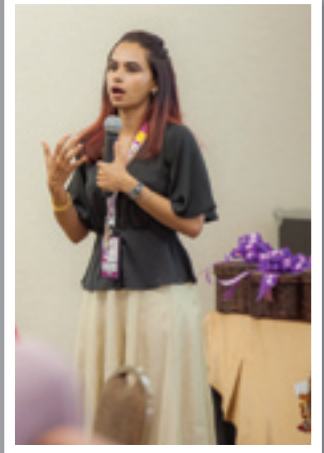
Answer: Online marketing can be utilised for measuring purposes. A banner may cost RM10,000 but ROI (return on investment) cannot be measured.

Question 2: Could you address an exit plan strategy for businesses?

Answer 1 (Dr. Tan): Previously, the responsibility was for initial investors to cash out, to attract more talent and also to engage in the process of mergers and acquisitions in formulating an exit plan. Today, companies are going for public listing or for IPOs. Going for IPO is not only an exit plan but also a legitimate and powerful way to exponentially grow a business.

Answer 2 (Ms. Tan): Since the company started more than 20 years ago, there was no exit plan. Instead, the idea was to expand. When the twentieth store was opened, a partnership with an Indonesian listed company was formed in order to scale up the expansion.





SESSION 7

Charting the Roadmap for Action

The Day 2 working session again divided the Conference delegates into the earlier three breakout groups of New Entrepreneurs, Business Owners and Product and Services Suppliers. Expert practitioners led the working sessions to identify gaps, develop strategies and chart the roadmap for action required to face challenges and overcome barriers within their respective areas.

WORKING GROUP 1: New Entrepreneurs – women and men who are starting new businesses

Lead Facilitator: **Ms. Krista Goon**
Co-Founder, WomenBizSENSE

SPEAKER: **Ms. Sangeet Weissenberger**
Founder, Klien&Fine



Ms. Sangeet Weissenberger introduced herself and the reasoning behind the naming of her company (Klien&Fine), where Klein means “small and cozy”. Her inspiration came from her husband, who happens to be German. The latter part of the name (Fine), signifies the “tiny, small and cute pieces” that substantiate the products in her business. She continued with how she became bored with the usual fashion available in the market and sought to create pieces that would capture people’s attention and make them wonder where she had obtained them. This has been her direction for the business since its inception.

After her marriage to her German husband, she decided to become the housewife as her husband’s salary was substantial enough for both of them. Doing this for two years, she enjoyed herself up the point until she was addressed as the “wife” of Mr. Weissenberger, without her name, much to her annoyance, at an event. That night, she decided that a change was necessary in her life.

She was thankful that her husband encouraged her and gave her the support she needed for her start-up. Surfing on Pinterest, Ms. Sangeet discovered MantraBands and decided that this was going to be one of her main products. She obtained the distributorship for MantraBands in Malaysia and currently, she also represents MantraBands in Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and is attempting Singapore next.

Following MantraBands, Ms. Sangeet worked on a different brand, which was Steffanos Jewelry, who had been operating in Malaysia for about 15 years. Once again, her husband gave her the full support to take over the brand without badgering her about the costs or details. Upon acquiring the two brands, she realised that they had opened a lot of doors to retailers, such as Isetan, which were previously inaccessible. Realizing the importance of brand image, she strived to offer a unique experience at her boutique in order to leave a lasting impression on customers. She also highlighted the importance of networking to businesswomen as it expanded their business horizons.



Ms. Sangeet emphasised the artisanal aspect of her products, highlighting the unique edge that it has over factory-made products, hence educating people on their exclusivity. For instance, the African beads that come from Africa come attached with personal stories about the women who make the beads – the income they receive from their business help to feed and educate their children, besides giving them a sense of confidence.

Without the support of her family and her friends, Ms. Sangeet believed that her road would not have been so easy. In her own words, she has been incredibly “blessed” and believes in paying it forward to the next person. She urged all the members of the audience to be confident in their own brand image and to never compromise their integrity for the sake of going with the flow.

As an entrepreneur, she also cited the importance of being human in every aspect possible, and that one should never sacrifice humanity for profits. This humanity will shine through in your products and give you a unique brand experience that no one else can compete with. “Everyone else can have a nice product with a catchy tagline, but only you can let your heart shine with humanity through your products,” says Ms. Sangeet.

Working Session Guiding Questions and Responses

Question 1: What are the top barriers preventing you from starting a business?

- ▶ **Transport:** Transportation is important in every single aspect of a business as it determines whether you will be able to get to work on time every day or even whether you can get your goods to your store in a timely manner. Difficulty in managing the logistics can prove to be a significant barrier for business.
- ▶ **Capital:** Most banks and trust funds require some form of business cash flow before the approval for a loan can be given. However, as most of budding entrepreneurs have minimal savings, they are unable to front the cash needed to start up a business. As such, the working group reported that the only way to source for capital is to get a cash injection from a family member or a friend. However, this is risky as there is usually no documentation in such dealings. Accepting seed funding from friends or family will also mean that should the business do well, they may demand a share of the company.
- ▶ **Real Estate:** Finding a location for their business that is feasible for daily travel as well as strategic in terms of traffic location is a huge obstacle as they often have little, if any, experience in these areas. Training in these essential skills is rarely provided for new entrepreneurs and if they were provided at all, a hefty fee is imposed that most new entrepreneurs would be unable to pay.
- ▶ **Fear of failure:** Most new entrepreneurs are extremely apprehensive of the fact that they might lose their entire life savings if their business fails. The lack of available capital through loans and lending means that most new entrepreneurs invest substantial amounts of their own money into their businesses. As such, the fear of losing everything they own is palpable, and has a dampening effect on their business. This fear also



means that new entrepreneurs are less willing to take risks, but ironically, the path to success is always lined with risk.

- Heavy family commitments:** A large majority of new entrepreneurs are drawn into starting up their own business due to the fact that they can earn a high income if their business succeeds. However, most of these entrepreneurs also have many dependents and as such, the need to provide care for them looms over every business decision they make. The consequences of a bad business decision could negatively affect their ability to provide for their dependents.
- Lack of family support:** The family is the last line of defence in an entrepreneur's struggle in the business world and as such, family support is crucial. Lack of family support is the main reason why many budding entrepreneurs give up before they even start. Support from the people whom one loves the most in the world is the number one motivator that have kept many entrepreneurs fighting until their business turns a profit. Maintaining a stable personal life while trying to make a business work can be especially difficult for working women, because of women's social obligations to the family.

Question 2: What are the best strategies to overcome these barriers?

- Forming a partnership:** Having a partner means that another person is there to help out and share the burden of running the business. Thus, the difficulty in gaining capital and transportation can be halved as there are two active contributors. With two minds working together, there is always a second perspective, which is better in terms of risk management and decision making. In fact, some of the biggest companies in the world today started out with two or more founding partners. However, the participants noted a caveat, whereby profits have to be shared too.
- Obtaining a government grant:** Government grants have low interest rates and affordable repayment plans, which make them suitable for new entrepreneurs. With such facilities in place to help new entrepreneurs, there is little reason not to consider government grants. In contrast to borrowing from a bank, approval for such grants is easier to be obtained and as such, translates into faster capital injection for a business.
- Going small-scale:** Your business may be running perfectly in your mind, but that may not be the case in real life. To play it safe, any wise entrepreneur would start the business on a small scale before attempting to inject more capital into it. A general rule of thumb is to wait until the business breaks even, or preferably turns a profit before upsizing is considered. Participants also cautioned that losses will now be multiplied if the business grows bigger. As such, new entrepreneurs should not be swayed by the temptation of bigger profits but focus on stabilizing and maintaining the business first.
- Participating in networking conferences:** New entrepreneurs should consider joining networking conferences, as they provide an opportunity to meet and connect with potential business partners or investors. The more contacts you have, the more sources you can rely on in terms of your business needs. Having a Rolodex full of contacts will make you a resourceful businessperson with tools to deal with any situation that arises.



- **Holding family meetings:** Having a meeting with family members and informing them about the reasons to start a business is important because family approval means family support. A large majority of successful business people in the world today possess functioning family units, and claim that their success would not have been possible without their families. Trading family for a business is never a good idea, thus cherish them regardless of whether or not support is given.
- **Using the Internet:** The internet can be used to find popular hotspots that contain high volumes of foot traffic. This will allow you to choose a suitable location that has high visibility. In the age of millennials, it is more important than ever to keep up with the current trends. The internet is a very powerful tool, so make sure that it is utilise it to its full potential in terms of maximising the business's online presence.

Question 3: Choose a strategy and use the PIME methodology to chart a road map for action to reach your goal to overcome the barrier identified

PLAN		
Action	Timeline	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Preparing a business model and gathering capital through savings from all available avenues. ► Searching for a strategic location via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Surveying through contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► 1 -3 Months ► Within this timeline, list the funding options should be listed, and a decision to be made before submitting the application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Surveying competitors for the best location and conducting a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to determine what sets the business apart from other similar businesses.
IMPLEMENT		
Action	Timeline	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Setting up a business plan and conducting market research. From there on, one should engage in marketing to increase sales and production. ► Identifying the target groups and establishing an online presence. ► Negotiating with the landlord and reach an agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Determining the business plan: one week ► Establishing online presence: one Week ► Negotiating with landlord and signing the agreement: two weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Select a business plan. ► Established online presence. ► Sign agreement with landlord and conduct necessary renovations for the business.
MONITOR		
Action	Timeline	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Obtaining customer feedback, checking milestones and financial balance. ► Monitoring growth of sales. ► Reviewing the financial plan and keeping up to date on bank payments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► These should be continuously done throughout the period of operation of the business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► If sales are low, reevaluate the product and the business model. ► If there is negative feedback from customers, make immediate changes.

EVALUATE		
Action	Timeline	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Determining the amount of profit versus loss, choosing suitable marketing process and obtaining advice from other successful business owners. ▶ Obtaining direct feedback from customers and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Two to three weeks. Should be conducted periodically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Producing a financial report to portray an accurate description of the health of it and its performance. Based on this, business plan should be maintained if it is healthy. However, if it is underperforming, then corresponding changes should be made.

WORKING GROUP 2: Business owners – women and men who want to grow their businesses

Lead Facilitator: **Ms. Yeap Ai Li**
Chairperson, NAWEM Penang

Speaker: **Ms. Maresa Ng**
CEO and President,
ActionCOACH Malaysia



Ms. Maresa Ng was previously in the banking industry, after that which she thrived in her career in business coaching, when she found her calling in helping SMEs. She has conducted various seminars and spoken in many conferences in countries such as Vietnam and Japan. In her spare time, she enjoys rock climbing and cycling.

Ms. Ng started her sharing with the statement: “Business is simple but not easy”, making a clear distinction between “simple” and “easy”. While it is not easy in that it requires a lot of determination, it is in fact rather simple, given that the key to succeeding in business does not require anything overly complex on the part of business owners.

According to Ms. Ng, only 20% of businesses survive the first five years of operation, and of that statistic, a further 20% survives the next five years. She suggested that the success or failure of a business lies within the mind-set of the business owners and entrepreneurs.

Ms. Ng posited that there are two kinds of entrepreneurs: those who know what they do, and those who do what they know. She asserted that the latter kind is the one that often succeeds, because he/she is taking action. In this technological era where the internet is omnipresent, information can be accessed easily. Therefore, lack of knowledge is no longer an excuse for any business owners, given they can obtain any relevant information and knowledge through multiple online platforms. For instance, if an individual does not know about sales, he/she can access YouTube videos to learn more about it.

She also brought up the notion of entrepreneurs solving the symptoms, but not the root cause of problems, relating this to the ability of entrepreneurs to change their mind-sets and subsequently transforming their business.



Ms. Ng posited five critical mind-sets that she deemed as essential to have as an entrepreneur:

- **Don't get too busy:** Getting oneself involved in too many things tends to result in distraction, which in turn leads to costly mistakes in business.

A key question pertaining to this that, do business owners understand the distinction between working in and on their business?

Working in a business is akin to working in the engine room of a submarine, where one does repetitive work involving customers (selling, making, promoting etc) without proper oversight of the future of business. This may yield income for the next few months, but does not guarantee longevity of the business.

Working on the business, on the other hand, is akin to working in the captain room, where one has a clear oversight of the business as opposed to working relentlessly head down.

Business owners today rarely allocate enough time and effort to work on the business. She suggested participants to STOP – Set Time On Planning, and to slow down in order to speed up.

- **Know the numbers to your business:** Understanding key numbers like margins will help business owners to proceed strategically when pricing their products, as opposed to doing so based on pure speculation and estimation. Pricing positions the business in the market as well as the profits rendered.

Business owners who are unclear with regards to the figures to their business often face the problem of feeling as if substantial revenue has been generated during business operations, yet arriving at little to almost no profit at the end of the year.

As business owners, they should know these relevant figures, as these figures will provide insight as to how one can run their business more effectively and sustainably.

- **Have a clear and simple business plan:** Setting a goal in business is paramount; running a business relentlessly without a clear goal would often result in business owners feeling exhausted.

Ms. Ng explains that four criteria are important in a business plan. First, she strongly asserts that a business plan should be concise, and ideally to be only a page long. The business plan should be visible at the work station at all times, so one remembers it always.

Second, the business plan should also contain focused goals. It is important to stay on track with what is planned, and not fall into the trap of compulsivity by wanting to execute the latest ideas.

Third, business owners should not keep the plan to themselves. The team should be informed of the goals as well, so that the team is prepared to go the distance along with the owners.

Finally, the business plans should be subjected to quarterly reviews to ensure they have been met. Business owners should ideally review their business plans every 90 days.

- **Get good at selling:** Ms. Ng asserted that no one else in the business will understand the product and services better than the business owners





themselves, thereby making them better salespersons than an appointed sales team.

To help overcome the general fear of sales, she encouraged participants to view selling as a means of helping others to solve their problems. She also said rejection should not be feared, as it constitutes feedback that can be utilised in improving the business.

■ **Doing the work once:** The key to succeeding in business is leverage, meaning to do more with less. One should be able to make more money and have more customers, but not become significantly busier. Everyone has 24 hours in a day, yet some business owners are able to yield more results and bigger successes due to their ability to gain leverage on their business.

The key step in leveraging is by building powerful systems. Systematising your business means doing the work once, and delegating work to your employees should be done on the back of strong systems.

Ms. Ng suggested four areas of businesses that business owners should prioritise to gain leverage and time on:

The business owner should make sure the team members are well-equipped with knowledge and skills to operate the business. This entails investing time for staff training, or ensuring orientation is in place for new employees to enable them to learn about the standard operating procedures and culture of the organisation.

To run and grow a business, one should ensure that a dashboard is in place to measure each department of the company, and that each department provides the business owner with a monthly report on their updates and operations.

Ms. Ng suggests that product and service standardisation is key to obtaining leverage in business. Frequent customisations on elements like proposals and pricings should be avoided, as these could be time consuming. Softwares and systems can be utilised to carry out daily operations such as accounting or managing customer data to increase efficiency.

At the end of her sharing, Ms. Ng invited participants to visit www.MaresaNg.com/fourpillars to better evaluate their current business operations, and to visit her YouTube channel for more videos that give advice and information on how to better manage businesses.

Working Session Guiding Questions and Responses

Question 1: What are the top barriers stopping you from growing your business?

Among the reasons shared the business owners shared during the working session included:

■ **Lack of Resources:** Resources encompass many facets, all of which are necessary for the growth of a business. Business owners lack sufficient funds, and are often clueless on where to obtain funds. Also, another challenge arises when they do not have enough human capital or manpower to expand their business.



- ▶ **Mindset:** Negative mindsets such as lacking in self-confidence and fearing rejection pose as a problem to some business owners. This leads to being complacent with current results, and are unwilling to take risks for fear of failure.
- ▶ **Lack of Training/Experience:** Due to their inexperience, many business owners feel that they need more training, coaching and guidance to lead their businesses in the right direction.
- ▶ **Lack of Proper System/Management:** Business owners mostly do not have a system in place, resulting in messy operations. They also do not know how to manage their time to yield optimum results. In addition, they do not have performance management systems in place to ensure employees are working productively.
- ▶ **No Definitive Plan:** Some business owners do not have comprehensive business plans with clear goals to strive towards. Daily operations are carried out without focus, leading to stagnant results.
- ▶ **Lack of Technology:** The implementation and usage of software and technology is crucial in making business operations more efficient. Unfortunately, many face the difficulty of not knowing how to operate the technological tools, or not having sufficient funds to purchase the technology necessary to upgrade their businesses.
- ▶ **Lack of Support Structure:** As mothers who have to juggle between familial obligations and business operations, some business owners feel that they do not have enough support from their families or business partners to grow their business. Social support, especially from social agencies, is also lacking.
- ▶ **No Customer Awareness:** Most business owners are also unaware of information regarding their customer base, specifically in aspects like demographics, customer needs and corresponding satisfaction levels. This is likely due to insufficient customer research or feedback.

Question 2: What are the best strategies to overcome these barriers?

- ▶ **Obtain Funding:** Resources can be gathered from external parties such as investors and business partners. Alternatively, one can apply for bank loans for purposes of business expansion.
- ▶ **Undergo Training:** Business owners should attend more business matching sessions, seminars and business coaching programmes to be equipped with the necessary skills to run their businesses more effectively. Getting advice or guidance from SME corporations, MATRADE and experts in the industry also would help with business growth.
- ▶ **Produce a Business Plan:** Clear, defined goals and vision for the business should be established. The business plan should be restructured if and when necessary. Goals should be reviewed consistently, in order to ensure that they have been attained.
- ▶ **Increase Competitiveness of Business:** Business owners should strive to have an edge over other businesses in their respective fields. Observing product innovation, creating better branding of business, increasing availability of product/service, identifying added values and relocating business premises to more strategic locations represent some strategies for business owners. They should also learn new marketing

techniques to better position their businesses among their intended demographics.

- **Change Mind-set:** The cultivation of a positive mindset is important, for a business owner to feel more confident in the business, and therefore managing the business more efficiently. Calculated risks can be taken for business expansion, and rejection and failures can be treated as inputs for further improvements.
- **Seek Support:** Business owners could and should reach out to related NGOs or SMEs for any form of necessary support that they may need.

Question 3. Choose a strategy and use the PIME methodology to chart a roadmap for action to reach your goal to overcome the barrier identified

PLAN		
Action	Timeline	Output
► Equipping all members of workforce in the business (including business owners) with relevant skills and knowledge for improved performance, which includes enrolling in coaching/training sessions, seminars, courses, classes and workshops.	► Performing quarterly reviews, with updates to plans wherever necessary, for instance, and enrolling in new courses that are focused on specific skill sets.	► Establishing skills and knowledge that will result in an increased competency of the business, specifically in areas of employee performance, productivity and KPI. All these will lead to increased staff retention, as well as confidence from both the business owners themselves and from the customers.
IMPLEMENT		
Action	Timeline	Output
► After relevant skills and knowledge are obtained, business owners should produce an SOP that is best suited for their respective business operations. They should fine tune the SOP to ensure maximisation of results. After that, business owners could consider scheduling mandatory internal training so that all employees are familiar with the SOP.	► Quarterly reviews for progress in performance of employees as well as the business.	► The SOP ensures full utilization of the manpower in the business as well as a shortened production timeline to guarantee optimum efficiency.
MONITOR		
Action	Timeline	Output
► Implementing a mentor-mentee programme within the organisation to closely monitor the progress of all employees	► Monthly reports on employee performance should be established.	► The mentor-mentee programme yields reports on employee performance, which business owners can use as a basis of comparison with the targets set for the business. Subsequent adjustments to these targets can be made wherever necessary in accordance with the comparisons.

EVALUATION		
Action	Timeline	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business owners should evaluate their businesses using a variety of methods to obtain a clear picture of business performance. Performance appraisals, reviewing sales targets and obtaining feedback from multiple stakeholders of the business are among the methods of evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation period could range from quarterly to six months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having evaluation mechanisms allow for an increased incentive for employees to consistently put forth their best efforts in improving business performance, especially in terms of growing profits. It also ensures that the business plan is constantly updated with subsequent goals to be achieved.

WORKING GROUP 3: Products and services suppliers – women and men who earn income through supplying products or services

Lead Facilitator: **Ms. Wendy Wong Bee Kee,**
Past Chairperson, NAWEM Penang

Presenter: **Ms. Nurul-Huda Mohamed Afandi**
Founder and CEO,
Thrift Solutions and
Thrift Consulting



Ms. Nurul-Huda Mohamed Afandi is the Founder and the CEO of Thrift Solutions and Thrift Consulting, which provides training and consultancy for government agencies, SMEs and start-ups, specializing in IT projects, digital marketing and homestay/holiday rentals business. She is a Chartered Accountant (Australia) and a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA). Nurul-Huda graduated from University of Melbourne and is a HRDF Certified Trainer and eUsahawan Certified Trainer. Her presentation covers ways to perform a quick digital audit for the business, and how to build a digital marketing roadmap.

For the first session, Ms. Nurul-Huda administered a quick survey that revealed that most delegates do not fully utilize all the online platforms to publicise their products or services. All delegates were encouraged to utilize the online platforms available, so that they are optimised for Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).

Ms. Nurul-Huda recommended that the delegates provide backlinks or keywords in their pages, blogs and other social media accounts.

In designing a digital marketing roadmap, Ms. Nurul-Huda explained that there are two options of advertising products or services: free or paid. She highly recommended that product and service suppliers begins with the free option of advertising products or services since that method is cost-saving.

■ **Company website:** Ms. Nurul-Huda suggested using Keyword Analysis by Google Suggest or Google Trends. The related searches which usually appear at the bottom of the page are the terms that people actually



search on the internet. She also invited the delegates to optimize their marketing by using the related searches as keywords for the name of business' website.

It is suggested that content should be optimised with long-tail keywords and an attractive call to action. It is also important to ensure that the information presented is clear, by making sure the features or the icons on the website are functioning well to make navigation easier for all customers.

The website must be user-friendly or mobile-friendly to ensure that the website can be easily assessed. Delegates should also build backlinks to optimise their advertising strategies such as leaving comments such as "Nice photo! The next time you come to Penang, do spend your visit at our cozy homestay" on people's photos on Instagram.

- **Facebook page:** For a Facebook page, the name or username should be keyword optimised. The story or the description of the company should be keyword optimised as well. Ms. Nurul-Huda also suggested that businesses set an auto-reply for the messaging system, to show the customers that the business is interested in further engagement.

For Facebook posts, business owners should use optimised keywords and scheduled posts to let the customers know that the business actually active on social media accounts, and can be contacted easily. The goal is to make the targeted audience aware of the business' brand, products or services.

- **Classifieds:** Classifieds is one of the best ways to increase website traffic. The title and description of the classified advertisements, along with corresponding photos, also be keyword optimised by renaming them using the related keywords. Multiple advertisements for testing could also be done as a quote to track the marketing trends.

- **List building:** When building list(s), entrepreneurs could use marketing software to manage the list, which is to capture leads via the website by giving freebies. It is fundamental to schedule the emails and engage with the members of the list(s). Lastly, entrepreneurs should remember that it is important to encourage customers to return and subscribe, in order to maintain the relationship with customers.

- **Content marketing:** In content marketing, surveys or quizzes can be conducted in order to understand the customer's needs or wants, for it is important to create and share information that customers are attracted to. Tutorials could be posted to help the public become familiarised with your products or services. Another key point to remember is that Google helps to promote a page if the content is worthy. Therefore, make sure that the content is comprehensive and useful. One could also advertise by using Facebook Live or Instagram Live. These approaches must be carried out with the focus on quality and engagement, which include content in various formats such as emails, Q&A/FAQ section, news, video and infographics to attract and retain customers.



■ **Paid advertisements:** Entrepreneurs should think from the mind-set of customers. Before using paid advertisements, the entrepreneurs need to know where most customers search for the products or services that they need. For instance, Google Advertisements are used for products and/or services that people are actually searching, for while Facebook Advertisements are used for products and/or services that people stumble upon.

A/B Testing is run by testing both product A and product B at the same time, which could be used to measure the success levels of each product. The successful testing could be repeated. In paid advertisements, the entrepreneurs always need to track the return of investment (ROI) to see whether any benefits are gained from the things that invested into. In Search Engine Marketing (SEM), it is important to adhere to the cycle of SEM, which starts with Promote, Engage, Measure and Optimise .

■ **Track and Monitor:** When tracking and monitoring, Ms. Nurul-Huda reminded entrepreneurs to review the results of the Facebook posts in addition to running website analytics. It is important to monitor ads conversion, and compare lead sources in order to enhance wherever is required. As for the operating of social media platforms, the entrepreneurs should know their targeted audience well, and think of the channels frequently utilised, and focus on said channels.

Questions and Answers

Question 1: What are the appropriate channels to promote property?

Answer: Examples of a good channel include free classified advertisements in websites such as iBilik and mudah.my, which are recommended as most people will use such classifieds to search for property.

Question 2: How can I reach a bigger audience for a niche service?

Answer: The business owner should be making full use of Google Suggest and state the location you are operating in. Simple and familiar keywords should be used for the brand of the organisation.

At the end of the presentation, Ms. Nurul-Huda invited the delegates to attend free digital marketing workshops under the Free E-usahawan Workshop initiative to learn more about useful marketing techniques for business.

Working Session Guiding Questions and Responses

Question 1: What are the top barriers preventing you to offer your products/services to the market?

► **Financial reasons Financial/Budget:** Before any loan application can be approved, banks and trust funds need some form of business cash flow statements. However, when products or services suppliers only have



limited funds, they are not capable of fronting the money to supply the products or services, and therefore, may lack a proper business cash flow statement.

- Knowledge/new ideas/idea block:** Some suppliers encounter a hard time in generating new ideas to advance their businesses due to lack of knowledge. Even when they do manage to form ideas, idea implementation is sometimes hampered by certain unwanted circumstances.
- Networking:** Some suppliers sometimes have trouble finding strategic partners to expand their business. Due to their inability to successfully network, they may be rendered incapable of carrying out business expansion.
- Competition/Red Ocean (too many same products):** When there are too many similar products or services in the market, this leads to competition among suppliers, which is described as a “Red Ocean” scenario. Companies in the “Red Ocean” try to outperform their rivals by grabbing a greater share of existing demand. When the market space gets crowded, prospects for profits and growth are reduced. Products become commodities and cut-throat competition among the suppliers turns the ocean bloody red.
- Time processing/time constraints:** The time taken to supply products and services can be longer than originally anticipated. Unfortunately, when the time processing is too slow, the suppliers are unable to keep up with the demand.
- Sales/Marketing:** Some suppliers do not have enough and efficient knowledge of doing sales and marketing. Therefore, their products or services are not well-known to the public.
- People – talents:** It is more convenient to work as a team than to work solo, because the productivity of the products or services can be increased with more human capital. However, products or services suppliers do face the difficulty of recruiting talent for their business.
- Quality:** The suppliers who are unable to increase the quality of their products and services would eventually lose out to other competitors in the market.
- Lack of experience:** New suppliers venturing into the entrepreneurship world may lack experience in business operations. Thus, it will be difficult for them to actually strive in the business world, especially if they do not have past experience to leverage on.
- Fear:** Some suppliers are apprehensive they may lose their entire life savings if their business experiences failure. Thus, they are not bold enough to take up the potential risks.
- Lack of focus:** Some suppliers have some other commitments, such as being a housewife, or carrying out the duties of a mother and a caregiver. These distractions may cause them to lose focus on their entrepreneurship journey.
- Government policies (red tape):** Red tape is excessive regulation or rigid conformity to formal rules that is redundant or bureaucratic, and hinders or prevents action or decision-making. Because of this, the suppliers are constrained from both business operations and expansion.



Question 2: What are the best strategies to overcome these barriers identified?

- Capital:** Entrepreneurs should go for cost-effective options where ever possible. Collaborations or partnerships are helpful in the issue of capital. Delegates can also apply for loans or grants from government, such as the SME loans, and go for the option of flexi payment with lower interest rates. Entrepreneurs could also use their savings or ask for financial support from the family. Investment, fund raising or crowd-funding are some of the other ways to raise capital.
- Competition:** Entrepreneurs are able to increase quality of products or service by getting the relevant certification. Entrepreneurs should be innovative of the products or services in order to gain an advantage on competitors. Instead of only competing, collaboration should be emphasised to promote diversity in entrepreneurship.
- Knowledge:** Attending courses or conferences and doing self-research are great ways to gain knowledge. Moreover, one can broaden the networks and knowledge can be further enhanced. Joining relevant business associations is a great way to obtain the latest and most useful information with regards to the relevant industry. Besides, a business owner should also recruit new talents, so that more ideas can be generated.
- Network:** Some ways of networking include getting involved in relevant agencies and organisations, and collaborations in order to secure connections with other business owners. One could also use the platform of live videos in promotion of one's business. Business exhibitions are another way to raise awareness of a business' brand.
- Quality:** Having a control system such as a standard operating procedure (SOP) can help to maintain consistency in performance and quality. Entrepreneurs should also involve themselves in training programmes. Approval and/or certification of products is a good way to showcase the product's quality. It is also crucial to obtain reviews and feedbacks from the customers for improvisation and improvement.



Question 3: Choose a strategy and use the PIME methodology to chart a roadmap for action to reach your goal to overcome the barrier identified

In applying for a bank loan to obtain financial support, product and services suppliers can use the PIME template as a tool to solve the problem encountered:

PLAN		
Action	Timeline	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning to apply for a bank loan to obtain financial support: by planning, one should think and consider about the type of bank loan that would be the most suitable and convenient for the business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two to three months: Researching the availability of all bank loans and business loans available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of the planning, one should be able to do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding what bank loan to apply. Deciding the amount of money that is to be required (e.g.,: RM100,000).
IMPLEMENT		
Action	Timeline	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing the proposal to apply the bank loan: when preparing the proposal, be sure to include all necessary information and follow the right procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One week: Preparing and writing the business proposal for securing the loan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double checking the proposal to ensure that no necessary information is left out. Amending any mistakes before submitting it.
MONITOR		
Action	Timeline	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting the updates of the application is important because we need to know the ongoing status of the application. This can be done by doing follow-up through email, call or whatsapp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately one week: Monitoring the progress of the application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout the timeline, one should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting the necessary updates regarding the application. Asking any on-going questions regarding the application.
EVALUATE		
Action	Timeline	Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussing and reflecting on methods that work and methods that do not work Realising the importance of reasoning and justification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two to three weeks: Discussion, reflection and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking actions after the evaluation of the discussion and the reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing carrying out the methods that are working and further enhancing them. Stating the justifications to the methods that are not working, and giving solutions or other ways to improve them.



SESSION 8

Charting the Roadmap for Action – Working Session Report Out

This working session reported the findings on the barriers identified for each group and solutions to overcome the barriers.

NEW ENTREPRENEURS

Ms. Krista Goon

Co-Founder, WomenBizSENSE



Ms. Krista began the reporting session for the first question, “What are the top three barriers preventing you from starting a business?”, by outlining the three main points as decided by the working group, which were: lack of resources, lack of family support as well as a fear of failure and negative feedback from society.

Lack of resources is a problem that is faced by every entrepreneur in the early stages, and it is a huge bridge to cross on the path to success. Financial resources and capital needed to kickstart a business may not always be available to a new entrepreneur, thus such a hurdle causes many potential business owners to give up on their dream before even trying. Lack of avenues from which one can attempt to obtain resources, such as a grant or a bank loan was also highlighted. These options often require guarantors and high interest rates, which further deterred new entrepreneurs from carrying out their business plan.

Following this, Ms. Krista presented that the lack of familial support was also a problem encountered by many new entrepreneurs. Most Asian families have a wary approach to business opportunities as they have an inherent fear that the family member involved may have financial difficulties and later on, will entangle them in terms of requesting financial help. As such, obtaining support from their families is sometimes impossible for most new entrepreneurs.

The fear of failing and the negative feedback one will have to endure from society in general is also a deterrent that scares potential entrepreneurs from starting their own business. The “what if” question often lingers in their minds, as failure is not something that could be easily faced. Fixation on this idea often prevents them from mustering up the courage needed to take a step towards the right direction. Furthermore, the repercussions and scorn that one might have to face from the public in terms of public image is also a major barrier for new entrepreneurs, as most Asians place great value on social standing.

Ms. Krista then explained that new business owners could expand their network by attending forums and increasing their social media presence. By networking, new entrepreneurs can gain contacts such as investors who might be able to provide the resources needed to kick-start a business. A proper social media presence as well as a reputation amongst prominent business associations could also be a deciding factor that might help an entrepreneur when applying for a government grant or a bank loan. With a presentable business front, banks and governments will be more willing to consider loan applications from new entrepreneurs.

The second solution presented by Ms. Krista, as discussed during the working session with new entrepreneurs, was having a proper sit-down with family members to discuss the decision of starting their business. It is



important to take charge and explain to their family that full responsibility is being taken by the entrepreneur for the business. When the family knows and understands that one is serious about the business and that one is willing to do what it takes to make it happen, support will be given. It is especially important not to make a family member as a source of capital because if the business does not perform, the relationship with the family member could be strained.

For new entrepreneurs, the third solution was to gain courage to take the right step in the right direction. Close friends and partners should be conferred, and their thoughts taken into account before making a decision. Just because a new business opportunity seems exciting, new entrepreneurs should not allow it to cloud their objective judgement. Instead, Ms. Krista suggested that they take time needed to make the right choice. Although the fear of failure might always be there, it should be used as a source of motivation to make the right choice, instead of as a deterrent altogether. In conclusion, Ms. Krista reported that the working group was in agreement that once a call is made, it is important to have the right mindset of sticking to your guns, and avoid backing down at all.

BUSINESS OWNERS

MS. YEAP AI LI

Chairperson, NAWEM Penang



Ms. Yeap highlighted a few key issues that were discussed during the working group session with business owners. Firstly, she highlighted numerous internal factors, including the lack of confidence, the inability to manage time, and the fear of rejection in response to the first guiding question: "What three things are stopping you from growing your business?". She also noted how business owners lacked knowledge to grow their businesses, but these can be curbed through training and guidance in this area.

Additionally, she noted that business owners sometimes do not have clear business plans, affecting their ability to plan time or obtain resources to grow their businesses. Business owners therefore do not know how to prioritise what is important in their business, resulting in improper time management. Business owners also do not know who to reach out to in obtaining the necessary funds or loans.

In terms of human capital, they are also unable to find the right people for their businesses, or to retain these talents due to a lack of proper compensation and benefits policies in their companies.

For the second guiding question "What are the best strategies to overcome these barriers identified?", Ms. Yeap highlighted the need to actively reach out to relevant parties, such as SMEs, NGOs or MATRADE, to obtain advice on how to overcome existing barriers in their businesses. Such advice is important in producing or restructuring business plans that clearly outline goals and vision of the business.

Another strategy mentioned was on the issue of branding. Reaching out to relevant parties could help business owners to identify method to market their products/services, or position themselves strategically in the market.



On the third guiding question, “Strategies to chart roadmap for action to reach your goal to overcome the barriers identified”, Ms. Yeap emphasised on the importance of performing a business health check. This is to identify where the business stands at present, and to understand how business owners should proceed to grow their businesses.

Business owners are also encouraged to refer to professionals who can be helpful in crafting branding and marketing strategies in growing their businesses. Financial advice can also be obtained; specifically what information is retrieved from the numbers of the business.

To overcome market-related barriers, Ms. Yeap also highlighted the need to obtain the right certifications for their businesses. For instance, food-related businesses should obtain the halal certification to open up the business to the Muslim market. Other related certifications include those of Mesti, ISO and SIRIM.

Finally, Ms. Yeap also encouraged business owners to explore digital marketing in order to reach out to more customers. This is done through identifying the relevant items to the business and subsequently, marketing them to the intended market.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES SUPPLIERS

MS. WENDY WONG BEE KEE

Past Chairperson, NAWEM Penang



The guiding questions for Working Group 3 were summarised by Ms. Wendy Wong in the report out session. For the first guiding question “What are the top three barriers preventing you to offer your products or services to the market?” three major barriers were identified:

The first prominent barrier is the lack of funds or capital. Many entrepreneurs find that insufficient funds are an obstacle for them to move forward with their businesses. Such a situation has frequently led them to a dead end and is often a source of discouragement.

The second barrier was with regards to knowledge. According to the conference delegates, knowledge is not just limited to the attainment of capital and funds, but it also pertains to knowledge about products and design, knowledge about improvement of their services and knowledge about the marketing plan for their services and products or how to reach out to their customers.

The third barrier was about competition in the field of entrepreneurship, which can also be referred to as the “Red Ocean”. For instance, all businesses start with a product such as Brand A coconut drink. Although the new product involved a lot of initial efforts but once it starts to sell well, Brand B and Brand C will also emerge with similar products, and these companies compete in a market, sometimes resulting in a pricing war.

After identifying the above three barriers, the delegates from Working Group 3 formulated some strategies to tackle each of the barriers based on guiding Question 2, which is “What are the best strategies to overcome these barriers identified?”.

For the first barrier concerning lack of funds and capital, Ms. Wendy reported that the delegates were advised to look for loans or grants. The delegates were also encouraged to evaluate the advantages and



disadvantages of each loan or grant. Besides that, she reported that the delegates also considered joint ventures or partnerships for fund sourcing. For example, if one is operating a spa business, she may want to find another entrepreneur who is selling pillows or towel to be her partner. In this way, the spa owner can widen her networks and also get financial aid indirectly.

Other than relying on friends and family for financial support, it is also important to source for crowd funding, and find investors. In order to obtain funds and investors, entrepreneurs need to prepare a good proposal. Lastly, entrepreneurs can also take pre-orders for their products from potential customers. This way, the entrepreneur would be able to secure the financing first before proceeding to produce the product.

For lack of knowledge, firstly, entrepreneurs were encouraged to attend courses, training and conferences to gain more knowledge and skills in the entrepreneurship field. Ms. Wong also reminded the delegates to make full use of the name cards collected throughout the conference. The next strategy is to find a mentor, as a mentor can share a lot of personal experience and tips on how they overcome the challenges they face while being an entrepreneur. Joining relevant business associations is also great to gain more knowledge about the entrepreneurship world.

For the competition or the "Red Ocean" challenge, four elements that are equally important to tackle the issue are innovation, diversification, collaborations and merger and acquisitions. By implementing all these elements, it would lessen the rivalry and increase the productivity of the products and services.

As for Question 3, which is "Choose a strategy and use the PIME methodology to chart a roadmap for action to reach your goal to overcome the barrier identified", Ms. Wong gave the example of a bag as a product.

It is important to start planning about the design of the product, the timeline of it and how is it going to be produced. Then, entrepreneur should think about the funding. One good example given is by using pre-order method. With this, entrepreneur would not have to worry about the funding as it will be paid by the customer beforehand.

One needs to implement the planning and follow it very closely. For example, entrepreneurs should take into consideration of the designing duration, the production and the delivery. To do this, it is very important to implement a timeline and follow it closely.

Entrepreneurs also have to monitor every step and process of the business very closely. Some of the things that should be monitored include the quality of the end product and the response of the the target market towards the product. Hence, the process of monitoring should be daily, weekly and monthly process.

Lastly, it is vital to evaluate everything. To evaluate, one must have a chart, or a timeline. With evaluation, the business owner will be able to pinpoint strategies of success, as well as areas of the business that need continuous improvement. The evaluations should be reviewed continuously until the goal is achieved.

Closing Speech



The Honourable Dato' Haji Abdul Halim Haji Hussain, Penang State EXCO for Domestic and International Trade, Consumer Affairs and Entrepreneur Development

Dato' Haji Abdul Halim Haji Hussain thanked the organisers for the invitation, and also congratulated the delegates and the speakers on a successful conference. Dato' Abdul Halim believes that it is not easy to be a woman entrepreneur, to be one who looks after the family and the husband, while maintaining her business.

In Penang, the "Skim Pinjaman Harapan", a form of a government loan, is available to help entrepreneurs in financing their business projects and helping them to embark on the road of entrepreneurship. Micro-schemes are also available for woman entrepreneurs, and the female borrowers recorded a rate of 80% in successful repayments. Women are seen to be good at budgeting and planning, as seen in their ability to repay loans, whereas men tend to make up the majority of loan defaulters.

Dato' Abdul Halim referred to Chief Minister, YAB. Tuan Chow Kon Yeow's speech about Penang 2030, on developing Penang as a family focused green and smart state that inspires the nation. In this era of digital technology, families are unfortunately often obsessed and preoccupied with their gadgets. A family-focused state stresses that family bonds must be well maintained, and must not be sacrificed for success in business and entrepreneurship. In Penang, no matter how the state progressed in terms of business, entrepreneurship or investment, the family institution must not be abandoned.

In this conference of "Rethinking Women in Economy", he stressed that through his portfolio for domestic international trade for consumer affairs and also for entrepreneurship development, he would like to focus on helping entrepreneurs, educating them, and providing them with updates with regards to the latest technology.

Dato' Abdul Halim shared the experience of Thailand, who has a special ministry for digital economy and society, named the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society. In the age of the fourth industrial revolution, the state government has the responsibility to ensure that more so that the entrepreneurs in Penang are able to engage with smart technologies such as IOT (Internet of things) and artificial intelligence. Courses and training programmes will be organised and held, so that entrepreneurs will not be left behind.

He thanked PWDC for its tremendous effort in championing women, and also extended his congratulations again to the sponsors, collaborators and those who have made the conference a success. As the executive councilor for entrepreneurship, he welcomed feedback on what the state government can do to help women in entrepreneurship and in their families.





BUSINESS MAPPING SESSION



After the closing ceremony, the conference delegates gathered for a networking session to strengthen and form new strategic partnerships and collaborations.

At this session, the conference delegates could reach out to other delegates who were either at the same or different levels of their business development, i.e. starting a business, sourcing for additional funding, looking for a business partner to expand their market, or looking for products and services suppliers (for instance banks, business associations, drop-shipping agents, marketing strategists, advertising agencies).

The business mapping and networking sessions provided the ideal environment for new entrepreneurs, business owners and suppliers for products and suppliers to exchange contact details, brainstorm on ideas and share their commitments to advance their entrepreneurial ventures.



Building a sustainable economy together



PROGRAMME

DAY 1: 24 TH SEPTEMBER 2018	8:30am – 9:00am	Registration and Morning Coffee/Tea
	9:00am – 10:30am	OPENING CEREMONY Welcoming Speech by The Honourable Puan Chong Eng, Penang State EXCO for Women and Family Development, Gender Inclusiveness and Religions Other Than Islam Opening Address by The Right Honourable Tuan Chow Kon Yeow, Chief Minister of Penang, Keynote Address on Women and the Economy by The Right Honourable Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah Dr. Wan Ismail, Deputy Prime Minister cum Minister of Women, Family and Community Development
	10:30am – 11:00am	Coffee/Tea Break Press Conference
	11:00am – 12:30pm	SESSION 1: Economic Pie – Every Woman Can Have A Share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Moderator: Ms. Jun Fredda A Jabar, Programme Manager, Inclusive Development and Growth, UNDP ■ Ms. Goh Ai Ching, Co-founder & CEO, Piktochart.com ■ Ms. Sangeeta Kaur, Founder, Emerging Journey Asia (EJA) ■ The Honourable Dr. Hajah Norlela Ariffin, Penang State Assemblyperson, Penanti
	12:30pm – 2:00pm	Lunch
	2:00pm – 4:00pm	Session 2: What's In It For Me? Working Group 1: New Entrepreneurs – Women and men who are starting new businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ms. Elizabeth Hor, Founder and CEO, Elizabeth Image Branding ■ Mr. Chan Kee Siak, Founder, Exabytes Network Working Group 2: Business Owners – Women and men who want to grow their businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ms. Gina Koay, Founder, Director and Chief Pharmacist, City Wellness Pharmacy ■ Mr. Hare Krishnan, MD, Restaurant Sri Ananda Bahwan Working Group 3: Products and Services Suppliers – Women and men who earn income through supplying products or services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ms. Ann Wong, Co-founder, Penan Women Project ■ Ms. Norliza Othman, MD and Principal Consultant, TES Consultancy
	4:00pm – 4:30pm	Coffee/Tea Break
	4:30pm – 5:30pm	Session 3: What's In It For Me? (Working Session Report Out) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ms. Krista Goon, Co-Founder, WomenBizSENSE ■ Ms. Yeap Ai Li, Chairperson, NAWEM Penang ■ Ms. Wendy Wong Bee Kee, Past Chairperson, NAWEM Penang

8:30am – 9:00am	Registration and Morning Coffee/Tea
9:00am – 9:30am	Keynote Address 2 on Current and Future Economy by Ms. Cynthia Hwang Siew Peng, Executive Director, Suiwah Corp and CEO, Sunshine Wholesale Mart
9:30am – 10:30am	Session 4: From Start to Finish - Business Support System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Moderator: Dr. Florance Sinniah, Director, PWDC ■ Ms. Tong Bee Yoke, Co-founder, QQ Holistic Education Programme ■ Madam Hajjah Fatimah Anis Ibrahim, Founder, Fatimah Frozen Food
10:30am – 11:30am	Session 5: From Start to Finish – Supply Chain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Moderator: Dato' Dr. Marina David, Dental Surgeon, Marina Dental Consortium ■ Ms. Surinder Kaur, Founder, CEO and MD, SG Sales Services ■ Ms. Patrina Tang, Co-owner, Tedboy Bakery
11:30am – 12:30pm	Session 6: From Start to Finish – Marketing and Sales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Moderator: Ms. Ong Bee Leng, CEO, PWDC ■ Dr. Tan Cheng Wooi, Founder, Nukleuswear ■ Ms. Peggy Tan, Co-founder, CG Computers
12:30pm – 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm – 3:30pm	Session 7: Charting the Roadmap for Action <p>Working Group 1: New Entrepreneurs – Women and men who are starting new businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ms. Sangeet Weissenberger, Founder, Klein&Fine <p>Working Group 2: Business Owners – Women and men who want to grow their businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ms. Maresa Ng, CEO and President, ActionCOACH Malaysia <p>Working Group 3: Products and Services Suppliers – Women and men who earn income through supplying products or services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ms. Nurul-Huda Mohamed Afandi, Founder and CEO, Thrift Solutions and Thrift Consulting
3:30pm – 4:00pm	Coffee/Tea Break
4:00pm – 4:30pm	Session 8: Charting the Roadmap for Action <i>(Working Session Report Out)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ms. Krista Goon, Co-Founder, WomenBizSENSE ■ Ms. Yeap Ai Li, Chairperson, NAWEM Penang ■ Ms. Wendy Wong Bee Kee, Past Chairperson, NAWEM Penang
4:30pm – 4:45pm	Closing Speech by The Honourable Dato' Haji Abdul Halim Haji Hussain , Penang State EXCO for Domestic and International Trade, Consumer Affairs and Entrepreneur Development
4:45pm – 7:30pm	Networking Hi-tea and Business Mapping Session

CONFERENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- The Hon. Puan Chong Eng, Penang State EXCO (Chair)
- The Hon. Puan Teo Nie Ching, Member of Parliament
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- Ms. Hidayah Zulkipli, Programme Officer, PWDC

PUBLICITY

- Mr. Robert Teh, Communications Officer (Lead)
- Ms. Syazwani Abas, Conference Coordinator, PWDC



CONFERENCE ORGANISER

State governments are part of Malaysia's federal system. The Penang State Government governs the state of Penang, the second smallest Malaysian state but one of the most developed and economical important states in the country. Its heterogeneous population is highly diverse in ethnicity, culture, language, and religion. The state of Penang is divided into two distinct areas: Penang Island and Seberang Perai, which is on the mainland.



STRATEGIC PARTNERS

The City Council of Penang Island (MBPP) covers the two districts of the island (Barat Daya and Timur Laut), making up some 299 square kilometres with a multi-racial population of some 752,800 people. Its estimated density of 2,518 people per square means it is much more densely populated than Seberang Perai. MBPP was granted the status as the City Council of Penang Island in 2015.



The Municipal Council of Seberang Perai (MPSP) is responsible for a geographical area of 747 square kilometres, which is the largest area of any municipal council in Malaysia. The area is divided into three districts: Seberang Perai Utara (North), Seberang Perai Tengah (Central) and Seberang Perai Selatan (South). It is a fast-growing area, now accounting for some 55 per cent of Penang overalls population (some 910,200 person).



Sunshine Wholesale Mart Sdn Bhd is the core subsidiary of company of Suiwah Corporation Berhad; a public listed company on the Main Board of KLSE.

They are a pioneer in both offline and online retail stores in Penang offering supermarket and departmental stores merchandise. A local brand in Penang, Sunshine focus on fair pricing in its business models for the benefits of local communities.

Sunshine currently owns and operates Sunshine Square in Bayan Baru, Sunshine Farlim Shopping Mall in Farlim, Sunshine Lip Sin in Bayan Lepas, Sunshine Bertam in Kepala Batas and Sunshine Jelutong in George Town.



WomenBizSENSE

WomenBizSENSE is a women entrepreneur association sharing resources, opportunities, connections and knowledge with women in business so that they can nurture and grow a community of successful business leaders who impact society. Since WomenBizSENSE's founding in 2006, they have organised more than 150 talks and events as well as put together a highly successful entrepreneurship expo in 2016.

Besides entrepreneurship, WomenBizSENSE has a heart for the underprivileged too. Each year, they organise charity events to bring cheer to the single mothers, the elderly and the children of House of Hope and Special Children's Centre. More information on WomenBizSENSE at: www.womenbizsense.com



The Penang Institute is the public policy think tank of the state government of Penang. With the tagline, “Making ideas Work”, the Penang Institute seeks to spur bold thinking in the key areas of economics, socio-politics and sustainable development. As a policy advisory body to the state government of Penang, the Penang Institute is constantly working hand-in-hand with the state government, its related agencies as well as various international organisation such as the United Nations Development Programme and other non-government organisations. In addition, the Penang Institute also constantly engages the public by promoting and highlighting various issues of local, national and regional concern through facilitating conferences, lectures, workshops and public seminars.



UNDP helps countries to simultaneously reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development that leads to transformational change, bringing about real improvements in people’s lives. UNDP promotes an integrated approach to achieve sustainable development that tackles the connected issues of multidimensional poverty, inequality and exclusion, and sustainability, while enhancing knowledge, skills and production technologies to reduce risks and sustain development gains. UNDP helps countries build their capacity to integrate environmental considerations into development plans and strategies, including through managing and sustainably using natural resources; ensuring that natural wealth is used to improve people’s lives; promoting economic recovery and livelihoods, and better targeting policies and social protection for those in need.

COLLABORATORS



PERSATUAN KEBANGSAAN USAHAWAN WANITA MALAYSIA
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OF MALAYSIA

National Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Malaysia (NAWEM) was established in 1993 and was founded with the firm belief that the full realization of the human potential is limited only by the acquisition of skill, knowledge, availability of information and opportunities.

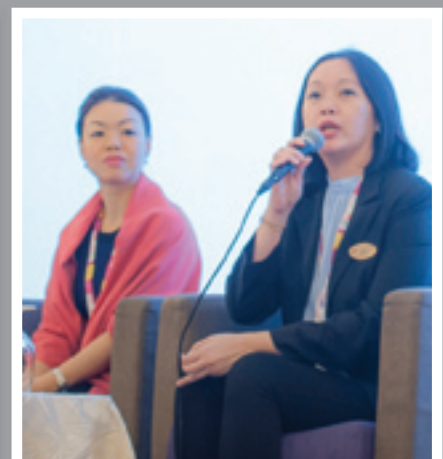
NAWEM is an excellent platform for women entrepreneurs. NAWEM aspires to be the inspiration to stimulate innovation and creativity in the development of businesses. NAWEM recognises the need for cohesiveness in forging business relationships, acts as the conduit to transcend differences, nurture cooperation and a mutually satisfying business environment within and outside our national boundaries.

For more info on NAWEM, visit: www.nawem.org.my/



Junior Chamber International Pearl being the only all-ladies Chapter in Peninsular Malaysia has been very much involved in all areas of activities in the JCI movement. JCI Pearl had over the years conducted activities for individual development, offered services to the community, participated in providing management experience, extended friendly ties internationally and played a part in business network.

The JCI Philosophy of one-year to lead, changing management team and leadership to allow more young people to take leadership roles to create positive impact towards respective communities, has been a great culture practiced all over 100 countries and 5,000 communities of JCI worldwide.





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Sunshine Wholesale
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WomenBizSENSE



Penang
Institute



United Nations
Development
Programme



Junior Chamber
International Pearl



National Association of
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