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Regional Indices

KLCI	1,330.17	-4.10
HSI	19,944.94	+229.74
NIKKEI	10,242.64	+6.88

US Indices

Dow	10,625.83	+5.67
Nasdaq	2,354.23	+7.38
S&P	1,136.94	+1.26

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Special Focus

Published May 18, 2010

SME INC

## Business coach helps spa product maker hit target

Mind and Body Delight boosts its export marketing

By CHEN HUIFEN

Ng Yen Yi is no stranger to India, as the founder of Mind and Body Delight Pte Ltd had lived there for more than five years during past stints working for multinational firms.



**Ng Yen Yi: Although huge financial returns may not come immediately, the skills learnt stay with Ms Ng**

other types of toiletries.

Having found some success in Thailand, Ms Ng returned to Singapore recently hoping to penetrate the local market and use Singapore as a launchpad for exporting.

Through IE Singapore's Exporter Development Programme which she got involved with late last year, she got to know Sandy Chong, a business coach specialising in international marketing. Dr Chong reviewed Ms Ng's market strategy and mentored her in market information gathering, and also gave plenty of ideas to improve her presentation skills and business model.

Since then, her business techniques have improved in leaps and bounds.

'It was a very unique arrangement - to have a coach telling you which directions to go to, how to do things,' says Ms Ng, who is in her early 40s. 'We're like a baby to them.'

Through coaching, Ms Ng learnt the proper methodology to market

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research, which used to be done haphazardly.

And she also picked up pointers on applying information beyond pure selling. Research on water, weather and sales periods in different parts of India became relevant to her as it helped her understand the environment and issues faced by her potential clients, in order to be able to suggest solutions.

'You never know what your client wants, so research essentially prepares you for all possibilities,' says Ms Ng.

This also explains why she now carries 40 bottling options - from just one previously - and 62 products, instead of the 10 before, whenever a formal business introduction is needed.

'So clients have more choices now. I also realised packaging is important.'

She also admits to not knowing how to create Powerpoint presentation slides before starting her own outfit. It was painful starting from scratch. Dr Chong had to review her slides four times before they were deemed suitable for presentation. But the hands-on experience was worth it, as each time the presentation was reviewed, Ms Ng found ways to improve.

Today, she is proud of her current set of presentation slides, which she says better articulate the niche positioning of her company. They were used last month during a business trip to Bangalore.

In the process of documenting her company's market strategy, Ms Ng also found that Mind and Body Delight could move into services. 'I discussed it with Sandy and she said why not?'

So in addition to supplying products, Mind and Body Delight now provides consultancy services, helping new spa owners in setting up, furniture sourcing and manpower training. It is in the process of helping a female entrepreneur in Bangalore set up a new 1,400 sq ft spa.

Although huge financial returns may not come immediately, at least the skills learnt stay with Ms Ng. The thought processes that she had to undergo during discussions with her coach and in strategising export plans also gave her the competency to tackle other new markets which her company may eye in future.

Before this, she was knocking on doors randomly. She also joined a B2B portal which drew plenty of junk mail and did not generate the desired outcome.

She added: 'Now I know that we should constantly come up with new ideas for clients, rather than just pushing products. If not for this (programme), I think I would probably still be wasting a lot of time and money.'

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