

contents

MAY 2009

COVER STORY

Get Smarter For Goodness Sake

To make this world a better place to live in, getting smarter is the only agenda, IBM believes.

22

8 EDITOR'S VIEW

10 UPDATES

16 MOVERS & SHAKERS

Giving entrepreneurs a helping hand
Having struggled on his own before, William Du knows what it's like to be an entrepreneur. Here he tells Business Today how he gives back to the community.

20 NEWS MAKERS

Fuelling the World's Economy
Find out how manpower supply works for a critical industry as Business Today gets an exclusive from Morshidi bin Kiparawi, Working Chairman/Managing Director of Sikom Supplies Sdn Bhd.

28 BUSINESS ABROAD

Is Thailand Heading Towards Total Chaos
Political Turmoil to Exacerbate Economic Woes

30 FINANCE

Food For Thought
The recent Reuters Islamic Banking and Finance Summit has been useful in highlighting some of the opportunities and fresh developments in Islamic finance in various regions.

32 SECURITIES COMMISSIONS SAYS...

Revenue or Capital Gains

34 WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Starting Them Young

MARKETING & MANAGEMENT

36 Winning Your Customers Over

38 Overcoming Tough Times

40 Using Search Engine Marketing to Drive Business Success

FEATURES

42 Engineering Global Success

44 Money - The Biggest Business

48 PVC Pipes Go Green



72

16

Giving entrepreneurs a helping hand

Having struggled on his own before, William Du knows what its like to be an entrepreneur. Here he tells Business Today how he gives back to the community.

By Edwin Yapp



The ingredients for making good entrepreneurs can be summarised as follows: Being able to take risks, being adventurous, and having hard-core perseverance. Mix in traits such as dogged tenacity, sheer hard work, and the ability to rise up after

falling down, and you'll have a recipe for success.

Some may beg to differ, but at least, this is how William Du, CEO and founder of Ingenious Group, a financial boutique and corporate advisory firm, sees it. After all, Du started his venture

capital (VC) business - Ingenious Haus Sdn Bhd (IHSB) - in April 2004, and five years later, his boutique corporate advisory firm has doubled its turnover from 2007 to 2008, and today offers a comprehensive range of funding solutions and expansion capital to entrepreneurs in growing their businesses.

But it was not all rosy for Du when he first started, he tells Business Today in an interview.

Born in 1978 and raised by his parents, both of whom were civil servants, Du, 30, who was bred in Kuala Lumpur, has a younger brother and sister. Upon completing SPM in St John's Institution, he proceeded to read an Accounting degree in the University of Hertfordshire, graduating with first class Honours. After that, Du pursued his MBA at the same University and began his career as a trainee accountant in London.

Later, Du joined PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), specialising in transfer pricing & tax investigations and left PwC to join Star Cruises Ltd as a senior corporate planning executive before setting up Ingenious Group in 2004.

"It was difficult in the first few years, but my perseverance paid off," Du recounts his experiences. "I first started out my company when I was approached by my friends requesting assistance to prepare a business plan to secure a bank loan. Later, I began my maiden venture capital fund raising exercise. After six months, two round trips to Hong Kong, and almost a hundred

meetings later, I decided to cancel the fund raising exercise."

Du says that despite the great demand for business plan services and in particular preparation for raising venture capital funds, the early days were tough because he didn't have many contacts in the business world and getting good assignments was more difficult than he

had had imagined.

"Due to limited track record, I was unable to convince investors to invest in a closed end fund for a period of 10 years."

Notwithstanding this setback, Du says he then focused in helping entrepreneurs raise equity and debt financing, providing tax planning services, and

ad-hoc consulting projects for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In 2006, after gaining more corporate experience, Du invited strategic partners to form a new company, Ingenious Capital Sdn Bhd (ICSB), and concentrated in corporate advisory, initial public offering (IPO) services, merger and acquisition planning, and restructuring services to SMEs.

Since then, ICSB has been active in providing due diligence and turnaround advisory to ailing companies. This kept his company afloat in the beginning years. Later in 2007 and recognising the emergence of private equity companies in the financial market, Du started Ingenious Equity Sdn Bhd (IESB), to focus on the private equity arena.

Seed challenges

Du's mission for his company is to spur technopreneur development by investing in outstanding companies, each of whom has passion, drive and commitment as well as viable business models.

Asked why he chose to stay involved in the local entrepreneur scene in Malaysia, Du says he enjoys meeting aspiring entrepreneurs, learning from them and working with them to grow their business.

"The most satisfying part of my job is being able to deliver our work, and meet clients' objectives. By helping our clients, we also learn a lot about their businesses, industries and outlook, and these experiences will enable us to grow and develop our expertise."

According to Du, the local funding scene, especially for technopreneurs could be much better as he feels there is still a big gap between pre-seed funding, which is often given to develop an idea, and late stage funding to venture capital funding, which is only done after companies have shown their success.

"There are still various challenges in the local funding scene. Firstly, there aren't enough private venture companies who are willing to back start-up companies in Malaysia. Most of the VCs today are either government-backed or bank-backed, and most of these only





In March 2008, Du was invited by MCA ICT resources Centre (MIRC) to manage a venture capital fund to invest in technology companies.

invest in companies that have proven track records.

"Secondly, the exit strategies for VCs (out of a company they've invested) in Malaysia are not as good as in some other countries in the region. Consequently, the industry is not that well developed and many VCs are reluctant to fund start-ups.

"Lastly, it's also difficult to get investors to pour in money into start-ups, particularly tech-based ones, as they would prefer putting money into something more secure, such as public companies."

Du says that is why Ingenious Group is committed to helping entrepreneurs and mid-sized companies accelerate growth and create value and to be a strong catalyst and important motivator towards successful entrepreneurship ventures by its involvement in venture capital activities.

"We are in the business of seeding hope to budding entrepreneurs who

returns to our stakeholders," he adds.

Some of the activities Du has involved Ingenious Group in goes to the contribution of this cause.

For instance, in March 2008, Du was invited by MCA ICT Resources Centre (MIRC) to manage a venture capital fund to invest in technology companies. MIRC is the Information Technology arm of Malaysia Chinese Association (MCA), providing incubator and support services to start-up companies.

With an initial commitment of RM5 million, Du reveals that the mandate was to fill the gap of the funding requirement, where there is not much start-up capital available for Malaysian aspiring entrepreneurs. To facilitate this fund, MIRC Ingenious Capital Partners Sdn Bhd (MICP) was formed in 2008.

"MICP is a joint venture between MIRC and Ingenious. MICP will manage the venture capital fund called Technopreneur Venture Management (TVM).

have the passion, drive and commitment; and simultaneously creating business values and investment

We are committed to this fund and my team and I have conducted several road shows in Penang, Ipoh, Johor Bahru and Kuala Lumpur to promote the fund and entrepreneurship in Malaysia," Du explains.

Living life to the fullest

In his spare time, Du enjoys spending time with his family and reads, listens to music or watches movies. Asked what his management style was like, Du says: "Our company is very result oriented, and I do not believe in any form of hierarchy in our organisation. We also value intellectual capacity, and we seek to work with the best."

His philosophy in life is: "At the end of the day, I want to live life to the fullest, do what I believe in and work hard to achieve my dreams. My wife is most influential; she is my friend, mentor and companion in every journey I take on."

Does he have any regrets after striking out on his own? "I've never really thought of that. In life, we have choices to make; right or wrong, we learn and move on. I think it's important to enjoy the process and walk your own path in that journey." 