

# SME WEEKLY NEWS

(15 January 2018 – 19 January 2018)

Countries	Highlights
<p><b>MALAYSIA</b></p> <p><b>Alibaba introduces DingTalk for Malaysian SMEs</b></p>	<p>Alibaba launched DingTalk in Malaysia, which is the company's signature proprietary enterprise communication and collaboration platform to enhance communications and redefine collaborations for businesses and SMEs. Equipped with cutting edge technology, the English version of the app provides SMEs with a simple, efficient and secure platform for collaboration. DingTalk offers organisational-centric functions and features aimed at improving business-to-business communication and collaboration. It is also a platform that combines all workplace tools in one place, allowing collaborations and tracking on both the employer and employee's level. The goal is to create a secure and effective platform which is mobile-optimised while offering cloud-based office automation solutions and freeing companies from the costs of building or buying software and maintaining their own servers for business communications, workflow management and data storage. Currently, DingTalk serves businesses across sectors such as e-commerce, manufacturing, education and finance.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Digital News Asia, 18 January 2018)</i></p>
<p><b>INDONESIA</b></p> <p><b>WhatsApp Business to help SMEs communicate globally</b></p>	<p>WhatsApp launched "WhatsApp Business", a free-to-download Android app for small businesses, which will help these enterprises communicate better with their customers globally. The new app will make it easier for companies to connect with customers, and more convenient for its 1.3 billion users to chat with businesses that matter to them. Currently, "WhatsApp Business" is available on Google Play in Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Britain and the US. The app will roll out in India and other countries in the coming weeks. The app will provide customers with useful information such as business description, email or store addresses and website. It will also save time with smart messaging tools - quick replies that provide fast answers to FAQs, greeting messages that introduce customers to your business, and away messages that let them know you're busy. People will know that they're talking to a business because it will be listed as a Business Account. Over time, some businesses will have Confirmed Accounts once it's been confirmed that the account phone number matches the business phone number.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: SME Times, 18 January 2018)</i></p>
<p><b>SINGAPORE</b></p> <p><b>New OCBC loan gives SMEs flexibility</b></p>	<p>A new loan from OCBC Bank for small and emerging businesses offers flexibility and cost effectiveness. The OCBC Business Revolving Short Term Loan, which was officially launched on 2 January 2018, offers funding of up to \$200,000 and is tailored for small and emerging businesses that have been in operation for at least two years and need cash flow financing from time to time. Business owners can draw down, repay and redraw from this line of credit, giving them a readily available source of cash. Repayment is also flexible as there is no early repayment fee. Since the soft launch last November 2017, more than \$6 million in loans have been approved. For SMEs looking to ramp up their businesses, the loan's extra cash injection will allow them to hire more manpower, buy more supplies or even expand overseas. Previously, according to 2017 SME Financing Survey conducted by Spring Singapore, three in five SMEs face delays in receiving payments from customers. The SMEs surveyed also continued to rank delays in customers' payments as the top finance-related concern.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: The Straits Times, 17 January 2018)</i></p>

<p><b>SINGAPORE</b></p> <p><b>Woo start-ups that can become unicorns, urges SME Committee</b></p>	<p>Attracting and developing start-ups that have the potential to be unicorns - or start-ups valued at over US\$1 billion (S\$1.3 billion), is a strategy that could drive Singapore's growth, said the SME Committee (SMEC) led by the Singapore Business Federation, in recommendation for the Budget 2018 submitted to the Government. To position Singapore as a hub for unicorns and investors, there can be incentives to attract promising start-ups to set up base or relocate here. Private companies could be spurred to invest in potential unicorns through grants and tax incentives, and the provision of tax deductions and rebates for private companies whose investments have failed. To benefit Singapore, the schemes should incorporate criteria such as a minimum equity stake in the potential unicorn company. Other criteria include requiring the start-up to house its headquarters, R&amp;D, intellectual property (IP) holding and other key functions in Singapore. Another recommendation made by the committee is to promote partnerships between large companies and SMEs, through tax or other incentives given specifically for projects that have substantial SME involvement.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: The Straits Times, 18 January 2018)</i></p>
<p><b>THAILAND</b></p> <p><b>Denso aids Thai SMEs</b></p>	<p>The Department of Industry Promotion (DIP) has signed MoU with Denso Corporation to set up a new modern industry manufacturing centre tasked with developing technology and automation systems for SMEs. Construction of the centre is scheduled to begin in April 2018 and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. Director General of DIP, Kobchai Sungsitthisawad said Thailand and Japan entered into an agreement to support SMEs of both countries, as well as the Eastern Economic Corridor project and the Thailand 4.0 initiative. The labour shortage crisis in Thailand is a major problem that will affect Thai SMEs. Thailand and Denso have been working together to support SMEs since the Japanese government brought 500-600 businesses to visit Thailand in September 2017. Thavorn Chalassthien, chairman of the Human Capacity Building Institute, said his group will advise the government and local SMEs to teach them about how to apply automation to their business. To further this goal, the company has built the Lean Automation System Integrator, a network of 36 companies that can support SMEs in the project.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Bangkok Post, 19 January 2018)</i></p>
<p><b>MYANMAR</b></p> <p><b>Myanmar aims to increase exports of rice husk-to-biomass products</b></p>	<p>Some Myanmar businesses are hoping to receive technical and financial support from the government to convert rice husks into biomass products for export purposes. Rice husks are the hard protecting layers covering each grain of rice. These are discarded during the rice milling process and can be converted into building materials, fertilisers, insulation material or fuel. Last week, the Myanmar Rice Federation said companies involved in the rice husk-to-fuel conversion business, would be eligible to apply for SME loans to fund expansion. Workshops will also be conducted to train businesses on technique and know-how on converting rice husks to bio mass fuels.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: The Myanmar Times, 19 January 2018)</i></p>

## WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY TAKES ITS GREEN RESPONSIBILITY SERIOUSLY

CORPORATE social responsibility (CSR) can be seen in many forms and for the Director of 3R Quest Sdn Bhd, Jerome Heah, it is about being able to lead the way for people to appreciate the environment better. It is not about ringgit and sen, but rather the impact it has on the people. His company, which offers scheduled waste management solutions for clients ranging from printing companies to manufacturing facilities, is a sterling example of leadership by example.

“Our business is centred on helping our clients manage their waste in a proper manner, taking into account environmental factors, but that is not all we do,” Jerome said. Every year, the company takes in an average of six interns to learn and subsequently become leaders in specific projects that could benefit the local community. These undergraduates in fields ranging from environmental science to chemical engineering, may take up internships to further their knowledge but giving back to society is part of their training at 3R Quest.

His mother, Brenda Heah, 63 who is also a company director, said the management had made it clear from day one that business should contribute to society’s well-being. The company, which was founded in 2001 and started operations in 2007 in Chembong industrial zone in Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, has a staff of 20.



Jerome’s father, David, who founded the company, made some careful observations during his early days. Having been educated at the London College of Printing, David was amazed at how simple things such as cloth the technicians used to wipe oil from their hands and printing machines, were properly treated with chemicals instead of simply being disposed. “We do not know if the business will succeed, but I know it is good for the country to treat its waste properly as not to do so would affect the whole environment, from the water source to the food chain,” David explained.

Despite the challenging economic environment at the moment, Jerome says they will continue with what they are doing. “Our clients know about what we do and many are happy to be with us for what we stand for,” Jerome concluded.

*(Source: The Star, 15 January 2018)*

Economics and Policy Division  
SME Corp. Malaysia  
23 January 2018