

03/09/1999

SMIs urged to venture into vending business

SMALL- and Medium-scale Industries should venture into the vending business which has tremendous potential, Health Minister and National SMI Consultative Centre chairman Datuk Chua Jui Meng said.

The untapped Asian vending market was worth more than RM42 billion, he said when launching the "Vending - New Door for Opportunity Forum for SMIs" at Pan Pacific Hotel in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The half-day forum, organised by ExpoAge International (M) Sdn Bhd, is to introduce the potential of vending to the small- and medium-scale industry.

"The vending industry has established a strong track record of success in the US, Europe and Japan. Malaysia and the rest of Asean are fairly new players and we must explore this business area."

There is one vending machine for every 100 people in the United Kingdom, one to 88 in the United States, one to 18 people in Japan but one to every 2,200 in Malaysia.

"If we want to have one machine for every 300 or 500 Malaysians, we will require more than 30,000 vending machines. The number of products which can be used for vending is staggering. The US has some US\$125 billion (RM475 billion) worth of products for vending annually."

ExpoAge International's executive director Irene Tay said the potential for vending was great as Asia has nearly 2.8 billion people.

"The established markets for vending in Asia are Japan, Taiwan and Korea. The rest of Asia, with a total of 2.6 billion people are not familiar with vending."

ExpoAge International's co-founder Mirzan Mahathir said Malaysia's SMIs were well-poised to exploit the opportunities in vending and its supporting industries.

"If you are manufacturing IT components, microchips, smartcards, food and drinks, novelties and toys, trinkets and gift items, tickets, watches, diapers, feminine hygiene towels, tissue, soap, magazines, flowers, cosmetics and aspirins, you are already producing products for vending machines."

"We foresee an increasing need and demand for refreshment machines in workplaces, shopping malls, airports, train stations and other public places," he said.

Companies could produce packed local delicacies like roti canai and nasi lemak for vending machines as well. Mirzan said the possibilities were endless and exciting.

ExpoAge will be organising Vending Asia 2000 to promote and provide business opportunities in vending. The trade expo will be held from April 18 to 20 at the Putra World Trade Centre.

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