

PM: In business we must sell to all and 'not be selective of race

FROM PAGE 2

very low. Most of them are involved in property development and other businesses. Many are remisiers — now they just look at the screen. If the stock goes up tomorrow, then they get profits. Too many are looking for the easy way.

But we need retail. Retail was a difficult business for Malays to participate because there was bargaining.

If we go to a shop, and if we are smart, we can get lower prices, but if the seller is smarter than us he will sell at a slightly higher price. And we will not know what the real price is.

Because of that it is difficult for Malays to enter into the field of retail. Hence, we require all goods to have price-tags so that Malay business people can go and compare prices to determine their own prices.

We also find that retail needs certain skills. Some feel that anyone is capable of running a business. I don't believe this.

As a person who used to sell bananas during the Japanese era in Pekan Rabu, Kedah, I too had to learn from friends and partner how to sell bananas. It

I hope Malays start looking at retailing. But of course, don't keep on selling rempah *cabai* (spices) forever; we can become importers, and then agents, distributors and then move on to other types of goods.

Q: (Mohd Zainuddin Abu Bakar) I am very interested in the concept of culture being the basis for development. Could you elaborate?

A: Culture is the sum total of beliefs, and because of this, some people believe that the Chinese are very advanced in business because they are good at cheating.

So if Malays do not learn how to cheat, they cannot become good business people. This is not true. We can thrive in business without having to cheat people — in fact, we can get more customers.

We need to be careful in running our businesses and maintain records and inventories. If this becomes our culture, then I am sure we can succeed.

Don't believe that only through cheating can we be successful. If we are an insurance agent, we must tell our client how much we have to pay. With this, people will buy from

but our culture is not so good, sooner or later we will fail.

For example, we now use the Internet. But if through the Internet we spread falsehoods, people might listen in the beginning but in the end they will know that this Website is useless.

If we look at Amazon.com, a most successful e-commerce company, the success is because it guarantees that something ordered will be delivered and the quality is as promised.

With this, people will have trust in them, and the business will be good.

I apologise if what I'm about to say will offend anyone. If we eat at a friend's house, he will buy the best meat and chicken. But when he opens a restaurant, he will buy cheap meat and charge high.

We have to protect our credibility. If our credibility is negative, we will not last in our business. Having knowledge only is insufficient. We must marry knowledge with culture. If we can ensure that our knowledge and culture is suitable, we will succeed.

In going into this knowledge economy, don't be too overzealous in getting information. On

profit. We don't have to buy the licence, just pay what needs to be paid to the Government.

So our costs are much lower. The only problem is that we don't want to work on our own. We want to get money as fast as possible, and with that, we will forever be dependent on others.

But if we are only good at selling licences, then we will forever be experts at selling licences. That happens a lot. That is why we have a problem with the Ali-Baba ventures. It's not that the Government is encouraging this sort of ventures but it's our culture of wanting to get rich quickly.

If we give out a taxi licence, the recipient won't even buy a taxi; he'll be going around with the licence asking who wants to buy it, just give him a certain amount monthly and take it.

That is why I ask to return to culture. Correct our culture. Drop all that is not good — I am certain we can succeed.

The Government will help, if possible. Write me a letter, but if you want to meet me, it is a bit difficult. It's not that I don't want to meet you, but you can write first.

Q: (Mohamad Ashraf Fauzi, from MRSM Perlis) Some peo-