

**2009-15**

## How do SME identify opportunities?

Nexia TS Public Accounting Corporation (“Nexia TS”) organized its first Breakfast Talk in partnership with the Association of Small & Medium Enterprises (ASME) on 4 September 2009. The event attracted more than 50 participants comprising entrepreneurs, senior executives, investors and professionals. The event was very well received by the market and it was felt that it is timely for Nexia TS to provide thought leadership on a current topic to the SMEs.



The topic of the Breakfast Talk was “How do SMEs identify the opportunities of the silver linings in the dark clouds? Are we out of the woods yet?” Since the early months of this year, there has been much talk about “green shoots” and no less about “brown weeds” of the global economy. Is the global crisis really coming to an end or the worst has yet to come? Our opening speaker, Mr Justin Doebele, the Special Projects Director of Forbes Asia, delivered his take on the possibility of a “second dip” by reviewing the arguments

on government stimulus packages, stock market reactions and the China economy. According to Justin, there may be a case for the silver linings, or the bull-market case given the rise of China, recognized by some as a growth engine alongside the US and Europe, Asia’s sound finances and stability in the Middle East.



What are some of the things that our SMEs can do to stay relevant and ahead of the curve? How can SMEs take advantage of the emerging trends and opportunities? On these, Mr Henry Tan, Managing Director of Nexia TS encouraged SMEs to look out for collaboration or partnership opportunities, capitalize on the low valuations and seek out new talents in the marketplace. The key for SMEs is survivorship, be it in a “v” shape or

double-dip economy. The SME who can ride through it will emerge winner.



The highlight of the event was the lively panel discussion between Mr Justin Doebele, Mr Henry Tan, and Mr Stanley Tan (Executive Chairman of Global Yellow Pages Media), and moderated by Ms Teo Ser Lee (Principal Consultant of Protocol Academy). A word of advice from Stanley, “SMEs cannot afford to spread themselves too thin or diversify recklessly. Size isn’t that important. SMEs should

focus on their core competence and work on their strengths despite the cyclical downturn.” The panel discussion concluded on an interesting note when Justin identified East Timor as a new potential market in Asia in response to a question regarding growth areas and new markets that SMEs can tap on. He further mentioned that the key to a good business model is on a process or product that can save money or increase productivity of companies.



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