

Seaventures Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd



No other story quite epitomises the application of business and passion as much as the story of Seaventures Travel and Tours Sdn. Bhd. Founded in 1995 by Razak Harris, the company has grown steadily throughout the years since its inception and has seen a smooth transition of a new management team, headed by Suzette Harris in 2005. Suzette, a degree holder in business administration, serves as the company's managing director cum current owner and is determined to ensure the continuing success of the family business. This family business simply started out of the sheer firm belief in their product, involving the recycling and reuse of decommissioned rigs as a diving facility,

which offers almost similar experiences to live-on boards, with the pristine views of Sabah waters.

To say what was to follow was a test to their beliefs would be an understatement as their initial years were laden with various obstacles. Chief amongst the challenges was the then-market's unreceptive response to their product concept and ideas whilst the harsh and established competition in the underwater tours industry made it all the more difficult for them to penetrate the market. Another major obstacle faced by Harris was the lack of funds as well as problems in human resources, more so in acquiring the necessary skilled and legal workers within their niche expertise. The turning point for them was the new management headed by Suzette and the injection of funds in upgrading their facilities alongside the company's ability to meet customers' needs.

Dividends can be seen as evidenced by the company's healthy financial performance. This is based on the sound implementation of their market strategies as well as revamping of certain business systems that were found to be ill equipped with modern trends. Seaventures' latest endeavours revolve around delivering novel and

exclusive diving courses. Complementing these latest concepts is the company's policy of ensuring optimum services to their patrons and customers – of which most are avid divers. These divers – which represent their major target market – are mainly from China, followed by the local Malaysian divers as well as the smattering number of Westerners (mainly the English contingent) making up the numbers.

Competition is stiff as there are currently 11 other legal operators also operating within the vicinity, coupled with roughly around 112 homestays throughout the region that cater to the local tourism industry. This does not factor into consideration the challenges from illegal operators who also offer services at much cheaper rates, serving to undermine the current market. Nonetheless, the passionate and strong-willed businessperson that is Suzette becomes Seaventures' major motivation for the company to further consolidate and expand their business, with the hope of a higher return on investments, indicative of their confidence in the current management's acumen. As a small way forward, "Seaventures hope to introduce more facilities and also on partnerships that will help to expand our brand" says Suzette.

To this end, the financial backing from MIDF proved to be most timely as it seeks to achieve its goals by assisting the company to acquire new boats as well as replacing old boat engines. These are critical assets for the business, which the company found that other banks and financial institutions were unwilling to back. In the competitive rates on offered as addition, the lower interest rates - when compared to the on-going market rates – as provided by local banks, is a plus. These factors resulted in the company's exponential growth with the upgraded facilities; enable the company to provide a better level of service to their patrons.

Suzette and Seaventures are looking forward to a promising future. Suzette is also mindful of potential hindrances that might occur in the company's prospects, such as poor environmental and infrastructural maintenance. In order to mitigate these factors, Seaventures seek to keep abreast with current market developments while finding suitable avenues and opportunities to ensure its growth.