

# 'Technology is SMEs' strategic business enabler'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) must start viewing technology as an investment in order to survive and thrive in the post-Movement Control Order (MCO) environment.

SME Association of Malaysia national vice-president Chin Chee Seong said even as restrictions were being progressively lifted, it was no longer business as usual with SMEs having borne the brunt of the Covid-19 pandemic impact.

"SMEs are the cornerstone of the economy. In Malaysia, about 98.5 per cent of registered businesses are SMEs, accounting for 37.1 per cent of gross development product and 66 per cent of total employment, and it is crucial that they adapt to the new normal.

"The pandemic has transformed the business environment fundamentally and SMEs

must start rebuilding new foundations for their businesses now to emerge stronger and more resilient," he said.

Covid-19 had erased any doubt that technology was the way forward, said Chin.

"Today, what's extremely crucial is for SMEs to realise the role of technology as a strategic business enabler," he said.

Meanwhile, former National Tech Association of Malaysia (Pikom) chairman Ganesh Kumar Bangah said the acceleration of the digital economy had opened up more varied and intense competition for SMEs.

"In a market full of choices, the customer is king and SMEs must be mindful of the selling experience they are providing.

"There has been a shift in consumer buying behaviour as demonstrated by the e-commerce boom during the MCO.

"Many business transactions were already being done online and the MCO was the catalyst for many Malaysians to shop and sell on e-commerce platforms."

It is never too late for SMEs to develop a commanding online presence.

"If SMEs are intimidated or are not familiar with technology, they could always look at outsourcing their e-commerce needs to build a strong online presence.

"That way, they concentrate on what they do best — running the business — while letting the outsourced company take care of their information technology and e-commerce needs."

He also foresees "live commerce" taking off very soon in Malaysia.

Live commerce is essentially the combination of streaming video and e-commerce.

In 2018, live commerce generated more than 100 billion yuan in transactions on Taobao, Alibaba's premier customer-to-customer e-commerce marketplace in China.

"Hence, SMEs need to quickly look at this avenue or they would lose out to others with the 'first mover' advantage," added Bangah.

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**GANESH KUMAR BANGAH**

National Tech Association of Malaysia  
former chairman