

## **IBC BUSINESS FORUM**

### **Family Business – Starting and Maintaining a Business**

**British Club, 25 February 2010**

Indonesian Business Centre focuses their forum this year on individual/s who have successfully started, then groomed their family businesses to the next level. On 25th February 2010, we had a forum on Family Business – Starting and Maintaining a Business. Why have a business, one would ask. Is it for money, more control over one's future, tired of being employed, suddenly got laid off or simply the need to fulfill a dream, and to turn ideas into reality? Three IBC members shared their stories about how they came to be at the IBC Business Forum held at the British Club, Singapore on 25th February 2010.

**Mr Rohan Kamis**, (60+) Managing Partner of an accounting firm Rohan, Mah & Partners and a former Member of Parliament of Singapore, wanted to create an occupation upon his retirement. His company's objective is to provide all the services of the larger accounting companies, but with a more personalised attention to its clientele. Kamis firmly believes that good conduct, moral ethics, integrity and strong family support are key essentials for a business to survive and succeed. Being a public figure he was never short of anecdotes which kept the audience humorously entertained. Kamis believes in "Old Things": Old Money, Old Friends and Old Wife..... rather than "New Things: New Money, New Friends and New Wife. He jokingly said that he was a "kept husband" during the early years of his new business, as it was his lovely wife Jun who apparently brought in the bacon. Kamis never forces his daughter to carry on the business, but in the long-winded way, she is now into accounting too.

**Mr. Jahja Suriawinata**, (50) the third generation owner and the President Director of PT Pacific Paint Factory, felt it was his obligation to help out in the family run business. He started working in the Jakarta factory as marketing manager in 1986, was in the supervisory board for shareholder of Pacific Paint Factory Jakarta since 1994 and was appointed a president director since January 2006. Upon his entry into the company he restructured and sold off all the non - core businesses and concentrated on a single product which is paint. As he has only daughters he does not make it obligatory that they join the family business. Suriawinata firmly believes that the strength of his company lies in his employees, many of whom have faithfully worked for over two decades. He feels that these men and women who have seen the company through thick and thin are truly the ones deserving and qualified to take on the helm when the necessity arises. He also believes that a proper "system" will enable the company to carry on the business well.

**Mr Setyadi Ongkowidjaja**, (50+) the founder and Managing Partner of Atelier East, faced opposition from his father who ran a textile business and who naturally wished his first born to carry on with the family trade, when his intention to study architecture was announced. Upon graduation, he worked in the UK and then in Singapore. He realised that it would take a long time to be invited to a partnership, if he remained as an employee. An opportunity to develop a piece of land in Indonesia and to work with a well known Singapore developer 20 years ago saw the birth of Atelier East, offering master-planning, architecture and interior design services. Though the first hand-drafted drawings took place in the spare bedroom of his condo, Atelier East has now from its Singapore fully computerised studio at Robinson Road concluded design work in Malaysia, main land China and back to where it all began, Indonesia. Ongkowidjaja believes that good architecture will be an asset to those who occupy it and should enhance an otherwise undesirable site. He quoted Churchill: "First you shape the environment, then the environment will shape you"

Further information:

- Rohan, Mah & Partners  
Website: [www.rohanmah.com](http://www.rohanmah.com)
  
- PT Pacific Paint Factory  
Website: [www.pacificpaint.com](http://www.pacificpaint.com)
  
- Atelier East  
Website: [www.atelier-east.com.sg](http://www.atelier-east.com.sg)