

“MARKETING HALAL: CREATING NEW ECONOMY. NEW WEALTH” HANDS ON EXPERIENCE BY AN AWARD WINNING NON-MUSLIM HALAL ENTREPRENEUR

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I have to admit initially, that I would wonder whether a non-Muslim going into the halal business would be accepted.

One thing that always suppresses people who are not familiar with the halal industry is that easily 70 per cent of the halal business done in Malaysia, and I'm told, the world, are owned by non-Muslims.

Halal Development Corporation in Malaysia (HDC) has affirmed many times that the Muslim world is fine with non-Muslims going into the Halal industry in fact they encourage it. The more entrepreneurs go into the Halal business the better.

Since we began operation in 2008 HDC has noticed our work and our commitment to communicating the goodness of halal products and services even though we are not a Muslim company we have earned their respect and have been chosen by the HDC to be on their Top 20 Most Successful Halal Compliance Companies in Malaysia.

I respect HDC's open-minded view on how Malaysia as a Country should be use Halal as a drive of economic growth. They have been adamant that race and religion should not matter, as long as the business owner complied with Halal requirements.

Which is brings me to a really important point that I cannot emphasise enough. The important thing that all businessman wanting to go into the halal business must do is to be sincere about compliance. What I mean by that is that it is not enough just to adhere to the letter of the regulations but also to the spirit of it.

So if you want to say your business is halal. Make sure it is.

Get Halal certification and be extra careful in ensuring that you are in compliance with the requirements at all the times, throughout the entire value chain.

That mean all the raw materials must be halal. How can factories or truck be halal or non-halal? It depends on what they were used for. If a factory had been used to produce non-halal products previously or if a truck had been used to transport non-halal items, they would not be considered halal.

Through my work in a MNC for 14 years, I was already familiar with the halal concept, so it was not new to me. But my previous work involved personal care and cosmetics. Food is a different kettle of fish, which is even more sensitive when it comes to halal compliance.

To learn about halal, I completely immersed myself into that industry. I read lots of books and magazine like the Halal Journal. I participated in halal conferences. I joined in World Halal Forum, where I meet other businessman involved in the halal industry. I appointed a halal compliance officer. All this helped ensure that I fully complied with halal

requirements.

I learned that halal is much more than just about which animals are forbidden to be eaten and what acceptable slaughtering methods are. Through HDC, I learned about the concept of halal toyyiban which means permissible and wholesome.

The wholesome part mean the food must be good for you, it must be safe, and it must be hygienic. So, beef might be halal but if the cow has been fed lots of harmful hormones or if it might have contracted some diseases or if the meat is not prepared in a clean manner, it's not toyyiban (or wholesome). As such, it does not fulfil the criteria of halal toyyiban.

Foe something to be truly permissible to be eaten by Muslims, it is not enough to be halal but it has to be halal toyyiban. And this is something the HDC promotes.