



Encouraging Malaysians to give e-commerce a try

> FROM P17

haggling, so we decided to start a hybrid site which provides a combination of auction and classified services," he said.

For the first five years, Tan said the company did not charge any fees for its services – it relied on its own investments to run throughout the years.

"Unlike other auction sites, Lelong.com.my does not charge a listing fee or commission," he said.

However, the site is selling its advertising space to remain afloat. Customers who want their products to be prominently featured on the site would also have to pay a small fee.

"We didn't want to burden our users with fees, but we want to encourage as many successful online trades as possible," said Tan.

"The more people we get to buy or sell online, the more comfortable they will become with it," he said.

When this happens, he said, it would also encourage other Malaysians to give e-commerce a try.

Custom mini sites

For about RM168 a year, a trader can set up his own shop in Lelong.com.my, said Tan. The site currently has over 800 stores.

"Instead of building an e-commerce site from scratch, you can just set up a ready-made shop on Lelong.com.my and have instant access to a ready

community of buyers and sellers," said Tan.

According to him, shop owners are given their own mini website on Lelong.com.my which they can customise.

Shop owners also get larger displays when they list an item for sale, he said. "This gives small businesses a chance to participate in e-commerce with a very low start-up cost," he said.

Tan said the hardest part in an e-commerce business is not building a website, but to attract traffic to the site.

"More money would be spent in promoting and marketing the site than in building it," he said.

Currently, Lelong.com.my has over 30 million page views and one million unique visitors a month, said Tan.

Over 10,000 items are posted per day, with 100,000 transactions taking place on Lelong.com.my monthly.

Despite this, Tan said the number of people trading online still falls below expectation.

"It's growing but the community is still small. There will be a while before most Malaysians do not feel so fearful about buying and selling online," he said.

Recently, Tan said the company set up Pretty.com.my, a separate but Lelong.com.my-integrated portal that caters to women.

"Shopping for clothing and apparel online is big business in the United States. Over here, we hope to encourage more Malaysians to try it," he said.



EFFICIENT: Cheah demonstrating how his staff use PC terminals in the packing room to check for orders placed through Blooming.com.my.

E-COMMERCE SUCCESS TIPS

BUDDING e-commerce merchants should keep one thing in mind: The Internet business platform is not immune to bad business practices, said Blooming.com.my's managing director, Martin Cheah.

"You will still need a sound business model that works. The usual business basics apply to e-commerce, but keep in mind that there are also other factors to consider," he said.

"Some business models may appear logical on paper, but it may not work online," he said.



» Traditional business might be more slow-moving and predictable, but the e-commerce landscape is not

MARTIN CHEAH,
BLOOMING.COM.MY MD

perhaps it is just not the right time or marketplace," Lelong.com.my's Tan added.

Also, not all products are suitable to be sold online, he said.

"You have to evaluate the type of product – whether it is breakable and how you're going to ship it," he said.

If you're new to e-commerce, you need to find a way to differentiate yourself, he added.

"You need to bring something new to the table that others are not offering or cannot provide," he said.

"Since the entry barriers to e-commerce are low, anyone else can easily come in and take over your market," he said.

Traditional business might be more slow-moving and predictable, but the e-commerce landscape is not, said Cheah.

"It allows creative energy from anyone and anywhere to compete on the same platform," he said.

He said those who want to venture into e-commerce have to understand that rapidly changes and continually evolves everyday.

"In this business, you need to expect surprises and be ready to react to it – you'll never know when a young boy with a bright idea might just come and change everything," he said.

"And just because an idea worked in one place at one point in time does not mean it'll work again at another place and time," he said.

For example, several local companies failed when they tried to set up a virtual mall in Malaysia. But when Yahoo! did it, it was very successful, said Cheah.

"And what doesn't work at one point doesn't mean it would not always work –

Instant Cash Rebate RM400

Hurry! Limited offer, while stocks last!

Work Big IN24+

2000-lumens
2200-lumens

2500 lumens (max)

Price after Instant Cash Rebate RM400

RM 2,399

Normal Price: RM2,799

- SVGA resolution
- 2000:1 contrast ratio



Work Big IN26+

2000-lumens
2200-lumens

2500 lumens (max)

Price after Instant Cash Rebate RM400

RM 3,399

Normal Price: RM3,799

- XGA resolution
- 2000:1 contrast ratio






The Big Picture




Authorised Service Centre for InFocus, ScreenPlay, ASK & Proxima.

Digital Sight & Sound (M) Sdn Bhd (010) 6336 1111
 No. 21, Jalan USJ 5/1A, Regalia Business Centre, 47620 Subang Jaya, Selangor
 Tel: +603-8024 9909 Fax: +603-8024 9909

For more information, please contact our nation-wide office:

Kuala Lumpur	Tel: 03-8023 3800	Malacca	Tel: 06-282 5380	Kuching	Tel: 082-238 553
Johor Bahru	Tel: 07-352 2523	Kuantan	Tel: 09-512 5886	K. Kinabalu	Tel: 088-218 126
Penang	Tel: 04-228 8388	Desa Pagar	Tel: 07-432 3525	Miri	Tel: 360-660 496

Authorized Dealer:
 Peking Jaya (M) Sdn Bhd Tel: 03-77102076, Ansonida Tel: 03-27108176, EngageTel Tel: 03-20823190, I-Gate Tel: 03-98208770, Super Data Tel: 03-77102218, MCL, Kuala Lumpur
 Tel: 03-27420360, A.S.I. Sdn Bhd Tel: 03-21488878, Cosmos Electronics Tel: 03-21488819, Klang, Kedah/Ipoh/Lebua Tel: 03-23236000, Kajang, Marang/Technology Tel: 03-91302000, Ipoh, Cyber
 Computer Sdn Bhd Tel: 05-4220846, PND, Delta Business Solutions Sdn Bhd Tel: 04-26282886, Seremban/Resources Sdn Bhd Tel: 04-6433733, A&E Sales & Services Tel: 012-4028282
 B.P. Sales & Services Tel: 07-4227571, S&B Electronics Sdn Bhd Tel: 07-4551918, S&B Computer Media Tel: 07-4302 2807, Klang, Klang/Service Station & Services Tel: 07-7729 987, Peng Peng Special
 Sales & Training Centre Tel: 01-6879 787, Muzika, DGC Computer Centre Tel: 08-283 0688, Muzik Computer Services Sdn Bhd Tel: 08-338 2061, Tampalau, Muhi Hutan (Electrical Training) Tel: 36-519 8380
 Kuala Lumpur, Muzik 27, Technology & Computer Sdn Bhd Tel: 08-8302888, RegaliaTel, Papi PC Hardware Tel: 118-1129 241, A.E. S. Sales & Services Tel: 07-34910460, 07-232 1391,
 Asia Computer Tel: 03-262386, Mediatec Systems Tel: 03-85222148, Technology Tel: 07-2225714, V-Power Tel: 03-1121865, Pemasaran Sdn Bhd Tel: 04-6822217