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Expand business potential at Harbour Mall Sandakan

By JAMES LEONG

SANDAKAN: They say to be successful in running one's own business requires a lot of hard work, determination, commitment, believe in oneself and sometimes, a little bit of good fortune.

With all these ingredients already in hand, opening up your retail store at Harbour Mall Sandakan is an advantage considering the proactive strategies employed by the Mall's Management in promoting the establishment which have helped to generate improved revenue and increased marketing exposure.

Harbour Mall Sandakan which celebrated its fifth anniversary last July, is the one and only state-of-the-art shopping mall of its kind in this east coast town. It offers 200,000 square feet of prime spaces for retailers, making it a shopping haven for both locals and tourists in Sandakan.

Today, Harbour Mall Sandakan welcomes more than 70,000 an average footfall each week.

"This is very encouraging as we are now just about 70 per cent occupied with the target of 80 per cent or more by year end," Ireka Corp Bhd Group Managing Director Datuk Lai Voon Hon disclosed during the mall's anniversary celebration.

Our reporter met up with mall tenants who shared their success stories and how the mall management's extensive promotion campaigns through electronic, print and social media has given marketing exposure which is one of the vital elements to boost their sales.

This is the first part of interviews conducted with Harbour Mall Sandakan retail store operators.

SN MUTIARA

If you are looking for some creative and unique design for your Tudung, SN Mutiara is the place where you can have your headscarf especially decorated to cater to your taste.

This store is located on the first floor and dealing in a wide range of clothing for Muslim women. Owner Nurdiana Labaco, 42, set up the establishment in June 2012 with the support of her husband, family members and a loan from Koperasi Polis Di Raja Malaysia Berhad.

Nurdiana said her venture into the business was mainly due to her passion for Muslim women fashion. She chose Harbour Mall Sandakan to open her business because it is the only modern mall and also for its location in town where a concentration of people from Beluran, Telupid and Kinabatangan converged on when they are in Sandakan.

Five years on today, Nurdiana has her



SN Mutiara

own brand of Tudung and a clientele of 6,000 members. The benefit of being a member of SN Mutiara is enjoying a special discount when making purchases.

Nurdiana's other specialty is bead decorating for Tudung where customers come with their own plain headscarf to have sparkly beads hand-sewn at the store.

According to Nurdiana, 70 per cent of her clients are from the working class in Sandakan and also other neighbouring districts. There is also a growing number her clients who are guests from the adjoining.

FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON SANDAKAN

Apart from promoting her merchandise on social media, she said the mall management's promotion campaigns have helped to boost sales particularly during the period in 2015 where business was slow. This is an added value for setting up a business in Harbour Mall Sandakan because the management gives emphasis on the interest of the tenants.

She said she would strongly recommend to her friends and those who are planning to establish a business in Sandakan to pick Harbour Mall Sandakan for their location.

WAHAP SATE DI BAWAH BAYU

Satay is a popular delicacy in Malaysia. It is grilled chicken or beef skewers marinated with spices and served with peanut sauce.

In Sandakan there are a few satay stalls around but one that is synonymous with authentic Sandakan satay is the well-known Wahap Sate Di Bawah Bayu

The man behind the delicious satay at Wahap Sate Di Bawah Bayu is 59-year-old Wahab Linggang. His love affair with satay started from the days when he was a young boy helping out at his uncle's satay stall in Jalan Dua, town centre after school.

Wahab started off preparing his satay from home and later operating a stall at the walkway of an eatery in Sandakan Harbour Square. He set up Wahap Sate Di Bawah Bayu at the Harbour Mall Sandakan more than one year ago.

Initially he had hesitated but after some encouragement from friends and also the conviction by Thomas Lau, ICSD Ventures Sdn Bhd Consultant for Government Liaison and Public Affairs (East Malaysia), he made the decision to open the satay stall at Harbour Mall Sandakan food court.

Wahab is assisted by his family members in running the satay stall. He uses his special recipe to prepare his satay and it has been a hit with visitors to the mall. They also offer catering services.

"To be successful in your business venture, hardworking alone is not enough. There must be passion, motivation, determination and readiness to take risk in order to move forward," Wahab said.

Wahab thanked the mall management for their proactive initiatives in extending assistance to its tenants to promote their products to a wider market.

He said various promotion events organized by the mall management have proven to be an effective marketing strategy benefitting tenants.

"Of course, I encourage those who want to set up their own businesses, to consider Harbour Mall Sandakan."