

Grab a tech edge, Sage leaders advise Malaysian SMEs



In a special message to *MALAYSIA SME*[®] readers, top executives at Sage, the American technology giant, underline the importance of technology and innovation for SMEs

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Sandra Campopiano, Chief People Officer

The term CPO is anything but common in Malaysia. What then is unique about Sandra Campopiano's role that the term "human resource" does not encompass?

Campopiano said, "My business is about people. It's about hiring, retaining and developing the best talent to build a sustainable business. It doesn't differ much from normal HR initiatives, more like 'rebranding' the function. I have people, business partners now. Human resource sounds like something you consume, and you don't consume people."

Campopiano's role at Sage has her leading the Sage Foundation, whereby Sage commits to providing 2% of employee time, 2% of free cash flow and two donated licenses to support eligible registered charities, social enterprises and non-profit organisations.

She said on this, "We just launched the Sage Foundation in Singapore, where we engaged with 60,000 runners, and we raised S\$1 million for cancer research. Our business in Singapore is relatively small, and yet managed to achieve this milestone. It is fascinating!"



Santiago Solanas, Chief Marketing Officer

Santiago Solanas was appointed CMO in September 2014. He joined Sage in 2007 to lead the Start-up and Small Business Division in Spain and was appointed CEO of Sage Spain in 2010. During this time he renewed the leadership team, increasing the efficiency of the business and returning it to growth, as well as leading the Accountants Segment in Europe.

He said, "We see probably more online, aggressive and creative marketing coming from Asia, as compared to other parts of the world. I see differing levels of maturity in terms of online marketing. For example, North America is more balanced than Europe in general. Marketing in general is evolving towards maintaining creativity and a more data-driven approach to marketing."

Solanas has a message for SMEs. "It is really important for companies to use the tools that they need and think about technology as an enabler. Many times a company looks at technology as something they have to do. It's not something you have to do, but it allows your business to be a better business. Think about technology as a building block for your business to be better."



Yaj Malik, Managing Director, Asia

Yaj Malik is the EVP and Managing Director of Sage Asia since October 2015. He joined Sage with over 20 years of leadership experience in building high growth software businesses and has led sales transformation charters across many tech organisations in Asia Pacific. At his previous post at Citrix, he led the startup of ASEAN region operations which today has over 5000 customers in the region.

Malik has a lot of experience in the Malaysian and Singaporean markets, helping to establish previously Citrix and now Sage in these markets.

Malik said on SMEs in Malaysia, "In hard times, technology is an enabler. It helps you manage your business and cash flow. Of all the SMEs in Malaysia, less than 25% use ICT. That is a very low percentage when you compare with ASEAN or the neighbouring country of Singapore. Companies in Malaysia are utilising technology when it comes to business to consumer side, but not the business to business side."

"It is a laggard position. Out of the 25%, only half of them have websites. Once you have a website, your reach increases. Even traditional industries can set up a presence online. Once you're on the web, you have equalised somewhat in tradition and modernisation."



Klaus Michael Vogelberg, Chief Technology Officer

Klaus Michael Vogelberg is CTO of Sage. He is responsible for Sage's global technology strategy and software architecture. Klaus-Michael is also Acting Chief Technology Officer for Sage Europe. From 2004 to 2007 he was R&D Director for Sage UK and Ireland. He joined Sage when Sage acquired the German KHK Software group in 1997, where he was R&D Director and a partner.

Klaus-Michael said on technology for SMEs, "Every business is a technology-enabled business. We need to think of any business as a software-enabled business, whether it is IoT technology or big data technology. A lot of that technology is being democratised, you don't need to be a big business to use that technology. It is very affordable."

"To the heroes of the economy, SMEs, embrace technology! Work with a partner who can help you achieve this mission."



Jennifer Warawa, Executive Vice President Product Marketing

In her role as EVP of Product Marketing, Jennifer Warawa has the responsibility of creating and implementing the product marketing strategy for Sage's global solutions and also driving the product marketing activities for all Sage products worldwide. Her responsibilities at Sage include go-to-market strategy and execution, competitive and market intelligence, customer experience, sales and partner enablement, pricing and customer value propositions.

"Innovation is not just meant for technology. How do we get businesses to figure out that innovation can make some improvements but will only get you 10% of the way there, and the rest is about adapting your business model? Let's say you're doing something on the cloud today, but how do you adapt your business model to take advantage of that, to be more efficient?"

"Think beyond technology. There needs to be a business model shift. When you want to determine how you can leverage technology to double your business while keeping your staffing levels flat, you want to talk to an expert who knows how to do this."