

# fashion is SEDUCTION

Bill Keith

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“I have sold a lot of my transparent clothes to Middle-Eastern countries such as Dubai. The people there love sexiness. It’s all about seduction. Fashion is seduction. Women want to look good,” Bill Keith, the man synonymous with the Malaysian fashion industry tells us. “They go out in full clothes but when they open they start to seduce. Another aspect which plays a part is that they have the desire to compete. The ‘I need to be more beautiful than you’ mentality. Although they won’t actually say it out loud,” said the man who has been involved in the fashion industry for over 35 years. His clients come from all over the world, just like the countries where he has done fashion shows. It’s safe to say that labelling him as an established figure would be considered an understatement.

Starting off as a couturier in the 80s, Keith has

expanded his business empire to include furniture, footwear, handbags, and also interior designing. With a wealth of experience at his disposal, it comes to no surprise that the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) has roped him in to be their fashion counsellor. In this role, he will nurse a group of young designers who are hoping to grow their business. “These are my incubating designers. They are not hatched yet. They are very creative and talented. They come up with the perfect range but they are not good at production and workmanship yet. It’s not easy for me to nurture them, it will take around four or five months,” he tells us. How much is he being paid to perform this role? Nothing. “I am doing this because I was once in their shoes too”.

Keith underlines one element that is extremely critical when venturing a business overseas – understanding what the

market wants. “The Dubai market, for example, wants high-end products. They are fast in development and they are not afraid. They take chances. The people there live life. The China market, on the other hand, is different. The people there don’t want to buy a product from their own country. Even if you’re a Malaysian brand with a Chinese name, you are not going to make it there. They will mistake it for a Chinese from China. It’s a very infectious disease,” he explained.

Keith proceeds to reveal a very common mistake that Malaysian entrepreneurs make. “People always talk about marketing but you have to present your product first. If your presentation is no good, then how do you reach marketing? You cannot work backwards,” he stressed. This perhaps further strengthens his opinion earlier in the interview. Your presentation, just like fashion, needs to be seductive! 📺



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You need to understand what the market wants

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