

SME Survival Strategies

中小企疫市營商策略

Business owners share their experiences of coping with the impact of the pandemic, and ways to find new opportunities

企業經營者分享應對疫情影響的經驗及發掘新商機的方法

After almost a year, the coronavirus pandemic shows no signs of slowing around much of the world. The global economy has suffered an unprecedented blow, and many local businesses, especially SMEs, are in deep trouble.

To help members work through the difficult times together, and to learn from others' experiences the Chamber invited four entrepreneurs from different sectors to share their experience at the SME Survival Strategies Sharing Session on 15 October. They discussed not only the difficulties they were facing amid the pandemic, but also their tactics to resolve their issues.

Since the pandemic began, people have had to adopt to a "new normal," both at home and in the

workplace. CK Lee, Managing Director of CK Lee & Associates, a human resource management and training company, noted that Hong Kong businesses have always been flexible. For SMEs, the pace of response to change is even faster, as most companies have been shifting to online meetings, flexi-work hours and work-from-home arrangements over the past six months.

Lee said he also realised that while only the strong survive challenging times, it is also a time when companies can explore new opportunities. He shared his partners' experience in coming up with new business ideas when they were forced to stay in their hometowns, in

Malaysia and Mainland China, when the pandemic first broke out.

Although the catering industry has been among the sectors hardest hit by Covid-19, Alan Lo, Co-founder of Duddell's, pointed out that there were silver linings to be found. "With rents falling to a ten-year low, now is an opportune time for businesses to expand, if they have strengths, new ideas and a good team," he said.

Lo stressed that companies should make use of technology in their operations. They could also consider new business models, such as



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developing online food ordering systems and takeaway markets, or even consider setting up cloud kitchens, to reduce operating costs.

Lexington Limited is engaged in product design, production, brand promotion, export trade as well as retail and wholesale. Its co-founder, Carlotta Wong, said the company focuses on responsiveness to stay competitive.

"In the past, it was 'the big fish eats the small fish,' but in the context of the current critical situation it is 'the fast fish eats the slow fish,'" she said. "As such, we review our operations daily to allow immediate adjustment."

Wong added that her company also pays particular attention to staff morale. During the pandemic, the company has encouraged employees to upgrade their skills, while also cultivating its internal marketing team. The aim is to create a sense of everyone working together as a team, from senior to junior staff, to tide over the hardships.

Kevin Ng, Managing Director of Tsangs Group, is a fourth-generation member of the family business, which focuses on financial investments. He said that while Hong Kong's financial industry has been less affected by the Covid epidemic than some other sectors, it is obvious that innovation and technology is driving a change in how we all live and work. These have brought many new business opportunities, so the group has shifted to more investment in projects related to innovation and technology, such as fintech, biotech and blockchain.

The speakers all agreed that, given the rapidly changing development and impact of the pandemic, businesses should continue to stay abreast of the situation and respond promptly. They said that they hope that Hong Kong companies will aim to "think out of the box" and embrace innovation, putting themselves in a good position for both attack and defence as the current situation evolves.



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——羅揚傑 都多利會館聯合創辦人

新冠病毒疫情已經持續接近一年，似乎未有好轉的跡象。全球經濟受到前所未有的衝擊，許多本地企業尤其是中小型企業的營運雪上加霜。

為幫助會員一起渡過難關，並從別人的經驗中學習，總商會邀來四位來自不同行業的企業家在10月15日的「中小企疫市營商網上分享會」分享經驗，除了討論他們在疫情下遇到的困難，還講解各自的應對策略。

疫情之下，市民的生活及工作模式都出現「新常態」。李志強管理顧問公司從事人力資源管理及培訓，董事總經理李志強表示香港企業一向靈活變通，而中小企的應變速度更為快速；在過去大半年，大部分企業都已掌握網上會議，並實行彈性上班及在家工作安排。

另外，他發現難關總會汰弱留強，同時也是企業發掘新機遇的時候。他解釋，其合夥人因疫情緣故，分別留在馬來西亞及中國內地的家鄉，反而在那裡為公司覓得新商機。

雖然餐飲業首當其衝，都多利會館聯合創辦人羅揚傑卻指出：「現時租金已達十年新低位，若企業有實力、有新概念及好團隊，反而是擴充業務的最佳時機。」

他強調企業要利用科技，考慮新經營模式，如開發網上訂餐系統、外賣市場，甚至研究開設雲端廚房，以減低營運成本。

誠信行貿易有限公司是一家結合產品設計、生產、品牌推廣、出口貿易及零售批發的企業，董事王詠儀指出，他們公司重視應變能力，以維持競爭力。

她說：「以前商業社會是『大魚吃細魚』，但現下危急情況是『快魚吃慢魚』，所以公司會每日檢討，以便即時做出調整。」

此外，她的公司特別重視員工的士氣。疫情期間，他們鼓勵員工自我增值，並培育內部市場營銷團隊，希望公司上下一心，一起渡過難關。

曾氏集團從事本地金融投資。作為家族企業第四代營運者，集團董事總經理吳建勳表示疫情對香港金融業的影響較少，但明顯發現創新科技正帶動人類生活方式及工作模式的改變，當中引發了不少新商機，因此集團轉移投資金融科技、生物科技及區塊鏈等創新科技相關的項目。

四位講者皆認為疫情的發展與影響瞬息萬變，企業應持續關注情況，並即時作出應變。他們希望香港企業都能破格求新，攻防兼備，展望未來。



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