

# Public-Private Partnership towards Business Sustainability



Food manufacturing industry has been growing tremendously within the nation and revolutionises according to Malaysian taste buds. It is an undeniable fact that, demands on processed foods are increasing in parallel on a daily basis with the growth in population. These changes and revolt in food and expectations have made the industry boom into being creative in fulfilling varied demands and expectations of the society.

MIWA Manufacturing Sdn. Bhd. which started as an enterprise company in the food and beverage business in 2005, has transformed into an exemplary company among the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This company offers a range of delicious jelly drink which is now marketed throughout Malaysia and is being exported to Singapore.

Customers increase over the years as the East Coast region recorded the highest value in demand. These

demands motivate employees at MIWA in producing more drinks. In 2011, MIWA embarked into the automation world where machines took over the production of jelly drink. Following that, MIWA implemented more changes in 2014 by appointing sales agents. They play roles in marketing the products and consecutively increasing sales.

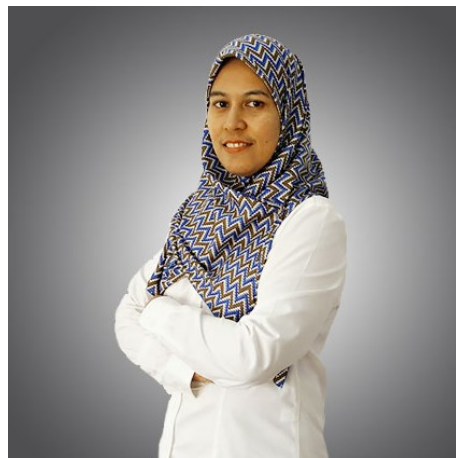
MIWA looks forward into improving its efficiency as this attributes to business sustainability. The company is extensively involved in Public Private Research Network (PPRN) and has significantly improved efficiency and reduced sick leave among its staff.

Initiatives through PPRN is a project sponsored by Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia (MOHE) that serves as a platform to resolve problems faced by SMEs in its daily business operations. This is an approach by the government in engaging businesses with experts from local universities.

## Establishing MIWA as a jelly drink

Brand plays a crucial role in popularising products among customers. Companies usually invest in building a rapport for their brands as this will aid in establishing the respective products. Fara Ellizia Rashid, the Operations Manager of MIWA Manufacturing Sdn. Bhd. aims to establish MIWA Jelly Drink in the minds of Malaysian.

“The company has embarked on a lot of marketing strategies to build MIWA into being a generic product for jelly drinks similar to MILO or MAGGI. As time went by, our business was going through a phase of



expansion. In 2014, we adopted the agent system in which the marketing and distribution were given to third party companies. Following that, in 2016, we co-branded with BoboiBoy, featuring characters from the animation series. With this we have been

“MILO and MAGGI have conquered the chocolate drink market and the instant noodle market within the region and we intend to do that for the jelly drink market as well.”  
— Fara Ellizia

receiving tremendous demands,” Fara said.

This company has gone through a series of business transformation before the success of MIWA Jelly Drink. MIWA not only believes in the

uniqueness of its product but also in its effective marketing strategies and branding for jelly drinks.

She further explained, “We started as a trading company in 1997 and ventured into food truck business in 2005. We wanted to expand our business and penetrate into food manufacturing industry by producing our own frozen fruit puree. To illustrate further, my sister who is also my business partner, and I love trying out local food and drinks during our travel. Additionally, we also observe food products and their marketing strategies.”

“That was exactly when jelly drinks caught our attention. The jelly drinks that we tried was indeed unique and surprisingly we have never come across such drinks in Malaysia. That was the beginning of how an idea manifested into establishing MIWA Jelly Drink in Malaysia. After a year of R&D, we successfully managed to create a recipe catered to Malaysian taste buds.”

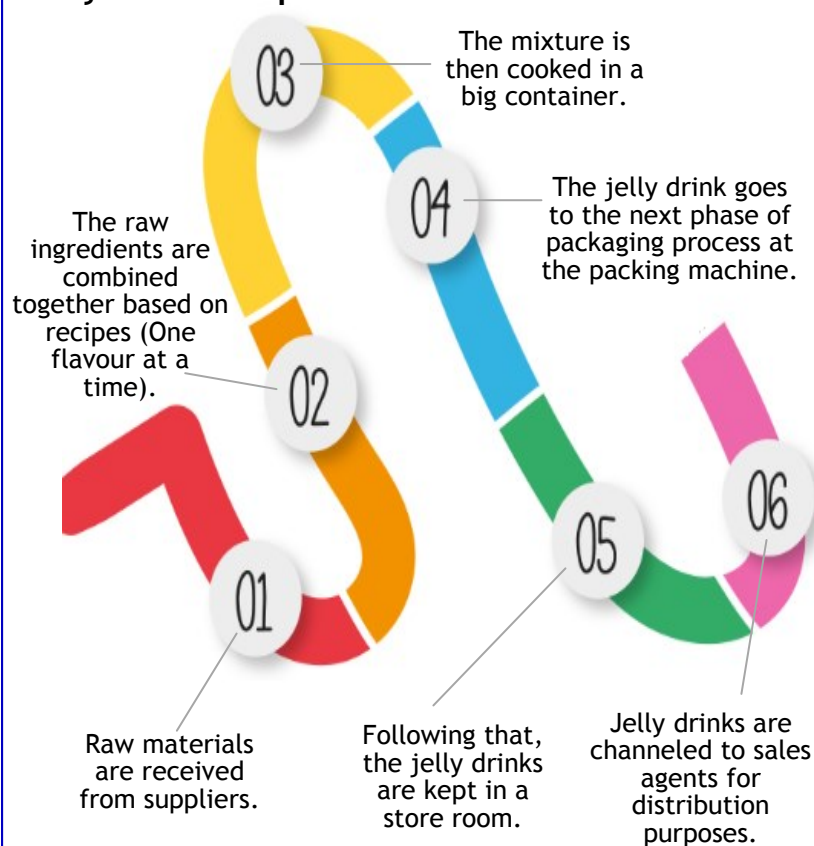
### Improving efficiency rate to maximise output

MIWA made an astonishing breakthrough in 2010, where they started renting a factory to produce jelly drink. About 200 to 500 liters was produced daily to meet the demands which were increasing year by year. Nevertheless, all of the jelly drink production processes were done manually.

Fara elaborated, “There have been times when we were unable to meet the demands. Consequently, 2012 served as an era of trials and improvements when we decided to automate the packaging processes. With this advancement, we were in joy as production increased to 1,000 liters to 2,000 liters on a daily basis. In fact, during festive seasons, we serve demands which reached up to 4,000 liters of jelly drink per day. With such alterations, we were able to meet the demands which was truly an inspiring success.”

MIWA has a set of ten productive workers and of course automation shaped MIWA in performance. Fara said, “4,000 liters was produced without hiccups or issues as the machines brought a new face to our business structure. The efficiency rate increased more than 50 percent when we

## MIWA : Daily business operations



managed to produce more output within shorter duration. Marketing and distribution of goods were picking up far more than expected.”

### Barriers at the packaging process

Towards the end of 2014, Fara realised that sick leaves among some of the employees were increasing. This consecutively added medical costs and raised awareness if such situations would burden the company's financial aspects especially if it is not resolved.

Fara clarified, “Such situations happen as some of our employees did not maintain a good body posture during their work. To be specific, those in stationed at the end of the filling machine, often bent to collect the cups at the final process. Such situations led to two of our employees to suffer from severe back ache and were on medical leaves every now and then.”

“We realised that this slightly affected our production as well as led to overtime among other employees. Consequently, it led to additional cost to the entity itself.” Fara and her team knew that the issue should be solved and hence brainstormed various solutions.

## Public - Private collaboration for better results

In October 2014, MIWA was very much delighted when the Ministry Higher of Education (MOHE) had introduced an initiative known as Public Private Research Network (PPRN). This is an approach by the government to alleviate the technological knowledge gap through innovation and commercialisation programs in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). MOHE plays a role in selecting experts within the local universities and assigning them in coming up with solutions for barriers in SMEs.

Fara shared her experiences on the PPRN project “We knew that this was an interesting interchange, as we shared our constraints in dealing with an improper height for the filling machines that led to ergonomic problems among staff. We submitted our proposal to PPRN.”

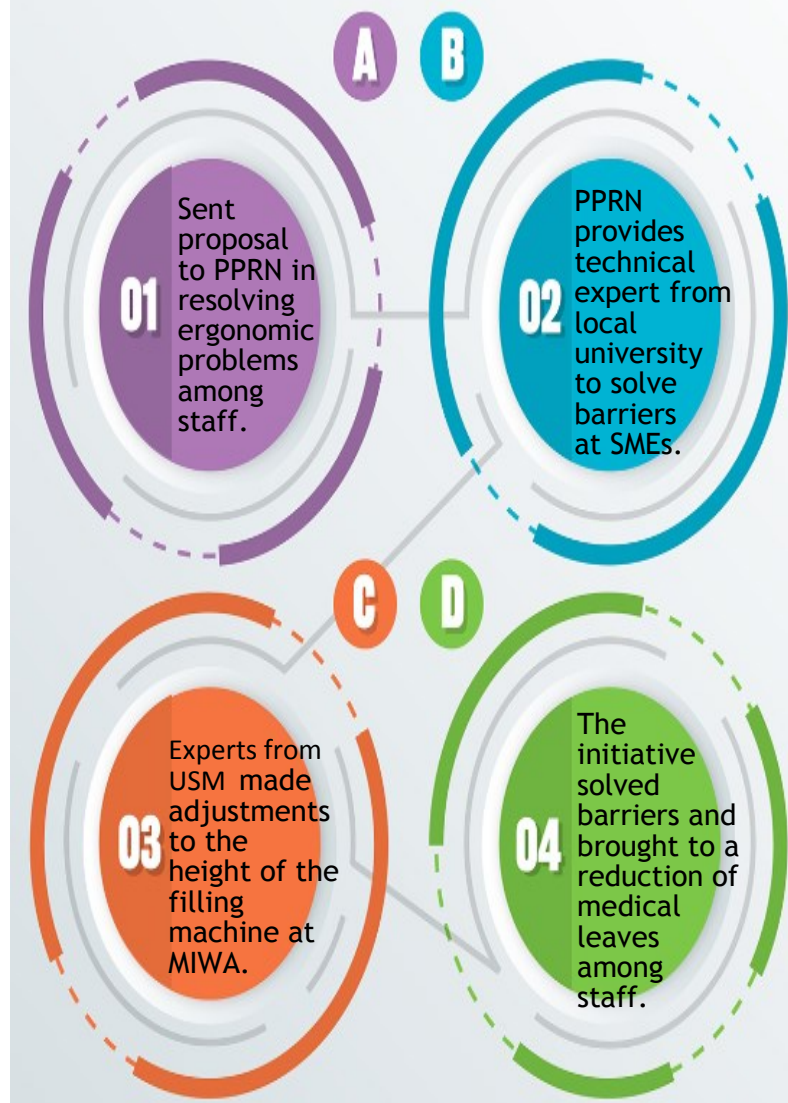
“There were many universities which were offering ways on encountering barriers for SMEs. Subsequently, after one month of reviewing proposals presented by many universities, we selected Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and was approved by PPRN, as they provided the most effective solutions to our constraints.”

She further explained “USM used its expertise in solving our problems through making adjustments to the height of the filling machine so the employees would not have to bend themselves. Additionally, their solutions did not require major changes and it was believed to bring effective vicissitudes.”

This project was funded by MOHE and it is believed that such projects will increase collaboration among the public and the private sectors. MOHE also believes that such initiatives will aid in building a stronger economic growth.

Fara proclaimed “We were delighted as the research experts from USM worked towards planning and executing these measures from March 2015 until September 2015. We are proud to say that these solutions are still valid till to date and concurrently have reduced medical leaves among employees. This shows that our employees no longer suffer from back ache and we have provided them a better working environment. This is definitely a plus point for us! With this, production increased to 30 percent and all targets are achievable.”

## Efficiency at MIWA through Public Private Research Network (PPRN)



MIWA believes that this progress will enhance growth as a whole in the future. The company aims to serve the younger and the elderly equally as they inspire to conquer the hearts of all. In fact, they now strongly believe in collaboration with MOHE as it brings fruitful discussions and evolution. MIWA is motivated to triumph over the international market in the coming years.

