For a Greener Future

Dr. Alicia Bustos of Baliuag University
Publisher's Message

Going Green

The pursuit of environmental initiatives is very much the trend these days. Businesses have started to inculcate responsible stewardship of the environment in their core business practices and Gaea has so far been receiving the much needed care and attention, after years of neglect and abandonment.

From a single bottom line perspective, enterprises have made a conscious effort to transcend beyond profit and start caring for Nature. The triple bottom perspective—People, Profit and Planet—of which Plantersbank has long been an advocate, is gaining a huge following among businesses.

With the Bank’s green initiatives, Plantersbank has been a staunch supporter of the Going Green movement—long before others took notice and firms became environment-friendly.

This issue is dedicated to Going Green. We are happy to share with you features about businesses and programs that are helping to repair, recover, replenish and revive our fragile ecosystem. Our cover story about Baliuag University takes a look at their revolutionary “green building.” We also feature a couple of fashion innovators using sustainable and indigenous materials for their products. A number of eco tips and ideas are likewise showcased under our SME Focus section.

In this Green Issue, we hope we can inspire you to pursue your own environment-friendly initiatives. In our quest to do a more sustainable way of conducting business, every effort counts to protect the Earth. We rally everyone to Go Green—it’s good for profit and the planet.

Ambassador Jesus P. Tambunting
Chairman and CEO
Planters Development Bank
New Ideas from Everywhere

By Arvee Fantilagan

Facebook acquires Instagram—What attracts big corporations to their smaller counterparts?

Initially only available for iOS devices, Instagram is a mobile app that allows users to take a photo, apply a digital filter to it, and share it on their preferred social networking service. Who better to acquire this popular start-up than Facebook, the biggest social networking site today. Facebook reportedly acquired Instagram for $1 billion. Not bad for a start-up with only 13 employees and no income. This raises the question, what do the bigger counterparts or competitors look for in small businesses that they plan to acquire? According to some Silicon Valley businessmen, it’s these three:

• People – Big companies always look for great talent. And when they find it within their smaller counterparts, they grab the opportunity to acquire the company. Nowadays, good engineers are rare even in Silicon Valley, and Facebook was lucky to acquire the rare ones.

• Intellectual property, technology, inventions – A new yet developed concept is interesting to another company, especially if it has good patent protection.

• Market – This is probably the reason behind Facebook’s acquisition of Instagram—they wanted to reach out to a new or bigger market. But don’t let the idea of getting acquired be your guiding principle. Instead, focus on making your start-up company a great one in order to grab the interest not only of your market but of other companies as well.

London: “Campus” hubs for startups

With tech companies flocking to and setting up shop in London, this city is fast gaining a reputation as the technological start-up center of Europe. And soon, it can even begin to look the part. Internet elite Google just announced plans to open a seven-storey building catering to dwellers of east London’s so-called Tech City.

Google declined to divulge the other specifics of its “Campus” project for now, but Northern and Central Europe Vice-President Matt Brittin has said that the company will be coordinating closely with other start-up investors based in the area, such as Tech Hub, Springboard and Seedcamp, to find out how to maximize the benefits that the building can offer to its future users.

The venture also serves as a prototype for a bigger plan that will establish similar technological centers in other countries in the region. The hope is that these centers will tend to the needs of start-ups that badly need amenities for their operations.

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Source: http://fort-greene.thelocal.nytimes.com/2012/01/31/a-cleaning-solution-so-green-that-you-can-drink-it/

Source: http://www.computerworld.com/thnews/business/3344121/google-to-open-london-centre-for-start-ups/

SME

New York City: Salt + Water = Detergent

Brooklyn-based company EcoLogic has developed detergents that don’t use traditional surfactant chemicals. Instead, their e-Water and SAN-e-Water detergents are made up of nothing more than harmless salt and water. And yet it’s still strong enough to wipe all kinds of surfaces squeaky-clean and germ-free.

Using an electrically-charged process, salt water is broken down into its individual components and is re-arranged into one of two solutions—sodium hydroxide, one of the basic components of your typical hand soap, and hypochlorous acid, which can be found inside our bodies killing bacteria and germs.

A number of restaurants in New York City have already adopted and lauded E-Logic’s environment-friendly system, although the innovators admit that their main obstacle now lies in convincing people that something so non-toxic can kill away the toxins in their sinks.

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Source: http://open-london-centre-for-start-ups/

SME
PinoyME advocates microenterprise development

The country’s most promising microentrepreneurs gathered at the Landbank Plaza in Manila recently to attend the “ME Naman!” Convention organized by the PinoyMe Foundation in celebration of its sixth anniversary.

Keynote speaker and chairman and CEO of Plantersbank Ambassador Jesu P. Tambunting rallied growth-oriented microentrepreneurs to move forward, citing they are the “dynamo of development,” especially in the countryside. He emphasized the importance of proper support and assistance to the micro, small and medium enterprises in order for them to grow, improve knowledge and sharpen skills.

“As entrepreneurs generate employment, better incomes and progress in the countryside, in the end, it means “dreams fulfilled and better lives for our kababayans,” according to Ambassador Tambunting.

Also present during the opening ceremonies were presidential sister and PinoyMe steering committee member Ms. Viel Aquino-Dee and president and CEO of Landbank Ms. Gilda Pico.

PinoyMe stands for “Filipino (Pinoy) microenterprise.” Founded by the late President Corazon C. Aquino, it aims to provide MFIs with plans for SME Development that may have a considerable impact, in the following years, the summit has been hosted by, among others, the Vietin Bank in Hanoi, Vietnam; the Japan Finance Corporation in Tokyo, Japan; the Industrial Bank of Korea in Seoul, Korea; and the Association of Banks in Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This is the first time that the Philippines will be hosting this annual summit which is slated from July 18-20, 2012 at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza.

The first APEC SME Summit was held in 2003. It was hosted by the SME Development Bank of Thailand in Hua Hin, Thailand. In the following years, the summit has been hosted by, among others, the Vietin Bank in Hanoi, Vietnam; the Japan Finance Corporation in Tokyo, Japan; the Industrial Bank of Korea in Seoul, Korea; and the Association of Banks in Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This is the first time that the Philippines will be hosting this annual summit which is slated from July 18-20, 2012 at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza.

SME Speaker Series brings winning coach to CDO, lecture on creating winning teams

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY - Multi-titled PBA and national team basketball coach Vincent “Chot” Reyes discussed the principles of a winning team during an educational afternoon with some 200 stalwarts of the Cagayan de Oro City business scene in the recently concluded Plantersbank SME Speaker Series at the Mallberry Business Hotel in the country’s City of Golden Friendship.

With the theme “Creating a Winning Team: Strengthening Your Business Through Teamwork”, Coach Chot presented fresh insights on how to help SMES integrate winning plans into their businesses. He shared his learnings and life lessons based on his own pitfalls and successes as head coach of various basketball teams and as an entrepreneur. He explained the parallelism between coaching a basketball team and managing a business, presenting practical tips and time-tested strategies to be an effective leader. According to Coach Chot, “Business, like basketball, harks on the same principles of choosing the right people and forming a strong team to achieve goals.”

Coach Chot studied and trained in London to master the art and science of Corporate Coaching. He later established Coachcom, which has been providing executive coaching to executives of various top 500 corporations in the Philippines.

The forum held at CDO is the Bank’s response to help uplift the morale of the business community after the onslaught of Typhoon Sendong which greatly devastated the province and crippled several businesses. The SME Speaker Series was presented in partnership with PhilExport Cagayan de Oro.

Now on its fifth year, the Plantersbank SME Speaker Series imparts winning management techniques and business skills delivered by today’s top motivational speakers. The advocacy program is aligned with the Bank’s goal to promote SME enablement. It aims to provide Filipino entrepreneurs with a venue to equip themselves with the latest management trends and learn valuable tips for capacity-building, as well as expand their network and build possible partnerships. This symposium is an added dimension to Plantersbank’s portfolio of innovations for enabling entrepreneurs, among them the Small Business Forum, SME Business Park—the country’s first industrial development park solely focused on SMEs and the SME Center for Asia.

Plantersbank Inaugurates New Visayas Avenue Branch

To make banking even more pleasant and convenient for its clients, Plantersbank Visayas Avenue branch has moved its office to a more prominent location in the new and highly-accessible Wilson City Mall near the Queen City Memorial Circle.

“The transfer to the new Wilson City Mall now makes it easier for our clients to visit the branch. The modern and spacious interior is also a testament of Plantersbank’s commitment to offer excellent service, responsive to the needs of our clients,” according to Plantersbank first vice president and Metro Manila 1 area head Joy R. Goitancio.

Invited to cut the ribbon were Plantersbank clients Mrs. Marisha Aban, chairperson and director of Montessori School in Quezon City; Mr. Roland Raniez, 3rd and 4th from left. They were joined by Plantersbank executives (L-R) Visayas Avenue branch manager and assistant vice president Eric A. Albarico, vice president and head of human resources and security & premises group Victoria T. Afonis, Joy R. Goitancio and senior vice president and head of SME Banking Group 1 Liberty S. Basilio.
The Unconventional Ways of Cooling Down

You don’t have to settle for your stingy neighbor’s iced candy to ward off the hot days of summer. Here is a list of unique and refreshing ice creams from some of the metro’s coolest finds.

By Arvee Fantilagan

Bored with the usual chocolate, vanilla or fruity ice creams? Then how about some liquor? Elfav Ice Cream in Parañaque City offers liquor-laced ice creams. At the top of its patrons’ lists are Beer, Tequila Rose, and Bailey’s. Although they closely resemble vanilla ice cream the first time you see them, these slushes manage to capture that familiar intoxicating aroma so well, you’d think you just poured some alcohol into your cone.

One noticeable difference is that the bitter taste you would expect from an alcoholic product has been drowned by the sweetened vanilla sorbet. The alcohol content is still there, albeit a tad lighter, so you better watch how many scoops you order, especially as they’re quite tempting at just P60 per scoop. Those who are driving, however, can still have their fix of radical ice cream aftertastes. Also available is the spicy-minty wasabi ice cream, while veggie-lovers would adore malunggay flavor, which retains only a bit of the plant’s bitterness and mixes it with a lot of sweetness. And then there’s the lactobacilli ice cream, a hit among the younger customers for its variation of a popular yogurt drink.

If it’s even more familiar flavors you are looking for though, Sebastian’s Ice Cream’s specialties are those that rank among the Filipinos’ most beloved. Their pioneering star: the champorado ice cream, which is as chocolatey as an ice cream can get, thanks to extra sweet recipe of the actual chocolate porridge. The store even mixes sticky rice with the choco sorbet to complete that familiar “rainy morning breakfast” feel.

And because this experiment in combining the Filipino’s beloved kakanin with ice cream easily clicked among visitors, other native rice snacks soon found their way to the shop’s menu. Now, for P500 per pint, you can try treats such as Mangga’t Suman, Puto-bumbong, and the Tibok-Tibok—all of them frozen to a delight.

Watching your food get frozen before you, meanwhile, is the proudest selling point of The Iscreamist, a restaurant near UP Diliman. A P48 order from the menu labeled “Dragon’s Breath” will get you four sticks of delicacies ranging from munchkins to bacon to chocolate wafer, with a complementary cup full of nitrogen liquid. Dip the treat-on-the-stick in it, wait for 15 seconds, then pull it out to see a freshly crystalized snack. All this while the liquid nitrogen flows out of the cup flooding your table like a mystic winter morning. Begin chewing your ice cream, then you can already impersonate the legendary Chinese animal as thick fogs of blue smoke blow out of your nostrils and mouth.

There is also a good variety of beverages in their menu which includes different flavors of milk shakes, tea shakes, yogurt shakes, and blended coffee. Watching the staff prepare them is even more interesting as they use large quantities of liquid nitrogen, turning the glass-walled kitchen into an impromptu stage for an impromptu smokes-and-mirror presentation.
Managing Your Own Cash Flow... via Spreadsheet

A personal cash flow spreadsheet is extremely simple to set up, and yet can save you from quite a lot of potential cash headaches. Here’s how to set one up.

By Art Ilano

Smart money managers always insist that while having a net income is good, it’s cash flow that’s king. Because no matter how profitable you are, if all your profits are in receivables and your cash is running out, then you’re careening into a critical situation where you may not even be able to meet your payroll and other essential expenses.

Rule of thumb: keep cash flow in the positive.

So now let’s take that idea home and apply it to personal finances because, let’s face it, cash flow will still be king even in your home domain. Just as in business, you don’t want to get caught running out of cash for personal expenditures, especially critical ones such as upcoming tuitions and the like.

Let’s start by creating a most basic cash flow template in Microsoft Excel (or some free spreadsheet program such as OpenOffice or LibreOffice).

An elementary cash flow spreadsheet consists simply of three elements: Cash In, Cash Out, and a running Cash Balance. And, of course, a couple of description fields, specifically Date and Item.

Here’s how it might look like:

The Balance cells would simply have a calculation of <previous balance (the cell directly above it)> + <cash in> - <cash out>. Copy that all the way down the Balance column and you have a basic cash flow statement. Simple, no?

This deceptively simple spreadsheet holds tremendous power when you’re planning your financial future. To use it, plug in your expected income and expense items throughout the future. Utility bills, for instance, are relatively predictable and so can be plugged in for the rest of the year. Car maintenance coming up?

For instance, take a look at this hypothetical stretch of the cash flow:

In the above example, take a look at June 9. By then, the cash forecast predicts that the cash balance will drop down to just a thousand pesos. That sounds like a precarious situation to be in, particularly since it will still be nearly a week before the next inflow of cash. Scary, but at least you’ve now predicted this impending crisis way ahead of time. Now you can do something about it. Demand payment from your shady neighbor who borrowed money from you, for instance, or even cut down on some budgeted items that come before June 9.

All this, of course, brings out the value of having a Minimum Cash Policy. This is a personal policy where you strive to never go below a certain level of cash on hand. This way you can have enough on hand for emergencies and the like. The good news: Excel has a visual tool that can serve as your warning lights for whenever (or, more precisely, wherever) your balance reaches critical levels. This is in the form of the “Conditional Formatting” feature. You can find Conditional Formatting on the Home Ribbon (if you have one of the later Excel versions). Conditional Formatting allows you to specify rules for colorizing or emphasizing certain cells.

Here’s how you can use this feature. Highlight the entire Balance column and click on Conditional Formatting. Now let’s say you want the sheet to warn you whenever you are close to hitting your Minimum Cash Policy of, say, 25,000 pesos. You may want to set up a “warning light” for when your cash drops below 25,000 pesos, in which case click on “Highlight Cell Rules”, click on “Less Than”, and then type 25000. Immediately, all Balances that are below 25,000 pesos will be in red font, screaming for your attention. You can also change the formatting to taste. The point is that even just by casually scanning down your balance stream, you can already be warned whenever your cash balance reaches critical levels. And of course, this means that you’ll have to adjust your cash flow before that happens so that you don’t hit your critical levels.

Congratulations! You are now doing cash flow management on the domestic level.

So what are the advantages of implementing such an obsessive-compulsive undertaking? Well, aside from being warned way beforehand about impending financial crises, having a well-plotted cash flow allows for you to cut down on unnecessary expenditures, all in the hope of keeping your cash balances in the black.

What’s more, having a clear cash flow statement can eventually also serve as an inspiration for you to save up. Believe me, watching your cash balance climb over the coming months can quickly become an obsession. And as far as obsessions are concerned, at least this can be a healthy one!

Here’s how it might look like:
How Going Green Can Help Promote Your Business

Environmental campaigns are not just for the big firms. Here are some tips on how to do it right.

by Portia Silva

In 2010, the Department of Natural Resources launched the “Switch to Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb (CFL)" campaign, wherein one million CFL bulbs were distributed nationwide to help reduce the use of the wasteful incandescent light bulbs. This project resulted in the disposal of lesser light bulbs in a span of one year, contributing to the overall waste reduction of the company and its partner communities.

To the average observer, the question may be “Why?" As in, why would a large public corporation put so much interest in an initiative that costs it certainly cost money to implement?

Sustainable business

According to Meta Brophy, director of publishing operations for Consumer Reports magazine, any sustainable, conscious effort is categorized under green marketing. “Aside from brandishing the company with ‘positive vibes,’ effective eco-friendly marketing strategies increase the Chief Marketing Officer’s bottom line.

Brophy adds that a company’s saving on production costs in order to increase profits is an indication that the brand is on the right track towards going green. Companies that have opted to go green do so by modifying their production processes, packaging strategies and public relations and advertising tactics. These are concrete steps toward the fulfillment of ecological impacts outlined by the brand. She says, “Once you have identified measures to achieve your goals, primarily to green the environment more while earning money, everything else follows. You have to know that it takes a while to implement all these grand plans, but when it takes off, it goes very far. You can only choose to continue or go back to your old, tried and tested ways.”

From a consumer’s point of view, product messages infused with environmental advocacies are very attractive since they bring the brand to a positive light. Brophy argues that the human desire to help improve the surroundings is almost always present in entrepreneurial encounters and related settings.

Social enterprise

One might argue that one needs to be a big corporation to initiate such green initiatives. But green efforts are being implemented by a number of smaller firms as well. Reese Fernandez-Ruiz, co-founder and current CEO of eco-ethical business Rags2Riches Inc., stands as a solid example for a profit-driven, advocacy business model.

With “People, Profit, Planet and Positive influence” as the brand’s philosophies, Rags2Riches was created to work with recycled materials, clothing scraps and organic materials to produce fashionable items such as handbags, wallets and organizers. Reese envisioned the company as opening opportunities for the company as opening avenues to the local economy, says Reese.

Part of the decision-making that consumers go through is thinking how a certain product that claims something can actually turn out to be true. “Although eco-certifications differentiate products and aid in consumer decision-making, they are not without controversy,” say the authors.

To achieve both, they say that green marketing must come out as “grassroots-driven and humorous without sounding too preachy.” Studies claim that consumers are turned off by brands that go overboard and their best intentions at hand, the authors claim that social entrepreneurs are often challenged by the task of presenting their cases and advocacies in the proper mediums with appealing messages.

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The authors go on to argue that going green can, like every other business trend, get into the fad drive. Sure, word-of-mouth marketing helps, but brand marketers have to closely monitor from whom and where these praises (or otherwise) about their products come from. It’s difficult enough establishing how your product can be legitimately considered as ecological; let alone relying on unreliable sources of product reviews.

Gold in green

Ultimately, all entrepreneurial efforts rooting from and leading to going green have their advantages as well as disadvantages. It is a matter of knowing how to position yourself in this blooming market, where to invest your best ecological efforts and what message to tell people across industries.

For successful campaigns, the drive, the passion and the will to make positive change may have overridden the temptation to make huge short-term profits. While practically dictates the necessity to earn, good business values point towards a more outward-oriented mindset.

So does going green pay off? In the end, yes it does. Going green is a long-term investment, and it can pay off in terms of good corporate citizenship and an enhanced reputation among the public.
Almost everyone we know has one or more accounts in social networking sites these days. We all know people who log into Facebook or Twitter as soon as they wake up in the morning, often by using their mobile gadgets.

In the workplace though, being connected to their mobile gadgets may be a false sense of security. “We recommend that an IT administrator block these sites during office hours and allow their use during off-hours such as lunch time or after office hours,” he advises. “Doing so will effectively achieve the goal of increasing staff productivity during working hours and reducing such distractions for employees [when they need to work].”

However, there are companies, like those in the PR and marketing industries, whose work requires the use of social networking sites. In cases like these, it is not realistic to prevent employees from accessing such websites.

In the end, choosing whether or not to block social networking sites may be a function of common sense and good judgment. Yes, social networking has its role in business, but management should be clear as to the limits of its placement.

Blocking Social Networking Sites

So you want to block social networking sites. How do you do it?

There are security systems available which can block certain sites. For instance, with Kaspersky's Endpoint Security, an IT administrator can configure the network settings to specify which sites to block using web control. According to technical specialists, this is not the best solution as social networking is conveniently among the categories of services offered. Furthermore, the blocking can be implemented through scheduling whereby, as mentioned previously, these sites can be made inaccessible during office hours and allowed after office hours.

There are also parental control programs that may do the trick. Parental control software is typically designed to help parents regulate their kids’ access to the web. However, this is tricky since most business owners are looking for an order to restrict company access to sites.

In effect, employees would still be able to visit blocked sites and, in so doing, compromise security within the internal environment. “And productivity would not necessarily increase as employees now have to exert more effort to be able to visit blocked sites,” points out Siew. “Thus, the intention to secure the internal environment [becomes more] compromised.”

The best option when dealing with employees’ inclinations to log on to social networking sites, according to Siew, is to allow it on a controlled basis. “We recommend that an IT administrator block these sites during office hours and allow their use during off-hours such as lunch time or after office hours,” he advises. “Doing so will effectively achieve the goal of increasing staff productivity during working hours and reducing such distractions for employees [when they need to work].”

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Local Business Tax: the limits of an LGU’s taxing power

By Senen M. Quizon

Consistent with the policy to guarantee and promote the fiscal autonomy of local government units, the Local Government Code gives LGUs the right to create their own sources of revenue. Pursuant to this mandate, Republic Act No. 7166, or the Local Government Code (LGC) enumerates the kinds of taxes and fees that each LGU may levy, including the local business tax (LBT).

The LBT is a tax on a trade or commercial activity that is regularly undertaken, is a means of livelihood, or is designed with a view to profit. The LBT is collected based on the amount of gross sales or receipts of a business establishment for the preceding year, at varying graduated rates of taxes depending on the type of business.

In the case of business establishments that operate in other localities through a branch, sales office or warehouse, the collection of LBT is subject to the situs rule, which describes which LGU shall levy the LBT. The situs rule also provides for a system of allocating gross receipts. In cases of manufacturers, assemblers, contractors, producers, and exporters that maintain factories, project offices, plants, and plantations elsewhere.

The basic rule enunciated under Section 150 of the LGC is that which is made in a locality where there is a branch or sales office or warehouse should be recorded in said branch, sales office, or warehouse, and the LBT due should be paid to the city or municipality where the same is located. Thus, in case there is no branch or sales office, the tax due shall be recorded in the principal place of business and all taxes due thereon shall be paid to the city or municipality where the principal place of business is located.

For cases of manufacturers, assemblers, contractors, producers, and exporters that maintain factories, project offices, plants, and plantations that are established in the pursuit of their business, the tax due shall be based on the location of the principal office which provides that 30% of all sales recorded in the principal office shall be taxable by the city or municipality where the principal office is located and 70% of all sales recorded in the principal office shall be taxable by the city or municipality where the factory, project office, plant or plantation is located.

To ensure that taxpayers pay their LBT correctly, the City Treasurer who assessed the taxpayer submitted its sworn declaration of income, which provides that 30% of all sales recorded in the principal office shall be taxable by the city or municipality where the principal office is located and 70% of all sales recorded in the principal office shall be taxable by the city or municipality where the factory, project office, plant or plantation is located.

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In the end, choosing whether or not to block social networking sites may be a function of common sense and good judgment. Yes, social networking has its role in business, but management should be clear as to the limits of its placement.
Why even bother to go “green”? Well, the answer to that question is that going green can be good not just for the environment, but also for your bottom line.

Green efforts may not necessarily translate into immediate cash flows. You may not even see much of an impact on your financials at all for some time. But then marketing programs are generally long-term in nature and green initiatives will likely pay back in dividends eventually.

This may well explain why many large firms have gone green. A number of supermarkets, for example, have already designated Wednesdays as their “green” days, encouraging customers to bring reusable shopping bags and giving them incentives for doing so. Still want a plastic bag? You’ll have to pay for it. It’s not so much a penalty but rather a gentle reminder as to how much a plastic bag costs and, in a way, a reminder of how it may affect the environment once you throw it away.

What do these large retailers gain from such programs? Perhaps not much on the bottom line in the short term, but there is goodwill that is being built up here, and this goodwill can eventually translate to better relations between both customers and stakeholders, possibly leading in turn to even more consistent patronage.

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Here’s another example of a green initiative. Several local government units, such as in Quezon City and in other parts of the country, have programs for processing both recyclable and non-recyclable wastes. Non-recyclable plastics, for example, are converted into very sturdy and colorful shopping bags that are then sold cheaply in wet markets. These bags have been selling very well, to the point that oftentimes supply cannot keep up with demand. Meanwhile, such recyclables as food wastes are converted to compost materials that are excellent fertilizer material for small-scale farming or backyard horticulture.

So what green initiatives can SMEs hope to pursue?

If you have the budget for it, examples of large-scale green programs can include the conversion of waste water into potable-grade liquid, the recycling of used oils and vehicle radiator coolants, or the recycling of waste papers into new products. But again, most SMEs may balk at the initial costs involved with these large-scale endeavors.

When in doubt, you can always start with your own operations. See where you can implement green initiatives right in your very own processes.

Here are some examples:

- Water generated in huge volumes through condensation from large-sized air conditioning units can be used to flush toilets. With an added filtering process it can even become potable drinking water. In even larger quantities, the filtered drinking water may become a revenue stream by being bottled for commercial sale.
- Septic tank collection service companies can, with the right recycling equipment, convert the collected human wastes along with other biodegradable material into agriculture-ready fertilizer material or bio-gas for home cooking fuel.
- Food scraps from fast-food firms can also be collected and dumped into a compost farm and converted into agriculture-grade organic fertilizer. Many chain restaurants in the United States have been doing this for some time now.
- Rooftops of high-rise buildings could have solar panels or a small wind farm that can power up the building’s lighting systems for their open spaces, building exterior night lights and corridor lighting. In Japan, for instance, suburban apartment buildings in Tokyo save up to 32 percent of their building energy costs this way. Solar panels and wind can also power up emergency lighting systems during power outages.
- Old corporate documents that have been de-classified can be sold to scrap paper collection companies that, in turn, transform the paper sludge into egg trays, beautiful home decors or even creatively-crafted premium giveaways.
- Large garment manufacturers can convert their discarded clothing shreds into utility towels that can be used for cleaning windows and other surfaces in the company, or sold to enterprising hawkers who in turn resell these at wet markets for home use. Janitorial service companies will be attracted to buying these as well.

There are a lot more great ideas that a company can look into where their waste management practices can translate into green initiatives. They may not necessarily be money-making, but such green actions can increase a company’s favorable rating with its clients, thereby building goodwill and, just maybe, long-term business growth as well. So check out what you can turn green in your company today!
How to Run a Meeting

Making your meetings more efficient translates into more quality time for other tasks. Here’s how to streamline your meetings.

By Jing Lejano

Facilitating Meetings
Your day-to-day schedule would inevitably have you running a meeting or two. This could either be a short session with your staff to map out everybody’s schedule for the day or it could be a marathon session to discuss urgent issues concerning the very life of your company.

“Building good relationships and the sharing of vital information are integral to the successful operation of any business or organization,” says Jane Santos Guinto, a lecturer at AHEAD Professional Network, which offers a variety of skills-enhancement programs. “For these, meetings are the usual avenue, which is why managers have to learn how to effectively lead meetings.”

Meetings are called for different purposes, says Guinto. It could be to brainstorm on solutions to problems and issues, and then eventually come up with an action plan. Some meetings are called to address other tasks. Here’s how to streamline your meetings.

Skills Requirements
In order to make the most of these sessions, certain skills are required of the facilitator, says Guinto. These are:

- Time management. A good facilitator is able to manage time well. A meeting cannot go on forever. A good facilitator is able to tackle all the important issues within the prescribed time. In the same vein, he must be able to know how to prioritize the matters for discussion.
- Listening. A good facilitator must not only be a good talker, but must also be an active listener. He must be able to draw out responses and ideas from others. He must know how to ask the right questions and to elicit the desired response.
- Diplomacy. A good facilitator must be the consummate diplomat. He must be seen as strong, yet tactful. He must be able to affirm, reinforce, and motivate others while signifying his disagreement, when appropriate.
- Creativity. A good facilitator must be a critical and creative thinker. He must be able to steer the discussions towards a more analytical level of thinking.
- Clarity. A good facilitator should have the ability to give clarity to issues and not cloud them with verbose talk. He must also be able to summarize and synthesize all the points discussed.
- Negotiation. A good facilitator is a good negotiator. He must have skills in conflict management and resolution, steering the group towards a course of action that’s clear, logical, and amenable to everyone.

Unfortunately, not everybody is blessed with all of these qualities. Fortunately, you can learn these skills to make yourself more effective in your position at the helm of a meeting. Read books, attend enhancement seminars, and practice. In time, you will be able to effectively run a meeting that’s swift and productive.

How to run a successful meeting
Jane Guinto of AHEAD Professional Network shares these five important tips:

- Write down your specific agenda.
- Make sure all involved will be present or will send representatives.
- Make your objectives clear at the start of the meeting.
- Allow everyone involved to express their ideas and suggestions but know when and how to stop them from rambling or hogging “airtime.”
- Be sure to summarize all important points, plans of actions and deadlines, and resolutions before closing the meeting.

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The Descendants: Building a Legacy of Leadership in Education at Baliuag University

Baliuag University may arguably be the most progressive academic institution in Bulacan. And behind its remarkable success is a warm and loving family whose members have pitched together to make the university what it is today.

The university was founded by the late Domingo B. Santiago, Sr. Today, it is his daughter, Dr. Alicia Santiago Bustos, who now serves as the university’s Chairman and President. Her daughter, Patricia “Pat” Bustos Lagunda, serves as Executive Vice President while another daughter, Monina “Nina” Bustos Santos, serves as Vice President for Administration and Finance.

Also represented in the Board are other family members Mr. Edgardo A. Santiago, Dr. Norman S. Bustos, Atty. Susan Bustos Jacinto, Atty. Asteya M. Santiago and Atty. Abigail M. Santiago.

Together, this dynamic family team has made Baliuag University a formidable landmark, more so with the completion of the crown jewel of the campus, their Php105 million green IT building. Baliuag University is a private, co-educational school that offers basic education (pre-school, grade school, and high school), undergraduate college programs, vocational programs, and special and certificate programs for several specialty skills which are offered through five colleges and three schools. The campus also offer graduate programs for Masters and Doctoral degrees. In all, the campus hosts some 40 undergraduate and 10 graduate courses, including courses in accounting, nursing, education, hospitality management and tourism, information sciences, and environmental design and engineering.

A conducive learning environment

Despite a population of nearly 5,000 students, Baliuag University’s campus is clean, serene and welcoming, as befits a historically important institution in the province. Impressive and homey at the same time, its traditional and modern buildings are still shaded by the first trees that were planted in 1925 when the university was still the Baliuag Institute. The Bahay Na Bato and its mango tree were the first campus landmarks. The Bahay Na Bato was renovated in later years, keeping as many of the original features as possible intact. The iconic structure sits in the middle of the original campus, serving as a multi-purpose events hall, with a chapel one floor above. Nearby is the statue of its founder Domingo B. Santiago, Sr. fondly called “Tatang,” who was then ably supported by his educator wife Consuelo Alejo Santiago or “Ima.”

Baliuag University was the first school to be granted full autonomy in Region III by CHED, in recognition of its excellent academic reputation. Its students’ passing rates in various Professional Regulation Commission licensure examinations - such as the CPA, Nursing, Civil Engineering, Library Science, Education, and Electronics Communications Engineering exams - regularly surpass national averages, and are at par with the country’s top-ranking universities. Yet, despite having equal academic footing with premier universities in Manila, the university’s tuition remains below its peer-group average.

Enrollment trends reflect national and international employment opportunities.

These days it’s the courses at the College of Business Administration and Accountancy and the School of Hospitality Management and Tourism that have become the university’s bread and butter, says Pat.

But aside from its excellent curriculum and academic performance, Baliuag University is also known for its very modern landmark.

The Eco-Building

The late Chairman Domingo A. Santiago, Jr. and incumbent president Dr. Alicia Bustos were the main proponents of Baliuag University’s construction and expansion strategies. In 2009, an additional building was clearly needed in order to accommodate the growing enrollment, the new integrated classes, and to generally upgrade campus infrastructure. The decision to make the new facility a cutting-edge “green building” was driven by a desire to pioneer in the latest in energy-efficient technologies in order to drive down costs and to shorten the building’s ROI. As it has done in the past for the University’s most important initiatives, Plantenbank funded the Php 100 million final cost of the building.

The Green Building was designed by Architect Froilan Hong. The construction of the four-storey structure was completed in only one year, from October 2011. Every cutting-edge, cost-saving measure possible was implemented, from the LED lights to the inverter-technology air conditioning, to the LED (instead of LCD) screens on every brand-new workstation, and to the rainwater catch-basin in the basement. Still ahead: solar panels on the roof deck to further drive down energy costs.

These measures have already resulted in at least a 40 percent savings versus comparable costs in a traditionally-powered building, and a relatively-short ROI of 5 years is projected. “The electric bill of the University’s old air-conditioned Information Commons or library is approximately Php200,000 per month, whereas the electric bill for the entire four-storey IT Building is now only Php100,000 per month,” shares Nina.

“Our IT Building is Baliuag’s first green building,” adds Pat. “Aside from the cost savings, it serves to attract students as a point of pride and high standards in the region. It also serves the entire university, both as an academic site as the School of Information Technology, and as a Center for IT Services.” The 3,500 square meter-building houses 11 computer laboratories holding a total of 550 workstations, one smart room with the latest multi-media equipment, three lecture rooms, and an Internet room.

K to 12: The next challenge

The next and most important challenge facing Baliuag University, like indeed every public and private school in the country, is undoubtedly the K to 12 education reform. The Kindergarten plus 12 Years Basic Education Program is a flagship reform of the Aquino administration which aims to improve the quality and competence of Filipino high school graduates by adding two more years to the current 10-year education curriculum. Proposals to improve the basic education program have been put forth since 1925, but this time the Aquino administration is determined to implement the necessary reform. The Philippines is the only Asian country with a K to 12-level education program. Neighbors Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand have 12-year programs, while Singapore has an 11-year pre-university program. “Internationally, only the Philippines, Angola, and Djibouti have a mere 10-year basic education program,” says Pat.

The proposed program model is K + 6 + 4. Kindergarten when a student is 5 years old, followed by elementary school grades 1 through 6, junior high school grades 7 and 8, and senior high school grades 9 through 12. The Aquino administration is determined to implement the necessary reform. The Philippines is the only Asian country with a K to 12-level education program. Neighbors Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand have 12-year programs, while Singapore has an 11-year pre-university program. “Internationally, only the Philippines, Angola, and Djibouti have a mere 10-year basic education program,” says Pat.
grades 7 and 8, and senior high school grades 9 through 12. With the goal of full K to 12 implementation by 2016, the Department of Education’s two-pronged roll-out started with public kindergarten schools for 5-year-olds in the opening of the 2011-2012 school year last June. The second part of the roll-out will launch Grade 7 during the upcoming 2012-2013 school year.

So how will this impact Bualug University and other academic institutions? “Schools will suffer a unique and stressful minimum two-to five-year period during which, first, we will have no incoming high school freshmen and missing cohorts thereon,” admits Pat, because current sixth graders will now enter the new seventh grade, and then on to eighth grade, before the new four-year high school period. Then, the current graduating classes must do the necessary extra years to complete the four-year high school period.”

In other words, the school will have to spend money for the necessary additional and longer curriculum, staffing, administrative, and infrastructure requirements of K to 12, without the benefit of additional new tuition to fund it. Despite the impending financial strain on educators and students, most educators and citizens agree that the pain is worth the gain to the nation. Ever the dutiful education leaders, Dr. Bustos and her daughters are resolute: Bualug University will forge ahead with the K to 12 reform.

The family act

While many family businesses may be characterized by having family members in key positions even if they do not have the competence for it, Bualug University is run in a professional manner. Pat says that their succession planning strategy is actually quite simple. “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket!” she says. “We all had to qualify elsewhere before coming here.”

Dr. Bustos, for instance, was the Dean of the College of Education at the University of the East for 25 years before coming to take her seat in Bualug University’s board. And Nina is a Home Economics major from the College of Education at the University of the Philippines who keeps her mother’s quarter-century tenure at the university bagged the award for its water needs.

Pat came from the corporate world as a marketing manager at Avon. She joined the university initially on a part-time basis in 1995 as VP for Administration and introduced new corporate practices. She eventually went full-time in 1998. In 2003, she added to her AB in Economics and Master in Business Management by taking her PhD in Educational Leadership and Management at De La Salle University.

A third sister, the family’s Alicia Junior, is “on contingency,” ready to be called to duty as needed. She is currently managing another private school in Bulacan.

When asked about their role model, both daughters agreed: it was mom. “She’s hard to beat!” says Pat, citing her mother’s quarter-century tenure at U.E.’s College of Education, as well as her pioneering work at the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA), a private accrediting agency which gives formal recognition to educational institutions.

Both daughters also separately quote, verbatim, their mother’s most important and oft-repeated maxim: “No amount of success can compensate for failure in the home.” Family comes first, so what better way to prioritize family than by working together? Off campus, the various siblings and cousins - many of whom also have roles at Bualug University - live near each other in Manila. Dr. Bustos has fourteen grandchildren - ten boys and four girls.

Bualug University may be a family act, but it is a professionally-run family act. And it has the track record to show for it, as well as the vision to take it well into the future. When asked if she has any plans of retiring, the formidable Dr. Bustos replied, “Not for long as I am still standing!”

Bualug University is located at Gil Carlos Street, Baliuag, Bulacan 3006 Philippines. For more information, call +63(44) 766-2045 / 766–3344 or visit www.baliuagu.edu.ph.
SME Profile

GPIoS: Less is More

By Reynard de Leon Ong

Imagine joining a movement where you get to save the environment by learning how to institute green initiatives in your workplace, resulting to cleaner air, cleaner water, less energy use, and even happier employees. All that is possible thanks to the Green Philippines Islands of Sustainability (GPIoS) initiative. Just last year, the program has led to the saving of some 175,060 cubic meters of water, 25,350,250 kWh of energy, 25,415 kg of avoided potentially-hazardous chemicals, and a 5,050 kg reduction in solid waste, equivalent to a total savings of 1.7 million (Php 95.7 million). Its success also brought the GPP to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference.

Wilson Baldonado, the Public Relation and Sustainability Officer and Technical Consultant of GPIoS, recounted that because of this early success, the vision was then expanded to Metro Manila and the CALABARZON region, with the hope of meeting a 500-company target in the process. Both foreign and local implementing partners worked hand in hand with GPIoS in realizing its vision, among which were the Technical University of Ostrava in Czech Republic, the Center for Appropriate Technology (GiAT STENUM), and Austria Recycling (AREC). Local implementing partners include the Asia Society for Social Improvement and Sustainable Transformation, Inc. (ASSIST), the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), the European Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines (ECCP), and the Philippine Business for Environment (PBE).

Origins of green
GPIoS traces its roots to the Green Philippines Project (GPP), an initiative which lasted from 2007 until 2009. GPIoS itself is a program “that attempts to switch the micro climate through sustainable production for the industries” within their initial topographical scope. This program caters to a very broad spectrum of clients that may belong to different sectors throughout Metro Manila and CALABARZON.

While the project itself has been promising, sustaining it was the bigger hurdle. GPIoS sought partners such as the Philippine Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Inc. (PCEPSDI) and Plantersbank, among others. PCEPSDI, also called the “Green Choice”, is the National Eco-labeling program of the Philippines that advocates compliance to national policies on matters of environmental protection, sustainable consumption and production (SCP), as well as in setting standards for certain products and processes. And Plantersbank, as a financial institution, aims to open its doors to the SMEs and perhaps promote pro-environmental approaches within their dealings, thereby educating these potential investors on the economic benefits of implementing eco initiatives.

What’s in the switch

GPIoS: Pro-Eco.
GPIoS seeks to facilitate a restructuring of the sustainable development process that starts with the understanding that a company is a complex system comprised of a variety of processes and activities. GPIoS seeks to facilitate a restructuring of the sustainable development process that starts with the understanding that a company is a complex system comprised of a variety of processes and activities.

Integrating eco-efficient measures would lessen environmental impacts. Companies are encouraged to adopt the values of responsible stewardship, to not only with but be firm in promoting the cause for environmental care. Reducing waste materials, harmful air emission and the like will not only protect the environment from further degradation but will also lead to the optimization of resource use and cost reductions as well. Waste management, as ECOSwitch understands it, is not tantamount to segregation alone. Proper waste management lies in finding a range hood exhausts with an open window.

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What’s in the switch

ECOSwitch builds its very foundation on the triple bottom line that is Profit, Planet and People. It is a holistic remedy to the varying concerns of its members:

Profit
ECOSwitch gives its clients an assurance that they would certainly reap financial benefits through cost reduction and efficient maintenance costs. This can be done through material flow analysis or the evaluation of location, materials, procedure and other processes that may entail wastage. Consultants would give recommendations on better resource allocation and handling to improve energy efficiency, to apply preventive waste measures, to optimize resource utilization and, more importantly, to reduce unnecessary or avoidable costs. Companies embracing these as their core values are propelling for competitiveness.

Planet
Integrating eco-efficient measures would lessen environmental impacts. Companies are encouraged to cultivate the values of responsible stewardship, to not only with but be firm in promoting the cause for environmental care. Reducing waste materials, harmful air emission and the like will not only protect the environment from further degradation but will also lead to the optimization of resource use and cost reductions as well. Waste management, as ECOSwitch understands it, is not tantamount to segregation alone. Proper waste management lies in finding a solution by identifying its very source.

Every little thing counts. For instance, a restaurant kitchen with a perennial ventilation problem may benefit from simply replacing range hood exhausts with an open window.
People
It pays to invest in people, and this program promises better working conditions for employees, by improving their quality of life in the workplace and giving each one a greater sense of worth. Consequently, coupled with proper motivation and sufficient instruction, this program could lead to higher productivity, with employees being driven to become more responsible.

How it works
The ECOSwitch program holds a series of lectures and workshops for its participants. The program may vary according to the size of the company: ECO Bonus for large and medium enterprises (more than 100), ECO Focus for medium and small enterprises (10-100), ECO Sense for micro enterprises (less than 10) and finally, the ECO Club for the ECOSwitch certified companies.

The general structure of the project begins with company selection, followed by the base workshop. In the initial assessment, companies go through careful scrutiny and evaluating whether or not it qualifies for the program. At this stage, potential areas for improvement shall likewise be identified, which will be further discussed in conjunction with the consultant’s recommendations. It will be followed by the selection and implementation of selected activities. Training sessions may include workshops that tackle topics such as cleaner technology, industrial energy efficiency, energy analysis and material flow analysis, sustainable production and consumption, motivation, and economic and legal requirements, among others.

Progress shall then be monitored and performance shall be validated according to their ROI. For small to medium enterprises, four weeks is deemed sufficient to experience results. Should the program be successful, the client will be awarded with an ECOSwitch Certification.

As it is designed for sustainability, the training does not end with the certification. Club workshops, training sessions and on-site consultation will still be offered as part of the ECOClub Program.

For the years 2010-2011, 91 companies joined the initiative, spanning different industries including the academe, manufacturing, food and beverage, automotive, utilities, electronics, and even local government units. Some of these firms included Philippine Airlines, RCM Manufacturing, GMA Network, Maynilad Water Services Inc., European School of Manila, and Holy Angel University.

The total savings that these companies were able to generate out of their respective initiatives for the year was calculated to be around Php 143.8 million.

Future growth
Mr. Baldonado said that GPIoS does have plans of expanding. At this time, they are aiming to establish a legal identity, whether it is for profit or not for profit. The idea is to build a center where they can conduct their green initiative, perhaps by partnering with local government units as quasi-agencies for pro-environmental support, or with financial institutions to offer assistance to their banking clients.

Interested companies may download the company data sheet from the GPIoS website at www.greenphilippines.com.ph. For further information on the Green Philippines Islands of Sustainability (GPIoS) and the Ecoswitch project, please contact Ms. Mariefe Kim at +632-4031890 and +632-4038668. Their office is located at GPIoS Training Center Asia, 5th Flr., A&V Crystal Tower, 105 Esteban St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

GPIoS Success
Savings from GPIoS implementation for 2010-2011:
- 8,907,445 kWh of electricity
- 877,852 liters of fuel
- 315,464 kg reduction in solid waste
- 640,662 cubic meters of water

Total savings: Php 143.8 million
Fashion Accessories Go Sustainable
by Maria Cecilia Pedrocillo

What better way to push for the use of sustainable materials than to get an industry to push for earth-friendly designs? That’s the thinking behind Go Green Philippines, an initiative that advocates the use of replenishable materials, especially raw materials for fashion accessories.

Go Green Philippines was launched by Cebu FAME (Fashion Accessories Manufacturers + Exporters), an association that represents both manufacturers and exporters of fashion accessories. While most of its members are from Cebu, there are no rigid territorial requirements for membership in the association. Among its prominent member companies are Avatar, ABS International, Cyprea, Fenimar, Creative Shapes on Style, Ramir Bonghanoy, 33 Point K, Korlanda Corporation, and Alzagere Sterling. Cebu FAME has 64 member companies so far.

Cebu FAME established Go Green Philippines as a program that would address the sustainability of materials. By planting Pamantuon trees, which yield a kind of soft wood that can easily be turned into wooden beads, the industry can provide a sustainable source of materials for many years to come, especially now that Cebu’s fashion accessories export sector uses natural materials in their products like wooden beads, ropes made from natural fibers, shells, and seeds. In fact, the wide use of these natural materials has earned the industry a good reputation for being an excellent source of green-friendly jewelry.

Go Green Philippines is the brainchild of Janet Chua, who is also the long-serving president of Cebu FAME. In fact, Go Green has become Cebu FAME’s flagship program for the environment. It answers the issue of sustainability of materials by providing sources of materials of the components used in fashion accessories for export. It comes up with a perfect solution of making use of idle lands and helps rehabilitate the environment by planting trees in them. To date, Go Green Philippines maintains three plantation sites, with a combined total of 35 hectares, planted with 87,500 Pamantuon Trees in Catmon, San Remigio, and Borbon all located in the beautiful province of Cebu. The fourth plantation is currently a work-in-progress.

Go Green also provides tree farmer communities in the said locations additional source of income as they are paid through the program for their stewardship. Once the trees are matured, the farmers will harvest and sell the wood to fashion accessory makers. All proceeds go straight to the farmers. Go Green Philippines’ Mission is “Plant a Tree, Save a Community.” It is supported by foreign buyers of fashion accessories from all over the United States of America and Europe. The funds saved from the sponsorships are used by Go Green Philippines to buy seedlings from the tree farmers in the communities maintaining the plantation.

Any individual or company can be a part of Go Green Philippines through sponsorship. Cebu FAME’s members, especially the companies that join Bijoux Cebu, an international trade fair organized by fashion accessories manufacturers, have also pledged support to Go Green Philippines.

An offshoot of Go Green Philippines is Green for Good Program wherein the foundation conducts livelihood trainings for the tree-farmer communities, where most of the women stay at home and take care of the children. They do not have the skill or the opportunity to augment the meagre income provided by the men. Here, Green for Good aims to address both by providing training where they can eventually complement the exporters by subcontracting some of the production process to the communities.

Now on its third year, the success of Go Green Philippines has not gone unnoticed. It has created much needed awareness from the players in the industry, the buyers, and the government to be more open in supporting private-led initiatives.

More than Just a Fashion Statement

By Louise Myel A. Guevarra

When typhoon Ondoy struck the country in 2009, leaving widespread damage that was partly attributed to improper discarding of waste, Leah decided to take a stand for the environment by bringing together her two loves. “I figured that recycling magazines into something could reduce the waste around us,” says Leah. “I remember seeing a bag made of out wrappers. I thought they looked like our bayong so I researched on how to make a bayong using magazines.”

The effort gave birth to RULA (Radically Unique Lifestyle Accessories) Designs, her own small company that sells eco-friendly bags, photo frames and accessories. It’s an example of a trend called “upcycling,” which adds more value to discarded products by transforming them into higher-value goods. Soon, Leah hopes that RULA will be making big bayongs for groceries and malls, since many cities in the metro have enacted laws disallowing the use of plastic bags.

An advantage of using recycled materials is the opportunity to market development that comes with it. “More people are showing interest in learning how to make the bags. Therefore, their mindset in waste management is further honed,” says Leah. As a small business, Leah needed financial support to give her RULA a boost. “I have brought RULA to a number of places and Plantersbank was one of the few who took notice of our advocacy,” she recalls.

For more information about RULA, log on to www.ruladesigns.com and www.rulafashions.com, or visit the Le Grand Boutique at the NAIA Terminal 3.
Access Your Files From Anywhere!

You’ve just locked up the office are now headed home. Two hours later, you realize that an essential file that you wanted to work on before sleeping was left in the office computer! What to do?

Fortunately, a number of solutions are now available—many of them free—that allow you to get to your files from anywhere.

From the Editors of www.technosoogle.net

VNC Programs

VNC stands for Virtual Network Computing, and it’s the quick and dirty way to connect to a remote computer from wherever you may be. You get to see what’s on the remote computer’s monitor, and you get to control its mouse and keyboard.

For Windows users, try UltraVNC (http://www.uvnc.com/). It’s powerful, relatively easy to use, and free. You install a host VNC program in the target remote Windows computer and you run the application on your device. Using a Mac? You can access a remote computer using a VNC program such as Chicken of the VNC (http://sourceforge.net/projects/cotvnc/)

Dropbox - www.dropbox.com

Dropbox has become widely popular, especially among the iPad-toting crowd because it’s one of the few ways by which you can squeeze files into the iPad.

In Dropbox, you copy the files into your designated folders and they magically appear in any other device you have under your account, like your phone, tablet, or other computers.

But the real use for Dropbox is in collaboration. Sharing a Dropbox with your work mates enables you to all work on the same sets of files, collectively viewing and updating them as needed.

Dropbox gives you 2GB of space for free and for every person that you invite to the service, you get an extra 250MB to 8GB of storage. Subscribe to the Pro 50 plan for US$89 a year, or US$199 a year for 100GB of storage.

SugarSync - www.sugarsync.com

SugarSync does most everything that Dropbox does, but it stands out for two extra reasons: it gives you 5GB of free storage space and you can synchronize any folder in your devices.

Through SugarSync, you can sync your desktop computer’s set of folders, and then make your laptop sync its folders here as well. Result! your desktop and laptop are now fully in sync! If you change a file on your laptop, that same file changes on your desktop as well. Yes, you’ll have to be online to update the files. And like Dropbox, you can also access your files on the web. If you ever lose your laptop, fear not. Your data is safe online, and all you have to do is to sync any new device you have. Want more space? You can get anywhere from 30GB for US$49.99 a year to 100GB for US$149.99 a year.

Recycling Pages

Learn how to start living the green life with these must-read books on eco-living and eco-businesses.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: An Easy Household Guide by Nicky Scott

One of the greatest challenges today is the proper disposal of e-wastes. How do you discard old cellphones and batteries, for instance? Reduce, Reuse, Recycle lists down household items and how you can recycle them, if throwing them in the trash doesn’t help. Aside from its many recycling tips, this book can even teach you how to make a bit of money from your garbage. And if that wasn’t enough, its comprehensive resources section also teaches you how to be more active in taking care of the environment and how you can reduce the volume of your trash.

Ten Technologies to Save the Planet by Chris Goodall

This timely book takes a look at clean technology and its major players. Ten Technologies looks at alternative power sources such as wind, solar and heat, green home buildings, electric cars, and other new technologies that promote sustainability and what people can gain from them, if only they are given enough time and energy to develop. Author Chris Goodall lists down the benefits and problems facing clean tech and puts forth the idea that the world must work as a team to develop clean tech instead of hiding their breakthroughs from competitors.

Green to Gold: How Smart Companies Use Environmental Strategy to Innovate, Create Value, and Build Competitive Advantage by Daniel C. Esty and Andrew S. Winston

Businesses want to take advantage of the eco-friendly trend not just for the sake of profit but also to contribute something to the environment. Whether you’re a businessman who is about to start a small company or an already established executive looking to further get hold of your market, Green to Gold is an essential guide that can help businesses generate profit, cut costs, reduce risk or create brands through environment-friendly strategies. Authors Esty and Winston, with their years of experience, give advice on how business owners can achieve both environmental and financial success through eco-advantage, as well as how they can overcome the challenges they are facing in their companies.
Mövenpick Resort and Spa Cebu understands the importance of clean water

By Louise Myel A. Guerra

For hotels, both hospitality and amenities typically take center stage when it comes to appealing to visitors’ sensibilities. One Cebu hotel, however, has boldly decided to go even further, pursuing an innovative program that is as practical as it is eco-friendly.

Hilton Cebu Resort & Towers recently switched operators and is now known as Mövenpick Resort and Spa Cebu. Indeed, a lot of changes became evident right away. Hilton Cebu Resort & Towers recently switched operators and is now known as Mövenpick Resort and Spa Cebu. Indeed, a lot of changes became evident right away.

According to Osmeña, the Philippines has no proper sewage system, which is why clean water still cannot reach many rural areas. This harsh reality made him decide to create a system for his hotel that will desalinate salt water, collect rainwater, and recycle black and grey water.

Osmeña contracted Salcon of Singapore to design what are now the hotel’s zero-waste water facilities. Aside from the treatment, desalination and processing plants, the buildings in the hotel were made to have separate pipelines (all made of copper) for the collection of drinking, washing and shower water. The grey-water facilities consist of separate pipelines (all made of copper) for the collection of grey-water and black-water.

And so the zero-waste water system remains in use today, amidst all the renovations that are going on at the Mövenpick. But Joanna Cuenca, Asst. Director of Communications, promises that the hotel is not sitting on its laurels and that there are other sustainability plans that being laid out for the hotel in preparation for their Green Globe accreditation.

The success of Mövenpick and its sustainability efforts point to how green efforts make good business sense. Zero-waste water facilities lead to cleaner surroundings. And cleaner surrounding waters lead to more visitors, which in turn lead to better business all around.
RUNNR store opens in Alabang Town Center

Running enthusiasts who opt to stay healthy and fit this summer may now easily avail a variety of customized runner equipment. RUNNR, the country’s first world class running specialty store, recently opened its doors in Alabang Town Center. It brings the newest development of technology and a complete selection of running brands to the leading business and residential area south of Manila, which has recently become the new favourite venue for running and other endurance events.

For more information about RUNNR, visit their website www.runnr.com.ph or visit their branches at Bonifacio High Street, Trinoma or at Edsa Shangri-la.

Panaderia Antonio Bakery now available at Robinsons Calasiao

Panaderia Antonio Bakery, one of the most successful food establishments in Pangasinan has lately opened its branch at Robinsons Supermarket in Calasiao. The best in freshly-baked bread, Panaderia Antonio is very delighted to be part of Robinsons Supermarket where they can also have a small cafe that offers their delicious specialty breads and sandwiches.

For more information, visit also their store at Robinsons Supermarket in Dagupan.

Metropolis to serve you the simplest but perhaps one of the best halo-halo or you may visit their website www.razonsofoodcorp.com.ph.

Razon’s of Guagua refreshing summer treat

Razon’s Halo-halo, known as “Halo-halo ng Pilipinas” from Guagua, Pampanga has constantly served the Filipinos for almost a decade with its finest and delectable halo-halo. It sweetly serves the finely shaved ice, perfectly-made leche flan, creamy milk, sweet macapuno and luscious bananas all in one—a perfect refresher this hot summer.

Visit one of their 25 stores strategically located from North to South of the Philippines.

Amorita’s Relaxing Resort Packages

Amorita Resort, Panglao Island’s serene haven and finest resort, offers the best of Bohol’s 2012 year-round packages. The packages are warmly arranged for all tourists escaping from the heat of summer and exploring during the most restful and intimate time of the year. Take pleasure in the most affordable packages including Relaxing Escape Package, Bohol Tourrific Package and Honeymoon Bliss Promo as they also offer escorted transfers from the Tagbilaran airport or pier to the hotel and resort. Experience the love of Bohol in Amorita!

For inquiries and reservation please visit www.amoritarorts.com.

Torre Venezia offers a vacation in the city

Having gained its attractiveness and reputation for convenience for both business and leisure, Torre Venezia Suites continues to gratify its customers’ recreational needs since it is located along two famous avenues—Timog and Tomas Morato Avenue. Also located along these two avenues are many fine-dining restaurants, bars, clubs and Karaoke joints that provide patrons with all-night recreations.

Be the first to learn more about their latest offerings and special packages. Just visit their website www.torreveneziasuites.com or call 332-1658 to 60.

Montemar’s year-round recreations

Whether you’re staying for business or for pleasure, during the dry season or the wet season, Montemar has the facilities, amenities and services to fill your needs. Montemar Beach Club is located at Bagac, Bataan where you can experience the pristine waters and powdery-white sand of the beach. Relax and indulge yourself with the club’s complete set of sport and recreation activities from Aqua Cycle, Banana boat ride, Golf-course, Cabana and fishing.

For inquiries, email inquiry@montemar.com.ph or visit their website www.montemar.com.ph.
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Through SMEs, various industries have emerged and flourished, bringing much needed development to the Filipino communities around them.

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So while our proficiency lies in building successful SMEs, its effects are felt not only by the entrepreneurs that we help. By building a business, we are building a nation.