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Tuesday September 9, 2008

Bold gamble pays off for businessman

By YENG AI CHUN

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IT was a gamble to move from selling pharmaceutical drugs to selling paint, but Marvynn Gan did not let that deter him from plunging into a relatively unknown industry 20 years ago.

Taking up the challenge, Gan set up a small company and became a dealer for Norwegian paint manufacturer Jotun Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

His company, Unforce Engineering & Industrial Coating Services, now renamed UNF. Engineering & Coating Sdn Bhd, was the pioneer dealer for Jotun's marine and protective coatings.

"Back then when I started in 1988, Jotun was not that well known yet and it was a lot of hard work put in to promote the paint. I had to give personalised service and convince customers to use the paint," said Gan when met at his office in Taman Desa Murni, Sungai Dua here.

Jotun's product range spans across four segments – decorative paint, powder coatings, marine coatings and protective coatings - and Gan specialises in the latter two.

"Moving from one field to another field was not easy.

"I had to start from scratch to learn the trade and I had to do a lot of research and homework on the paint," said Gan who had no prior background in the paint industry as his previous jobs were in the pharmaceutical and food industries.

"I applied for the position of sales manager in Jotun but Peder Bohlin (Jotun managing director and regional director for South-East Asia) suggested that I tried being a dealer.

"So after spending eight years in Singapore to familiarise myself with the shipyards and, oil and gas industry, I returned to Malaysia and applied to be a Jotun dealer," he said.

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