

# Furniture fair with more to offer

2017 edition sees 12% increase in number of local and international exhibitors

By EMILY K.  
emilyk@thestar.com.my

THIS year, Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) features a whopping 543 local and international exhibitors, a turnout of 12% more than the number of exhibitors last year.

Covering 80,000sq m of Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), Kuala Lumpur, the 23rd edition of the fair has a strategic partnership with Muar Furniture Association to bring the Muar Hall, and also highlights the China Hall, Taiwan Hall and MIFF Office – the largest office furniture showroom in South-East Asia with 100 companies gathered from Malaysia, China, Taiwan, South Korea and Indonesia.

There are also several delegations from Japan, Italy, Belgium, India and Germany visiting the show, and presence of the foreign trade media from 22 countries.

“We are honoured by the presence of so many who have worked hard to develop the furniture industry into what it is today.

“MIFF will continue to enhance its position as the leading and most important furniture industry event in South-East Asia,” said MIFF founder and chairman Datuk Dr Tan Chin Huat.

Exhibitors at MIFF firmly believe they are going strong and expect things to improve this year.

Safari Office System Sdn Bhd executive director Wendy Kiew said the company has participated in the annual MIFF for the last 20 years since its establishment as an office furniture manufacturer in 1980.

“Throughout the years, we met many new customers at the fair and expanded our business internationally.

“Besides export, we have also taken up many local projects to sustain our business and build our brand presence in Malaysia.

“Although the demand has been slow, it has been steady as we produce high quality products with new and current designs and offer them at a reasonable price to attract our loyal customers,” she said, adding that the company’s latest offerings were displayed at the fair.

Similarly, Tube Home (M) Sdn Bhd has been sustaining its business with strategic planning that has boosted its presence in the local and international scene where it also supplied its products



Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong (second from right) with Chin Huat (right), UBM Asia Asean business managing director M. Gandhi (standing) and PYD Associates founder Philip Yap at the MIFF 2017.



Kiew says she has met many new customers at the fair and it has helped expand her business internationally.

to the Sydney Olympics 2000 and Rio Olympics 2016.

Tube Home chairman Datuk Y. C. Tan said the furniture manufacturing industry was very competitive, especially among international industry players.

“We used to make aluminium and steel furniture for our garden furniture series but, over time, we lost volume due to the increase in competitors.

“As these materials were also more expensive, we improvised by investing in machinery to produce new innovative products that use cheaper material such as robust plastic.

“This led us to designing new products such as our plastic garden



Y. C. Tan showing off the beds that were designed for and supplied to the Sydney Olympics 2000 and Rio Olympics 2016.

furniture and single beds that can be assembled in less than two minutes, and these were supplied to the Olympics in 2000 and 2016.

“The market may not be as great as it used to be, but with thoughtful planning and strategising, we will be able to sustain a steady business as the market continues to slowly improve,” said Tan, who was participating in MIFF for the 22nd year.

DPS Resources Bhd executive chairman Datuk Seri Dr Sow Chin Chuan said its subsidiary company Shantawood Manufacturing Sdn Bhd, a producer of wood-based products, is doing well overall except for the shortage of manpower.



Sow (right) and DPS Resources Bhd executive director Emily Sow Mei C at Shantawood Manufacturing Sdn Bhd's booth.

“Although it appears that technological advances are becoming increasingly popular and subsequently taking away jobs, it doesn’t mean manpower is not important in production.

“MIFF is a good platform for exhibitors to meet new customers and expand their business networks.

“This is also one of the ways companies can get orders, but sometimes, they may be asked for more than they can deliver and this is when manpower is much needed.

“If the government can be more lenient with its foreign worker policy, specifically for export-oriented manufacturers, it will benefit local

industry players and the overall economy, especially with the weakening of the ringgit as most transactions are made in US dollars,” Sow explained, adding that this will also encourage industry players to explore business overseas.

Today, MIFF will be announcing the outcome of the MIFF Furniture Design Competition 2017 and the winners of the Best Presentation Award and the Furniture Excellence Award at 2.30pm.

Next year, MIFF will be co-held at the new Malaysia International and Exhibition Centre and PWTC. Star Media Group Bhd is the media partner of the event.

For details, visit [www.miff.com.my](http://www.miff.com.my)