Eizaz finds his rhythm in business world

KUALA LUMPUR: It all started with a dream. He was a music student who was also pursuing his engineering degree at the University Sedaya College International, but decided to give it all up because he wanted to make his mark in business.

With only RM4,000 in savings, saxophonist Eizaz Azhar mustered enough courage to approach the music school directors, a husband and wife team, for a business tie-up and the rest, as they say, is history.

"We started our company with only a capital of RM8,000 and without any borrowings. We first operated from a 300 sq ft shop lot in Endah Parade in 2004, and today, we operate out of a shop as big as 17,000 sq ft (at the same shopping centre), clocking in a revenue of about RM4.3 million as of last year," Eizaz told the Business Times in an interview, recently.

It was not an easy '
de in the beginning," said Mama Treble Clef Studio and Guitar Empire director Eizaz, with him learning how to play at least seven musical instruments "to keep the company afloat.

"The other directors have to look into the running of the business, while I have to learn to play the flute, saxophone, drums, guitar, piano and clarinets so that the students would continue taking lessons with us."

What started as a music school under the Mama Treble Clef Studio, with education as part of its business, attracting only 30 students, today the company has added another subsidiary called Guitar Empire, which focuses on selling musical instruments as well as light and sound effects audio visual equipment.

"Now, we still maintain our education division with more than 500 students taking music lessons from us but our revenue is derived mostly from the sales of musical instruments, especially guitars, as it is an easy instrument to play. We sell about 1,000 guitars monthly and almost 60 per cent of the sales come from our website because most of our customers are based in Sabah and Sarawak," he added.

Eizaz, who is the oldest son of sailor Datuk Azhar Mansor, said the company now has grand plans to convert part of Endah Parade into a hub that specialises in the sales of musical instruments.

"We plan to turn the whole of the third floor of the Endah Parade into a musical hub, selling nothing but musical items. Just like Low Yat Plaza is known for its computers, we want Endah Parade's third floor to be known for musical instruments."

Eizaz said the company needs to get an investor or a bank loan of about RM10 million to turn that dream into a reality.

"The good thing about starting a business with your own money is that you have no borrowings but the bad thing is that you have no track record, so that means banks won't lend you money. We hope that the owners of this building are able to give us a chance by hearing out our proposal and eventually allowing us to re-brand this shopping complex into a musical hub," he said.

Eizaz said the company is opening another outlet in Miri, Sarawak, and is looking for similar opportunities in other states.

"We might want to franchise out our business and this is something we are still looking into, but for now, what we want to do is to re-brand Endah Parade into a musical hub and create another avenue for youngsters to come and hang out during the weekends," he added.
Mama Treble Clef Studio and Guitar Empire director Eizaz Azhar says he had to learn to play at least seven musical instruments to keep the company afloat. Pic by Nurul Shafina Jemenon