

Adventures in the PR business

By **LIM WING HOOI**

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A BOOK to understand public relations (PR)? Definitely not a text book, says *GO For it! A roller coaster public relations adventure* author Michael de Kretser.

"I wrote this book for a broad audience – from those in the industry including advertising and PR, university students – and for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)," the PR veteran says.

SMEs will read about how de Kretser started his company from his own apartment. It is about having ambitions and dreams, he asserts.

The book, now available in bookstores, encompasses de Kretser's journey of more than 30 years in PR.

One of the notable campaigns discussed in the book is the campaign for the Sarawak Tourism Board (STB) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Engaging artists to paint a series of montages of Sarawak's unique attractions, he says the campaign caught the attention of travel agents and travellers from Europe to China.

Editorials were built around the images and written in an Indiana Jones movie script and produced in posters, brochures, maps

and others materials. The campaign won five gold awards from the Pacific Asia Travel Association.

Another noteworthy campaign that de Kretser is sharing in the book is how they put Singapore Airlines (SIA) mascot, the "Singapore Girl," into Madame Tussauds Wax Museum in London.

"When we got a brief from SIA to celebrate the Singapore Girl's 21st birthday, we scrapped the idea of having an international media conference or a gala dinner. Crazy ideas were later tossed around and we came out with this idea," he says.

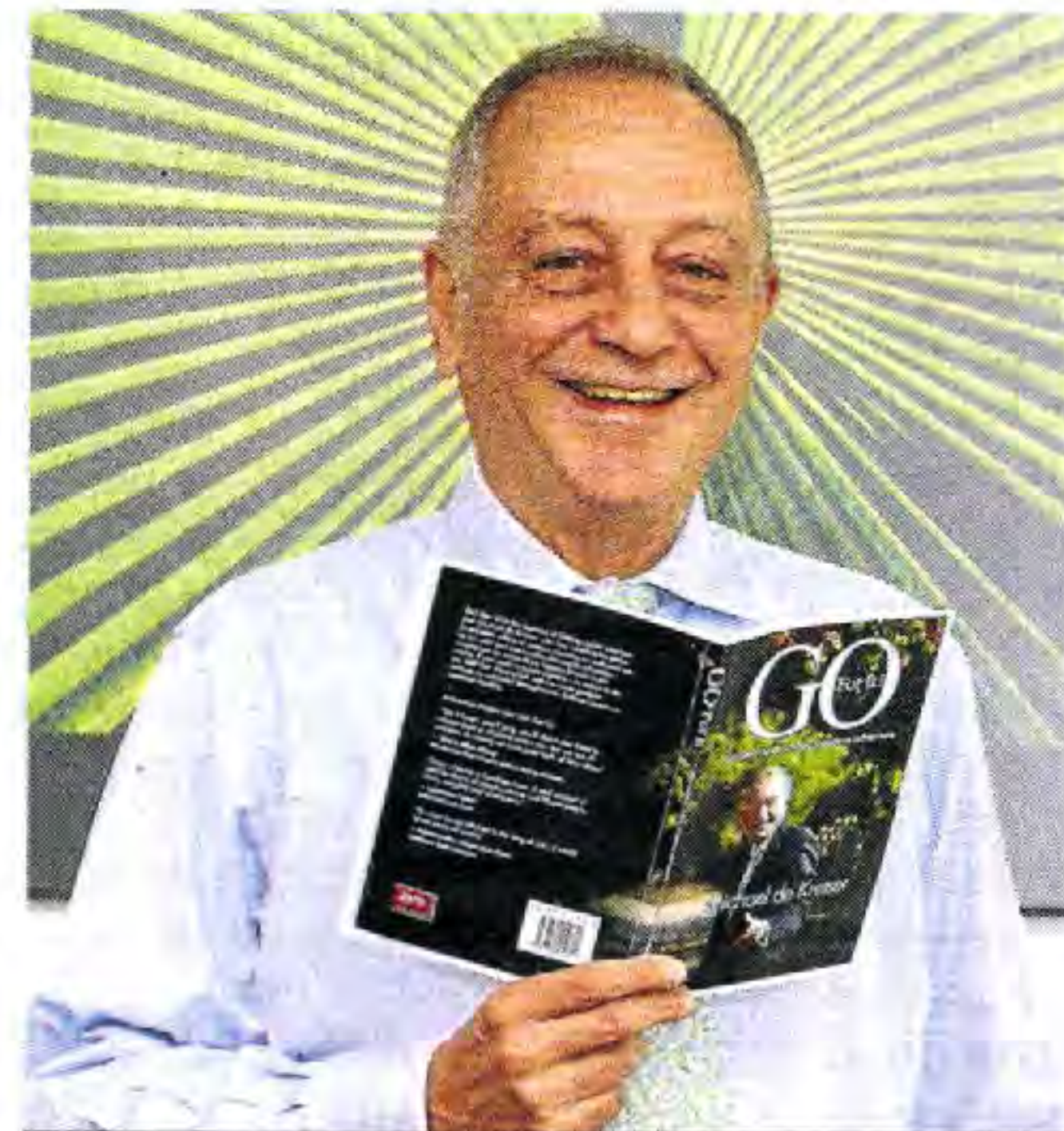
Beginning as a journalist in Australia, de Kretser did PR with a few international agencies and subsequently started his first PR firm with his initials, MDK Consultants, in 1982.

For one who has ignored naysayers, he says, he was approached by a publisher to write a book on his PR journey earlier but the book was not publishable due to the sensitive contents.

"It was a dynamite – simply too hot to publish," he exclaims.

His son advised him to rewrite the book and remove the sensitive contents which included characters that de Kretser felt unworthy to talk about.

De Kretser, who is GO Communications



De Kretser: 'I wrote this book for a broad audience.'

Sdn Bhd chief executive officer, says all royalties are pledged to the National Kidney Foundation Malaysia. The company has a working relationship with them and he thinks it is a worthy cause.

The GO Group are in nine countries including Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Japan, Laos, India, China and the Philippines. The company has about 400 staff members and 250 clients in various sectors including automotive, airline and pharmaceuticals.