



Big ideas on the GO

Michael de Kretser's book highlights his rollercoaster public relations adventure

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IN stark contrast to the common perception of him being someone who not only embraces all forms of communication tools but also goes on to redefine them, GO Communications executive chairman Michael de Kretser still feels challenged by emails.

A little bird from within this public relations outfit reveals he's still very "old school" when it comes to the modern staple of communications — preferring to dictate his message via a recording device to his personal assistant, who then types in the drafts and sends them out.

Incoming emails are printed out and the oft-dubbed "Asia's Mr Public Relations" would then craft his responses with his trusted fountain pen or jot down pointers to be followed up by other staff at his now Asia-wide PR network.

You won't find such an intimate look at how de Kretser handles work processes in his recently-published book, *GO For It!* — but everything else is fair game, including how he had to scramble to keep his then infant son Peter, now chief operating officer at Go Comms, out of clients' way when he was starting out of his apartment in Singapore so many years ago.

The compact personal account in the book is, in many ways, "a roller coaster public relations adventure" which de Kretser says captures key highlights and also failures he had faced along the way, finally putting down onto paper the idea for a book he had been contemplating for some time.

"I was quoted in the media for many years that I was going to write a book, but I never started on it.

"The trigger was finally provided by Peter, and I took about six months to complete

the book, writing chapters on weekends and holidays.

"From start to finish, it was reasonably quick as I had the book and all the background in my head. And while the book is not intended to be a legacy for Peter, if it does become one, it's not a bad legacy."

While the foreword and back flap summary highlights de Kretser's achievement in getting the "Singapore Girl" into Madame Tussaud's, he doesn't hide the challenges and uncertainties he underwent with the project.

De Kretser also wistfully wrote about what could have been an even bigger achievement with

the fastest-ever plane flight which was to have been undertaken with celebrity magician

David Copperfield.

Keeping his tone firmly tongue-in-cheek, he also downplays much of the hard work that had gone into the many PR campaigns he had undertaken over the years and to how far

"out-of-the-box" he had taken some campaigns for clients.

But you will discover why it's best to stay in a love hotel when opening an office in Taiwan, and the advantages

of opening an office above an Indian restaurant in Kuala Lumpur.

Still, one gets the sense of desperation at times which must have driven de Kretser in growing his PR network — judging from his description of how he literally sat at a client's office in Bangkok until the client eventually relented.

"I hope this becomes an inspiration to young entrepreneurs who can start a business with a dollar like I did — money is not the obstacle.

"It is the passion and will to succeed that is most important. The moral of the story is you should have no fear to fail to be able to succeed."

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MICHAEL DE KRETSER
GO COMMUNICATIONS
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN

• The book is available at all MPH bookstores at RM32.90 a copy. Royalties from this book have been pledged to the National Kidney Foundation Malaysia.