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Open for Business by Daniel Assaf



'Australia – the land of opportunity'. This is how most migrants envisage their new homeland to be while making the long journey to this mysterious and faraway place. When they finally arrive; wide-eyed, anxious and fueled by a burning desire to make good on the dream of a 'better-life' they had longed for; they quickly get to work making it happen.

Australia's business landscape is a colourful mosaic of cultures; 30% of small business owners are born overseas.

When you take into account the second and third generations, just over 62% of all SMEs are owned and operated by Australians that identify themselves as having non-Australian ancestry. These businesses are fuelling the domestic economy and research suggests that they have a survival rate 6.5 times higher than their mainstream counterparts.

Starting a business is always a challenge – finding a niche and up-front capital, creating a brand, building customers, paying bills. On top of all this, many migrants start behind the eight ball with the added challenges of English not being their first language and not having a solid understanding of domestic trade regulations and local customs.

However, as Ethnic Business Awards founder Joseph Assaf says, in most cases, the migrant struggle often leads to success. "It's the ambition, the single minded determination, the dream," he says. "Even refugees who come with an empty suitcase, come full of dreams. They work hard. They start with nothing, sometimes in a garage, but all the members of the family work together."

Migrants have a unique advantage of being able to view things with a different perspective - most see their background as an opportunity rather than a challenge. Their approach to business is built on a philosophy of 'no pain, no gain'. The dream is bigger than the risk of failure, the vision clearer than the very real obstacles. For those that don't have any money, they can afford to fail, and they sometimes do; however, they never lose sight of their goal – a better future for themselves and their family.

So why do so many of these migrants with an entrepreneurial spirit choose Australia as their 'passport to success'?

After New Zealand, the World Bank, ranks Australia second globally for ease of starting a business.

Our Immigration Department actively encourages business owners from around the world to set up shop on our shores.

And the biggest winner in the overall scheme of things? Australia itself. Apart from driving employment across all major sectors and injecting substantial investments into the domestic economy – these entrepreneurs become our best global ambassadors and our bridge to the world.

Enjoy some amazing and inspirational migrant success stories at www.ethnicbusinessawards.com



Joseph Assaf, Founder of Ethnic Business Awards with 2011 Finalist, Gary Ng, Founder and CEO of E-Web Marketing.

From the Editor's Desk



Australia is truly a lucky country, it has been voted as the second best country for the ease of starting a business.

In this issue, we have an article 'Open for Business' which

brings to life the sheer determination of business migrants to ensure their business is successful, the survival rate is 6.5 times higher for ethnic business owners, compared to the average rate.

One of the most outstanding business awards are the Ethnic Business Awards. Australia's longest running business awards will be 25 next year! I spoke to the Chairman and Founder of the Awards, Joseph Assaf who highlighted the amazing combination of the 4 Ds coming together for those born overseas and nominated for these awards: Dreams, Determination, Diligence and Downunder.

Easter is a wonderful time, a family time of togetherness! The article on Easter is about celebrations and new beginnings.

Enjoy the newsletter. Wishing multi-BUZZ readers a wonderful Easter!

Sheba Nandkalyan

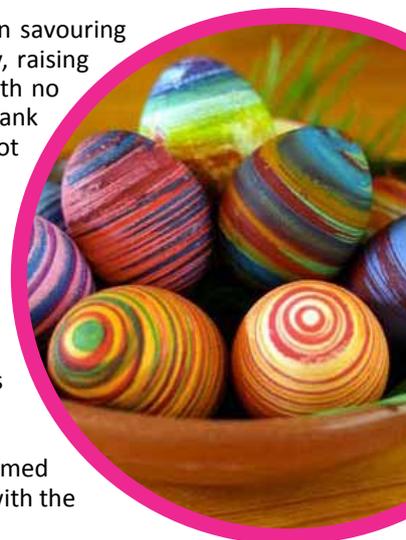


The Easter Bunny visits Multicall by Phoebe Pulido

The Easter Bunny decided to pay us a visit well in advance this year. Even before Lent, we have been savouring an array of delicacies from around the world in the office. New treats are brought in every other day, raising the innovation bar to newer and more dizzying heights and we have pounced on each opportunity with no hesitation. Birthday cakes, with two birthdays within a week, Vietnamese lollies, Hawaiian cookies (thank goodness for Diksha's Hawaiian holiday) macadamia chocolates, and a very famous brand of 'baked but not fried' pizza biscuits all entrées to the grand finale.

Then started the deluge of Easter eggs, started off by one of our interns. She made sure that the box was big enough not only for our office mates but also for our visiting clients. And then there were more Easter eggs arriving every day! This set me off thinking of the significance of Easter eggs. With a few staff members fasting this lent, the significance of this period gained momentum.

Philippines celebrates the world's longest Christmas and I was given the wonderful task of writing this article. Yes, my surname would have already rung a bell as to its country of origin!



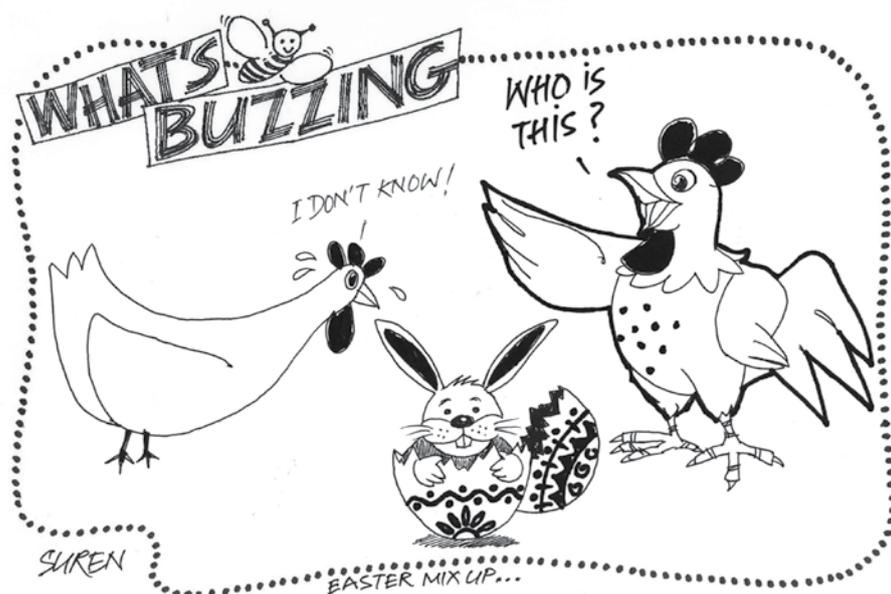
Going back into the past ages, Europe had a role to play. It is thought that 'Easter' was named after the Goddess of rebirth, Eastre, whose symbol was the rabbit. This deity tied in with the ancient Saxon spring festival, which celebrated the renewal of life and fertility.

Over the course of history, Easter has become known as the celebration of Jesus Christ's resurrection. It is the most significant event in the Christian calendar, the foundation of Christianity. Lent, forty days before Easter, marks the time of preparation and fasting before Christ's crucifixion on Good Friday. This is the time where people often 'give up' something as a symbol of sacrifice before Easter. On Easter Sunday, the climax of Holy Week, Jesus Christ rose from the dead and fulfilled God's promise of eternal life. As the Son of God, Christ triumphed over sin and death giving salvation to all believers regardless of one's cultural background. Easter gives a new hope and chance for renewal in the relationship with Jesus Christ the son of God.

In many countries, cultural traditions and customs are closely linked to prominent religious and cultural beliefs to Australia. For example, the Philippines, Italy and Brazil are predominately Christian countries and many migrants from these nations bring with them their religious beliefs and cultural practices which the communities continue to enjoy today.

Easter in Australia is a four-day public holiday from Good Friday to Easter Monday, and is usually celebrated within the school holiday period. Most retail outlets and shops are closed on Good Friday and it is the only day in Australia that newspapers aren't available - an interesting consideration for advertisers who want to target audiences specifically during the Easter holidays. People attend church services, go on mini holidays and spend time with family and friends. Particular events also occur during this period such as the Sydney Royal Easter Show, Australia's largest showcase of culture, heritage, agriculture and entertainment.

Whatever we will be doing these Easter holidays, let's not forget the real meaning behind the day and the reason why this celebration brings forth much happiness whatever your cultural background or religious belief. I'm sure we'll be on the hunt for more Easter eggs leading up to the holiday! Speaking of which, where are those CHOCOLATE MACADAMIA BUNNIES?





Georgina wishes us a Kalo Pascha!*

We chat to Georgina Lionatos, Multicall's Account Director, to find out about Easter, Greek-style, and to get to know more about the younger generation of Australian Greeks.

Q: Once a Greek always a Greek! Does this apply to you considering you were raised in Australia and have so many mainstream friends and interests?

My Greek heritage is something that has been instilled in me since birth and to this day I am passionately Greek! Being raised by not only my immigrant parents but also grandparents who spoke very little English, we were always socialising with Greek families, friends and members of associations linking back to Greece and Cyprus. During my uni days I was Vice President of the Greek Club and loved attending Greek youth parties.

Although I was born in Australia and speak English as a native tongue, Greek culture is a living and dynamic part of my lifestyle. Today, I am continuously educating my friends and colleagues on Greek customs, cooking my favourite Greek dishes and travelling back to Greece as often as I can.

We are indeed so lucky we have the best of both the worlds!

Q: Greek Easter: does it hold any special memories?

In one word, food! I should mention here that many Greeks fast for 40 days leading up to Easter or at the very least the week before, so by Easter Sunday we are all ready for a big feast! Immediately after midnight mass on Saturday, families gather for hot soup to break the fast and greet each other with the phrase 'Christos Anesti' which means 'Christ has risen' – we continue to greet friends and family in this way for a good month after Easter. On Easter Sunday we break out the lamb on the spit and all kinds of good food and wine. This is how Greeks celebrate!

As a child growing up with Greek and Cypriot family, Easter was always the highlight of the religious calendar. We would often drive to the Blue Mountains on Good Friday to a small Greek Orthodox monastery and join the procession, walking through the bush at night, breathing in the cold crisp air. After the service, hundreds of people would gather for a picnic under the stars.

Q: What is your favourite moment at Multicall?

The Multicall kitchen at lunch time is a true testament to the beauty of living in a multicultural country. We are all constantly detecting new aromas, sharing the origins of our weird and wonderful meals and of course, swapping recipes! The richness of the diversity of cultural customs and traditions continues to amaze me.

Q: We know Greece is one of your favourite holiday destinations, what do Greeks living in Greece think about Greek-Australians?

My Aunt, who has never travelled to Australia, made an observation one day after spending time with me and some of my Greek-Australian friends in Athens. "You and your friends, you are all so... GREEK!" As Greek-Australians, our pride in our nation is immense and we all enjoy the opportunity to Greek-ify our lives when we travel back to Greece. The natives are often taken aback by just how strong the Greek culture is among the Greek-Australian youth of today.

Q: Has the current situation in Greece affected the Greek pride you mentioned among the Greek Diaspora?

In a word - Yes. Many, many Greeks all over the world feel defeated, frustrated and embarrassed by the situation. On the other side, there has been an amazing outpouring of support and a strong sense of community among 1st and 2nd generation Greeks worldwide. With online communities and social media groups with names such as "I Believe in Greece" and "Greece, it's time to imagine the future" – the Greek Diaspora is banding together to create a community of support for their fellow Hellenes. Now that's Greek pride at its best!

Q: And finally will you invite us to your Big Fat Greek Wedding?

Well let me keep that a mystery and keep you guessing, you have to wait to find out for yourself!

***'Good Easter' in Greek**

