

Kenwingston announces big plans for MeMi ZoooZooo

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A catchy new name is gradually making its presence known in the Klang Valley's retail scene. MeMi ZoooZooo, which has a quirky and unique rhyme to its name, offers mini marts and grocers that operate 24 hours a day. The brand was launched in August 2022 by former contractor and property developer Kenwingston Group of Companies.

The group currently has nine MeMi ZoooZooo outlets. The brand started as a 13,000 sq ft grocer at Cantara Residences in Ara Damansara. The other outlets are grocers at Platz Kenwingston in Setapak and Residensi Majestic Maxim in Cheras as well as mini marts at Residensi Wangsa Meranti in Medan Idaman, KL Trader Square in Setapak, Skyloft Subang in USJ 1, Jalan Langkawi in Setapak, and TR Residence in Titiwangsa. Last year, Kenwingston acquired Ken's Grocer at Kenwingston Business Centre in Cyberjaya. The outlet's name was retained but it has adopted MeMi ZoooZooo's policies.

Kenwingston group managing director Datuk Lovis Lam Kong Tang tells *City & Country* how MeMi ZoooZooo started. "Even before I began my construction business, I was always interested in retail businesses, grocers in particular. Back when I was a kid, there was this mini market, or *kedai runcit* as we call it, right next to my house. So we were neighbours and I really loved going there. I enjoyed my childhood because of that.

"The idea of MeMi ZoooZooo came about during the Covid-19 pandemic, when most businesses were shut down. That's when I realised that grocery stores were allowed to operate and it was something that would never be out of demand, even in emergencies. Then it occurred to me that this was my opportunity to execute my childhood dream as I've made a promise to myself that one day after I'm successful with some other business venture, I must then change course and follow my passion," he shares.

One thing led to another and Lam found himself developing a business model for the retail brand during and after the pandemic. The entire process took him about 18 months. Then came the search for a perfect name.

"We were looking for a name that is catchy, special and unique. For me, this was future branding. When we were brainstorming, one of my family members proposed this name. I knew right then that the name would suit us. There's no meaning behind it really, it's just a fun name," he says.

Expanding the brand

In May, the group will open the company's largest store in Bloomsvale Shopping Gallery at Jalan Puchong, Kuala Lumpur. The 300,000 sq ft shopping mall is part of Kerjaya Prospek Group's Bloomsvale mixed-use development which comprises serviced apartments, offices, hotels and the mall.

MeMi ZoooZooo grocer at Cantara Residences in Ara Damansara



We want to convince our customers that we provide just what they need. The long-term goal is to turn them into our permanent customers." – Lam

"The mall has a modern design that goes well with MeMi ZoooZooo's concept as well, so we decided to make that our flagship store."

Lam also reveals his plans to open two more outlets this year, one in SAMA Square @ SkySanctuary at Setapak and another at Bandar Tasik Puteri in Rawang.

To be different from its competitors, Lam says the company offers two distinctive services.

"No doubt we're a very young company. We've only been in the market for about one and a half years, 18 months to be exact, since August 2022. To take on the big boys, we decided to offer something that fewer grocers and mini marts offer in Malaysia, which is being open 24 hours, 365 days a year.

"This provides convenience for the community nearby and for the surrounding neighbourhoods as well. For working adults, by the time they come home, it's already like 9pm and sometimes they would want to bring the kids to the grocery store as well. With a grocer that's available for 24 hours, they won't have to worry about being late."

Besides that, Lam also stresses the importance of having high quality and value for all his products. This can be seen through the stores' return policy, he explains.

"After you buy a product, if you're un-

happy with the quality or something goes wrong, just bring it back. We will receive the product and exchange it with a better one. We don't have a policy on how many days sold goods can be exchanged. Even if you buy an apple or a packed processed food packet, we will exchange it for you — on one condition: you must have the receipt.

"What you buy is all value for money, so you are guaranteed in terms of quality. So that's why I don't want the return policy to be too strict with too many criteria. I have been asked by the board of directors: What if the people exchanging the items are not truthful? To this, I responded that we should focus on the 95% majority, which would not be untruthful. There may be 5% of those who might not be genuine but if that really happens, then I assume they are having a very tough life. I just see it as a way of giving back to society," he adds.

Another distinctive feature of the company is its "Childhood Memory Lane" aisle

or section, offering all sorts of nostalgic snacks and toys way back from the 60s to 80s.

"Because the kedai runcit was so close to my heart when I was young, I sort of adopted that concept for all our MeMi ZoooZooo mini marts and grocers. This is our way of creating a unique experience for our customers.

"It's something they don't get to see anywhere else nowadays. So when I see these products, it brings back memories. I've even seen customers bring their children or grandchildren to show them these toys and snacks."

In addition to these services, Lam says he has also integrated F&B outlets into his larger-sized grocers. Some of these F&Bs, he reveals, use ingredients from the company's outlets. These F&B offerings include Paku Pakis, Kakedo Dodo Kopitiam and more.

Setting targets

On transitioning from construction and

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The Childhood Memory Lane section aims to provide a nostalgic and unique experience to customers

Aiming for RM300 mil revenue by 2027

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property development to retail, Lam says he managed to wrap things up for the former last year.

“We completed all our construction jobs worth around RM3 billion. At the same time, we also managed to fully sell our final project, with a gross development value of RM2 billion. Then we completely stopped operations and fully exited both sectors.”

To test his entrepreneurial talents, Lam says he has set both short- and long-term targets for the brand. “We had a five-year plan from 2023 to 2027 [which is] to hit RM100 million in revenue, but we had managed to achieve the said target with profit within 18 months since we came into the market. From here, we can only go up, seeing that the figures will improve as well.”

He says the group has now set a target to achieve RM300 million in revenue by 2027.



MeMi ZoooZooo grocer at Cantara Residences offers fresh produce such as fruits and vegetables

On his other expansion plans, Lam says he aims to open three to four outlets in neighbourhoods every year. “We go back to the basics of our whole intention of offering this type of service to the customers. Neighbour-

hood convenience has always been the priority. We want to convince our customers that we provide just what they need. The long-term goal is to turn them into our permanent customers,” he adds. **E**