



華商經貿專業聯合會  
Chinese Business Chamber  
MAURITIUS

# *Newsletter*

Vol 7, Issue 1, December 2020

# MESSAGE



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Dear Members

The COVID-19 virus has really affected our lives and businesses during 2020. Things are in a dire situation in our tourism industry including hotels and associated businesses. Other sectors have been less affected but overall, our economy is forecast to contract by 17% this year, the first time for many decades. With the strong fiscal support from the Government, businesses are weathering the situation until better times return. However, the Government and us, taxpayers, will have to deal with the much higher debt level incurred in the future. The rolling out of vaccines to combat COVID-19 during the first half of next year is welcome news and hopefully we shall go back to a new normal.

Despite COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown, activities at the Chinese Business Chamber has continued. We had our first Zoom Talk on the Finance bill 2020-21. Most anticipated visits from our overseas partners were cancelled due to severe travel restrictions but we kept in touch with our partners by emails and video conferences. Young CBC has continued to do interesting Talks geared more towards our younger members. Our female Board Members continue to be very active and effective. Of course, the male colleagues are trying to keep up with them!

We had a Strategic Retreat in October 2020 at the Hilton with Board Members and some of our Past Presidents. We got to know each other better and addressed

# OF THE PRESIDENT

some of the challenges facing the Chinese Business Chamber in the short and longer term. A short write-up on the Strategic Retreat follows but one of the outcomes is that we have applied to join the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI). This should ensure better representation vis-à-vis the Government and strengthen our negotiating ability. We shall also look into some innovative initiatives to improve our longer-term fund-raising efforts to strengthen the Chamber and to better serve our members by offering more relevant services. We hope to approach some of the larger companies to seek long term support and/or collaboration towards the CBC's work.

We shall be publishing our CBC Directory imminently. Thanks to all the contributors for their tremendous effort and to the sponsors for their strong continued support despite the COVID-19 environment. This edition of the Directory has raised the most funds despite the difficult economic environment thanks to a large part to the strong motivation of the members of our Directory Committee. A big thank you Team.

There seems to be renewed interest in the CBC's activities with new members joining. I urge members to volunteer their time on the Board and its Committees as you will find it a rewarding experience and a great way to contribute to the work of the Chinese Business Chamber and the wider Community.

In this Newsletter, we feature two interesting articles by Michael Li of Design Lounge and Michael Marti of Gemstone Training, two of our younger members, who are writing about their lines of business. This is also an inspiration for our younger adults/children to learn about

new businesses/professions outside the traditional ones of Law, Accounting and Medicine. Please make sure the younger ones read these articles.

The CBC Year-end dinner is being held on Saturday, 12th December 2020 and I invite you all to come for a joyous celebration to see the year 2020 off.

As previously announced in Inside News, there will be a Forum on financial incentives to combat the impact of Covid-19 at Jin Fei Centre jointly organised by CBC, Rotary Club and the Ministry of Finance. This was initiated by the Ministry of Finance during the CBC visit to the Ministry in September 2020. The date has been re-scheduled to the last Thursday of January (to be confirmed). Keep this in your calendar as there is a wealth of relevant information which will be shared with companies and especially SMEs. There will be one to one information sessions and networking opportunities. Please seize this opportunity to learn about incentives being offered by the Government to help businesses in this difficult environment!

I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year and to a better 2021!

Antoine Kon-Kam KING (管安东)  
President





# CBC Talks

In an effort to keep its members abreast of latest changes in the legal and economic landscape, the CBC organised various Talks during the year 2020, moderated by Ms. Kate Li Kwong Wing, CBC Board Member on some topical issues, as listed below:

## **Coronavirus (Covid-19) and its economic impact**

With the collaboration of Hua Lien Club, a talk was held on Thursday 5th March 2020 on the Coronavirus (Covid-19) and its economic impact with various experts to talk on the subject. The guest speakers for the Talk were: 1. His Excellency, The Ambassador of Mauritius to China, Mr. Andre Lee Hon Chong; 2. Mr. Bhavik Desai from AXYS Stockbroking; 3. Mr. Avinash Teelock from Attitude Hotels; 4. Dr. Khodabocus from the Ministry of Health & Wellness; and 5. Mr. Jean Pierre Young, Partner at PwC. The Talk was attended by some 70 people.



webinar was highly successful with over 62 registered attendees participating from the comfort of their home.

The lead presenter was Johanne Hague, Barrister-at-law and Founder of Prism Chambers, a boutique tax chambers.

Other presenters were:

- Zaynab Hisaund - Senior Manager in Tax at Atax
- Zuleikha Abbasakoor - Barrister-at-law



## **Contribution Sociale Generalisee**

- As from 1st September 2020, the National Pensions Fund has been replaced by the Contribution Sociale Generalisee ("CSG"). In that respect, the CBC held a Talk on Thursday 24th September at Hua Lien Club to shed some light on this new pension regime, which is bringing about some major changes in the pension landscape. The guest speakers for the event were Mr. Oozeer, Director of Operational Services Department of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) and Mr. Bernard Yen, Managing Director of Aon Hewitt.



## **Tax Implications of Budget 2020-21**

- Due to Covid-19, the Chamber has also adjusted its method of operation by organising its first webinar via Zoom on 15th July 2020. Amongst others, the following topics were discussed in detail: CSG (Contribution Sociale Generalisee), 25% solidarity levy, VAT on Internet Services, Tax Incentives, examples of the impact of the new Tax Regime on different income groups. The

# Young CBC Talks

## Crowd lending and Innovation by Fundkiss

The Chinese Business Chamber organized a talk for its younger members on crowd lending and innovation with Fundkiss on the 19th of February 2020. Fundkiss is Mauritius's 1st crowd lending platform for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Launched in 2018, Fundkiss has already successfully facilitated the funding of 35 projects, summing up to the amount of MUR22m by businesses seeking quick and efficient financing to grow. CEO Paul Perrier gave an inspiring talk on his journey and how crowd lending is a worldwide trend.



# Young CBC Talks

## Talk for Young CBC on Digital Communication, Investments & Statistics Mauritius on Thursday 26th November 2020

A total of 25 (members and non-members) attended the event in Pailles. Here are some key takeaways.

### 1. Mr Michael LI, Founder of Design Lounge - Design & advertising strategy, digital marketing ([www.designloungeitd.com](http://www.designloungeitd.com))

Michael spoke about the growing importance of digital communication. In Mauritius, A Facebook post reaches 760,000 people, an Instagram post 240,000 and a LinkedIn post 280,000 people. He then performed an interactive session to identify if your company has a digital communication strategy. He concluded that digital communication is here to stay and any company should take it seriously. Michael offered a prize to help an invitee to start on his digital communication journey..



**2. Ms Jenny LO NAM, CFO & Mr Amit BAKHIRTA, CEO of Anneau, which is focused on investment & portfolio management ([www.anneau.co](http://www.anneau.co))**

Jenny explained that we sleep for about 30% of our lifetime. As such, would it not be great if money can work for you while you sleep? This is what investing is all about. She said that when you have a water leak at home, you call a plumber. Likewise, when you want to put order in your finances, you should talk to an investment advisor so you are aware of the risks. Amit said that the right moment to invest is right now in the middle of the covid-19 health crisis. This is because investment bargains can be found during periods of high turmoil. Anneau offered a prize to help an invitee to start on the investment journey.

**3. Mr Mukesh DAWOONAUTH, Principal Statistician at Statistics Mauritius (<https://statsmauritius.govmu.org/SitePages/Index.aspx>)**

Mukesh explained that Statistics Mauritius was created in 1945 and its data sources. He did a demo of the website and showed the numerous key performance indicators that may be useful to businesses. Examples are tourists arrival, unemployment rate, GDP.

About Young CBC - we are all about listening to inspiring CEOs, entrepreneurs, trending topics & products. We are like your smart friend with great advice and good connections.

If you are aged between 18 and 35, join the Committee and get inspired. We are looking for skills in digital communication and video editing. We think you will have some fun along the way.



## Past Activities of CBC

### *Distribution of Masks in Albion on 13th September 2020*

Past President Tony Ah-Yu distributing masks donated by the Chinese Embassy to disadvantaged persons at Albion



## CBC Board Retreat 19-20 September 2020

Members of the Board of the Chinese Business Chamber (CBC), as well as some of the past presidents of the CBC, participated in a retreat on the 19th -20th September at the Hilton Hotel, to brainstorm on various specific topics affecting the CBC. In addition, the newer Board members of the CBC had the opportunity to hear first-hand about the history of the CBC from the past presidents, who shared their experience during their tenure as president. It was also an occasion for Family members of the Board and Advisory Past Presidents to get to know each other, giving it a family feel.

During the retreat, the participants reviewed the achievements of the CBC so far, and through discussions and SWOT analysis, refined the objectives of the CBC. Action Plans have also been set for the short term, and medium to long term, based on the conclusions of the discussions.

Mr. Patrick Ah-Teck, vice-Chairman of Gamma Group, was a guest speaker, and he gave an overview of the history, challenges and success of the Gamma Group.

As a finale to the retreat, the participants and their families participated in a tug of war, and other activities on the beach, including the obligatory football match!



The retreat was a successful one, and each member of the Board left with a better sense of purpose, renewed ties, and more motivation to bring the CBC to new heights!



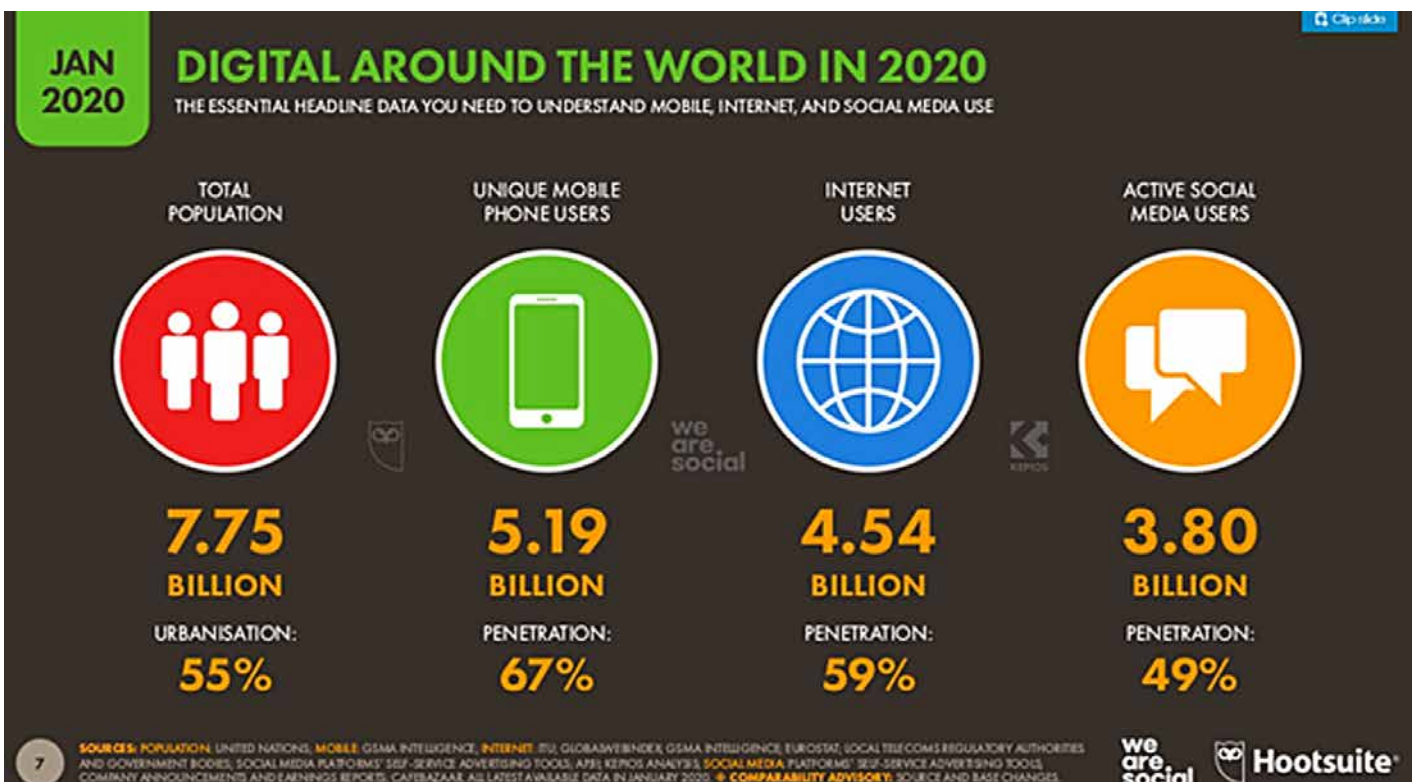
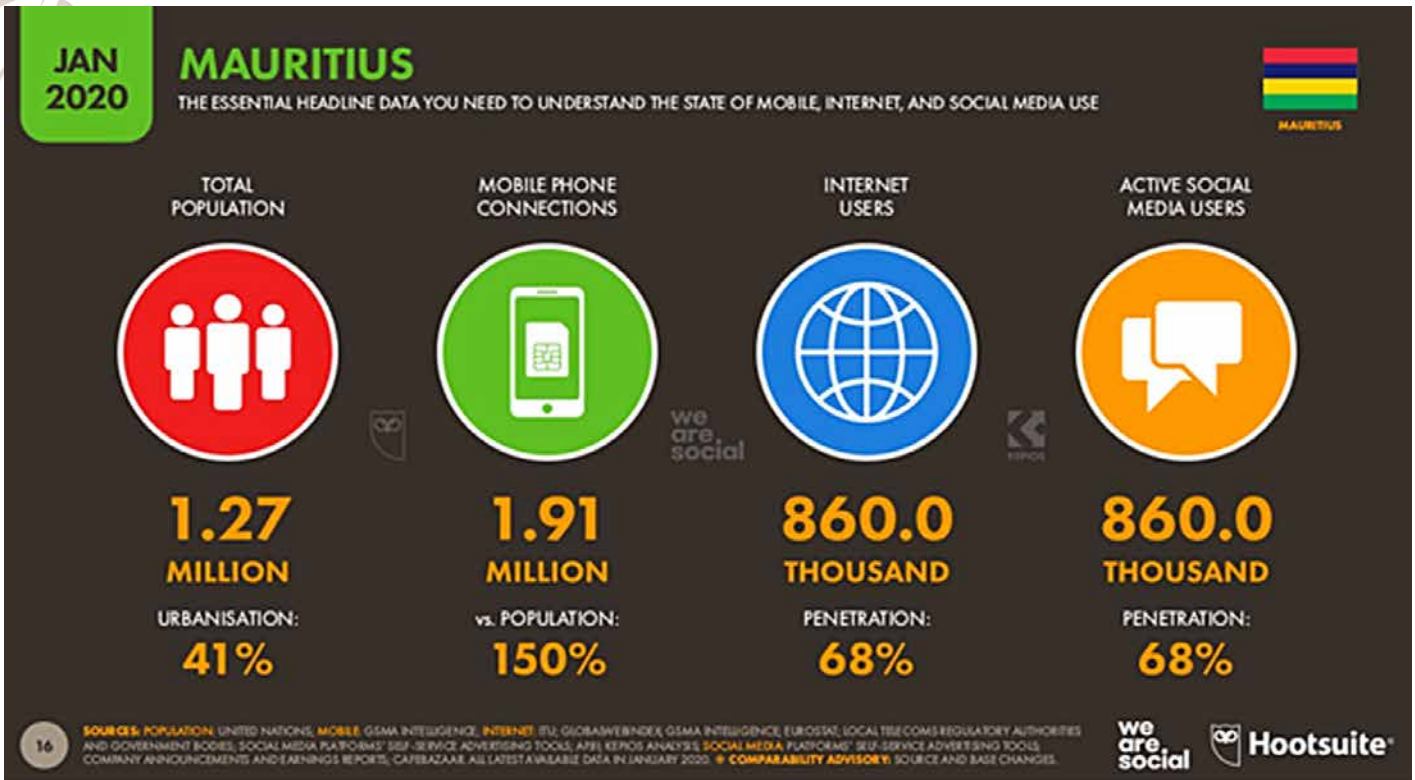


## CBC Members' Articles

### 3 reasons to be on social media for skeptics:

(by Michael Li from Design Lounge Ltd)

#### 1. The stats speak for themselves.



Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/DataReportal/digital-2020-mauritius-january-2020-v01?ref=https://datareportal.com/>



Worldwide: 3.8 billion active social media users. For a 1.2m Mauritius population, 860,000 users are active on one or more social media platforms. The most popular ones locally are Facebook, Instagram, Youtube. And trending is Tiktok, the next big thing according to some. If you are a startup, in FMCG, own a brand or company with a service to offer, you need to be connected to your audience to build a community around your brand, get their feedback, start a conversation and create a relationship to build brand loyalty. It's a big pool of potential customers with whom you can engage DIRECTLY.

## **2. The power of e-WOM**

Everyone knows the term Word-of-Mouth and is known to be a powerful way of spreading the word about your company or brand. e-WOM is word-of-mouth on steroids! You can instantly tell hundreds of thousands about a brand or a company by giving a comment, a review, your own user experience. And it is also known that WOM is a more credible source of information than advertising. Someone will more likely be influenced by a user's review / comment than an advertising message making the communication much more powerful. Just give it a thought; what is the first thing you do when you want to buy a product (e.g. a latest mobile phone, a movie you want to watch, a pair of shoes) — you google it to find out what others are saying about it !

## **3. Your competitor is leaving you behind**

If you're in a business or working for a business, it's very likely that you have competitors (unless you are monopolizing the market!). Are your competitors on social media? If yes, you need to keep up or do better, and if they are not, it's an incredible opportunity to fill the gap!

## **About Design Lounge Ltd.**

Our agency has built a solid reputation in below-the-line advertising over the years, much appreciated for the quality of its works in branding/rebranding, annual reports, product catalogues, company profiles, magazine, corporate ID, packaging and such. Our competitive edge lies in our reaction time and efficiency. Clients have often endorsed us for our ability to interpret their brief and propose solutions that are very close to what they had in mind.

Entering our 10th year in the creative industry, Design Lounge has grown into a multi-disciplinary agency offering varied services such as advertising, communications strategy, digital advertising. Its founder, Michael Li, has foreseen the impact of digital communication years ago, thus the purchase of a digital company in 2016 and today Design Lounge + 18-man Team are geared towards servicing and pushing for digital communication as an inevitable component of a marketing strategy.

## **Our services**

Design & advertising, strategy, community management, social media content creation: static posts, video production, online communication: google ads, e-newsletter, web development

## **Get in touch**

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[connect@designlounge.ltd](mailto:connect@designlounge.ltd) / [www.designlounge.ltd](http://www.designlounge.ltd)



## LEADERSHIP THAT FUTURE-PROOFS ORGANISATIONS

Michaël Marti, Director, Gemstone Training Ltd.

If management were not challenging enough, 2020 has put greater pressure than ever before on organisations to support and empower their people. In Mauritius and worldwide, executives, managers and employees at every level are facing scenarios that are at best unexpected and at worst, unprecedented.

But these are not new challenges. Instead, we are facing familiar questions, albeit with a greater sense of urgency: What can I do to keep motivation and productivity high despite the realities of the day-to-day? How can I get the best from my people and build agile and responsive teams? How can we raise levels of quality and added value? What will it take to embed a culture of proactivity in my organisation?

This year, in tackling these challenges and many more, we are reminded that the world of work is changing, whether we keep pace with it or not. Automation, communication technology and democratisation of knowledge are driving more competitive markets with rising customer expectations. New regulations and international political shifts are disrupting the status quo.

In response, organisations are feeling pressure to differentiate themselves in crowded markets and are doing so by rethinking the evolution and the future role of their employees. At the same time, their managers are finding new generations (generations Y and Z) increasingly difficult to engage: employers are having to foster a deep sense of belonging, impact, purpose and a dynamic collaborative environment to attract and retain the best talent the market has to offer.



In short, 2020 has reminded us that upskilling and developing a creative, innovative, strategic thinking and customer-focused workforce is essential if companies are to remain relevant and competitive into the years to come.

It is worth keeping in mind that the challenges are not new ones, and that people have not fundamentally changed. At Gemstone, we have seen our partners overcome disruptions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic by tapping into the capacities of their teams. We have been fortunate enough to work with companies in the consulting, financial, outsourcing and pharmaceutical industries, where we have helped strengthen the people skills, collaboration behaviours and problem-solving processes needed to future-proof their organisation.

Adapting to and thriving in the modern world starts with great management: management that taps into intrinsic motivation, establishes robust working practices, coaches, empowers and harnesses the diversity of teams, and builds a culture of trust and mutual support. Through a four-pillar framework for management we drive the organisational, cultural and competency changes needed to set managers up for success.

We call our framework Organic Leadership since it focuses on creating the conditions necessary for employees to thrive, with customised and highly interactive programmes that consider the unique contributions of every



employee. Our programmes prepare managers with the emotional intelligence, decision-making, collaboration skills and best practices needed to harness the best that their teams have to offer, in a way that is structured, memorable, and easy for managers to apply.

We offer organisational consulting, recommendations and training on processes, tools and soft skills for employee engagement and development, performance frameworks, effective collaboration, and information flow.

Content and format alike are built on the latest organisational psychology and behavioural research from world-class institutions such as Harvard and Stanford, and our consultants and trainers incorporate the insights and experience of leading consulting companies, modern leadership experts, and a range of philosophies, from timeless wisdom to cutting edge.

**Gemstone** provides organisational and leadership consulting and training services to help companies build an operating model that unlocks the full potential of their people, improves efficiency and drives collaboration and



innovation to future-ready the organisation.

Michaël brings 13+ years of international management experience to Gemstone where he uses his practical know-how to consult with executive teams on leadership, management, and organisational structure.

If you would like to learn more about how we can help, email Michael Marti at [michael.marti@gemstonetraining.com](mailto:michael.marti@gemstonetraining.com).

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*Please contact us and send us your comments, ideas, or recommendation of topics for future talks newsletter and activities.*



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