

MDV SpeedRead is a series of articles where we have conversations with our diverse customers under MDV’s funding portfolio to understand about their business, aspirations and directions. This week, we share with you our conversation with Fuqaha, CEO and founder of Katsana Holdings Sdn. Bhd. based on the recording of “MDV Interviews Start-up Founders: How Did I get Here?” during the Minggu Sains Negara on the first week of April 2021.

The story and history of Katsana should be told and read by many. Katsana, a wordplay of “Dekat Sana” or “Over There” was founded by Fuqaha when he realised that his friend and brother had both lost their cars within a week of each other.

Such incident, however, is nothing surprising considering the fact that Malaysia was once ranked sixth (6th) globally for car theft. One car in Malaysia was lost every 24 minutes, and less than one (1) out of ten (10) was recovered and returned to owners. Road fatalities in Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand were in the range between 24 to 36 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants as opposed to more developed countries like Japan (5 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants) and UK (3 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants).

While these are not recent data (circa 2006), it was due to this very reason that Katsana’s founders Fuqaha and Irwan rallied together: to find a solution to recover stolen cars. More recently, however, the number of vehicle theft cases has reduced significantly, especially during the current pandemic. The lower number of reported car thefts in the country is encouraging; and could be due to various factors; one of which could be the higher awareness for better car security systems, which means Katsana’s products remain relevant and very much in demand.

No of Vehicles	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Q1-Q3 2020
	33,394	35,557	38,322	30,581	24,198	20,058	16,750	13,587	11,655	5,716

Statistics of Reported Cases of Vehicle Thefts: 2011 – 2020  
Source: Vehicle Theft Reduction Council of Malaysia Berhad - [www.vtrec.net](http://www.vtrec.net)

Currently, Katsana’s investors include two series of capital funds by Axiata Digital Innovation Fund (ADIF) and grants from Teraju and Platcom Ventures. Katsana is also making its mark in the logistics realm by providing services for logistics-related companies such as Allianz Insurance, Etiqa, Prasarana and others. As a testimony to Katsana’s massive potential and excellence, Katsana was named top 20 Fintech in 2020 by Fintech News Asia and one of the ten (10) Fastest Growing Fintech Companies in Malaysia (2018) by the IDC.

We asked about Fuqaha’s foray into entrepreneurship, in which Fuqaha responded that he had always been a serial entrepreneur. Katsana was not his first venture into business. Having lost his father in his first year of architecture school, he dabbled in providing web design services while still studying to support himself financially. He later became the Project Manager for JomSocial, a social media platform, where he met his Katsana’s founder and business partner, Irwan. He was also an astute salesman and rather well-versed in the world of e-commerce, in which his business strategy included buying quality items such as smart watches, dashcams or GPS trackers from China at very low prices and reselling them for an upward profit of up to 300%. Savvy!

In that incident where his friend and brother both lost their cars in a week, Fuqaha was hooked into researching the country’s GPS Tracking market. He found that the hardware for a GPS tracker was priced on the upwards of RM1,000.00 per item for a simplistic, basic platform. Fuqaha felt that the available trackers in the market were pricey with no intelligence to it – as it is simply “not digital enough”.



Fuqaha then rallied with his partners and two part-timers to create their Minimum Viable Product: a modernised, smart and intelligent GPS-tracker prototype in just four months. The prototype was entirely funded out of Fuqaha’s own savings, which was depleting quickly by the end of the third month.

While the product was not yet ready, Fuqaha, being an astute e-commerce businessman, proceeded to develop its website to skew the SSO rankings to lead to Katsana’s website for any car recovery or GPS tracking Google Searches. This helped to create and build traffic into their website with hundreds of prospective sales leads. Fuqaha then launched a pre-sales offer for their product at a discounted price of RM900.00

which was snapped up fast. This brilliant marketing for a yet-to-be-launched product not only provided a respite for cashline to Katsana, but also provided market validation for their new product. This strategy was proven fruitful as Katsana received queries from corporate customers such as Metro Bus shortly after their launch.

Furthermore, to debunk the “Asians can’t drive” stereotype, Fuqaha and the rest of Katsana’s founders decided to continue developing Katsana’s Tracking System.

Katsana’s value proposition is that their system allows for scalability. Katsana scaling their products is due to the various conversations and discussions with their customers to solve their customers’ pressing operations problems. Since the launch of Katsana’s first GPS tracker, the Company’s product range has expanded to include a fleet management system, IoT and analytics for heavy industries, ports, factories, and precision farming in plantations.

Katsana’s DriveMark app, for example, forms part of a crucial system for corporate customers for asset monitoring. The app evaluates driving behaviors including speed, acceleration, cornering, braking and monitoring of fatigue levels which provides for easy tracking and scorings on driver’s behavior. This is particularly useful for car insurance companies who would be able to set a more specific premium for drivers based on the driver’s data. Currently, Etiqa, Etiqa Takaful and Allianz utilises Katsana’s products for this purpose.

With his strings of successful business ventures, we could not help but to ask Fuqaha on what he considers the important criteria to have in becoming an accomplished and successful entrepreneur.

Fuqaha firmly believes that there is always a way to solve problems and that the market is big enough for entrepreneurs to innovate and improve on the current market offerings so as to provide additional value propositions to customers.

He added that an important criterion is to always have clarity in their business problem statement. This simply means assessing the problem statement and available solutions in the market. The product offering will work if it provides the fastest route to solve the problem.

Fuqaha also presses on the importance of choosing the right team members and business partners as they can provide a good sounding board for major business decisions and bring in differing values into the business.

Fuqaha also feels that having a personal conviction is important to be successful in one’s life as it will provide that drive to continue to push in achieving excellence. His very own experience during his pre-university days is a good example: he was initially told that admissions to the architecture school was strict with high-score requirements. This gave him the push to relentlessly work hard in improving his grades to ensure his candidacy at the architect school. We say that his efforts had definitely paid off! With Fuqaha’s drive, vision and ambition, we are certain that Katsana will continue to grow and thrive. We wish Fuqaha and his team all the best in their exciting journey!