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Life behind *the* lens

> Photographer Kid Chan shares his experiences in photography in his new book, *Kid Chan's Guide to the Business of Photography*

BY ANANSA JACOB

THERE have been many books written on the art of photography, but very few that teach budding photographers about what it means to set up their own photography business.

As one of the most sought-after photographers in the country, Kid Chan has built up a reputation with various portrait and commission projects both locally and internationally. It is for this reason that he was selected as part of the MPH Masterclass Series, a new collection of books penned by local experts with the intent of sharing their experiences and advice.

Chan's book, *Kid Chan's Guide to the Business of Photography* was recently launched at his alma mater, Sunway College. It is already number two on MPH's International Bestseller List.

The book comprises 11 chapters, covering topics that include how to find a niche in the industry, how to set up a business and hire a crew, as well as how to market your brand; and is also the first photography business book written from a Malaysian perspective.

It is also a biography of sorts for Chan, as he details his childhood and his initial struggles as a first-time photographer.

Chan is also using his book as an opportunity to give back to society, donating the royalties from the first print run of the book to the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation and the Persatuan Kebajikan Generasi Gemilang.

In an interview with *theSun*, Chan shared brief thoughts on his book and about his career.

How did you come up with the structure of the book?

"I sat down and brainstormed with

the MPH team, and obviously, they had a lot of experience and guided me through the process. [The book] also included research I did myself and [recollections of] what I had gone through."

What is the most important lesson in your book for budding photographers?

"I think the most important thing is to figure out why you want to do this, because [there will be testing times] especially when you get started. Like, in the first two years, there was really no money! [For me] it got so bad I had to share a packet of nasi lemak with my mum for a prolonged period of time. And when I started my apprenticeship, my first assignment was to wash toilets!

"So, you've got to figure out your dream and your passion, and only then you will enjoy the ride. If you're in it just for the money, there's easier ways to make money!"

What do you think is the biggest problem for photographers wanting to start out today?

"[When I was first approached to write the book], I felt that there was a lot of free content online. But the thing is, how is this content verified and who are they from? I mean, everybody is claiming to be an expert, but are they, really?"

"A lot of young people who are just starting and trying to do some

research might end up confused as to who they should listen to. So they really need to authenticate the source whether people are just preaching or are actually living what

they are talking about."

What is the best thing about this book?

"I think it's the insights and personal experiences that make the book stand out.

"What many people see today is a polished Kid Chan product, but it wasn't always so. People need to know that it's not exactly easy. There's a lot of challenges, a lot of trials along the way, a lot of pitfalls."

What advice would you have given your younger self?

"I would have tried not to be too hard on myself. If you read the first chapter [in the book], I was quite clueless, but found good mentors. A mentor [may not just be] a person

who's going to be with you every other day; it could be a book, a CD, or even a seminar.

"If you're not where you want to be, you definitely need help."

What would you have done if you were not a photographer?

"I might also have tried [being a chef]. I cook for the kids and my wife all the time. I mean, these two fields require passion, and I'm also very passionate about food.

"When people found out I was writing a book, I joked that it was called *Cook with Kid!* And they actually thought it was true. Who knows? Perhaps, next time!"

Kid Chan's Guide to the Business of Photography, published by MPH Group Publishing, is currently available at all major bookstores at RM35.90.

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Company(Brand)	Mention	Tone	ROI
MPH Bookstores (MPH Bookstores)	17	0	RM 0
Sunway University College (Sunway University College)	1	1	RM 116

GIST(ENGLISH)

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