Bright job prospects for Malaysians at SMEs

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PETALING JAYA: As Malaysians usher in the new year, job prospects are looking better for fresh graduates, with ample openings in small and medium sized enterprises (SME) that are facing a shortage of manpower.

SME Association of Malaysia president Datuk Michael Kang said fresh graduates should seek employment with SMEs instead of big corporations to gain experience first before moving onward.

“The SMEs today are still short of manpower, from basic office recruits to managerial level and technicians,” he told The Sun.

He urged SME employers to shed the mentality of imposing old teaching style on recruits and adopt a more modern approach to attract young jobseekers.

“There is a mismatch of expectations between the employer and jobseekers, so it's important to train their mindset and get them into contributing to the market and perhaps give fresh new ideas in terms of how to innovate the company,” he said.

However, Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said it is still an employers’ market, where bosses get to pick and choose the best candidates.

“That is why the government is pushing out incentives to spur the economy and get potential jobseekers to actively look for employment,” he said.

“They can receive good monetary incentives should they find employment. This will then spur the economy.”
Shamsuddin urged the government not to regulate pre-employment issues because it would make employers reluctant to advertise. This would stifle the job market growth rather than make it more vibrant, he added.

Centre for Public Policy Studies chairman Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam said universally, there’s a slowdown in the job market, but it has worsened in Malaysia due to questions as to whether jobseekers have the right qualifications.

“There are questions as to whether we have the right education system and whether or not we can get jobs at big multinational companies due to the lack of proficiency in our language,” he said.

He also said Malaysians have to equip themselves for the future, whereby there should be a balance between wages for white-collar and blue-collar jobs.

“Not all Malaysians are destined to be doctors, lawyers or engineers. Our job market must diversify so that other kinds of jobs like plumbing can also be attractive.”