

IN TODAY'S final report of a three-part series on Financial PR's road show last week, we highlight how some listed companies stay nimble in what appears to be a tough environment.



COO Kelvin Lee explains Leeden's strategy to investors. Photo taken at Financial PR's conference room by Sim Kih

Welding works may not sound sexy but Leeden's CEO Mr Steven Tham and its COO Mr Kelvin Lee shared with investors at the conference some pretty innovative expansion plans.

Leeden is the market leader in Singapore, Malaysia and Batam for providing welding works integrated with gas and safety solutions.

Its revenues are driven by the current peak in ship building, but the authorized distributor for top brands of welding, gas and safety equipment has been thinking ahead on how to move in a downturn.

"Our Malaysian experience will help when we foray into the Middle East," said its chief operating officer and executive director Kelvin Lee at Financial PR's investor conference.

FY08 revenues from subsidiaries in Malaysia and other countries outside Singapore had jumped three to fourfold year-on-year to S\$51.1 million after Leeden made several acquisitions in Malaysia. These countries contributed about one third to its FY08 top line.

I was impressed by the company's foresight in tapping on manpower familiar with Islamic commercial culture to open up new markets.

Another strategy it has adopted was to introduce proprietary brands at mid-range prices but with quality comparable to the top brand names.

Not only did this improve margins, the products have proven popular as a result of the challenging economic outlook.

Marine & offshore / oil & gas customers have always been fussy about quality, but Leeden's reputation for top-of-the-range equipment has helped when the company pushed out mid-ranged products, said the management.