

## KEYNOTE 04

### DRIVING INNOVATION AND IDEAS

*Ridzwan Hashim*

Kulliyah of Allied Health Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia

#### ABSTRACT

Ideas may be acquired through inquisitive observation, ratiocination and social interaction. Graciously bestowed by the Almighty Allah, great ideas that lead to great innovations essentially hit the innovator, not the other way around. Having been entrusted as vicegerent, man is created to cultivate and develop, not to extinguish the earth and its contents. Malaysia is very rich in wildlife that includes many rare species of flora and fauna. This biota, perhaps not found in any other parts of the world, has yet to be explored and tapped for their benefits. Besides having abundant natural resources, Malaysia is blessed with different ethnicities. Many innovative ideas could be generated based on the unique interaction to unveiling traditional practices and unsubstantiated claims or folklores amongst the ethnics. However, it is almost impossible to grasp and study all the resources simultaneously and turn them into product innovation. Potentiality, availability, economics feasibility and social acceptance of the resources are some of the important considerations in materialising the innovation. For example, out of many local resources, the present author only managed to study and focusses on one local marine invertebrate namely sea cucumber throughout his 30-year research. After years and series of studies on various sea cucumbers, *Stichopus horrens* (or, golden sea cucumber) is noted as the most valuable species for therapeutic purpose. The extracts from *S. horrens* have been developed into several prototypes and commercialized. Numerous research outputs have been successfully published not only in refereed journals but publicised in local newspapers and magazines. Their appearances in several television stations help promoting the *S. horrens* further since the channels are easily accessible by the public at large. Sea cucumber was once "alien" to many researchers, entrepreneurs and manufacturers, hence, effective publicity through mass media, exhibitions and conferences is necessary to introduce this new product into market. All products are manufactured in GMP factory and improved from time to time based on the requirements set by the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA). Transforming ideas into product innovation has never been easy yet rewarding in terms of generating revenue for the country. After three decades of pains taking research experience and hard work, the author is now harvesting some returns and has been recognized as an authority in the area. He has been invited as consultant by manufacturers and marketing agencies. Actively devoted to translational research, the author's endeavour has attracted scientists from all over the world. Recently, the author received special invitation to Turkey and visited their research institution under Tubitak grant with the aim to establishing future research collaboration in the field. His research has also been filmed as several documentaries by the National Film Malaysia, National Museum Malaysia, National Television Malaysia, TV3 and Fuji Film Network Japan. Such recognitions perhaps mark the acceptance and positive development of *driving innovation and ideas*.