



Bristling business: Lengths of nylon scrubs being churned out for the scrubs and brushes categories.

Making a **clean** sweep every day

Manufacturer of brooms and brushes thrives in an age of electric appliances

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CHARLES Seow is one who thinks house-cleaning is fun. Using the wrong tools, says the 46-year-old managing director of Everyday Brush Industries (EBI), is the main cause of exhaustion.

"Take for example, the act of cleaning a fan. With the correct brush and handle, there is no need to stand on a chair, thus saving the cleaner from a possible fall. This explains why EBI has 32 categories of products in its broom division alone.

The need for a sense of cleanliness brings Everyday RM22.44mil in sales annually.

Going back to basics, the Asian paddy broom and the coconut frond (*lidi*) sweeper easily take the lead in the history of conventional hand-held household cleaning appliances.

According to Seow, who took over the family business in 1997, these two cleaning appliances once dominated 30% of the market.

Dwindling resources, however, have caused cottage industries to cease making them. Today, the Asian paddy broom and coconut frond sweeper have to be imported from Indonesia and Vietnam, causing prices to rise from RM 2.50 a piece to RM9 in the last 10 years.

Furthermore, natural fibres tend to shed sediment, creating more dust. This leaves the modern plastic versions with plenty of room to expand.

At present, EBI supplies its products to 4,800 outlets nationwide. Seow's brooms, brushes, squeegees, mops and scrubs are sold under the name E-day, the result of a rebranding exercise in 2003.

With a 6% of its production exported to New Zealand and Australia, plans are afoot to enter the market in Thailand.

Of special interest is the region north of Bangkok up to UdonThani because in three years' time, Seow forecasts, some 10 to 20 containers will bring in sales of



Eye on quality: E-day also produces toilet brushes for Jordan, better known for its oral hygiene products

RM35,000 on a quarterly basis from the rural market in the area. The price range for each item is expected to fall between RM5 and RM10.

"It is still a dream but we are working on it," said Seow.

The former radiologist with the Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute in Melbourne, Australia, is a firm believer in the power of dreams.

When he took over the family business, the company was in the red, having incurred losses of some RM1.97 million over the previous five years. Seow's desk was covered with resignation letters.

"Monthly sales of RM16,000 were at an all-time low. Reject rates were at 40% because steel drivers from old machines missed their mark and made unsightly

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