BACKGROUND

The title for this PowerPoint presentation was based on the remit chosen by the National University of Singapore MBA Study Group a month before they visited my office in Yangon on 24th September 2013. As I am an alumnus of NUS the business school contacted me a month before their visit to Yangon.

I originally wanted to put the presentation on Slideshare – however when I looked at the presentation 60% of the information are in the speaker’s note and if you view the presentation as a slideshow alone it does not really make sense. As many people are now using smart phone and tablet to surf the net I decided to spend a few days to put the PowerPoint presentation as a YouTube video with proper voiceover and subtitle so you can view it from any platform without having to read the speaker’s note simultaneously.

The video is divided into 2 parts:

PART 1:

YouTube [http://youtu.be/pCvYiQYDHcE](http://youtu.be/pCvYiQYDHcE)

To download the MP4 video [http://goo.gl/gLBU1X](http://goo.gl/gLBU1X)

1. Economic history of Myanmar – how Myanmar ended up where they are, as one of the poorest country in Asia despite its rich natural resources.
2. A simple story of why it is more profitable to invest in Myanmar than in Singapore.
   Caveat: You need to have strong stomach for risk if you want to invest in an emerging market like Myanmar.
3. As an entrepreneur:
   a. Is inefficiency good or bad?
   b. Is the continuing US financial sanction good or bad?
PART 2

YouTube  http://youtu.be/bLCMJ8Y6lhA

To download the MP4 video  http://goo.gl/ZYtpUm

4. What are the opportunities by industry in Myanmar?
5. Is your organization suffering from Giganitis?
7. Low entry barrier for entrepreneur in Myanmar versus China and India
8. Understand the role of the Central and State government.
9. What is the role of the JV Partner in Myanmar.
10. The importance of training in creating the right culture in you company.
11. How to operate in a cash based society like Myanmar.
12. Should you wait for after the 2015 election before entering the Myanmar market?
Hello. I am Andrew Tan – an alumnus of NUS. I am also the founder and Managing Director of Consult-Myanmar Co Ltd.

This is my presentation to the NUS MBA Group entitled “Doing business in Myanmar – What you need to know as an entrepreneur from Singapore”. Take note that this topic was chosen by the NUS MBA Group one month before their visit to my office.

The actual introduction to the NUS MBA Group is 4 min long I have moved it to the end of this presentation for those who are interested.

Let’s start with a little story about myself.
I first came to Myanmar in May 2012 to attend a Burmese friend’s wedding. When the new Foreign Investment Law was passed in Nov 2012, I read the content understood that I can start a 100% foreign owned company with only US$50,000 I came over to Myanmar straight away.
I moved to Yangon permanently in Jan 2013 and rented this office and started the business. I must state that I am very impressed by the way President Thein Sein has led the country through national reconciliation and reforming the economy. The President has always walk the talk.

My presentation will dissect many aspects of the Myanmar way of life and way of doing business. It is not meant to be disrespectful. It is meant to be a constructive criticism of how as a Singaporean who has a vested interest in this country how I would like to see this country developed and grow

Now to understand Myanmar we need to look at the economic history of Myanmar. I am going to use a series of 7 charts that was developed by Mckinsey in their recent report on Myanmar.

When it comes to designing charts that tell a vivid story about a business issue or challenges facing a country– there is no one better than McKinsey. So I am not going to reinvent the wheel I will just use the charts that they developed.
This chart shows that a combination of 2 factors cause Myanmar to have the lowest GDP per capita in ASEAN.
This is the Per Capital GDP in 2010 in Thousand of Dollars.
Myanmar has the lowest GDP per Capital in ASEAN at US$800.
This is caused by 2 factors:
Only 50% of its population is employed and
It has very Low labour productivity at $1,500. In fact it is the lowest in ASEAN.

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McKinsey assumes that Myanmar want to grow from US$45 bil in 2010 to US$200 bil in 2030, quadrupling its GDP in 20 years.
To do that Myanmar needs to grow by 8% annually from 2010 to 2030.
1% of the growth will come from increased in labour inputs such as new people joining the workforce.
That means that Myanmar labour productivity need to grow by 7% annually for the next 20 years.
However historically Myanmar has only manage to grow by 2.7%.
So to grow from 2.7% to 7% - Myanmar need to more than double its labour productivity growth for the next 20 years.
This additional labour productivity growth is a big challenge for Myanmar but it is also a big opportunity for entrepreneur as a lot of resources have to be spent on education, training and automation.

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Focus on the 2010 column. This chart shows the 7 major sectors of Myanmar economy.
Myanmar is predominantly an agricultural society, even though agriculture makes up to 40% of the economy it employs up to 70% of its population. Most farms are small land holding and the work is still done by hand with very low level of mechanization. So it is very unproductive. Myanmar export mainly pulse and beans to countries in South and North Asia.
The other sectors that contribute significantly to the export earning of Myanmar is mining and energy. This is a resource base industry where a lot of effort is put into extracting mineral resources from the ground. The mining and energy industry is not a big employer of manpower in Myanmar as compared to agricultural.
Myanmar has a small manufacturing sector which is predominantly focus on the domestic market. As it has been under Western sanctioned for a long time – there were not much export market for Myanmar’s manufactured product in the past. At the moment most of Myanmar’s manufactured product are low quality product that is targeted at the domestic market.
Despite Myanmar’s rich heritage and natural beauty - tourism is an under performing sector due to the economic sanctions in the past.
Financial and telecom sectors are wash-outs in Myanmar due to under investment and mismanagement.

Myanmar population are mainly rural. Only around 13% live in urban area in 2009. 87% of its people live in small towns and villages. According to McKinsey around 12 million people will migrate from rural to urban area in search of a better life by 2030. So there need to be a lot of investment in infrastructure such as building new town, industrial zone, road, bridges, port, airport, power plant, water treatment plant, etc.

This chart shows a timeline over 130 years. It shows that Myanmar GDP per capita stagnated in the middle of the 20th Century from like 1960 to 1980 when they experimented with socialism and then it became a military ruled country. The rest of ASEAN surged ahead during the same period.

This chart tells the same story. GDP has been stagnating from 1940 to 1980. In the 1990s Myanmar’s GDP started to pick up.

Even in the 1990s when Myanmar’s GDP improved - its growth rate is at the lower end of the Asia average of 4.2% just above Pakistan and Philippines.

Now if you are from Singapore which is famous for its clean street, green parks and world class airport – what challenges will you find in Myanmar?

Dysfunctional banking system. Most people still do not want to put their money in the bank due to past bank failures and prefer to hold cash. As banks have problem getting deposit they also do not give out loan for buying car or house. Crumbling infrastructure. Daily power outage; roads with potholes and overcrowded broken sidewalks; painfully slow internet speed; buildings that are poorly maintained; blocked drainage and no potable water. Outrages hotel rate & property rental. A 4 star hotel room cost like US$250 per night. A Grade A office in downtown Yangon is renting out of US$ 100 per square foot which is higher even than Manhattan or Tokyo.
Inefficient civil service – when you go to government department many are still using pen, paper, carbon paper and typewriter. Everything is done manually using the abundant cheap labour that they have.

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This is my bar chart to give you an overview of the level of efficiency that Singapore and Myanmar are operating at. In Singapore I would say that everything is running at 99% efficiency. In Myanmar I would say that everything is running at say 30% efficiency. The question we need to ask ourselves as an entrepreneur is this “is inefficiency good or bad?”

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As an entrepreneur when you approach a new market segment and you are trying to develop your products or services. You must constantly ask yourself 2 key questions: 1) Where is the inefficiency in the system? 2) Due to the inefficiency where is the pain points for the consumers or business users? If you can find the pain points for the consumers or the business users you will be able to develop products or services that will delight them and they will be more than willing to pay for.

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Let’s recast the question and look at the issue from another angle. We can say that in Singapore you only have 1% of inefficiency or pain point that you can exploit to develop good products or services. In Myanmar you have a much much broader range – maybe 70%. If you look at it this way – then Myanmar is every entrepreneur’s dream.

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Since I am a Singaporean and I know that many people in Singapore are flushed with cash and they want to put their money in investments that make money. Let’s look at what returns you get when you put money in the bank. Due to the low interest rate environment - if you put your money in the bank in Singapore over the last 3 years you are lucky you get 0.2% interest. If you put into a fixed deposit you get maybe 0.4%. After deducting for inflation – you basically earn nothing.

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There is this truism in Singapore that says that you can never lose money investing in property due to the scarcity of land in Singapore. Due to the low interest rate environment over the last 3 years – many investors have placed their savings into property thinking that it is a hedge against inflation. As a result everyone is aggressively buying property and then
renting it out, driving the price up so much that the rental yield have all been plunging. At the same time rental has been easing as the government has tightened the tap on foreign labour. Rental yield is now going down below 3% and is barely compensating for inflation. So you don’t make money investing in property now in Singapore.

Another truism in Singapore is that you can’t lose money opening a restaurant as Singaporeans love to eat and they must eat at least 3 time a day and they are not price sensitive. You pay US$10,000 a month to rent a shop in a good shopping mall, spend US$200,000 renovating it and then what happen? You can’t hire foreign workers to be waiter, waitresses and dishwasher as the government is tightening the foreign labour tap. So you round up all your relatives to help to serve tables and clean the dishes. At the end you sell off your restaurant or closed it down as it is straining your relationship with your relative and it is not viable anymore.

So it is becoming a vicious cycle. You put money in the bank – don’t make money. Put money in property – don’t make money. Put money in opening a restaurant don’t make money. Put money in the bank again – still don’t make money. Singaporeans are fighting to make money in that 1% inefficiency space and in the process bid up the price of all the asset class in that small space and thus not getting any return.

Have you heard this saying “insanity is doing the same thing again and again and hoping to get different results each time”? Guess which famous man said this? Albert Einstein.

Now I must qualify this statement by saying that our Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has tried to address this issue during the recent National Day speech by creating new space for growth for our future generation.

He said that over the next 20 years he is planning to move the air force base from the central-eastern region of Singapore to the eastern tip of the island next to the current Changi airport.

He is going to move the Port of Singapore from the South of the country to the Western tip of the country.

In the process freeing up large tracts of land for development. With the air force base removed from the central eastern region of the country it allows us to build another new town in the vacant land. At the same time it also removes the height restriction on buildings in the central eastern region of the country. So now we can build upwards and the sky is the limit.

When the port is moved out from the south of Singapore – the vacant coastline can be turned into waterfront cities & marinas.
He said that these projects will take 30 years to reach fruition and it will create space and opportunity for our children.
I say why wait 30 years?
You have the opportunity and the space now in Myanmar!
If you are a young Singaporean you need the opportunity now. Come to Myanmar where there is so much opportunity for growth, experimentation and creativity.

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Next question. As an entrepreneur the continuing US financial sanction on many Myanmar tycoons— is that good or bad?

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To an American entrepreneur.
They faced the problem of finding the right partner in Myanmar as most of the Myanmar tycoons are on the US watch list – meaning that most US entrepreneurs can only partner the small Myanmar businessmen.
The due diligence & reporting requirements significantly increase their cost of doing business in Myanmar. Most small businesses will go bankrupt if they have to meet all these due diligence process and reporting requirements.
As a result American companies will be slower in entering the Myanmar market.

To an Asian entrepreneur.
It is a godsend as you do not have major US brands to compete with. Imagine No McDonald’s, KFC, Pizza Hut or Starbucks. Instead you find Korean brands like Lotteria and BBQ Chicken. The Korean are setting the reference taste for burger and fried chicken among the Myanmar consumer as well as in terms of pricing and service level. So by the time the American arrives after 2015 – they will be seen as not the original taste but just a copy cat and a me-too product.
Our Singapore’s retail brand such as Chewy Junior & Yakun are not doing too badly either.
As there are many Burmese living in Singapore it is very easy for Singapore brands to enter into Myanmar quietly without having to pay a premium.
I don’t expect the American to lift the remaining sanctions till after the 2015 election.
So now is a good time for Asian brands to enter the Myanmar market while the US brands are absence.

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As an entrepreneur if you are entering a new market that is culturally different from your own you need to examine all your assumptions – especially if it is key assumptions about the market that underlie your business. You cannot believe 100% in everything you read in textbook or newspaper– you need to develop your own hypothesis about the market and
find some quick way of testing your hypothesis to see if it is true. Because if your assumptions are wrong your actions will be wrong.
If it is true – adopt it and exploit the opportunity quickly.
If it is false – you need to discard it and to develop new hypothesis about the market.
Have you heard this saying “it ain’t what a man knows that makes him a fool. It’s what he knows that ain’t”? This quote is attributable to American humorist Josh Billings.
My thesis is this - Myanmar is a good place for entrepreneurs. As there are a lot of inefficiencies in the system and there are many pain points for businesses and consumers which you can develop into viable products or services. So if you are daring and can take timely action you will find a lot of opportunities in Myanmar.

Let’s look at what are the opportunities that you can find in Myanmar.

**Inefficiencies >> Opportunities**

Poor infrastructure >> Construction & Building are growth sector. Material such as steel and cement that are essential to the building sector are also growth business.

Poor telecom infrastructure >> Sales of telecom equipment and handsets are growth business.

Dysfunctional Banking System >> Financial service consultancy and training are growth sector. Sales of banking equipment such as ATMs are booming.

Lacked Skilled Workforce >> Educational and Vocational Training business are growth sector.

Poor internet speed >> Web programmers are out of practice in Myanmar. Web design & online room/ticket booking & payment system for tourism related business are booming.

So as an entrepreneur there are so many areas that you can focus on. You guys are best and brightest of your cohorts. I’m sure you can come up with products or services that meet the needs of businesses & consumers in the new Myanmar. You can build a lot of successful & profitable business around these opportunities and at the same time you are employing people, paying them a good salary, training them, paying your taxes and you are contributing to the development of Myanmar in a positive way.

If you are going to setup a business in Myanmar after today’s presentation I beseech you to always look for opportunity to contribute to Myanmar in a positive and responsible way.

Now Myanmar is an emerging market. To be successful in Myanmar you need to come in with the right frame of mind if you want to be successful. Look at some of the comments from befuddled executives:

“It’s a very cowboy town” said a property executive

“We can’t move into a space where someone’s cooking up nasi goreng on the sidewalk all night,” said an executive from a MNC. Nasi goreng is Indonesian for fried rice. Myanmar “lacked skilled workforce” said a manufacturing manager

Businessmen that have been doing business in China for the last 15 years seems to think that the conditions in Myanmar are normal. Why because Myanmar is an emerging market
and they expect to find: poor infrastructure; unskilled workers; unclear legal framework; and because of the low wages some low level of corruption.

Most important they want to move into Myanmar early to get the first mover advantage. For e.g. the HK garment factory owners formed a consortium to negotiate with the Myanmar government as a group for cheap land and good infrastructure support and is moving as a group from the South of China to Myanmar.

Remember the early birds do catch the worms!

Forget about the guy who said that he can’t move into an office because “somebody is cooking nasi goreng outside” he is an employee but you are an entrepreneur. You will bear any temporary discomfort just to get your business off the ground quickly so as to be a first mover and to get the right cost structure.

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One thing you need to know as an entrepreneur – is that “Emerging markets favour entrepreneurs”.

Can somebody tell me why?

Why? Because the environment is very fluid, it a bit opaque, it is hard to understand and big companies are not comfortable operating in an environment whereby they have to take risk. Most important big companies suffer from one big disease, you know what that is? GIGANITIS!

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What are the symptoms of Giganitis?

Everyone is an employee. Don’t stick your head out; It is too dangerous, everyone is risk adverse; Not on my watch, it is always somebody else’s fault.

Analysis – Paralysis, they over analyse. They must wait for 100% solution before making a move. They must wait for 100% consensus before making a move

Image is more important than effectiveness. They must travel business class and stay in 5 star hotel even when travelling in a 3rd world country. That office not suitable for the image of my company as “someone cooking nasi goreng outside”. They must wear suits even in summer when the outside temperature is more than 40°C.

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Emerging market favours smaller companies that are Agile, Fast, Spot opportunity faster, Exploit opportunity faster and Know how to mitigate their risk.

These are the characteristics of a successful company in the emerging market.

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It is very easy to start a 100% foreign-owned limited liability company in Myanmar. To start a foreign owned LLC in Myanmar all you need is US$50,000, in China if you are in Qingdao it is US$ 80,000 . In Shanghai it is US$ 150,000. In India it is US$ 1 mil.
In Myanmar you need only 2 shareholders, both can be foreign nationals. You do not need a Myanmar partner to start your business.

You need to remit US$25,000 upon incorporation and the balance US$25,000 5 years later when the business licence is due for renewal.

That means that if you can be cash flow positive from the first year onwards you do not have to call in the other half of the capital until the end of the 4th year.

Take note that you can start your business within 1 month from registration.

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So as an entrepreneur what are the factors that you need to be aware of if you want to start a business in Myanmar?

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In Myanmar the central government in Naypyidaw play a key role in regulating industries. Certain sectors are reserved for the State such as telecom, banking, mining, oil & gas, etc. These sectors are called the Reserved Sector. If you are a foreign investor if you want to invest in these sectors you need to either 1) Approach the State to propose a joint venture or 2) Bid for a licence during an open tender when they want to open up the industry.

Which is precisely what happened in July this year when they award 2 telecom licences to Telenor & Ooredoo.

The country will pass a new telecom law within the next 2 months.

There are 2 forces in play now in the telecom industry, one is the force of regulation, the other is the force of deregulation.

Deregulation – they will spin off MPT and Yatanarpon.

MPT is the current telecom monopoly and regulator will be privatised and the regulatory arm hived off as a separate independent telecom regulatory body. Yatanarpon the current internet monopoly will also get a telecom licence. That means that in all there will be 4 telecom companies in Myanmar.

MPT and Yatanarpon are looking for new telecom partners and investors as they do not have the money to fight with Telenor and Ooredoo – both of which are funded by governments from own rich country of Norway and Qatar.

Regulation – a new independent telecom regulatory body will be setup under the new telecom law that will oversees the new deregulated industry that is created.

So the telecom market is getting more and more interesting and we are also seeing the multiplier effects as a business consultancy company as we are seeing suppliers to Telenor and Ooredoo opening offices in Myanmar and engaging our service.

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The state government plays an important role in the market as well as they are responsible for the infrastructure in their own state and they have a say as to the type of industry and factory that opens in their territory.
The local state government is interested in attracting industries that are non pollutive and do not disrupt the local economy. For eg if you want to open a hypermart in the center of the city in Mandalay which will put most of the mom and pop shops out of business – you may have a problem getting approval from the local state government. The state government is mainly interested in creating employment and in expanding their state revenue and tax base.

In certain industry such as the Restricted Industry it is mandatory to partner a local Myanmar person or company. Example of restricted industry are manufacturing and marketing of consumer food & alcoholic beverages for the domestic market; opening a real estate agency; opening a travel agency, etc. Unless otherwise stated foreign investors can hold up to 80% share in a JV company in Myanmar. What is the role of the Myanmar JV Partner? The Myanmar partner should provide land, local knowledge, service or distribution to the JV company. Asking your Myanmar friend to recommend a JV Partner give mixed results. Unless your friends are from the industry that you are interested to invest in most likely they will recommend their relatives and friends to you. Most Myanmar people run businesses that are not registered with the Company Registration Office. As Myanmar is a cash based society most people operate unregistered business on a cash basis so as to avoid paying tax. Most foreigners who are new to Myanmar always assume that just because someone has a name card with a company name, email address and a mobile number – it is a registered company. 90% of the time it is not and the only thing real is the Name Card.

In starting a business in Myanmar hiring the right staff will be key. It is important when you hire people to ensure that there is a fit between the value of the staff and the culture of your company. Many workers have just moved from small towns to Yangon and are neither sophisticated nor worldly wise and they do not know what is quality work or good standard of work and what is important to you and your customers. As we have shown in the earlier chart – 90% of Myanmar people lives in small towns & villages. People are still very conservative and traditional. Very hierarchical. Respect your elders. Defer to your senior, junior staff will not challenge senior staff even if they are asked to do something that is wrong for the company. Pace of life is slower. People are less time-conscious. It is quite common for you to have an appointment with your plumber and you tell him come in Monday at 10 am and 10 am he does not turn up.
am he still does not turn up and when you call him he said that something else turned up and he cannot come for the appointment.
In Myanmar finding staff that share your company’s value is a challenge.
A lot of efforts has to be placed in recruiting the right people and training them if you want to succeed in Myanmar. Myanmar people value education but the education system has been broken for sometime now. A lot of effort will have to be placed in recruiting and testing the candidate. On the job training is important. Providing a progression of job titles and pay increase as the candidate learn and grow on the job is important. Paying market competitive salary is also important.

In our experience most foreign companies end up paying twice as much for property rental or salary as their local competitors. If your local competitor pay US$200 per month for a staff and you are paying US$400 – chances are you will not be making any money. Same thing for rental – must you be in downtown CBD area? Aim to be cash flow positive within the first year. If you are cash flow positive from the first year you do not have to call in the balance of the paid-up capital till the end of the fourth year when you business licence is due for renewal.

Myanmar is a cash based society. As the banking system is dysfunctional – people prefer to hold cash instead of putting it into the bank. Due to bank failures in the past and depositors lost their money – Myanmar people have low trust in financial institution. People hold their non-cash assets in the form of gold or land. Staff expect their boss to pay salary in cash. When you rent a property you need to pay 1 year of rental in advance. So let’s say you rent a Grade A office for like US$10,000 month – you have to pay US$120,000 in advance. When you buy a car or a house you pay full amount in cash as well. On pay day you will be flush with cash as an employer so you need to learn how to use a safe.
Due to the lack of interest from international community in Myanmar for the last 20 years, there has been little to no investment in modern infrastructure and office buildings. As a result there is a lack of rentable grade office space and residential housing in Yangon. Due to the poor transportation infrastructure in Yangon, the price difference between property in good location versus property in bad location – even in the same township can be very extreme.

If you want to start a business in Myanmar you need to have a strategy on how you are going to get the property you need for your business.

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In Myanmar all land are owned by the state. Only Myanmar people can acquire the right to use the land. Even if the Myanmar person say they own the land what they meant is that they have acquired to use the land from the government.

As a foreigner you can get long term lease of 50 to 70 years if you invest under Foreign Investment Law (FIL)

If you register a company purely under the Myanmar Companies Act i.e. not under the FIL scheme you can lease only from a year to year basis.

It is illegal for foreigners to buy land via Myanmar nominees. In the event of a dispute – your rights will not be recognized by the court.

For industry where location is important such as hotel or retail – getting a local JV partner that already own the prime land is important.

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Even as we are talking parliament is debating on a new telecom law, company law, trademark law, etc.

The legal and regulatory framework are being updated to make it more current and in-tune with the modern world.

It creates uncertainty as everything is changing at the same time. However it also creates certainty as the new laws will make Myanmar’s law more in line with that of Singapore and HK.

A new Hanthawaddy Airport will be built at Bago Region in 2018 – changing the dynamics of people and cargo flow in the South of Myanmar.

For your information the Yangon City Development Committee just put out a land tender for 36 acres of prime land to be developed into a Secondary CBD in Mayagone township south of the existing Yangon Airport. This will help to alleviate the space shortage in downtown Yangon when it is ready in the next 3 to 5 years’ time.
A very popular question. Many people ask me: “should I wait for the result of the 2015 election before deciding to enter the Myanmar market?”

I say that regardless of which candidate wins the election I believe the direction of reform will not change. Because the Myanmar people will not let them. The Myanmar people have taste the fruits of reform and democracy and they are benefitting now from an open market and new job created by the foreign investment - they will not go back to being a military run country.

Secondly both Aung San Suu Kyi and Shwe Mann are reformist. It does not matter who wins the election.

After 2015 election chances are there will be no place for new entrants in Yangon Division as Yangon is quite small like 50 km by 30 km in length and width.

If you are coming in after the 2015 election you should go straight to Bago Division where they are building the new Hanthawaddy Airport in 2018, as a whole new industrial zone and city will grow around it. It will change the dynamic of people and cargo flow in the south of Myanmar.

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Myanmar is not for the faint-hearted.
There are a lot of opportunities.
There are also a lot of risks as well.
You are able to control your risk by controlling the amount of capital you put into the business, building a strong local team and being hands on and on-the-ground.

As an entrepreneur having the first mover advantage is important.

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There is no straight path for entrepreneurialism in Myanmar.
You have an idea of the direction that you want to go. Each day you look at the road ahead of you and you adjust your plan based on the terrain and the feedback that you are getting for the last 2 – 3 days.

I use the immortal word of Deng Xiao Ping when he was asked in 1980s about how the reform process in China would progress – He said “it is like crossing the river while feeling the stone”摸着石头过河 meaning that it like crossing a fast flowing river. He knows the direction that China need to go, it will be risky however we need to stay grounded, keep our balance and advance one step at a time and feel our way through till we reach the other side. Crossing the river while feeling the stone. It is true for reforming a big country it is also true for entrepreneurialism in the new Myanmar.

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At Consult-Myanmar our customers are foreign investors that want to start a business in Myanmar we provide the following service. Market entry strategy, incorporation service & immigration matters.

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These pictures were taken during the 2 hour discussion with the students. It was a small, closed group discussion where the students were allowed to jump in at anytime during the presentation to ask question.

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Hello. I am Andrew Tan – I am alumnus of NUS. I am also the founder and Managing Director of Consult-Myanmar Co Ltd. We are the only Singapore consultancy that is operating in Yangon at the moment. So we are the pioneer and the first.

It is my honour to welcome the 23 members of the NUS MBA Group to our office in Yangon. I believe we are the first stop in your 5 day journey through Myanmar.

Now, looking back - I was wondering how I ended talking to a group of MBA students in my office.

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It started with an unsolicited email.

A chap by the name of Aldin Aupetit send an unsolicited email to me. Firstly I don’t know this guy. Secondly he has a name that I can’t pronounce “Aldin Aupetit”. Normally I would have consigned the email to the spam folder straight away.

But he said that he was from NUS – my alma mater. If he is from NUS he can’t be a bad chap. So I read the first paragraph and it said I only need to host 20 students in my office and tell them what I do in Myanmar. 20 students? A piece of cake.

I really didn’t know what I was getting into, as I thought maybe I would just take out some of my old PowerPoint presentations – merge 2 decks together - take out a few s, and then I am ready to present. So I innocently agree to host the NUS MBA group in my office.

However one week before today I took a closer look at the email again and in the 2nd paragraph it said “.. Tell your story as a Singaporean willing to make an impact in Myanmar and the challenges entrepreneurs face in Myanmar…” I say “Holy Smoke, I have never written on the topic of entrepreneurialship in Myanmar before – especially from a Singaporean’s perspective” this is going to demand a lot of original thoughts and preparations. It normally takes me a week to prepare an original PowerPoint presentation for a conference or seminar as I need to do the research, find the right picture, put together an outline and hopefully come out with something that is insightful and interesting – and this is no difference.

So it is going to be a lot of work! Now what have I committed myself to?? OK, now that we have been introduced and you know how I landed myself into this situation – let’s start the presentation.
So here is the my presentation for the NUS MBA Group based on the remit that Mr Aldin Aupetit has set for me.
“Doing business in Myanmar – What you need to know as an entrepreneur from Singapore”.

Let’s start with a little story about myself. I first came to Myanmar in May 2012 to attend a Burmese friend’s wedding. After the wedding my friend was kind enough to send his assistant a man who has worked in Singapore before and speaks good English to accompanied me around Myanmar. I get to see the mystical Bagan where the plain is covered with over 2,000 ancient temples; as well as the beautiful lake district of Inle, Mandalay and the Shan mountain. I learned that Myanmar is not only rich in nature’s beauty it is also rich in mineral resources such as oil, gas, gold, ruby, sapphire and jade and it should have been the richest country in Asia. However due to economic mismanagement for the last 50 years it is in fact one of the poorest country in Asia. I believe that with the right leadership and management this country can be turned around and can become one of the richest country in Asia within the next 50 years.
When the new Foreign Investment Law was passed in Nov 2012, I read the content understood that I can start a 100% foreign owned company with only US$50,000 I came over to Myanmar straight away.
I moved to Yangon permanently in Jan 2013 and rented this office and started the business. I must state that I am very impressed by the way President Thein Sein has led the country through national reconciliation and reforming the economy. The President has always walk the talk.
My presentation will dissect many aspects of the Myanmar way of life and way of doing business. It is not meant to be disrespectful. It is meant to be a constructive criticism of how as a Singaporean who has a vested interest in this country how I would like to see this country developed and grow

My last slide . Good bye.