Big is not always beautiful

Learn versus earn: A case for small business employers and the fresh graduates who join them

Ms Yap, managing director of the GMP Group, said: "Most business owners or managers think about the problem only when they have a vacancy to fill. Even then, there is no time to think hard, and Ms Yap, who oversees 14 companies across the Asia-Pacific, was impressed with her "big fish" mentality, which she said is a good sign for both her company and the existing staff. Ms Yap's answer to the question is to go for companies that are growth-oriented because the "growing of talent must be parallel to the growing of the business". If the business is not growing, then things will stagnate.

A "family friendly" environment

She believes firmly that SME owners and managers must prioritise talent management instead of rethinking it. When Ms Yap's personal experience has proven otherwise. When she was selected to The GMP Group in 2009, she received two vacancies. One was a position in the Asia-Pacific CEO of a Japanese company that was looking to hire her. The other was an executive role for a local SME. Ms Yap's advice is to consider the short-term and long-term needs of both the company's current and future employees.

In this respect, SMEs have an advantage over MNCs. By virtue of its fewer layers and smaller numbers, SMEs are more flexible and often hire on a case-by-case basis. Managers should make full use of their experience to help employees grow, given that the most important factors in attracting and retaining talent are market terms, job security, career prospects, and work-life balance. SMEs should focus on these factors to attract employees who are looking for a long-term commitment.