

Company : Chatime – Will Group
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PETALING JAYA: Chatime franchisor La Kaffa International Co Ltd has appointed Will Group Sdn Bhd as the master licensor of Chatime Malaysia, starting with four Chatime outlets in Malaysia.

The announcement alludes to a change of business model, from one of franchising, for La Kaffa. Under a licensing model, a company sells licences to other companies, allowing them to use intellectual property (IP), brand, design or business programme. These arrangements are usually nonexclusive, which means licences can be sold to multiple competing companies serving the same market. In this arrangement, the licensing company may exercise control over how its IP is used but does not control the business operations of the licensee.

The four Chatime outlets under Will Group are in KL Sentral, Kota Damansara, Genting Highlands and Bentong. The four outlets have continued with the Chatime brand in Malaysia, while ex-master franchisee Loob Holding Sdn Bhd has rebranded 161 Chatime outlets as Tealive.

La Kaffa has filed for an injunction to stop Loob from continuing operations under the new brand. The case is set for hearing on May 29.

Will Group, according to a statement issued yesterday, is the parent company of a number of Malaysia’s business development firms operating in the mining, construction, and food & beverage (F&B) industries.

The company said its F&B division, which started as early as 1994, was involved in the development and the entry of a few international F&B franchises into Malaysia. Now it is involved in local market research for international brands as well as assisting a number of leading F&B franchises in Malaysia, mostly in terms of franchising, branding and local marketing.

A check on Companies Commission of Malaysia revealed that Will Group’s major shareholder and one of the directors is Julita Aishah Abdul Latiff, the wife of the Tengku Muda of Pahang. The company was incorporated in 2011. It posted a revenue of RM1.29 million for the financial year ended June 30, 2013 and a profit after tax of RM15,076.

Will Group plans to open 30 new Chatime outlets over the next six months, and an additional 40 by mid-2018.

La Kaffa chairman Henry Wang said it has a good understanding of Will Group’s capabilities over the last five years as it has performed well as a Chatime sub-franchisee in Malaysia. In fact, two of the highest earning outlets in KL Sentral and Genting Highlands are operated by Will Group.

“High degree of dedication and prudent business operations make Will Group an ideal entity to enhance our partnership with. By working closely with Will Group, we hope to grow the revenue of Chatime Malaysia to eventually account for about 10% for the group in the next few years,” he said.

Will Group managing director N Aliza Ali, 33, said the company has been successful in implementing a strong business strategy to its outlets and can assist other franchisees to grow their businesses further with the formula it has in place.

“We will continue to provide excellent service and authentic Taiwanese bubble milk tea to the local market and would further develop and grow Chatime to maintain its position as the number one bubble tea brand in the market,” Aliza said.

Will Group executive director Widayu Latiff, 39, said that operating as one of Chatime’s sub-franchisees for the past five years, it has great faith in the brand.

“We are determined to ensure Chatime remains profitable with a good return on investment for our business partners.”