Statement by OLDTOWN White Coffee on the Recent Job Advertisement Announcement

Kuala Lumpur, Wednesday, September 24, 2014

A series of blogs, online articles, tweets and Facebook posts have appeared since Saturday, 20 September 2014 alleging that OLDTOWN White Coffee is being racist by preferring certain races for its workforce. This was based on a recent job advertisement which was sent to JKT (Jabatan Tenaga Kerja), and produced by the Franchisee for its new outlet in Austin Heights, Johor Bahru. This has generated remarks indicating that OLDTOWN White Coffee is a racist brand, including calls to boycott us.

OLDTOWN White Coffee would like to take this opportunity to clarify that the advertisement was made by the franchisee without any prior knowledge or approval from our management. On behalf of the Franchisee, OLDTOWN White Coffee management would like to sincerely apologise for the unacceptable and offensive content contained within the job advertisement.

We are already in contact with the Directors of Paramount Grand Success Sdn Bhd (A Franchisee of OLDTOWN White Coffee) to rectify this matter. They have explained that the job advertisement announcement was never meant to discriminate anyone. However, due to their own admitted negligence some customers and supporters of OLDTOWN White Coffee have been misguided to infer that the company was being disrespectful. The Franchisee has expressed their deep regret and sincere apologies for this oversight and we have also attached their official Apology Letter for your reference.

As a home-grown Malaysian brand, we value everyone equally and it has never been anyone’s intention to offend or slight anyone. We have since ordered that the said job advertisement be removed.

We would like to clarify that all of our Franchisees will need to obtain our final approval before sharing across any document related to the OLDTOWN White Coffee business. Under our Franchise agreement, OLDTOWN White Coffee has the right to terminate the Franchisee without notice. However, in this situation as the Franchisee is still new and has no ill intention, the OLDTOWN White Coffee management has decided to give them another opportunity to be part of the OLDTOWN’s family. As an internal measure, the Franchisee will be served with an official warning letter, a permanent non-compliance in their Franchise record.

We impose very strict Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and will continue to tighten them to ensure that this types of incidents do not recur. We will continue to educate our current and new Franchisees on the need to be sensitive in their choice of words in all forms of communication. We have reminded all Franchisees on the importance of submitting their documents to our team for final approval prior dissemination.
We appreciate the feedback and support from fellow Malaysians during this incident. We wish to reiterate that OLDTOWN White Coffee does not practice or support racism. We hope this statement clarifies everyone's concerns.

Statement by
Clarence D'Silva
Executive Director of Oldtown Berhad, and Chief Operating Officer of the F&B Division of Kopitiam Asia Pacific

About OLDTOWN Berhad (www.oldtown.com.my)

Established in 1999, OLDTOWN White Coffee manufactures instant beverage mixes and products in addition to operating over 200 cafés throughout Malaysia and the region.

With the intention of providing quality white coffee to Malaysian households and the food service industry, the founder of OLDTOWN White Coffee formulated a special 3-in-1 blend based on the special white coffee from Ipoh in 1999. In 2005, the business expanded into the food service sector with the opening of a chain of cafés based on the traditional Ipoh coffee shop setting and ambience under the brand name “OLDTOWN White Coffee”.

OLDTOWN White Coffee now exports its instant beverage mixes to 13 countries worldwide and plans to expand its café network in the region and plans to expand its café network in the region, Singapore, Indonesia and China.

For further enquiries, please contact:
Helene Gomez
Text100 Malaysia
+603-2282 2152
helene.gomez@text100.com.my

Chermaine Fong
Text100 Malaysia
+603-2282 2152
chermaine.fong@text100.com.my