

FABULOUS4U: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
PROCESS FOR A BRAND NEW ISLAMIC
NURSING ATTIRE

By

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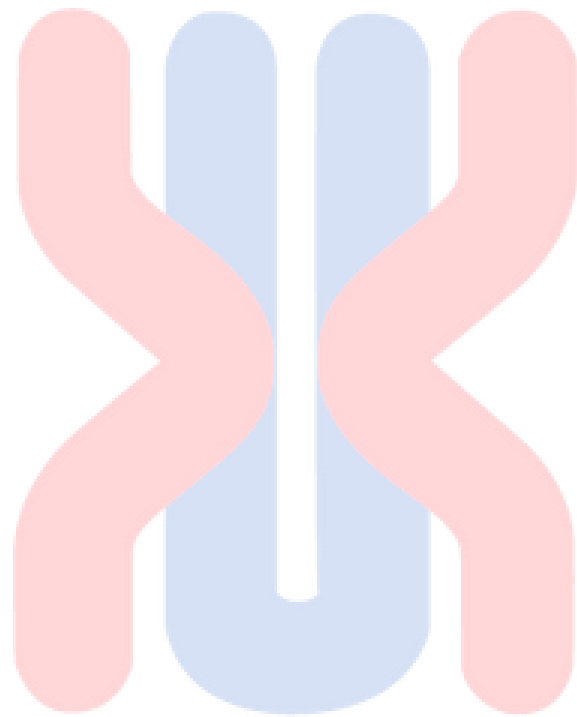
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case is pertaining to new start-up company, Fabulous Mom and Baby Boutique which is operated as a one stop center for mother and baby's products. As a new start-up company, this boutique concern about the process of developing new product which is focusing on nursing attire for lactating mother. This case is an exploratory multiple methods from the previous research to analysis of new product development process normally practiced in the apparel industry. The process, which is consider the customers' needs and satisfaction as a center of the product development process from the aspect of functional needs (lactating process) and aesthetics needs (Islamic concept). The purpose of this case study is to suggest the best practice of the new product development process for Islamic nursing attire and to propose the product features that is in line with Islamic concept clothing requirement and able to fulfill the objective of helping lactating mother to breastfeed their baby in public area. Based on the findings, the process was evaluated on its effectiveness of identifying the needs of their customers in order to produce the right product that able to fulfill the customer's satisfaction. A new model was constructed to illustrate the importance of identifying customers' needs in new product development process for this company. Based on the model and its definitions, recommendations were made to apply for FMBB as the chosen case study company. The conclusion made was that the new product development process for Islamic nursing attire should consider customers' needs in the process was recommended. The author believe that buyers and manufacturers in the apparel industry needs to work closer and more effectively in order to optimize the new product

development process through joint efforts and tackle the critical issues identified in this project.



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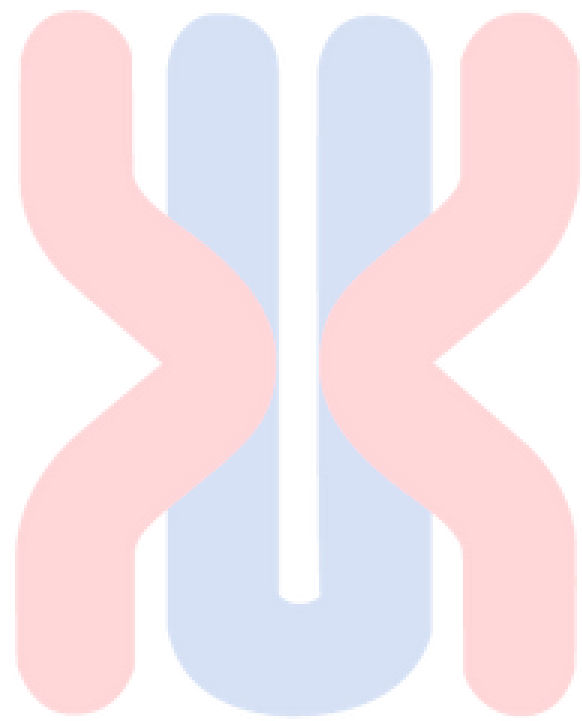
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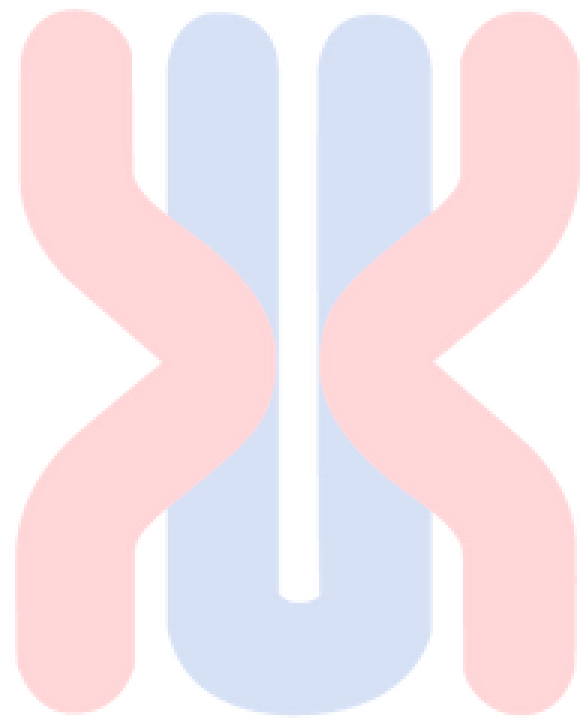
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the case study is based on my original work except for quotations and citations that have been duly acknowledged. I also declare it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UMK or other institution.

LAILATUL ASMAH BINTI MOHD TAHIR

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OR GLOSSARY

The following table describes the significance of various abbreviations and acronyms used throughout the thesis. The page on which each one is defined or first used is also given. Nonstandard acronyms that are used in some places to abbreviate the names of certain white matter structures are not in this list.

Abbreviation	Meaning	Page
FMBB	Fabulous Mom & Baby Boutique	1
IFF	Islamic Fashion Festival	2
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat	1
NPD	New Product Development Process	28

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1.1 Prologue

In March 2014, Mrs. Nor Aziah bt Amiruddin, Finance and Administration Manager of Fabulous Mom & Baby Boutique (thereafter referred as FMBB) proposed to open a boutique that would be operated as a one-stop center for mother-and-baby products. The boutique was successfully incorporated in April 2014 and was known as Fabulous Mom & Baby Boutique. She also proposed to have nursing attire as one of the products of FMBB. She suggested to focus on Islamic concept nursing attire and highlighted that current fashion did not support Syariah compliance. Referring to the guidance in Al-Quran, the Islamic clothing requirement for women must comply with the certain criteria of covering almost all parts of the body. In general, standards of modesty call for a woman to cover her body, particularly her chest and hip areas. The Quran calls for women to "*draw their head-coverings over their chests*" (24:30-31), and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) instructed women believers to cover their bodies except for their faces and hands. Most Muslims interpret this requiring head coverings for women. Some Muslim women cover their entire body, including the faces and/or hands.

When Mrs. Aziah was nursing her own baby three years ago, she had difficulties when breastfeeding her baby, especially in public areas. This situation has inspired her to start a business offering nursing attire with the aim of helping nursing mothers feel comfortable enough to breastfeed anytime, anywhere. This point is also supported by Puan Wan Zaleha binti Wan Musa, Assistant Director in MARA Finance Division who is herself mother of 5 children. She said, "*Convenience is an issue. A lot of mothers simply have to give up breastfeeding because they can't find clothes that are discreet enough for the purpose. I was hoping to have a nursing blouse that is tailored with*

double layers. The first layer hides the nursing openings in the second layer of fabric. To breastfeed, a mother only has to lift up the top layer, and not the entire hem of the blouse. Exposure is at a minimum – perfect for mothers who end up drawing rude stares in their attempts to nurse in public.”

Mrs. Nor Aziah considered the growing of awareness of Muslim women to wear attire that comply with Syariah’s requirement as a business opportunity for her to produce products of Islamic fashion. Based on the statement in Opening Speech by Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor in Muslimah Fashion Festival (IFF) Gala Dinner and Fashion Show at the Monaco, “ *Islamic Fashion is becoming a lucrative business with the current market estimated to be worth more than US\$96 billion (RM302 billion) a year. According to the prestigious Dubai French Fashion University over half of the world’s 1.6 billion Muslim population is spending a substantial part of their annual income on fashion and accessories.*”

Mrs. Nor Aziah concluded that FMBB will focus on the product features that are able to meet the objective of helping lactating mothers to breastfeed their baby in public area. Furthermore, focusing on Islamic concept to be part of the product development process is an advantage to FMBB as it complies with Islamic clothing requirement for women especially Muslim mothers. She wants it to be a ‘fashion solution’ by exploring the needs of the community with her own brand of moderate and tolerant Islam, where creativity and self-expression are embraced.

1.2 Company Background

1.2.1 The company

FMBB was incorporated on 1st April 2014 by its Finance & Administration Manager and her partner as a partnership business. This company was registered in Kajang with two key business partners. By using tagline “*The place you can find quality apparels and accessories for mom and baby at affordable prices...*” FMBB commits to providing high quality products for customers. *Fabulous4u* is the brand name used by FMBB as the product label for this company.

1.2.2 Products and Services

FMBB is a new boutique that offers a wide range of Muslimah maternity and nursing clothes as well as baby clothing and accessories. The concept is to offer exclusive products for both the mother and the baby in one store. There are two categories of main products offered by the company as below:

Product for Mother

FMBB carries *Fabulous4u* brand that offers designer maternity and nursing clothes and women’s accessories as well. It is committed to designing modest maternity and nursing clothing with two concepts in mind - *Labuh* (Long) and *Longgar* (Loose). Knowing that the modern Muslimah woman wants to dress modestly, without having to sacrifice style and beauty, FMBB sets out to create attire for Muslimah (mother or mother-to-be) that is not only modest, but also comfortable and affordable price. FMBB’s product offerings include maternity clothes, nursing attire, scarves & *tudung* and women accessories.

Product for Baby

FMBB also specializes in the retailing of baby-oriented apparels and accessories. This boutique will make available a large line of baby clothes and accessories from a number of brand-name suppliers. This segment will focus on clothing for toddlers and infants aged between days old and four years old. The range of baby products includes pants, shirts, tops, pajamas, cardigans, leggings and baby accessories.

1.2.3 The Organization's Competitive Premises

The company's boutique outlet is strategically located at BUSANA MARA, situated along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman in the hub of Malaysian favourite fashion district. BUSANA breathes new life to a more sophisticated shopping experience while elevating the Malaysian brand supremacy status. BUSANA is the pinnacle of MARA's effort to provide a platform and elevation for entrepreneurs to escalate their businesses around the Golden Triangle of Kuala Lumpur and it is the first Muslimah Fashion Centre in Malaysia.

1.2.4 Management of the Company

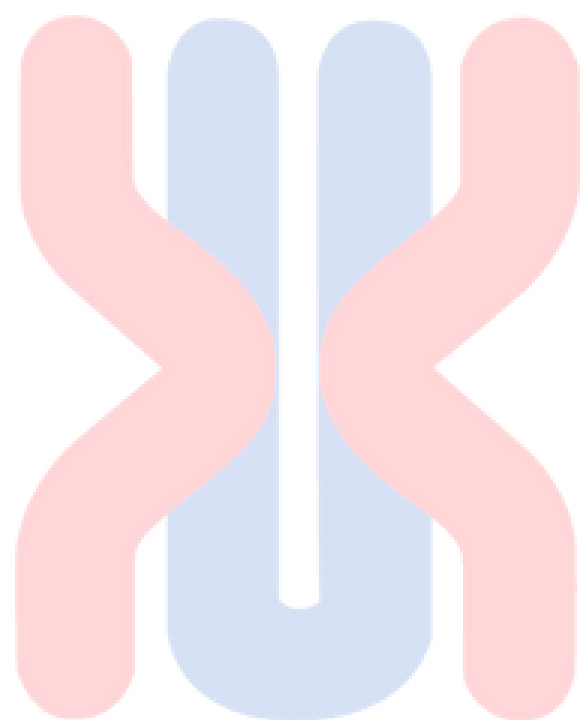
Every company must have its own management team to ensure that the company runs smoothly. FMBB was formed as a partnership business. For a start, both partners run the business together and extra team members are added as the business grows. Having a strong and effective management team in place is essential for the growth and success of any company.

The founder, Mrs. Nor Aziah bt Amiruddin graduated with a Bachelor of Accountancy (Honours) from Universiti Teknologi MARA and is currently doing her Master of Business Administration at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan specializing in Entrepreneurship. Before establishing FMBB, Mrs. Nor Aziah works in Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) Entrepreneurial Department for six years and MARA Financial Department for two years where she gained experience in entrepreneurial and financial management.

Though the company is relatively new and is still in the start-up stage, FMBB owners realize that they cannot do everything on their own. They need a group of skilled experts who can help them run the company. For a start, FMBB's organization structure consists of Mrs. Nor Aziah bt. Amiruddin as the Finance & Administration Manager. FMBB has three departments, i.e., Finance & Administration Department, Sales & Marketing Department and Production Department (Appendix I). The company will recruit four additional staff for the positions of Designer-cum-Production Manager, Finance and Administration Assistant, Sales Assistant and Tailor. All positions have their own job descriptions and the partners will take care the others ad-hoc tasks themselves with the aim of saving operational budget.

1.2.5 Competition

FMBB is facing stiff local competition with the many wonderful boutiques in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. Direct competitors include those boutiques that



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