Competitive horizons

New Zealand remains best country in which to do business

The latest Ease of Doing Business Index from the World Bank shows that New Zealand remains at the summit of its rankings. The country has demonstrated solid performance in areas such as corporate governance, and this is a result of reforms that have seen both corporate and personal tax rates being lowered. Ten indicators are used by the organization as measures to rank 190 economies and cities. As reported by www.nzherald.co.nz, the rankings help businesses and governments to make investment-related decisions. New Zealand is rated top in several indicators that include starting a business, securing credit, registering property, protecting the interests of small investors, and handling construction permits. However, the report also notes considerable scope for improvement exists. It is suggested that New Zealand should aim to better enforce contracts and tax payments, make electricity more affordable, and simplify the process of filing corporate tax. In addition, lowering the cost, time, and bureaucracy involved in conducting foreign trade would significantly help a market that is small and geographically remote on the global stage.

Worldwide demand for liquid silicone rubber set to increase

A report issued by Grand View Research Inc. states that the global market for liquid silicone rubber (LSR) should reach \$3.29bn by 2025. This would represent a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.9 per cent over the decade from 2016. In 2015, the market was worth \$1.5bn. The medical and electronics sectors are main drivers of demand, which is also influenced by development of new materials and ageing populations. It is predicted that the medical industry will post the largest growth over the forecast period. Equipment parts and implants are among the areas where LSR is used in the medical sector. The report, as published by www.plasticsnewseurope.com, also points out that the already strong demand for industrial grade LSR should increase further and account for market revenue of more than \$1.7bn by 2025. A key factor in this is the use of LSR for various purposes within the automotive industry. Automotive and electronics are cited as major reasons why the forthcoming decade should witness rapid growth in the use of LSR across the Asia-Pacific region.

Swiss firms expected to follow government corporate social responsibility guidelines

The government in Switzerland is satisfied with the progress of earlier plans to make the nation's firms conduct their business in a more socially responsible manner. According to a report published by www.swissinfo.ch, improvement has been made in all four strategic areas of an initiative first launched in 2015. These strategies encompass raising awareness among Swiss small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), transparency in social responsibility activities, development of multilateral standards, and advancing the program in developing nations. In the government's view, the environment, human rights, working conditions, consumer protection, anti-corruption, and taxes are all key elements of corporate social responsibility. This framework has been used to launch various measures and set expectations for different Swiss organizations and industries. The initiative is set to run until 2019, at which point a concluding report will be issued.

Reasons why many business partnerships fail

An article published by www.thebalance.com points out that around 70 per cent of business partnerships ultimately do not succeed. It is claimed that entrepreneur failure to address potential disadvantages in such arrangements is the key factor behind this statistic. Some individuals eagerly leap into partnerships with friends, spouses, or other family members. Lack of compatibility is one problem here, while awkwardness inherent in discussing challenging business issues can be another. The tendency to rely on informal agreements is likewise a potential source of trouble, especially during difficult times. And if conflict arises, serious harm to the relationship on both personal and

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professional levels frequently results. Equal commitment is expected between business partners, but this is not always possible. Other commitments or financial constraints are common reasons for this. Unrealistic expectation of immediate success is also a source of frustration. Tensions can arise when one partner is less patient as the business is being built. However, thorough planning beforehand enables better understanding of timescales involved. Insufficient trust and personality clashes are known to be highly damaging, as is lack of agreement about the company's values and goals. The report urges prospective partners to engage in some serious discussion to see if some common ground can be established before entering into any agreement.