

# VCENDOL: Traditional Taste with Modern Twist in Every Sip

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## Prologue

In the early morning of Friday, August 23, 2023, it was likely a storm silently brewed over Tuan Muhammad Muiz Bin T Nordin, known as Abang Cendol. An ordinary morning spiraled into chaos when a complaint flooded in, revealing an unexpected truth where 5,000 bottles of VCendol had turned out spoiled overnight. Panic had setting in as he grasped the magnitude of the disaster, threatening his business. Abang Cendol, as the owner of Versatile Food and Beverage Enterprise, was deeply troubled by that personal blow. For the first time ever, he found himself unprepared when all 5,000 bottles of VCendol were undrinkable!

This incident caused significant financial losses for his company and the dream he had fought so hard for suddenly seemed fragile. But true to his entrepreneurial spirit, he would not surrender to despair. Though unprepared, Abang Cendol reminded himself as a visionary entrepreneur, challenges were inevitable and part of the journey. Absolutely would not limit his ability to succeed even though he had poured heart, soul, and relentless effort into building VCendol from the ground up. Nevertheless, so many questions started to linger in his mind: What would be the consequences if he failed to resolve the issue? Would he face legal action from customers? Would his business have a future? Despite his concerns, guided by the trustworthy belief: *"There is nothing in this world that you cannot do. Just stay focused, be persistent, and work hard to make it happen. No hurdle is insurmountable."*—Dr. Roopleen]

## The Beginning



Versatile Food & Beverage is a fully Malay-owned company that commenced operations in August 2019 and was officially registered on June 2, 2020, under the Registration of Businesses Act 1965. Initially, the business operated as a sole proprietorship with a startup capital of RM1,000. Its flagship product, VCendol, is a bottled version of the traditional Malaysian dessert cendol, designed for convenience.

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## KEYWORDS

Entrepreneurship, product innovation, food and beverage startups, growth strategies, youth entrepreneurship, digital marketing.

## Disclaimer

This case is written solely for educational purposes and is not intended to represent successful or unsuccessful managerial decision-making. The authors may have disguised names; financial and other recognisable information to protect confidentiality.

The journey began with a simple yet powerful idea to bring Malaysia's beloved traditional dessert, cendol, into a modern, ready-to-drink version that suit with today's fast-paced lifestyle. Tuan Muhammad Muiz Bin T Nordin, popularly known as Abang Cendol, grew up surrounded by the vibrant street markets and local eateries where cendol was a staple treat. Inspired by its enduring popularity and cultural value, he recognized an opportunity to innovate while preserving tradition. With a clear vision in mind, he set out to create a product that merges heritage with convenience—VCendol. Unlike conventional cendol, VCendol is made from high-quality Santan Sawit, known for being cholesterol-free, low in fat, and rich in vitamins A, C, and E.

In 2019, with just RM1,000 as startup capital and a deep passion for entrepreneurship, Abang Cendol established Versatile Food & Beverage Enterprise. The journey was far from easy; from sourcing the right ingredients to perfecting the formulation of VCendol, every step demanded patience, experimentation, and unwavering determination. Despite operating with limited resources, Abang Cendol persevered by selling the first batches of bottled cendol to family members, friends, and small local vendors. The overwhelming positive response not only fueled his ambition to further improve and refine the product.

His unwavering commitment to quality and innovation quickly began to gain traction. Through word-of-mouth, social media, and small-scale marketing efforts, VCendol steadily became a recognized name among cendol enthusiasts. As demand grew, so did the challenges—scaling up production, maintaining product consistency, and ensuring product shelf durability were proved to be significant hurdles. However, through persistence and strategic planning, the brand gradually established its presence in the competitive food and beverage industry.

## Background

Tuan Muhammad Muiz Bin T Nordin, widely known as Abang Cendol, was born on May 17, 1997, in Kuala Besut, Terengganu. His entrepreneurial journey began at the age of 19 when he worked as an



assistant at the Professor Cendol Tok Bali restaurant in Bachok, Kelantan, owned by his uncle. Inspired by that early experience in the food industry, he pursued Bachelor's Degree Program in Entrepreneurship with Honors at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK). He enrolled under the 2u2i program, an initiative designed to blend academic learning with real-world industry exposure whereby bringing the gap between academic learning with real business exposure.

Throughout the 2u2i program, Abang Cendol gained hands-on exposure to business operations, supply chain management, and marketing strategies through direct industry placements. He actively participated in entrepreneurship workshops, networking sessions with established business owners, and real-world case studies,

which further shaped his business acumen. The program provided him with a structured pathway to transform theoretical knowledge into practical business solutions, strengthening his confidence to start his own venture.

Additionally, during his studies, Abang Cendol benefited from TUBE@IPT (Tunas Usahawan Belia Bumiputera), a government-driven initiative at UMK that supports young entrepreneurs in starting and scaling their businesses. The TUBE program was first introduced in 2014 with an initial allocation of RM10 million. Through this initiative, each participant is eligible to receive a start up business grant of up to RM15,000, gained access to mentorship, business training, financial guidance, and access to startup funding that played a crucial role in the establishment of Versatile Food & Beverage Enterprise. The structured training equipped him with essential entrepreneurial skills including financial management, product development, and marketing, which empowered him to navigate the challenges of running a business.



With the knowledge and support gained from the TUBE@IPT program, Abang Cendol successfully turned his innovative idea of cendol in a bottle into a marketable product. He applied the entrepreneurial skills acquired through training to develop a solid business plan, refine his product concept, and implement effective marketing strategies. As a result, Versatile Food & Beverage Enterprise quickly gained attention, especially for its unique approach to modernizing a traditional Malaysian dessert. The program not only provided him with the tools to kick-start his business but also instilled in him the confidence and resilience needed to grow and sustain his entrepreneurial journey.

His journey at UMK not only reinforced his passion for business but also provided him with a strong foundation to launch VCendol, an innovative bottled version of Malaysia's beloved traditional dessert. Combining modern convenience with authentic local flavors, VCendol quickly captured the attention of consumers seeking a fresh twist on a nostalgic treat. This milestone marked the beginning of a new chapter in his entrepreneurial journey, where he transitioned from a student entrepreneur to a full-fledged business owner, driven by vision, creativity, and community impact. By September 2021, Abang Cendol successfully completed his studies, armed with both academic credentials and real-world entrepreneurial experience.

## Market Demand in Malaysia



The demand for ready-to-drink beverages in Malaysia has been steadily increasing, driven by urbanization, busy lifestyles, and the growing preference for convenience. As more consumers seek quick and accessible food options, VCendol has the opportunity to capture a larger market share. The Malaysian market also presents a strong affinity for traditional desserts, making VCendol an attractive option for those who appreciate cultural flavors in a modern version. The rise in e-commerce and online food delivery services further boosts the market potential, allowing businesses like VCendol to reach a wider audience beyond physical retail stores.

## The Spark of Entrepreneurship

Abang Cendol's entrepreneurial journey serves as an inspiration for aspiring youth entrepreneurs especially those who were still pursued study. His ability to identify a gap in the market, innovate a traditional dessert, and scale the business despite challenges highlights the essence of entrepreneurship. His story demonstrates that success requires resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous improvement. By fostering a strong entrepreneurial spirit, he has not only built a growing business but also contributed to the local economy by creating job opportunities and promoting Malaysian heritage through food innovation.



## Growth



Versatile Food and Beverage Enterprise was founded out of a passion for entrepreneurship and inspired by early experiences in the food industry. In 2019, Abang Cendol established the company to innovate the traditional Malaysian dessert, cendol, by creating a convenient bottled version known as VCendol. Starting with a capital of RM1,000 and producing approximately 100 bottles per month, the company has since expanded, producing over 1,000 bottles monthly. Committed to customer satisfaction, the business managed to grow from only one to five branches, including kiosks and a physical outlet area Kuala Terengganu district.



## Challenges and Solutions

Despite of his early success like all new businesses, Versatile Food & Beverage faced numerous challenges and major setback in 2023 when a significant portion of its product inventory became unsuitable for consumption. This was a nightmare for Abang Cendol journey where one of the most critical was the limited shelf life of VCendol, which became evident in 2023, when 5,000 bottles of cendol spoiled overnight, leading to severe customer complaints, financial losses, as well as reputational damage.

Not only that, the limited shelf life of VCendol posed difficulties in inventory management, leading to wastage and revenue losses. The company truly believed that maintaining product freshness while ensuring scalability proved to be a complex challenge for the business. Additionally, limited capital also restricted the company's ability to invest in better packaging and securing for research and development (R&D) to enhance product durability and scale production. Due to that, it hindered the company's ability to innovate, affecting its competitiveness, preferably competing with larger brands in the market. To address it, VCendol tried very hard to explore alternative packaging solutions as well as develop partnerships with research institutions.

Besides media coverage, VCendol struggled to establish its strong market presence beyond its local consumer base for instance supermarkets, convenience stores, and international markets. While VCendol gained local recognition, penetrating broader markets required extensive marketing efforts, partnership and regulatory approvals. Moreover, maintaining product quality across multiple locations posed a significant logistical challenge. Expanding distribution while ensuring consistent freshness requires efficient supply chain management and strategic distribution planning.

Consumer trust and satisfaction were also crucial for long-term success. Addressing customer concerns promptly and ensuring consistent quality assurance measures were necessary to regain and rebuild confidence in the brand. Additionally, the company sought worked towards sustainable production practices to align with global trends in eco-friendly packaging and food safety standards. Implementing robust quality control measures and engaging customers transparently helped mitigate negative brand perception.

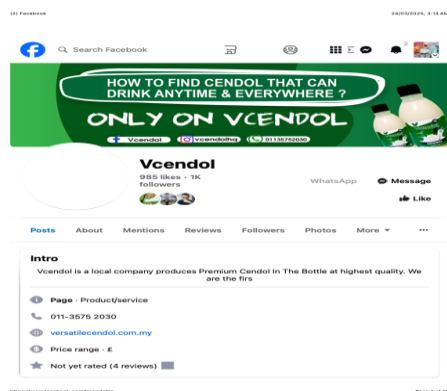
## Business Performance

The innovation behind VCendol allows customers to enjoy cendol anytime and anywhere by simply shaking the bottle before drinking. Versatile Food & Beverage has empowered the local community by recruiting distributors, agents, and drop shippers. The company aims to compete with established brands by prioritizing product quality and innovation. Abang Cendol's entrepreneurial spirit and perseverance have earned him several awards and widespread media coverage in outlets such as *Metro*, *Berita Harian*, *Sinar Harian*, *Harakah Daily*, *Free Malaysia Today*, *Journal Malaysia*, and *China Press*.



Since its establishment, Versatile Food & Beverage Enterprise has demonstrated steady growth, overcome various business challenges and gaining market traction. Initially producing only 100 bottles per month, the company has expanded its production capacity to over 1,000 bottles monthly. The strategic decision to introduce VCendol as a convenient bottled dessert has allowed the company to tap into Malaysia's growing demand for ready-to-drink beverages, driving significant revenue growth. At the start, every step of the process from mixing ingredients to bottling it was done manually, limiting output and making it difficult to meet rising demand. As word-of-mouth marketing and social media exposure increased, orders began to surge, prompting the company to seek ways to optimize production.

To improve the efficiency and scale production of the company, Versatile Food & Beverage made several key investments in its operations. The company transitioned from manual mixing to semi-automated blending machines, ensuring a consistent product texture and quality while reducing preparation time. Additionally, it adopted advanced bottling and sealing technology, which helped extend VCendol's shelf life while preserving the fresh, authentic taste of traditional cendol.



Moreover, to support continuous production, the company also enhanced ingredient sourcing and inventory management by securing bulk suppliers for Santan Sawit, pandan extract, and palm sugar syrup, effectively reducing costs and ensuring a steady supply of raw materials. Furthermore, as demand increased, Versatile Food & Beverage expanded its production space, setting up a larger, more structured processing facility to accommodate higher production volumes and streamline operations. These improvements enabled the company to scale up efficiently while maintaining the quality and authenticity of its flagship product.

With these improvements, the company successfully expanded its production capacity from 100 bottles to over 1,000 bottles per month, allowing VCendol to be distributed beyond small vendors to local retail stores, petrol stations, and online platforms.

The company's financial performance has been boosted by its ability to diversify sales channels. VCendol is now available at various retail locations, including kiosks, petrol stations, mini-markets, and online platforms. Strong brand positioning and media exposure have further contributed to increased customer awareness and loyalty. Moreover, partnerships with distributors and drop shippers have strengthened its supply chain, ensuring broader market penetration.

Despite of financial setback in 2023 due to the product spoilage incident, Versatile Food & Beverage Enterprise has taken proactive steps to improve quality control, secure additional funding for research and development, and refine its business strategy. Moving forward, the company aims to scale up production, enhance operational efficiency, and establish itself as a competitive player in both the domestic and international markets.

### Contribution to the Society

Beyond business success, Versatile Food & Beverage Enterprise is committed to making a meaningful impact on society. By recruiting local distributors, agents, and drop shippers, the company has created job opportunities and supported entrepreneurship within the community. Many individuals, particularly young entrepreneurs and small-scale vendors have benefited from the company's inclusive business model. Additionally, the company actively participates in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, including food donation programs, community engagement events, and sustainability efforts. Recognizing the importance of environmental responsibility, VCendol was exploring eco-friendly packaging options to reduce plastic waste and align global sustainability goals. Versatile Food & Beverage also promotes Malaysia's rich culinary heritage by modernizing traditional desserts while preserving their cultural significance. Through innovation, the company has redefined how Malaysians and international consumers experience cendol, ensuring that this beloved dessert remains relevant in today's fast-paced world.

### Future Goals



Moving forward, Versatile Food & Beverage Enterprise envisions positioning VCendol as a leading brand in the ready-to-drink dessert segment. One of the primary goals is to expand production capacity to 5,000 bottles per day within the next decade to meet increasing consumer demand. The company also aims to strengthen its national presence by securing partnerships with major retailers, supermarkets, and convenience stores such as 7-Eleven and PETRONAS Mesra. In addition, it plans to penetrate regional markets, including Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand, where cendol is already a popular dessert. In order to achieve this, Versatile Food & Beverage will focus on obtaining the necessary regulatory approvals and forming strategic alliances with international distributor.

Looking ahead, when the product innovation remains a priority, the company will invest in research and development (R&D) to improve product shelf life and explore new variations of VCendol, such as lactose-free and sugar-free options to cater to health-conscious consumers. Equally important, efforts will be made towards eco-friendly packaging, aligning with global sustainability trends and strengthening digital marketing as well as brand engagement to reach broader market and build long lasting relationship with customers. The company plans to leverage its social media, influencer collaborations, and e-commerce platforms to reach a broader audience and enhance customer loyalty.

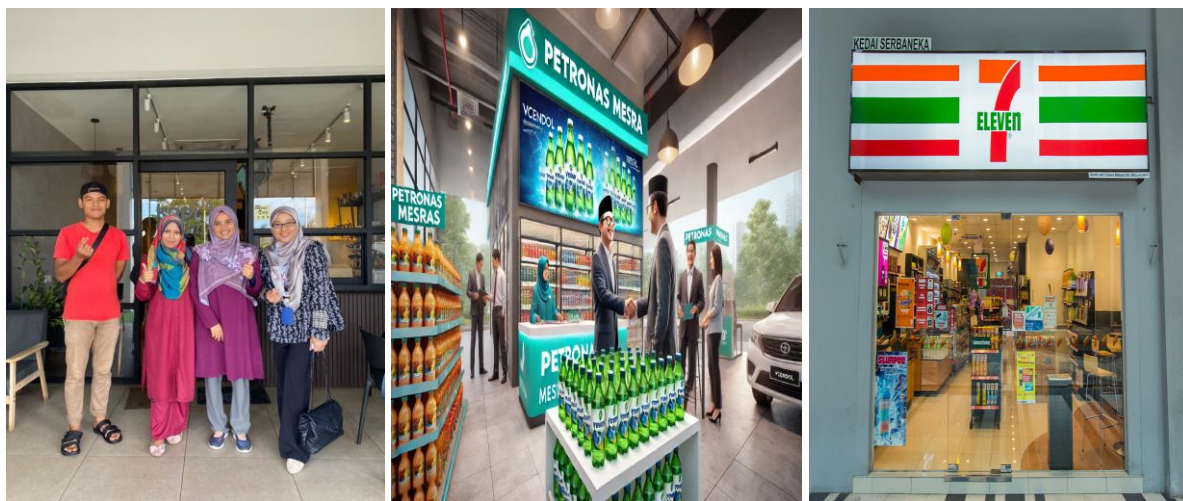
By implementing these strategic initiatives, Versatile Food & Beverage aims to achieve sustainable growth, enhance product quality, and establish VCendol as a household name in both domestic and international markets. Despite setbacks, Abang Cendol remains determined to expand VCendol's market reach, strengthen brand recognition, and enhance product durability. In the near future, he plans to collaborate with influencers, increase digital marketing efforts, and expand product distribution to cafés, petrol stations, convenience stores (7-Eleven), mini markets, and supermarkets across Malaysia. VCendol also aims to scale production to 5,000 bottles per day within the next decade, creating job opportunities for distributors, agents, and delivery partners.

Through strategic planning and unwavering dedication, Versatile Food & Beverage aspires to achieve sustainable growth and establish VCendol position as a leading beverage brand in Malaysia and beyond.

### Epilogue

From adversity came resilience. From adversity came resilience. Faced with a major product crisis that threatened the survival of his business, Abang Cendol demonstrated unwavering determination, adaptability, and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Rather than allowing setbacks to define his journey, he embraced innovation, strategic decision-making, and continuous improvement to rebuild customer trust and strengthen his brand presence.

With a renewed vision, Abang Cendol embarked on a transformative journey, leveraging strategic alliances, bold digital marketing effort, and unwavering commitment to enhance quality control framework to ensure that VCendol could withstand future challenges. His ability to learn from failures and implement corrective measures enabled Versatile Food & Beverage Enterprise to regain its momentum in the highly competitive food and beverage industry. Today, VCendol stands as a symbol of innovation and success in the competitive food and beverage industry, contributing to both local economies and the broader entrepreneurial landscape.





Despite operating in a saturated market dominated by well-established brands, VCendol holds a unique advantage through its innovative approach to modernizing a traditional dessert. By offering a ready-to-drink bottled cendol, the brand caters to urban consumers seeking convenience without compromising on authentic flavors. This distinctive value proposition sets VCendol apart from traditional cendol vendors and other beverage competitors.

Furthermore, strategic expansion efforts into e-commerce, supermarket chains, and convenience stores have strengthened its accessibility to a broader audience. With a growing digital presence through social media marketing, influencer collaborations, and targeted advertisements, VCendol is well-positioned to increase its market penetration and customer base