

(1) Case Study – Global Business Communications, Mong Reththy, Ltd., Cambodia

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(5) Case Study in e-Business

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## Abstract

Mong Reththy is an agribusiness industrial group of companies headquartered in Phnom Penh, Cambodia with total revenue of approximately US\$48 million from 9 divisions. The purpose of the project is to describe background of this company and the Camerica consulting group working with them. Further, to illustrate the index of the Mong Reththy website and examine the English language narrative used. The purposes of the website both locally and globally are examined and sample narrative for improvement is presented.

## Introduction and Background

Cambodia struggles to rebuild itself after 30 years of civil strife and warfare, including the genocidal Khmer Rouge period and the isolation and neglect by the international community. Life expectancy is only in the mid – 50s. Infant mortality stands at 95 per 1,000 childbirths. 85% of Cambodians live in rural areas where life is harsh and access to basic services is difficult. They depend largely on agriculture for their livelihoods. The agriculture sector accounts for 32% of the total economy. For the most part, agricultural products are exported as raw materials with limited value added. (USAID and Cambodia: Retrieved on March 1, 2002 at [http://www.usaid.gov/regions/ane/newpages/one\\_pagers/cambodia01a.htm](http://www.usaid.gov/regions/ane/newpages/one_pagers/cambodia01a.htm))

Most value added manufacturing of these raw materials takes place after export to Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Mong Reththy is vitally interested in the feasibility of manufacturing facilities in Cambodia in order to export more valuable agricultural products at substantially higher prices. In effect, managing more of the supply chain before exports leaves Cambodia, increasing overall revenues and strengthening the young developing Cambodian economy. Mong Reththy manages logistics of the supply chains of four specific agricultural commodity products: palm oil, tapioca, rubber and grapes.

CAMERICA Consulting Group, 848 West Cesar E.

Chavez Ave., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012-2131, U.S.A. is a non-profit association of research consultants specializing in providing services to Cambodian agricultural and industrial raw materials producers. Mr. Phillip T. Thong, C.P.A. is the principal of CAMERICA. Mr. Thong is a successful Cambodian American partner in Thong and Yu C.P.A. firm, and leader in the Cambodian American community of southern California. It is his goal to make a significant contribution to his community both in Los Angeles and his Cambodian motherland.

Camerica -- on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Chan Sarun, Senior Minister and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and the Mong Reththy Group, 130 Vithei Preashy Sihanouk, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Principal: Oknha (Royal Title) Mong Reththy to examine and research global business communications and website development.

## Camerica Objectives for Contribution

1. To examine the global business of Mong Reththy Group, Ltd., Cambodia to identify international markets of four commodity products: palm oil, tapioca, rubber and grapes in Cambodia.
2. To examine alternatives for Global business communications.
3. To work with Cambodian website developers who created <http://www.mongreththy.com/> to enhance website content. Specifically, rewrite extensive awkward and incorrect English text.
4. To make a personal and professional contribution to a real SME. in a newly democratized nation struggling to be recognized by the international community.

Visits were made to agricultural plantations of Mong Reththy in Southwestern Cambodia around Kampot and Phnom Bokor Mountain. Trips to Malaysia and Singapore to investigate current Mong Reththy brokers and business partners/alliances will be necessary. Numerous interviews with local experts were conducted to fully investigate market distribution and various value added manufacturing alternatives.

## *Mong Reththy Group of Companies*

This agro industrial group of companies is headquartered

at 152S, Preah Norodom Boulevard, Phnom Penh 12301, Cambodia and enjoys total revenue of approximately US\$48 million from 9 divisions:

1. Mong Reththy Group Company Limited
2. Mong Reththy Investment Cambodia Oil Palm Company Limited (MRICOP), an International Joint Venture Agro industrial Company, whose partners are Cambodian, and Korean, established in March 23, 1996.
3. Mong Reththy Investment and Cambodia Tapioca Flour Company Limited was established in 1999.
4. MRT-RML Livestock Corporation (Cambodia) Private, Limited was established in 2001 mainly for cattle breeding and ranching for export to Malaysia.
5. Mong Reththy Group - Tiwanon Construction Joint Venture Company Limited.
6. Mong Reththy Steel Industries Company Limited
7. Samnang Khmeng Wat Construction Company Limited was named by the then Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, and established in October 1997.
8. Joint venture with three government owned rubber plantations: Chou Kroc, Boeung Ket and Chamcar Andong, in new infrastructure and machinery.
9. Oknha Mong Port Co., Ltd.

They own 48 pieces of heavy equipment with 12 hauling sets which puts them in a good position to play a major role in the rebuilding of the infrastructure of Cambodia.

Need - Cambodia is a post-conflict country, having suffered a protracted period of war, social upheaval and political turmoil for more than 20 years, starting first under the Lon Nol regime and then Democratic Kampuchea. During this period of upheaval, the administration system for policy formulation and implementation was destroyed. The socio-economic infrastructure such as roads, bridges, irrigation facilities among others were damaged and left in a badly neglected state. Human capital, which could have contributed to the development of the country, was decimated by massive purges, forced labor, disease, and bombing. Cambodia has a wartime legacy of millions of landmines still buried and new victims are being claimed even today. With regards to poverty, 35.9 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line and socio-economic indicators such as literacy, infant mortality rate and others are among the worst in the region.

Since Cambodia's admission to ASEAN in April 1999, the country has been enjoying an opportunity as well as facing the challenge of regional economic integration and competition at an increasingly intense pace. (The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Retrieved October 1, 2003 at <http://www.jica.org.kh>)

## Website

A website such as that for Mong Reththy Group (See index page below) serves several purposes. Primarily it serves as a window to the world. An important public relations vehicle which the company can point to as pride to illustrate to potential suppliers, customers and other stakeholders – “here we are.” This company was eager to introduce themselves to a global audience with this device. It is not intended to manage the logistics of a supply chain or for transactory purposes of any type. Perhaps some day the economic need for such sophisticated utilization of software will be merited.

Two problems seem to show most significantly in this first attempt at a website. First, the company is Cambodian with predominantly Cambodian stakeholders and as such the website should speak to this local audience. The narrative seen on the index or “front page” was conceived in the Khmer language and subsequently translated into English. This English doesn’t speak so well to the local Cambodian audience. Agreed, the audience is not a group of home Internet users, but larger companies and government agencies that are much business cooperating partners. Versions of the narrative in several languages are recommended, but not the existing narrative. The entire website needs to be rewritten in say three languages: Chinese, Japanese and English; and completely redesigned and rewritten. The desired business communications or “impact message” is completely different in each language.

The second problem focuses on the website narrative intended for the global audience. The website originates from Cambodia whose language is not known much outside home borders, therefore English was chosen as a global website language. Unfortunately the translated Cambodian thought, which indeed comes from the heart, and speaks so very beautifully to the Cambodian people – does not “read” very well in English. The beauty of the narrative in native Khmer is somewhat like poetry. When translated directly into global English these thoughts from the heart give the reader a mixed reaction of quaint, odd and confusing.

The lesson is simple and important. When building a website for a local audience, and another one for the world. What the reader sees, reads, perceives and the resulting impressions are everything. When communicating meaningful values to a local audience, present them in the most meaningful way possible. When seeking commercial impact from a global audience, communicate as the global world of business communicates, in whatever language chosen for whatever audience.

## Original Text from Index Webpage

As an example, compare the original text of the front page of the current Mong Reththy website (<http://www.mongreththy.com/>) (See “print screen” picture of index page below)

### **Introduction**

*Reflecting undaunted will of Oknha Mong Reththy and those of the Cambodian people in the immediate on going negotiation of the Paris Treaty: To end h decades of civil war and elevate the plight of the people and give hope for the reunification of all factional parties.*

*Oknha Mong Reththy Chairman and founder of the Mong Reththy Import Export & Construction Company Limited, contributed a great deal to the ashes after the so called Cambodian Year Zero which destroy the country infrastructures, economic, morality and mentality well-being of the Cambodian people. We strongly believed that our hard working years and 3 years of on going efforts to accomplish the first of it kind Agro Industrial of Oil Palm Estate, will definitely pave the ways for Cambodian and put her one famous image back on the world map.*

*Oknha is the noble title has granted by His Majesty Preah Bath Norodom Sihanouk Varaman, the King of Cambodia, in 1996 for the charity works he has devoted and participate in rebuilding the country. Mong Reththy Import Export and Construction Company Limited (MRIEC) was established in 1991 as a form of family business. Today MRIEC does not merely operate as a family business but has expanded to include various associated and investment companies in the country.*

*Back in 1991 the company main activities were exporting of Processed Cambodian Natural Rubber to Asia Countries: Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and China etc. Apart from rubber trade, we are also importing Steel Bars, Cement, and other needed Building Materials, as well as Machinery & Heavy Equipment etc. By late 1996, Oknha Mong Reththy has inaugurated its other associated companies:*

### **Edited Text for Index Webpage**

The following edited version was presented to eliminate the English writing grammatical errors, but intended to preserve the original meaning.

#### *Introduction*

*Our mission reflects the undaunted will of **Oknha Mong Reththy**, as well as the Cambodian people: To end the decades of civil war, to elevate the plight of the Cambodian people, and to give hope for the reunification of all factional parties.*

*Oknha Mong Reththy, Chairman and founder of the **Mong Reththy Import Export & Construction Company, Limited** has contributed enormously to the reconstruction of ruin after the so-called “Cambodian Year Zero” which destroyed the country’s infrastructure, economy, morality and mentality; along with the well being of the Cambodian people. We strongly believe that our three years of hard work and diligence have resulted in the first of its kind Agro-Industrial Oil Palm Estate, which will pave the way to a proud future and reestablish Cambodia’s once famous image on the world map.*

*“Oknha” is the noble and royal title that has been granted by **His Majesty Preah Bath Norodom Sihanouk Varaman**, King of Cambodia, in 1996 to Mong Reththy for his charitable works, as well as his devotion and participation in the rebuilding of Cambodia. **Mong Reththy Import Export and Construction Company Limited (MRIEC)** was established in 1991 as a small family business. Today MRIEC has expanded into a major Cambodian agro-industrial conglomerate of associated and investment companies making a significant contribution to the Cambodian economy, and employing thousands of hard working citizens.*

*Initially, in 1991, the company’s main activities were exporting processed Cambodian Natural Rubber to Asian countries such as **Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China**, and others. Since then, importation of steel bars, cement and other critical building materials, as well as machinery and heavy equipment has been added. By late 1996, **Oknha Mong Reththy** has inaugurated the following associated companies:*

### **Example of Text Rewritten for Global Market**

Here is an example of a complete rewrite in English for a global market. We do not propose that this is the best possible rewrite and other issues and key success factors may need to be emphasized on this index or “front page” – the opening window to this company. Obviously it was

necessary to change the tone, and meaning of the opening text.

#### *Introduction*

*Our mission is to rebuild the infrastructure of Cambodia. We are building the finest roads, bridges, schools, temples and infrastructure systems with a traditional Khmer dedication to quality and excellence. We are dedicated to a new and prosperous Cambodia. We are a growing major player in agribusiness and construction in Southeast Asia and a loyal partner to our neighbors. Cambodia is back in business and ready to show the world her best stuff and Mong Reththy is leading the parade of key competitive strengths.*

*We are Mong Reththy Group -- a company big enough to rebuild Cambodia. A company with a reputation as solid as the Great Angkor Wat and a vision for the future as vast as the globe itself. We remain truly dedicated to the progress of all ASEAN economies.*

*We are nine solid divisions ready to provide the global market with Tapioca, Palm Oil, Industrial construction and a host of other resource based products and services.*

*Please contact us and let us provide a demonstration of what we can do for your company or your project. We are the project experts rebuilding Cambodia.*





Leading in Agro-Industrial for the development of national economy - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Back in 1991 the company main activities were exporting of Processed Cambodian Natural Rubber to Asia Countries: **Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and China** etc. Apart from rubber trade, we are also importing Steel Bars, Cement, and other needed Building Materials, as well as Machinery & Heavy Equipment etc. By late 1996, **Oknha Mong Reththy** has inaugurated its other associated companies:



**MONG RETHTHY GROUP OF COMPANIES**

- [Mong Reththy Group Company Limited](#)
- [Mong Reththy Investment Cambodia Oil Palm Company Limited.](#)
- [Mong Reththy Investment Cambodia Tapioca Flour Company Limited.](#)
- [Oknha Mong Port Co., Ltd.](#)
- [MRT-RML Livestock Corporation \(Cambodia\) Private Limited.](#)
- [Mong Reththy Group - Tiwanon Construction Joint Venture Company Limited.](#)
- [Mong Reththy Steel Industries Company Limited](#)
- [Samnang Khmeng Wat Construction Company Limited](#)

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**Mong Reththy Group Co., Ltd.**

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Email: [mrtgroup@online.com.kh](mailto:mrtgroup@online.com.kh) • Website: <http://www.mongreththy.com>

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