



Helen Ong, a bilingual post-graduate in Strategic Marketing from Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK), despite having many years of experience in business strategic planning, has propelled to be one of the most highly endorsed and in-demand Metaphysics consultant in the corporate and residential arena in Asia.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE RECESSION?

Last year in the month of December, I was invited by LOCBC Securities to share my view on the Financial Forecast for 2008. I have encouraged the participants to focus more on agricultural and metal industries. However, many of those whom I have spoken to were pinning their hopes on the property sector, hoping that there will be another Bull Run or a better time to get into the market. But by now, the market sentiments would have warded off speculators, leaving bargain hunters to benefit.

The sub-prime issues have not been solved, and perhaps, more ill effects have yet to surface, thus potentially causing the strain on financial markets. Given the current scenario of rising inflation, most business giants who have witnessed the last recession are prepared to take proactive approach to lowering costs on their business operations and development. Some of whom I have spoken with, are beginning to trim their staff force so as to get ready for the storm that is about to arrive.

With a reference check on the similar energy pattern using the Chinese Metaphysics system, it shows that the 2008 energy pattern including its monthly

elemental influences is similar to 2003. In 2003, the economy was largely affected by the SARS disease, which hit Asia badly. Will we see the same happening this year? Looking at the combination of elements from the yearly point of view, it shows water- and earth-related disasters, demonstrating contaminations that lead to breeding deadly diseases. Imagine, with current rising inflation on commodities, it will only take a natural disaster to cripple the equilibrium - which no one can prevent.

The construction sector, raw material suppliers, agricultural companies dealing with supply of food and grains, energy and gold will continue to perform well. However, the biggest fear may not lie in the rising cost of food as it may most likely be caused by rising cost of fuel which eventually results in ripping off tight expenses. This would mean insufficient budget for other necessities, depleting additional savings or reducing funds available for future investments.

With resources becoming scarcely available, manufacturing companies who are highly reliant on the fundamentals of supply chain will face major challenges as costs of production are

increasing. Only cash rich firms with strong reserves will take this as an opportunity to compete and monopolize the trade. Without financial support from banks, small firms will face a hard time in sustaining their high operational and production cost. Most will either choose to sell away their assets or result in business closure. What may eventually bring down the market and cause an economic downturn would be the retailers and manufacturers.

Meanwhile, while the business sectors are looking at survival methods and alternative ways to maintain their competitiveness, investors should take this opportunity to consider their options with care and re-evaluate their available resources for investments in a much longer-term perspective. Ultimately, having strong reserves or cash flow would be the key that everyone should remember during this challenging period of time. The recession has seeped in gradually and we should see the slump by 2009.

— Helen Ong

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