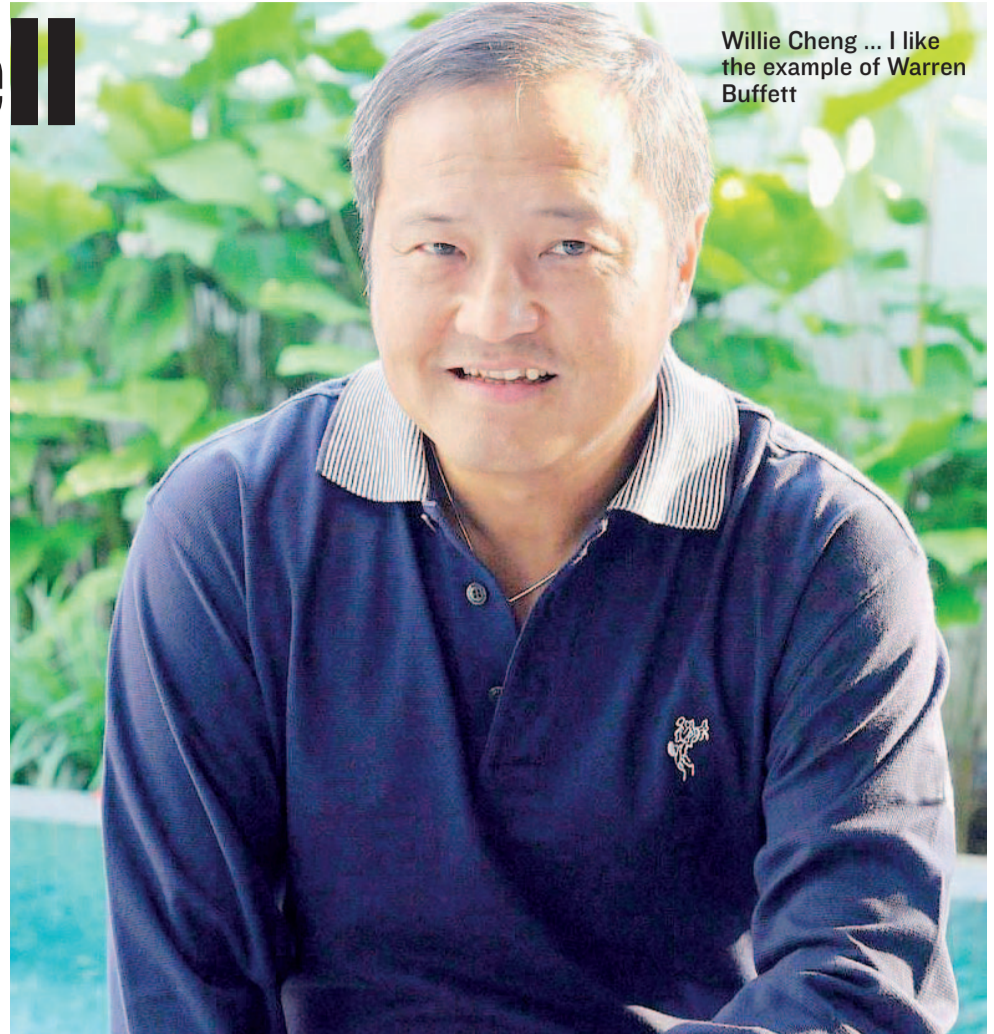


**Chit-chat – an occasional column featuring authors and their readers**

# Good read as well

Willie Cheng ... I like the example of Warren Buffett



**The book:** *Doing Good Well: What Does (and Does Not) Make Sense in the Nonprofit World*

**The author:** Willie Cheng

**The interviewer:** Joan Hoi

**A** new book about charity models provides a refreshing new take on the charity scene. It effectively reconciles the many apparent contradictions of the charity world.

Written by Willie Cheng, a former managing partner of Accenture Singapore, it provides a business perspective to the nonprofit sector.



Joan Hoi (left), a partner at Accenture Malaysia, having read the book, caught up with her former colleague for his take on some specific issues that many donors and volunteers face:

**What advice would you give**

**to someone regarding how they should choose a charity and how they should contribute to it?**

That's a good first step – wanting to contribute. I usually ask people to contribute from their strength and from their interest. Strength because that is how you make the maximum impact. If you are a doctor, being part of a medical mission or a health related charity leverages your medical expertise best. All of us have talents which can be used to contribute to society.

Interest because you should do what you have a liking for, better still, a passion for. Interest can also be developed. Often, people are drawn into a charitable cause through

being asked to by someone they know, but over time, they develop a passion for that cause.

**What about those people who have no time to volunteer, would just giving money do?**

That's fine too. Of course, we should give all of our means – our time, our money, our talents. It is more fulfilling when you give what you can. Many volunteers have found that in applying themselves, when they channel their money towards the same cause they are helping in, the impact they make is that much greater.

I hear many people saying that giving time is more difficult than giving money. That may or not be true. It depends on the individual. I think a more important question is: which will have more impact? For a successful businessman, the financial resources he can inject into a charity can significantly exceed the impact that he can make working directly in the charity.

I like the example of Warren Buffet, the investor extraordinaire. He pledged his fortune, some US\$37bil to charity by giving it mainly through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, rather than doing it on his own. Instead, he will continue doing what he is doing - compounding that money further. The charitable impact that he can make by growing that fortune is a great deal more than he can by rolling up his sleeves and helping out directly with charities.

**How can donors ensure that a charity is accountable for its spending?**

The theoretical answer is "informed giving" – donors should be demanding, discerning, and discriminating of the charities they give to; they should give only to those they believe are doing their jobs properly. That of course is not always practical. The average individual donor gives out of generosity and will not respond too favourably if you tell him that he now has to additionally expend the energy to do due diligence each time he gives a hundred dollars. The practical answer then is for individual donors to give through foundations and funds that have the scale, clout and expertise to do the due diligence as part of their grant making process.

I can tell you though that most charities

have got the message: that they need to be more accountable to the community. As the title of the book suggests, we are moving from an era where charity is simply about "just doing good" to one of "doing good well". They are getting that message from donors, from regulators, from the media and from the general public. It's now more a question of execution.

**Some charities employ people who are paid a commission to raise funds. What do you think of this practice?**

Paid third-party fundraising is a practice from the commercial world that does not sit well in the charity sector. Someone provides you a service and in exchange, he gets a cut of the results.

It does not sit well with donors because the reason they give is that they have a heart for the cause, and many donors do not like the idea that part of the money they give do not

go to the charitable cause.

There are donors who can be comfortable with the idea that there is a cost to fundraising and that cost is not absorbed by volunteers or a company doing it as part of their CSR. So these donors do not have an issue with the charity outsourcing this part of their operations.

So, the important thing is to ensure that the charities and the fundraisers declare upfront to the potential donors, the commercial arrangements at some level of detail, especially the commission percentage, and if donors give with full knowledge of what is happening, I think it should be fine.

• *The book is published by John Wiley & Sons and is available at Borders, Kinokuniya and other major book stores in Malaysia and online through Amazon. It recently won the Silver Medal in the Philanthropy/Charity/Nonprofit category of the 2009 Axiom Business Book*

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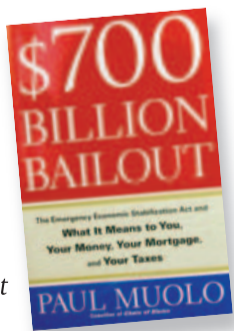
**\$700 billion Bailout**

**Author:** Paul Muolo  
**Publisher:** John Wiley & Sons (price US\$14.95)

THERE are several titles by Muolo on the current global economic turmoil. The first is *Chain of Blame* on how Wall Street and its practices created the current economic mess. *\$700 billion Bailout* is his third book. He had an earlier book *Inside Job: The Looting of America's savings and Loans* (1991). *Chain of Blame* and *Bailout* are related to the current quagmire the US has found itself in, but Muolo takes a more specific look at the \$700bil bailout by the US government and how it affects the ordinary American, his money, mortgage, and taxes.

This \$700bil package has since been superseded by the \$787bil fiscal package signed and approved by the American congress in February.

Muolo examines how the package effects the mortgage and credit market, the important things one should know about mortgages, rates and housing, and how to grow one's savings through various financial instruments. Half of the book - and there are only four chapters - outlines the great unravelling of and the subsequent Troubled Asset Relief Programme, and how



the layperson should manage his financial matters. The second half has excerpts from the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008. Definitions and legalities are set out in point form.

**The Quintessential Man: The Story of Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin**

**Author:** Azam Aris  
**Publisher:** Christine Holding/Utusan Publications & Distribution (RM100)

A ROBUST and indepth biography of the late Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin and his legacy as a committed civil servant and a dedicated president of Petronas. The writer traces the story of the young Azizan, the eldest in a family of four children and begins the story with Azizan's birthplace in Penang. Azam gives an insight into the man who put national interest ahead of everything, and whose integrity and hard work endear him to politicians, colleagues and friends. Although this is supposed to be a biography - and relatively light reading - the language and style tend to be rather stoic and to the point.

There are ample quotes from friends, relatives,



**SNAPSHOTS by THEAN LEE CHENG**

colleagues, and politicians but much of these are plucked from various sources, which result in a lack spontaneity. He also dwells on the various projects and assignments with great depth, which has a tendency to cut into the flow of the story about the man himself.

**Marketing Calculator**

**Author:** Guy R Powell  
**Publisher:** John Wiley & Sons (US\$24.95)

DON'T let the title fool you. There are some numbers but not as much as anticipated. Essentially, the book is about strategies and execution of marketing campaigns with highlights on competition, consumer psychology, and branding.

Its objective is to raise the return on investment and the writer gives a framework on how this can be done with branding, segmentation, strategies and competition, and how all these can work together to give the marketer a return.

Powell has done tremendous research in the field and examines every dimension, from purchasing to keeping stocks, distribution and promotions, and differentiation to packaging.

