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SAP's loyal and expanding pool of regional customers is a significant reason for the company's ongoing success story in Singapore. "More than half of SAP's customer base in Asia-Pacific is made up of companies with sales turnover of below US\$100 million (Small and Mid-Sized Businesses [SMBs])," revealed Chan Wai Leong, Managing Director, SAP Singapore.

This is not surprising, considering the latest figures on IT spending in Asia-Pacific compiled by IT and telecommunications market intelligence specialist International Data Corporation (IDC). According to IDC, SMBs spent over US\$28 billion on IT in 2003, accounting for nearly half of the total tech spending in the region. IDC also projects the SMB market in Asia-Pacific to grow at a combined annual growth rate of 18.5 per cent until 2004, making it the fastest growing area of the IT industry.

Before launching its All-In-One set of business applications, SAP first forged strategic partnerships with IT service providers Encore Applications Services, Genovate Solutions, ISS Consulting and **Unisoft Infotech**. Supported by SAP, these four Channel Partners are tasked with developing and market-customising solutions and programmes for specific vertical industries, which include high-tech, chemicals, **consumer products and retail**, as well as heavy equipment and machinery operations. In addition, each Channel Partner is granted US\$1 million by SAP in the first two years as a subsidy for training, after-sales support, and costs.

"Through our innovative SAP solutions for SMBs, we offer customers highly scalable out-of-the-box solutions to drive efficiency and profitability in this increasingly competitive business climate," SAP Singapore's Chan said. Even now, there are plans to involve up to six more Channel Partners to develop applications for the storage/transportation and services sectors.