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DEPUTY REGISTRAR

EVANS NG

17 JULY 2026

IN THE STATE COURTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

[2026] SGDC 230

District Court Originating Claim No 1255 of 2025
Assessment of Damages No 100 of 2026

Between

Haweina Trading Co Ltd

... Claimant

And

- (1) Bling Blink SG Pte Ltd
- (2) Ng Hui Fen

... Defendants

JUDGMENT

[Tort] — [Defamation] — [Damages]

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Haweina Trading Co Ltd
v
Bling Blink SG Pte Ltd and another

[2026] SGDC 230

District Court Originating Claim No 1255 of 2025
Assessment of Damages No 100 of 2026
Deputy Registrar Evans Ng
16 June, 16 July 2026

17 July 2026

Judgment reserved.

Deputy Registrar Evans Ng:

1 The Claimant is a foreign company and runs a business providing eyelash beautification services and related products and training courses. The 1st Defendant is a Singapore company and, *nomen est omen*, it too provides eyelash products and services. The 2nd Defendant is its sole shareholder and director. The disputants had no dealings with each other until April 2025. The Defendants had a misunderstanding with a supplier whom they had in common with the Claimant. They put it down to the Claimant's doing. Disgruntled, they dashed off a series of posts about the Claimant, its representatives or employees on their social media accounts.

2 Those louche publications attracted a libel action from the Claimant. Because the Defendants did not file and serve a notice of intention to contest or not contest, a default judgment was entered against them. The issues of

defamatory meaning and identification became incontestable. The matter proceeded to this assessment of damages hearing, at which the Claimant sought general damages only.

3 Unlike a natural person, a corporate claimant is not presumed to have a reputation. It must prove that it has a reputation that is capable of being injured by the libel. Therefore, when assessing damages, there is a threshold question of whether the claimant had a trading or business reputation within Singapore, at the time of the libellous publications. This is a question of fact to be established by evidence: *Qingdao Bohai Construction Group Co, Ltd and others v Goh Teck Beng and another* [2016] 4 SLR 977 at [50], [51], [58] and [59]. If the answer is negative, it is not entitled to damages.

4 The Claimant pleaded that it “operates outside of Singapore, from Taiwan” but has clients and customers “across Asia, including [...] Singapore” and a reputation “within the beauty community, particularly in Taiwan and Singapore”. I examine whether the evidence fulfils this pleading.

5 Ms Yeh Yi-Wei is a director of the Claimant and appeared as its sole witness. She says that the Claimant has clients in Singapore, based on the number of “followers” that its social media accounts have accumulated. Her affidavit of evidence-in-chief affirmed on 30 January 2026 stated:

The Claimant is a company based in Taiwan [...]. Given that the Claimant has clientele across Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, the Claimant has, to date, amassed approximately 13,700 followers on Instagram and 2,517 followers on Threads [which are social media platforms]. The Claimant primarily relies on social media to conduct and promote their business.

In my view, her reasoning lacks discrimination and her numbers are short of explanatory power. There is no certain or necessary relationship between the

number of followers that a company has gathered on its social media accounts and the existence of its business or trading reputation in a particular jurisdiction. Further, there is no evidence in the affidavit to show whether any, and if so, how many, of the Claimant's social media followers were from Singapore, and when they were cultivated.

6 Ms Yeh's affidavit also alleged, "On or around I was also informed by a potential client of mine from Singapore that she had seen the [defamatory statements] [...] Evidence of this is exhibited [...] herein." The allegation is missing a date. The exhibited evidence consists of screenshots of some text messages exchanged between Ms Yeh and the said "potential client", which are meant to prove the allegation. I cannot determine from the screenshots when those text messages were exchanged — I suppose the Claimant's solicitors faced the same problem when drafting the affidavit, inserted a placeholder in the text, and forgot about it. The bigger problem is that the Claimant is unable to demonstrate from the contents of the text messages that the said "potential client" hailed from Singapore and not elsewhere (for example, Hong Kong or Malaysia).

7 That is the entire gamut of the Claimant's affidavit evidence to prove that it had a business or trading reputation within Singapore as of April 2025, and it is insufficient.

8 When cross-examined by the 2nd Defendant, Ms Yeh said the Claimant:

- (a) did not have any physical premises in Singapore,
- (b) did not employ any staff in Singapore,
- (c) did not know how many alleged Singapore customers it had served,

- (d) had not produced any records showing the number of alleged Singapore customers it had served,
- (e) had not shown how much business revenue was derived from alleged Singapore customers,
- (f) did not conduct any physical courses in Singapore,
- (g) did not know how many alleged Singapore customers attended its online courses,
- (h) did not keep attendance records of its online courses because they were pre-recorded videos,
- (i) had not produced any invoices or receipts relating to alleged Singapore customers who had signed up for its courses,
- (j) did not know how many of its social media followers were from Singapore,
- (k) did not receive any industry awards in Singapore,
- (l) was not invited by any Singapore organization to speak as an industry expert, and
- (m) was not featured by any Singapore media outlets.

9 When given another opportunity to show the Court any documents regarding the extent of the Claimant's reputation in Singapore, Ms Yeh stated:

In terms of the number of Instagram followers, there are 14,100 [as of 16 June 2026, the date of the hearing], which I would say it is rather reputable with this number of followers. And I believe be it Singapore, Hong Kong or Taiwan, the number of followers in my case, I belong to the top tier.

Her answer made clear that the Claimant is indeed relying purely on the strength of its online social media presence to prove its business or trading reputation in Singapore, which I cannot accept (see [5] above). The oral evidence given on behalf of the Claimant does not advance its case.

10 Since the Claimant has failed to establish that, at the material time, it had the requisite reputation in this jurisdiction, it is not entitled to an award of damages. I will hear the parties on costs.



Evans Ng
Deputy Registrar

Fong Wei Li, Tiffanie Lim Jing Wen and
Leng Ji En Paul (Forward Legal LLC) for the claimant;
The first defendant absent and unrepresented;
The second defendant in person.
