

## **WHAT DO YOU SIGN UP FOR BY GIVING YOUR BUSINESS CARD?**

Exchange business cards is key to any business meetings in Asia. Even if you don't speak with someone, you may still exchange business cards.

Nevertheless, you should be aware that this type of document contains a number of personal data whose collection, use and disclosure are, depending on the context, not always protected by Singapore and Hong Kong's data protection laws.

According to Singapore regulation<sup>1</sup>, information's available on your business card are only protected if you provided it solely for personal purposes. Otherwise, the recipient is able to collect, use and/or disclose your personal data without your consent and for instance send you a brochure by email or by post, or email/call you for business purpose.

Since the data protection provisions do not apply to business contact information, if given for business purpose, there will be no more right of access and correction of his data for the business card's owner.

In Hong Kong, data used for direct marketing is regulated but there is no provision for business contact information. The guidelines<sup>2</sup> specify that your business contact information may be protected, it depends on the context in which this information is collected by the recipient, (for professional or personal purpose) and the type of information they wish to send. To conclude, the recipient is able to use the data without your consent only if your data is collected for professional purpose and cumulatively if the product or service offered are related to your company's activity. If not, the recipient must comply with the provisions of the Personal Data Ordinance and must obtain your consent to use your data for direct marketing purposes.

Now you know what's happening when you give your business cards. You may then think twice sometimes in order to avoid irrelevant solicitations.

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<sup>1</sup> [Personal Data Protection Act 2012](#), Part I Preliminary, (5)

<sup>2</sup> [New Guidance on Direct Marketing](#), January 2013