Scaling Smarter: Venture Debt in Action

How high-growth companies across Asia use venture debt to scale, preserve ownership, and build financial discipline.

Venture debt is rapidly emerging as a strategic financing tool for high-growth companies across Southeast Asia, India, and China. From Malaysia's first unicorn to the world's first publicly traded agentic AI company, Innoven Capital's portfolio companies illustrate a broader trend, that venture debt is a strategic complement to equity.

It is a deliberate tool for founders who want to scale smarter: extending runway and optimising ownership while building financial discipline early. As the region's innovation economy matures, these success stories demonstrate that debt, when deployed with prudence, supports sustainable scaling across diverse business models and market cycles.

INNOVEN CAPITAL

Carsome's Path to Profitability

Southeast Asia's largest integrated car e-commerce platform, Carsome, transformed the region's used car market through digitisation. In its early years, sustaining rapid growth was challenging amid rising working capital needs. Traditional financing options were limited for a pre-profitable company, and Carsome often had to prioritize liquidity for critical capital expenditures, which often came at the expense of faster expansion.

Venture debt played a pivotal role in supporting Carsome's journey from a growth-stage startup to a profitable, bankable corporate. It enabled expansion at two critical points: the launch of its retail business and the accelerated rollout of its dealer financing program.

Innoven Capital's structure included a modest equity kicker – far less dilutive than an equity round – alongside a reporting and covenant framework that reinforced financial discipline. Over time, this improved transparency, strengthened forecasting, and equipped Carsome with the financial and operational readiness to engage more efficiently with traditional banks as it matured.

Yay! Group: Scaling F&B Without Compromising Ownership

Across Southeast Asia, more consumer businesses are using venture debt to scale efficiently while preserving founder ownership. In Indonesia, Yay! Group's growth of Sushi Yay! shows how disciplined expansion can be achieved without sacrificing control or operational rigor. By focusing on building Sushi Yay! into a scalable national brand, the group has grown to 55 stores across Indonesia in two years, supported by a repeatable operating model and a clear, data-driven rollout strategy.

Venture debt played a key role in accelerating store expansion without diluting ownership. The additional capital enabled faster openings and more efficient deployment, while maintaining strict performance thresholds at the store level.

Beyond providing growth funding, taking on debt has strengthened the company's underlying financial discipline through tighter forecasting, improved capital allocation, and more rigorous reporting. Today, Sushi Yay! stands as a focused growth engine with strong unit economics and a clear path to continued national scale, demonstrating how businesses can expand rapidly without giving up ownership.

ElasticRun: Fast Track to Growth

It's a similar story at India's largest logistics and fulfilment network, ElasticRun, which delivers over 4 million parcels daily and operates the country's leading rural B2B e-commerce platform. While the company had raised sufficient equity early on, working capital cycles had yet to stabilise due to its limited operating history with vendors.

Venture debt enabled ElasticRun to fund working capital needs without slowing execution or returning prematurely to equity markets. The timely availability of capital, supported by Innoven Capital's swift decision-making, was critical in keeping growth on track. The move also strengthened financial discipline, sharpening cash flow and business forecasting, as well as improving planning for higher-than-expected growth.

Mininglamp Technology: Balancing Expansion With Discipline

In China, venture debt has played a similar role in balancing growth with financial discipline. Mininglamp, the country's largest data intelligence application software provider, used venture debt to support business expansion and manage short-term working capital needs. The financing eased operational pressure while enabling continued investment across core business lines, without diluting ownership.

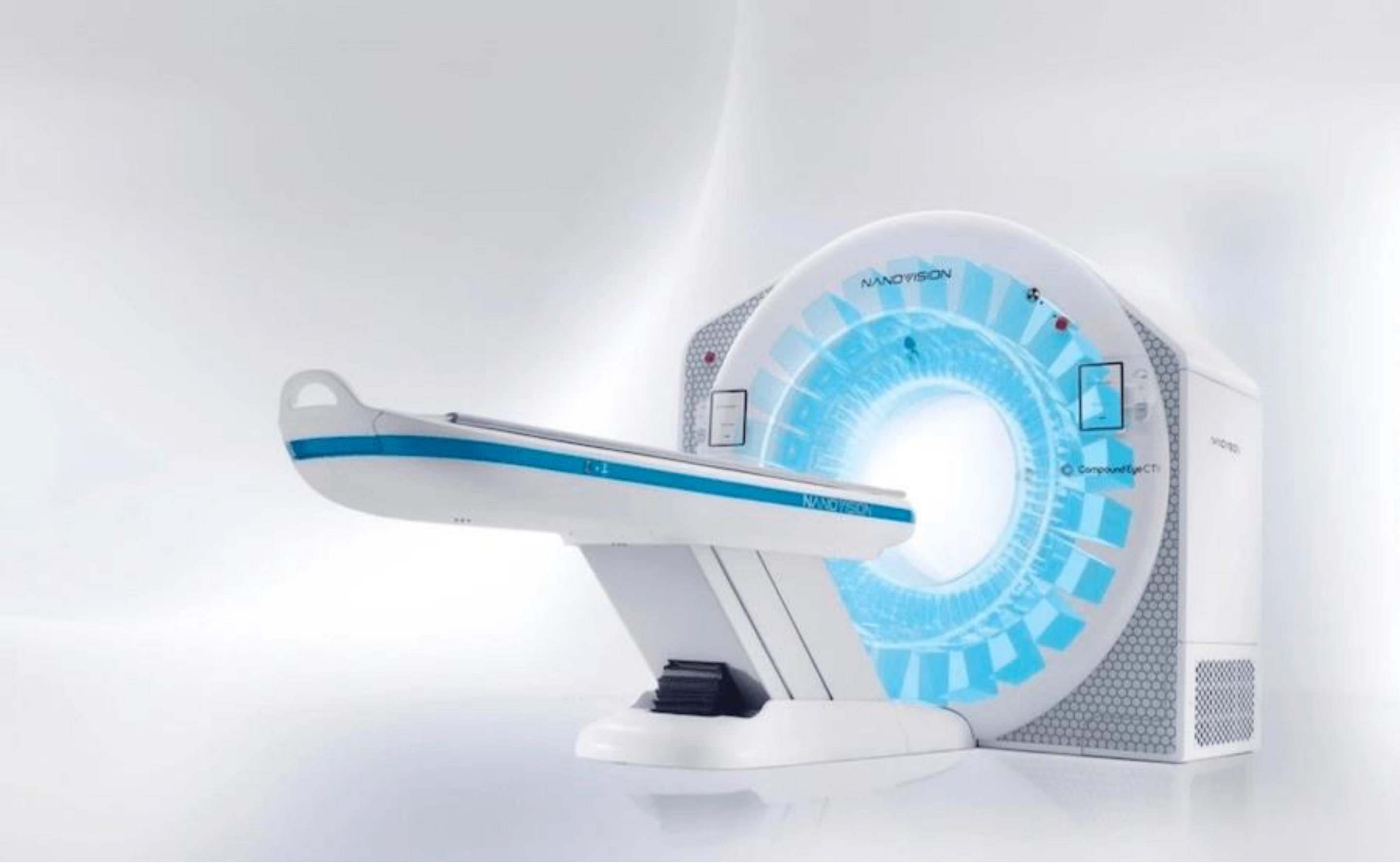
The discipline required to service debt also reinforced stronger financial forecasting and capital planning–capabilities that proved critical as Mininglamp matured.

In November 2025, Mininglamp successfully listed on the main board of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, becoming the world's first publicly traded agentic AI company, a milestone that underscores the value of disciplined capital management.

Nanovision Technology: Optimizing Capital Structure for Precision Growth

Nanovision Technology, a specialist in high-speed, high-precision radiology imaging, adopted venture debt at a stage when operations stabilized and growth opportunities accelerated. The company used debt to optimize its capital structure—supporting short-term working capital needs such as procurement and payments, while also investing in R&D and market expansion.

By balancing near-term operating requirements with longer-term investments, Nanovision improved capital efficiency, reduced reliance on dilutive equity financing, and strengthened financial transparency as it scaled its presence in the medical imaging market.



When Venture Debt Works, and Why

Across these companies, three consistent themes stand out:

Timing	Venture debt was deployed at the right moment, to accelerate momentum during critical growth phases. It did not replace growth.
Asset Alignment	Funds were directed toward assets or initiatives that generated immediate or near-term cash flows.
Capital Synergy	Venture debt complemented equity, preserved ownership, and prepared companies for their next institutional capital stage.

Together, these themes highlight the constructive role venture debt can play in supporting scale.

"When venture debt is structured thoughtfully, it becomes a powerful complement to equity in helping high growth companies scale successfully."

Ong Beng Teck, CEO, Innoven Capital Group