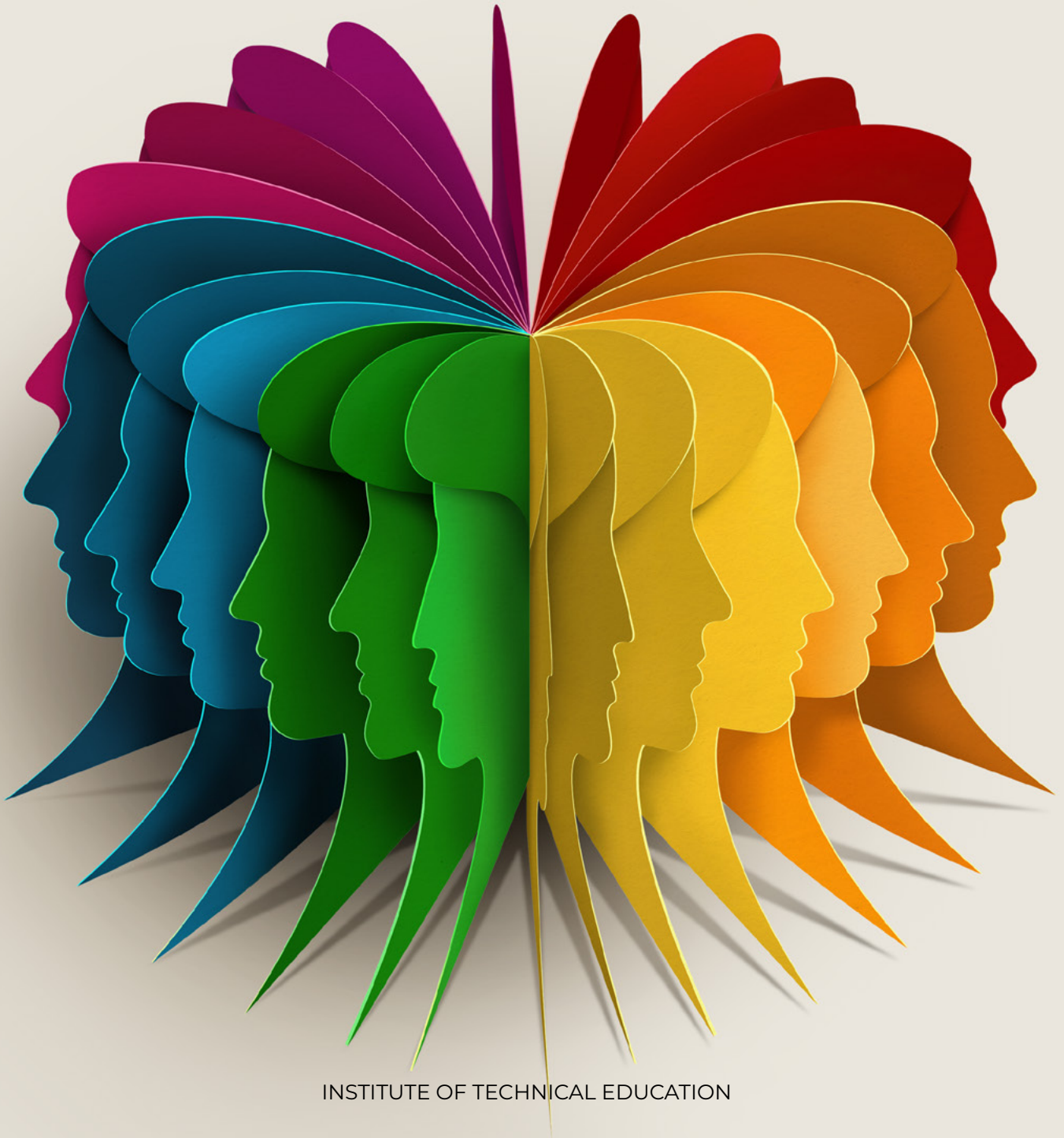


INSPIRING TOMORROW'S ENTREPRENEURS

Celebrating our Graduates who turned
bold ideas and passion into thriving ventures



INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

INSPIRING TOMORROW'S ENTREPRENEURS

Published by Institute of Technical Education, Singapore
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Designed by Oxygen Studio Designs Pte Ltd

Written by Oxygen Studio Designs Pte Ltd
Edited by Institute of Technical Education

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ISBN

978-981-94-4506-6 (Paperback)

978-981-94-4507-3 (PDF)

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD p6 — Mr Desmond Lee

CEO'S MESSAGE p8 — Ms Low Khah Gek

p10 **LAYING THE FOUNDATION**

Kenneth Neo Gim Chye
Thomas Ting Siew Hood
Terence Lai Chee Fai
Bryan Heng Joo Soon
Phua Swee Hoe
Edmund Chew Tee Khiang
Edwin Ang Thiam Seng
Dr Abdul Malik Hassan

p22 **BUILDING A SKILLED NATION**

Anders Tan Wei Siong
Mohd Farhan Bin Mohd Firdaus
Sivachandran Murugasu
Wang Junyong
Neo Shen Wei
Chan Wai Lim
Ben Ng Wei Li
Brenda Tan Sock Hua
Mohd Suhaimie Bin Sukiman
Bernard Lin Zhi Wei
Desmond Eng Guo Wei
Karylan Lee Li Lin
Melvin Chong Chee Leong
Jocelyn Ng Li Zhen

p40 **EXPANDING HORIZONS IN A NEW ECONOMY**

Noel Ng Sing Guan	Hafiz-Zul Hasif Bin Hasan
Evangeline Hum Yan Xin	Bonnie Chan
Derrick Lee Ming Yang	Koocester
Fathanah Binti Suhairi	Herron Ho Wei Chong
Lim Yan Hong	Movint Rao s/o Balakrishnan
Regina Ho Rong Ming	Leong Siew Yong
Daryl Wong Rui Zhi	Alwin Ng Zi En
Aow Jia Rong	Chandpreet Singh s/o Pritam Singh
Nuradlin Hamzah	Christina Soh Xuan Ni
Nur Atiqah Binte Jasman	Jess Tan
Suyadi Bin Sujaya	Teh Jun Xiong
Andrea Lim Meng Yan	Vanitha d/o Anbazhagan
Lee Syafiq Bin Md Ridzuan	Jolin Sao Jing Xuan
Sheila Manokaran	Genevieve Seah
Adrian Gan Jun Wei	Nur Hazwani Binte Muhamad Fadzil
Goh Miah Meng	Justin Lim Wei De
Lu Hui Wen	Tay Woon Teng
Lim Chin Soon	
Seah Bi Yang	
Nur Izzati Binte Mohamad Yusli	
Ernest Chew Chun Kiat	

p80 **SHARPEN SKILLS, SHAPE TOMORROW**

p82 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Entrepreneurship begins with an idea fuelled by resilience, learning and the courage to keep moving forward



This book celebrates our ITE alumni who have harnessed their skills to create thriving ventures. Their journeys show us that every starting point can lead to remarkable destinations.

These stories reflect ITE's ethos of equipping our students with practical skills, drawing out their latent potential, nurturing their confidence, and empowering them to shape their own futures. The stories highlight how entrepreneurship is not only about success, but also about uplifting communities and contributing to Singapore's economy, creating jobs and positioning our country as a hub for innovation.

In the following pages, you will gain insights from:

⑤ **Mr Desmond Lee**, Minister for Education, and Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration, on why entrepreneurship is essential for Singapore's progress.

⑥ **Ms Low Khah Gek**, CEO of ITE, on how a skills-based education lays the foundation for entrepreneurship.

Together, their messages and the stories of our alumni offer one clear lesson: you do not need to have everything figured out before beginning. What matters is to dream, start, learn, adapt and grow.

We hope this book will inspire the next generation of ITE entrepreneurs to imagine boldly, act bravely and shape the world they want to live in.



FOREWORD

Entrepreneurship has played an instrumental role in Singapore's transformation from a developing nation to a thriving global city-state.

Our early entrepreneurs laid the foundation with traditional trade and manufacturing, armed with sheer determination, an appetite for risk-taking and good ideas. They understood that success in business required not only technical skills but also business acumen, resilience and adaptability. These qualities remain equally relevant today. Our Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of our economy and embody the entrepreneurial spirit that has defined our nation's success. Today, SMEs constitute 99 per cent of all enterprises in Singapore, employing nearly 70 per cent of our workforce and contributing significantly to our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Each of them represents not just economic activity, but the determination, and innovative spirit of Singaporean entrepreneurs who dare to dream.

As we moved into the digital age, tech-savvy entrepreneurs now leverage digital platforms and social media to reach audiences far and wide. From e-commerce platforms to content creation, and innovative manufacturing solutions to tech-enabled services, the entrepreneurial DNA remains remarkably consistent. They have proven that Singapore brands can compete and succeed on the global stage, carrying with them the values of quality, innovation and reliability.

Since its establishment, ITE has been a launchpad for many entrepreneurs who have created businesses that not only serve our local community but have also expanded their reach beyond our shores. The stories within these pages chronicle their business success, as well as the evolution of Singapore's entrepreneurial landscape.

To our next generation of entrepreneurs, let this book be both a challenge and an inspiration. Learn from those who came before you. Start small, stay adaptable, and remember that every venture, no matter how modest, has the potential to grow into something extraordinary.

I congratulate our ITE alumni for leading the way and look forward to seeing many more of you turn your ideas into impact for Singapore and beyond.

DESMOND LEE

Minister for Education, and
Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration
Singapore

CEO'S MESSAGE

At ITE, our education philosophy is 'skills transform lives'. We adopt the 'Hands-On, Minds-On, Hearts-On™' approach to nurture work-ready, life-ready and world-ready professionals. I am immensely proud to present this collection of entrepreneurial journeys of our ITE alumni. They exemplify the very essence of what ITE stands for: turning potential into excellence, skills into opportunities and dreams into thriving enterprises.

For all students in ITE, we equip them with technical competencies as well as foster the desire to think beyond conventional boundaries. Our alumni entrepreneurs featured in this book are living proof of this. Innovation and adaptability are hallmarks of successful entrepreneurs, qualities that one alumnus, Herron Ho has demonstrated brilliantly in building a comprehensive ecosystem within aquatic services. Herron's ability to identify market gaps and create integrated solutions showcases the problem-solving mindset that the ITE education cultivates. The creative industries have also been enriched by our alumnus, Terence Lai, whose business has become a regional leader in design and events management. His entrepreneurial journey demonstrates that Singapore brands can compete and succeed on the global stage. Entrepreneurs can create community impact as exemplified by an alumna, Sheila Manokaran. Her enterprise and leadership in youth empowerment has created ripple effects far beyond her immediate sphere. Her commitment to nurturing the next generation reflects the values we hope to instil in every ITE graduate – that success is not just about personal achievement but also about lifting others along the way.

The ITE alumni entrepreneurs also represent unique challenges and opportunities of their respective eras, ranging from those who built their businesses during Singapore's rapid industrialisation to today's digital natives who leverage technology to reach global markets. They have reaped the benefits of the technical foundation and entrepreneurial mindset fostered during their growing years at ITE.

'*ITE Elevate*' marks a bold new chapter in ITE's journey, serving as our new five-year strategic plan to empower students to be future-ready in a rapidly changing world. A key thrust in *ITE Elevate* is nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets and capabilities and inspiring students to become creators of opportunities. These endeavours include launching startups, leading social enterprises, or embarking on their own businesses.

As we celebrate the achievements of our ITE alumni entrepreneurs, we also acknowledge the support behind their success. Every entrepreneur benefits from an ecosystem that includes family, mentors, peers and the broader community. ITE takes pride in being part of this ecosystem, but we emphasise that success ultimately stems from the courage, perseverance and vision of the individuals themselves.

In the following pages, you will read about a diverse group of ITE alumni entrepreneurs. Some names may be familiar; others are emerging talents forging their own paths. A common thread in all their journeys is their unwavering passion for their profession, their indomitable resilience in the face of challenges and their desire to impact their communities and industries.

Their stories offer more than inspiration. They offer insights and real-world advice for those who are ready to follow in their footsteps. Whether you are just starting out or already on your journey, there is something you can glean from their experiences.

So dive in, dream big and imagine what is possible.

LOW KHAH GEK

Chief Executive Officer
Institute of Technical Education
Singapore





LAYING THE

FOUNDATION

KENNETH NEO GIM CHYE

Class of 1991

ITC in Mechanical & Electrical Drafting
& Design

📍 Singapore Technical Institute (STI)

Kenneth is a business leader with ventures spanning manufacturing, aerospace and chemical plating. He is the owner of **Advance Tech Automation Pte Ltd**, a precision engineering firm in the electronics sector.



ENGINEERED WITH PASSION

From a young age, I never envisioned myself working for others. My elder brother, six years my senior, was already a successful entrepreneur in surface mount technology by the time I was doing my National Service. His achievements greatly inspired me.

I firmly believe that passion must come first. For me, that passion is in engineering. Everyone should pursue what truly ignites them, as engaging in something you dislike is inherently counterproductive. My formal education began with mechanical and electrical drafting at STI (now ITE). I continued my studies at a polytechnic before pursuing an engineering degree in the UK.

Funding my overseas education required significant savings, and it was my STI certificate that proved invaluable, opening doors to my first job at a construction firm. That role offered a salary higher than what I could earn with a diploma, directly enabling me to finance my university education.

After graduating in 2008, I joined a Small and Medium Enterprise, a decision that many questioned, given the allure of multinational corporations. My reasoning was simple: I was hungry to learn. At a smaller enterprise, I could gain comprehensive experience, from managing accounts to handling sales. I embraced every task, and within a year, I had a holistic understanding of how the entire business operated.

When the time came to establish my own company, I borrowed S\$30,000 from my brother, while my partner contributed S\$70,000. After just a year, when I was responsible for generating 90 per cent of our sales, he proposed a 50-50 split. About eight years later, we amicably parted ways due to differing goals.

People and relationships are the true determinants of a business' success. Many of my staff have stayed with me for over a decade. Auditors often inquire about employee tenure; if a company is 20 years old and the average tenure is only three or four years, it signals an underlying issue. To retain staff, you must invest in their development. Do not simply assign tasks, you must train them and demonstrate genuine care. I regularly connect with my team, both in group settings and smaller huddles, believing that leaders should never be 'untouchable'.

When people trust you, they are likely to share problems early. I am not afraid that my staff would make mistakes, my only fear is indecisiveness. Over the years, experience has honed my ability to understand personalities better. This principle applies equally to business and mentoring: you must give before you can take. The ITE Alumni Association has around 70 mentors guiding young alumni. However, mentorship is never a one-way street. A good mentor knows precisely when to offer advice and when to simply listen. ☺



THOMAS TING SIEW HOOD

Class of 1984

ITC in Industrial Electrical &
Electronics Engineering

📍 Singapore Technical Institute (STI)

Thomas is the founder and CEO of **TT Innovation & Technology Pte Ltd**. The company provides homeland security and system integration products. Its services include installation, configuration, and post-sales maintenance and support.

BUILDING ON RELATIONSHIPS

My entrepreneurial journey started when I was a child. I helped out at my father's coffeeshop and interacted with his customers who were mainly migrant workers. The experience taught me people skills and instilled a sense of responsibility in me. My fascination with electronics turned into a passion for solving problems with technology.

I graduated from STI (now ITE) in 1984 and discovered my strength through hands-on learning. Assembling a working radio from scratch gave me a sense of achievement I had never experienced. That moment shaped my belief that practical knowledge can open up real opportunities, giving me the confidence to move forward in life.

Starting my own business was a difficult decision. Having worked for 12 years, I was drawing a comfortable salary. I turned down offers to start a business with partners. I eventually took the plunge to prove my point that customers buy from people, not from companies. Relationships matter.

Identifying a market opportunity starts with listening. I ask clients about their challenges and customise solutions accordingly. I do not sell products; I sell integrated systems that combine equipment with technology to

solve real-world problems effectively. For example, a camera can become a security solution when it has a backend intelligence system supporting it, by using technologies such as facial recognition. This approach is why many of my customers have since become good friends of mine.

I founded my first business with my own savings and the strength of longstanding relationships. Even longstanding relationships, however, can end. The most difficult moment I faced as an entrepreneur was being ousted from the company that I founded and grew. It was emotionally devastating. Notwithstanding, I took time to reflect and learn. I started my current company, leveraging my network, credibility and years of experience in the industry. That experience taught me resilience and reinforced my belief in staying true to my values.

Looking back, I think I gained more from that setback than I could have imagined. Today, my word counts in the company. I have put proper structures in place. I am on track to list my company in the US in the next two years. After that, it would be time to think about my succession plan. I want to thank all my staff; there are currently more than 20 of them. In the end, building something that outlives me is the real measure of my success. 🙏

TERENCE LAI CHEE FAI

Class of 1986

Diploma in Applied Art

📍 Baharuddin Vocational Institute

Terence is the GM (Greater China) of **SPACElogic**, a company that specialises in event marketing and experience design. SPACElogic Group has expanded its market coverage to six other cities across Asia.



LIFTING OFF WITH PURPOSE AND PASSION

Entrepreneurship was never part of my plan. In fact, I resisted it for years. Then again, sometimes life has other designs. For me, starting a business became a convergence of 'right time, right moment, and right partner'.

The catalyst came during the proverbial '10-year itch' that many face in their careers. A close friend observed my growing dissatisfaction with corporate life and the existential questions I was grappling with: What was my purpose after dedicating so much of my youth to building someone else's dream?

This friend had been courting me as a business partner for years, but I remained sceptical. I had witnessed too many entrepreneurial casualties and had already declined three business proposals. However, I have learnt that partnership is everything. The right business partner does not just share your vision – they complete it. After 20 years of friendship, I knew this partner possessed the skills that could fill my gaps. I finally gathered the courage to take the leap. Together, we founded SPACElogic China.

My career has been shaped by mentors who appeared at crucial junctures. Their most valuable gift was not technical knowledge. They taught me how to think differently and approach my work with deeper purpose. As I matured, paying forward this mentorship became increasingly important. I make it a point to accomplish at least three corporate social responsibility projects annually.

True entrepreneurial success demands a higher calling. The question is not just 'How can we make money?' but 'How can we create value that people need?' These

deeper motivations become the fuel that sustains you through inevitable challenges.

Operating in Shanghai has provided me with a masterclass in modern business dynamics. Here, the phenomenon of '*nei juan*' (hyper-competition) forces companies into exhaustive efforts just to maintain position. This reality has taught me that evolution is not optional, it is survival.

In our experiential design business, this lesson has proven relevant as digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped our industry. 30 years ago, when I began as an event marketing designer, we worked primarily through offline mediums. Today's reality is far more demanding. We collaborate with brands to orchestrate multi-faceted events. Success is measured not just by execution quality, which clients now see as a given. It is also defined by our ability to generate meaningful engagement across both digital and physical touchpoints.

Through three decades of industry evolution, I have observed one unchanging truth: while technology transforms rapidly, fundamental human needs remain the same. Understanding this principle provides the foundation for adapting to any market evolution. The digital revolution did not eliminate our need for meaningful connection; it created new channels for achieving it.

As I often tell fellow entrepreneurs: the only constant in life is change. Mastering change, however, is not about predicting the future. It is about understanding the timeless human elements. This perspective has served me well through decades of disruption and continues to guide my entrepreneurial journey. 🙏

BRYAN HENG JOO SOON

Class of 1993

NTC3 in Precision Machining

📍 ITE Ang Mo Kio

Class of 1994

NTC2 in Precision Tooling

📍 Precision Engineering Institute

Class of 1996

ITC in Mechanical Engineering

📍 ITE Macpherson

Bryan is the founder and managing director of **Gem Metal Technologies** and **SE Manufacturing** – metal forging and manufacturing companies that offer a wide range of services, including custom forging, casting, metal injection moulding, powder metallurgy, and precision Computer Numerical Control (CNC)-machined components.



FORGING A PATH AHEAD THROUGH CRISIS

Faced with unexpected challenges, I learnt that with the right mindset, adaptability and resourcefulness, success is possible. Coming from a humble background and not being academically inclined, I worked hard to earn a Certificate of Merit, awarded to the top five per cent of my Precision Engineering cohort. Building on that achievement, I graduated with ITC in Mechanical Engineering in 1996. Beyond technical skills, ITE taught me resilience, responsibility and resourcefulness, traits that continue to define my work ethic today. Subsequently, I upgraded my skillset with a Diploma in Industrial Engineering.

At 31, I started my first business in the precision engineering sector in 2007. In 2008, a financial crisis erupted. Market growth halted and my income disappeared. My family and I lived on credit card loans. Eventually, I made the tough decision to sell our condominium, clearing debts and investing S\$100,000 into the business. A mentor once told me, 'If you do not have any flowers at home, the garden outside belongs to you.' That advice reminded me to recognise the opportunities around me and commit fully to my vision.

A turning point came when I met a Taiwanese business partner who opened my eyes to a manufacturing gap between Taiwan's specialised metal processes and what was available in Singapore. I realised that by going beyond traditional precision machining and incorporating forging, metal injection moulding, and powder metallurgy, I could offer something few others could. At the time, only one or two local suppliers had these capabilities. This set me apart from local competitors who relied solely

on traditional CNC precision machining. I could deliver more complex designs at lower costs, with materials offering greater strength than those produced through CNC machining alone.

In 2010, I founded Gem Metal Technologies, followed by SE Manufacturing in 2012. Today, we are trusted partners to industries such as defence, semiconductors, oil and gas and automotive. We serve these clients by delivering advanced solutions through techniques like 3D printing and electrochemical milling. In 2017 and 2018, we were honoured to be among Singapore's Top 100 Elite and Trustworthy Small and Medium Enterprises. We have consistently earned Top 10 Supplier awards from multiple clients for exceptional quality, reliability, and value.

Grateful for the foundation that ITE gave me, I have made it a point to give back. Since 2021, I have served on the ITE Alumni Association, becoming Vice-President in 2025. I leveraged my overseas networks to connect ITE with my partners in Taiwan, enabling 30 students to gain overseas industry exposure in 2025. I also actively supported fundraising initiatives for underprivileged students through the annual Alumni Golf and Bowling Tournaments.

To aspiring entrepreneurs, my message is: Dare to dream and work tirelessly towards it. The road will not always be easy, but with persistence and adaptability, you can turn challenges into opportunities.

As for me, I am not slowing down anytime soon. 🙌

The Mettle to Succeed

PHUA SWEE HOE

Inzign Pte Ltd

Class of 1974
NTC3 in Metal Machining
Industrial Training Board

ITE sparked my interest in metalwork, which evolved from a hobby into the foundation for my business. Thinking two steps ahead and anticipating people's needs, I began innovating specialised solutions. Although we started with general tool-making, we now focus on medical technology.

This market shift capitalises on Singapore's reputation for stability and rigorous standards in medical precision. I have also kept the company competitive by listing it on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, helping to offset high costs and labour shortages.

Since then, Inzign has earned the trust of leading global medical companies and grown into a S\$20 million business. Inzign's growth mirrors Singapore's manufacturing evolution over the past 30 years. Today, we also work with smaller, agile companies that need reliable, high-quality production partners. Having persevered through the financial strain in the early days of the company, I have learnt to balance courage and realism, and above all, be resilient.

I believe my entrepreneurial spirit was kindled in me at the age of seven. In 1963, I would hitch rides on Malaysian vegetable lorries, watching fresh produce make its way to city markets. This early exposure to trade planted the seeds of a business mindset.

A pivotal chapter of my growth unfolded during my time at ITE. My BVi-3D lecturer, Dr Iskandar Jalil showed me that the dirtiest mud, when properly filtered, could become fine clay ready to be shaped into beautiful pots. This metaphor for transformation deeply resonated with me.

In 1994, without external help or instruction, I founded Astrans, a cargo and freight company. Savings, resourcefulness and quiet determination were my most reliable assets.

This is the 31st year that Astrans has been in business and we have recently crossed the S\$1 million revenue milestone. We live in a fast-paced and innovation-centric world that is increasingly driven by artificial intelligence. My strategy is simple: continuously learn, adopt new technologies, and adapt to new methods and trends. Entrepreneurship is a journey of transformation, to succeed you have to be fuelled by a never-ending desire to grow.

A Journey of Transformation

EDMUND CHEW

TEE KHIANG

Astrans (S) Pte Ltd

Class of 1976
ITC in 3-Dimensional Design
Baharuddin Vocational Institute

In 1981, when the opportunity arose to start a construction equipment business, the decision was clear: seize the moment. I had a vision to provide top-quality machinery to clients across Singapore. My journey began with one major hurdle – funding. Securing loans without assets proved difficult, so the business was launched with borrowed capital from family and a commitment to reinvest the profits to build cash reserves.

Client relationships played a crucial role in the company's early survival. Supportive customers agreed to pay in advance, enabling the purchase of equipment and delivery of services, laying the foundation for sustainable growth.

Over the years, Acme Equipment became a trusted name, contributing to major local developments such as the Funan Mall, Mandai Wildlife Reserve, and Bright Hill MRT station. The company also expanded internationally, supporting large-scale projects like Shanghai Disneyland and infrastructure upgrades along Myanmar's Yangon–Mandalay Railway.

My philosophy is simple – when you are young, take every opportunity that comes your way. Be fearless, take the first step, and let momentum carry you forward.

From Hawker Stall to Household Name

DR ABDUL MALIK

HASSAN

Crave (Food) Pte Ltd

M3Oasis Global Travel Pte Ltd

Selera Rasa Nasi Lemak Pte Ltd

Class of 1992
ITC in Mechanical Engineering
ITE Macpherson

Building Big by Starting Small

EDWIN ANG

THIAM SENG

Acme Equipment Pte Ltd

Class of 1980
ITC in Electrical Engineering
ITE Macpherson

What began as a modest food stall at Adam Road Food Centre has since blossomed into one of Singapore's most beloved culinary brands. Crave, known today for its signature nasi lemak, traces its roots to Selera Rasa Nasi Lemak. It was founded by my father, who had a dream to preserve a treasured family recipe and pass it down through generations. I, however, had different aspirations.

With eyes set on the skies, I was preparing to join Singapore Airlines as a pilot. Then one question from my father changed everything: 'If you are going to pilot the plane, who is going to pilot the business?' That moment sparked a pivotal decision. I chose legacy over altitude, stepping into the demanding world of food entrepreneurship.

The early years were gruelling. I woke up at 4am and worked till 10pm day after day. Through sheer grit and unwavering commitment, I transformed the stall into a thriving enterprise. Today, Crave boasts over 20 outlets across Singapore, serving up the same fragrant coconut rice, crispy chicken wings, and fiery sambal that once drew long queues at the original stall. Success did not come from passion alone. One lesson stands above the rest: Never start a business without perfecting your costing. You must know exactly what it takes to produce your product.



BUILDING

**A SKILLED
NATION**

ANDERS TAN WEI SIONG

Class of 2003

Nitec in Info-Communication
Technology

ITE Macpherson

Anders is the co-founder of **Inclus Pte Ltd**, a social enterprise that empowers people with disabilities to find employment and independence.



A MISSION TO MAKE HIRING FAIR

I never set out to become an entrepreneur. It began by accident. I saw a gap, took a chance, and tried to solve a problem. What started as a side project grew into something far more serious. Along the way, I discovered that entrepreneurship offered a sense of purpose and ownership that I had never experienced.

About 12 years ago, friends voiced frustrations about unequal access to tutoring. In response, we created EduSnap, a mobile app where students could photograph questions and receive free answers from the community. This concept was novel at the time. We grew to 14,000 users, attracted media attention, and secured government grants. Yet without a sustainable business model, we could not continue indefinitely. The project eventually closed.

Inclus was different, born from a personal connection rather than market research. My brother-in-law, who is on the autism spectrum, struggled to secure meaningful employment. We saw both an opportunity and an injustice: many employers were not genuinely committed to be inclusive in their hiring practices.

We deliberately chose not to form a non-profit organisation. We built Inclus as a business, operating like an employment agency serving persons with disabilities. Employers would be charged fees for our services. Critics laughed, insisting no one would pay for what they perceived as charity. We proved them wrong.

Today, companies pay us to transform their workplaces through comprehensive training and strategic placements. We have witnessed remarkable outcomes. We placed a man with an intellectual disability, who had lived in a

long-term care home, into sustained employment for three years. His story demonstrates that with the right support, anyone can contribute productively.

Inclus now operates across Singapore and Malaysia and will soon launch in Thailand. We have also expanded into InSchool, providing after-school care for special-needs youths underserved by mainstream providers.

This journey connects back to ITE, where my entrepreneurial foundations were built. At first, I struggled with confidence and identity, but ITE gave me opportunities to prove myself. In addition, competitions, projects and group assignments required initiative and problem-solving skills. I discovered that I thrived in such an environment.

The entrepreneurial road itself has been anything but smooth. One of the toughest challenges was doing everything myself, from administration, design, marketing, to sales and support. Without formal training, I relied on trial and error. What sustained me were kind-hearted people willing to share their knowledge. They included peers, clients, and even strangers.

I avoided fallback plans. I wanted no safety net because knowing there was no easy escape forced me to push harder and persist through setbacks. Sometimes you only learn to fly when there is no other option.

My definition of success has evolved. At first, it meant being able to support myself and pay my bills. Now, it means creating value for the people we serve, our team, and society. If your work improves lives, it is success worth pursuing relentlessly. ☺

MOHAMMED FARHAN BIN MOHD FIRDAUS

Class of 2005

Higher Nitec in Business Administration

ITE Macpherson

Farhan is a partner at **Meet Ventures**, an innovation consultancy firm and early-stage investor that helps startups across Southeast Asia grow their business.



IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN?

My father's retrenchment at 40 cast a shadow over my life. Growing up, I lived with a constant fear of reaching the same age and facing the same fate. To eliminate this fear of redundancy, I knew early on in my career that I wanted to run my own business. Now, at 39, I lead both a consultancy and a venture capital firm, Meet Ventures. The path to entrepreneurship was rocky. Before enrolling at ITE, I had hit rock bottom. My father, retrenched due to illness, thereafter suffered a stroke. At 16, I became the man of the house, working in fast-food outlets and cleaning tables to bring the bread home.

ITE became my second chance. Having underperformed in my O-Levels, I was grateful for the opportunity to pursue a *Higher Nitec* in Business Administration. It equipped me with business skills that I still rely on today. Even tasks that many professionals struggle with, such as taking meeting minutes, were things I mastered.

ITE shaped me more deeply than I realised at that time. It taught me humility, resilience, empathy, and the value of rolling up my sleeves. Winning the Lee Kuan Yew Technology Award in 2004 sparked my interest in innovation, even if I did not recognise it then.

Before founding Meet Ventures, I spent years immersed in startups and early ventures. One of my first roles was with a dentist, where in two and a half years, I helped grow the practice from two to 25 clinics, with another 15 in the pipeline through mergers and acquisitions. At an investment holding company, I spent three years supporting the growth of their portfolio startups.

The turning point came when I pursued a Master of Science in Technopreneurship and Innovation at Nanyang Technological University, supported by the Chua Tian Poh Scholarship. During the programme, I began questioning my future. Was I going to present this qualification to another employer? No one in my family had been an entrepreneur, and my parents questioned my ambitions. Yet by 2019, after five years of employment, I thought: if not now, then when? That was when I launched Meet Ventures.

The entrepreneurial journey has been filled with challenges. Cash flow is a constant concern, and anticipating market shifts is an ongoing battle; some years exceed expectations, others disappoint. I learnt that markets change every few years, demanding constant reinvention.

For me, success extends beyond revenue. It is measured in customer satisfaction, repeat businesses, and solving real problems. If you can be a problem solver in your own work, your business can likely solve problems for others too.

Today, as a venture capitalist sitting alongside elite investors, I am perhaps the only one from ITE to have earned such a seat. I take immense pride in that representation. With no family connections, I relied only on determination and hard work. To me, it was a true reflection of our meritocratic system.

My philosophy remains unchanged: go big or go home. If you are not prepared to win the fight, do not step into the arena. ㊟

SIVACHANDRAN MURUGASU

Class of 2007

Nitec in Nursing

ITE College East

Siva is the founder of **Abella Agency**, a healthcare enterprise offering medical transport, tele-nursing and other nursing services to those in need.



A CALLING SHAPED BY CRISIS

My career initially began as an ambulance driver, drawn by an affinity for fast cars and flashing lights. However, this perspective shifted drastically one day when I attended to my first case alongside a friend. We were called to ferry a father of four who collapsed after returning home from hospital. We froze, realising neither of us possessed the basic life support training needed to intervene. He died right before my eyes, and I could only watch helplessly as his children cried around him.

This traumatic experience ignited a powerful realisation: I knew I had to do more to truly care for patients. Consequently, I applied for the Nursing course at ITE. To my disappointment, I was rejected for not meeting the profession's minimum grooming standards. Determined to prove my resolve, I cut my hair short and returned to appeal. I was surprised to find my interviewer was the same man who had rejected me. Mr Tay Wei Sern gave me another opportunity. Looking back, he became the most influential guide and the best mentor I could have asked for.

Immediately upon earning my *Nitec* in Nursing from ITE, I leveraged my newfound knowledge and certification to establish Abella Agency. My goal was to address the critical gaps that I had observed through my firsthand experiences.

In the early phase of Abella Agency's success, I admit I became complacent. I would briefly check on my employees before leaving the office to go fishing, presuming they could manage independently. Tragically, we lost a patient when one of our ambulances veered into a drain. It was a painful but vital lesson.

The tragedy made me want to do more as a nurse, which led me to pursue advanced studies. Returning to school after years in the workforce proved challenging, especially coping with the competitive nature of the younger generation. I gradually learnt to embrace the process and just persevere. Balancing my business responsibilities with my studies was particularly demanding, often requiring me to leave classes midway to address staffing shortages. Despite these obstacles, I pushed through and successfully completed the three-year programme.

After graduating, I pivoted my business strategy to focus on home-based care and telemedicine. Driven by a deeper sense of purpose, I also began offering free nursing services and niche services like repatriation.

Today, receiving genuine thanks from our patients and their loved ones is a feeling that money simply cannot buy. We were even honoured with the COVID-19 Resilience medal for our contributions during the pandemic, a recognition that further grounds us in our unwavering purpose to help others. 🙏

WANG JUNYONG

Class of 2008

Nitec in Applied Food Science

ITE College East

Junyong is the managing director of **TG International School** in Phnom Penh, Cambodia offering a blended Singapore curriculum for students aged 18 months to 18 years.



DRUMMING UP DREAMS ACROSS BORDERS

My lesson in entrepreneurship began at a young age, helping my father manage a canteen stall at a construction site. During school holidays, I would wake up at 4am to buy ingredients, cook, and sell. I observed how he cultivated relationships with suppliers, even exchanging gifts during Chinese New Year, teaching me the value of connections in business.

ITE was my first investor. In secondary school, I was part of a mentoring programme for at-risk youths that offered taiko drumming. Upon enrolling at ITE, I noticed the absence of a drumming club. Driven by a desire for juniors to continue enjoying drumming after my graduation, I decided to start one. At a student engagement session, I raised my hand and asked if I could. Mr Chong Leong Fatt, the Director, called me aside and asked a few questions.

With his support, I acquired drums, recruited members, and even organised paid performances. I learnt how to manage both the artistic and business aspects of a venture. I stepped down from my role as student councillor to fully dedicate myself as chairman of the Taiko Club.

ITE nominated me for the Philip Yeo Innovation Fellowship, where I met mentors who profoundly reshaped my thinking. One such mentor was Mr David Lim, a former senior civil servant. At the time, I was running my drumming business, earning about S\$30,000 a year. He challenged me by asking, 'Why not think in millions?' I was incredulous, but he opened my mind to thinking on a much grander scale.

In 2018, an opportunity arose to expand my business to Cambodia. I was hesitant, but Mr Lim flew there with me. In three days, by simply observing his interactions with partners and the questions he asked, I learnt immensely. The assessment was that Cambodia was not viable for my drumming business, but the local partners asked me to assist with their business development.

I secured a bank loan in Singapore and became a minority shareholder of an international school, primarily handling its marketing. Then COVID-19 hit. Within hours, schools were shut down. Our student numbers fell from 130 to 60. I found myself stuck in Singapore.

To survive, I turned to selling *kong bak bao* (braised pork belly buns) using my grandmother's recipe. Thanks to what I learnt in ITE's food science course, I had the knowledge to source ingredients efficiently and keep costs low. That humble bun became my lifeline. Just when prospects seemed bleak, a Singaporean company invested in the school. Today, we have successfully reopened a new campus, educating 700 students. Notably, Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister officiated the launch.

What defines success? I believe you can only truly know if you have been successful at the end of your life. My late father started out as a hawker, and became a taxi driver. At his funeral, neighbours whom I had never spoken to came to pay their respects. It was then when I realised, he had lived a truly successful life. ㊦



NEO SHEN WEI

Class of 2009

Nitec in Product Design

📍 ITE Bishan

Shen Wei, also known in trade circles as 'Basil King', is the founder and director of **Affordable Aircon Services Pte Ltd**, a company that provides air-con servicing to the residential market.

COOLING DOWN HOMES, HEATING UP THE MARKET

Like many Singaporeans, I do not like the heat. Our tropical climate, intensified by global warming, meant that demand for cooling would only grow. My research showed that even a small share of the residential market could generate millions in annual revenue. At the same time, my wife's influence sparked my love for Thai cuisine, which inspired me to set up Basil King, a stall in a Jurong West coffee shop.

Here comes the irony: I knew nothing about servicing air conditioners or cooking Thai food. I discovered that business success is not about technical expertise but about identifying talent, building strong teams, and implementing robust systems. I believe in creating fair platforms where profits are shared, ensuring everyone grows together. Working with people smarter than myself has also been central to sustainable growth.

My time at ITE instilled a vital lesson: you do not need brilliance to succeed, but you must be persistent. Entrepreneurship is a marathon, and perseverance through setbacks was my greatest asset.

I launched Affordable Aircon Services in 2017 with two small teams. The first three years were punishing. I faced bullying within the industry and made countless mistakes. Persistence carried me through. By 2019, I recognised that culture was as critical as competency. Replacing more than half the staff was painful but necessary to rebuild the right values. When COVID-19 struck, air-con services were deemed essential. The company was able to expand rapidly, proving that my instinct was right.

These lessons shaped my approach to Basil King. Within three months, we opened 10 outlets using a simple formula: consistency, a lean menu, and replicable

systems built on a culture of nurturing talent. At Basil King, chefs and managers who train their juniors will be rewarded with promotions and profit-sharing. I believe each person is like a carriage with its own engine – when every carriage drives itself forward, the whole train accelerates.

Setbacks were inevitable. Choosing the wrong partners was the hardest challenge, with some collaborations ending acrimoniously. I learnt to move on quickly. Another crucial realisation was that systems and culture must be established early, or growth will falter and problems will multiply.

The market has shifted dramatically. The air-con industry has grown more competitive, while trends in the food and beverage industry change at lightning speed. We adapted through digital marketing, stronger customer engagement, and continuous efficiency improvements. Challenges that once seemed insurmountable, such as staffing, cash flow, customer trust were overcome by staying hands-on, building resilient teams, and keeping customer needs at the centre.

Today, my businesses employ around 100 people and generate over S\$10 million in revenue. However, success is measured not only in profits but also in jobs creation, leadership development and community impact. I see myself not simply as an entrepreneur but as a builder of platforms that enable others to succeed.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, my advice is simple: start small, remain focused, and do not wait for perfect conditions to begin. With grit and consistency, results will follow – you too can heat up markets and create lasting impact. 🍲

Built for Success

CHAN WAI LIM

Trigger Design Pte Ltd

Class of 1993

ITC in Mechanical Engineering

📍 ITE Macpherson

My entrepreneurial journey was not sparked by a single moment; it evolved gradually over time. In ITE, I was encouraged to blend my love for both art and design. After decades in multinational technology companies, I recognised a gap in the industry: few industrial design firms truly integrate compelling storytelling, refined aesthetics, and a solid understanding of the product development process.

I began a business that evolves alongside the design market. Once primarily focused on hardware and aesthetics, the business has evolved to encompass user experience and user interface design (UX/UI), digital experiences, and artificial intelligence integration.

With empathy and a strategic mindset, we designed the Istinja urinal, a hygienic innovation that won the Singapore Good Design (SG Mark) Gold Award and iF Design Award in 2021. Not only are our solutions meaningful to users, but they are also viable for stakeholders. Running a business means you will have to be bold, adaptable, and resilient. Recover, reflect, and continually ask, 'why not?'

I have always been drawn to solving complex engineering challenges, finding value when others only saw limitations. In 2013, this led me to the highly competitive oil and gas sector, where innovation is extremely crucial.

It was tough breaking into an industry dominated by established international players. I emphasised quality, a strong team, and was committed to continuous innovation. As part of that commitment, Singapore WEFIC Ocean Technologies has established three research and development centres, in Singapore, China, and the United States. In 2017, our offshore modular wellhead system was recognised with a corporate award in science and technology. This system is the control centre at the top of a well that keeps oil, gas, and pressure safely contained. Unlike traditional systems, our modular design is easier to assemble and more convenient to maintain at offshore sites.

Now as the Chief Executive Officer, I measure success by impact: creating jobs, fostering innovation, and contributing to the industry's growth.

Turning Up the Gas on Innovation

BEN NG WEI LI

Singapore WEFIC Ocean Technologies Pte Ltd

Class of 1995

Certificate in Office Skills

📍 ITE Bishan

Hard Work to Heart Work

BRENDA TAN

SOCK HUA

Heart of Shou

Class of 1998

Certificate in Business Accounting

📍 ITE Clementi

Long before I became the coach and entrepreneur behind Heart of Shou, I thrived in managing and developing people in the corporate world. Despite the promotions and leading a team of 80 staff by age 26, I felt burnt out. ITE taught me not to be afraid of pivoting. I left my job to begin my coaching business to empower women.

Networking and finding sponsorships got my business off the ground. I explored creative methods like bartering my services in exchange for what I needed, such as brand design or event support. Many mistakes, mentors, and coaches later, my business has now broken two Singapore Book of Records titles and uplifted countless women through our conventions.

I did not achieve this alone: every business opportunity has come from conversations with real people and experiences. Today, my career highlights are not from records broken, but the lives touched and impact made.

Dutch Colony Coffee began with a simple wish: to create something that lasts longer than a great cup of coffee. After spending years in coffee sales and consultancy where I helped others build their dream cafes, it was time to build my own. My business began with savings, partnerships and sweat equity.

I listened to conversations at bars, uncovering what people wanted. Inspired by this, I asked myself, 'what if?' I offered experiences like public coffee cupping where people could explore specialty coffee. We have grown to new heights, such as winning back-to-back coffee roasting awards in the Australian International Coffee Awards. More than a craft, coffee is a community.

ITE taught me the value of working with and leading others. Looking back, I wish I had asked for help sooner, as great businesses are built by teams, not heroes. If I could do one thing differently, I would have documented more of the journey, because you never know when your story might be someone's spark.

Beyond the Brew

MOHAMMAD SUHAIMIE BIN SUKIMAN

Dutch Colony Coffee Company
Katalyst Coffee Academy

Class of 2002
Nitec in Building Drafting (Architectural)
📍 ITE Bedok

Two Ventures, One Unbreakable Spirit

BERNARD LIN ZHI WEI

Reap Counselling

Class of 2004
Higher Nitec in Business Administration
📍 ITE Bishan

I was inspired by the Chinese proverb '工字不出头' which translates to 'one cannot be successful in life by just being a worker'. My entrepreneurial journey was shaped by a deep-rooted drive to rise above limitations. My parents who had little formal education instilled a strong desire to succeed, and I began my career in precision engineering.

However, faced with steep startup costs, I made a strategic pivot to plumbing, a trade with lower entry barriers but enduring demand. Plumbing, I realised, was recession-proof. As long as homes had bathrooms, the need for skilled plumbers would never disappear. This insight laid the foundation for a sustainable business built on essential services and practical foresight.

My proudest achievement, however, goes beyond business success. By donating to the ITE Endowment Fund to help students pursue further education, it is my personal belief that true success lies in having the means to uplift others and help them build a legacy of impact.

I had two entrepreneurial journeys. I started my own business because of self-belief in my competency and ability to contribute much more, and in my resourcefulness to handle possible challenges.

In ITE, Mrs Katherine Heng was my lighthouse, sparking my first entrepreneurial journey. I faced rejection every day in my efforts to generate sales, but I persevered. My second journey was motivated by my family. I wanted to spend more time with them after my two children were born. I pursued a Master's in Counselling and opened a private practice. Since then, I have given mental health talks at corporate events.

Through drastic market changes, I have adapted by acquiring new skills. I also ventured into evergreen industries, opening a French bakery with my wife. As you pursue a clear goal, prepare for obstacles; the strategies that worked before may not carry you forward.

Plumbing a Path to Impact

DESMOND ENG GUO WEI

Dr D Plumbing and Sanitary
Sanitrio Pte Ltd

Class of 2008
Nitec in Precision Engineering (Machining)
📍 ITE Balestier

Class of 2011
Technical Engineer Diploma in Machine
Technology
📍 ITE Ang Mo Kio

Kneaded by Passion, Baked with Love

**KARYLAN
LEE LI LIN**

51 Fiveone Degrees Pte Ltd

Class of 2008

Nitec in Multimedia Technology

📍 ITE College East

In the heart of Singapore's vibrant baking scene, I wanted 51 Fiveone Degrees to stand out, not just for its exquisite Peranakan-inspired treats, but for the story behind every lovingly crafted bake. My bakery was inspired by a childhood filled with the sweet aroma of tradition, when I watched my mother transform simple ingredients into moments of joy. Those memories developed into a lifelong passion.

I had unwavering support from my family. My father offered a loan to kickstart the business, and my mother and sister cheered me on every step of the way. I opened 51 Fiveone Degrees, a bakery rooted in heritage and driven by heart. From day one, I set uncompromising standards of using only the freshest ingredients, baking everything on the day of sale, and no shortcuts, ever.

Even as the cost of supplies climbed, I remained transparent with my customers, choosing honesty and quality over profit margins. Discerning customers can always tell what are quality bakes. To me, success is not measured in numbers, but in the smiles of returning customers. Each bake is a tribute to my mother's legacy and a continuation of that joy. Through 51 Fiveone Degrees, I am not just selling pastries, I am preserving a heritage, one bite at a time.

I wanted to improve the working conditions of outdoor educators whom I saw working tirelessly out of passion but faced long hours, low pay and minimal support. At ITE, I had served as a student councillor and organised events, which gave me the confidence to lead.

Driven to improve conditions for my comrades, I started TBTL to create the kind of environment I wished existed, providing training courses involving sports and games. I began without loans or financial help.

I built my clientele resourcefully, offering free training and low-cost personalised programmes. Once TBTL gained recognition, people said I '*spoil the market*' by offering quick cash payment and other job benefits to freelance educators. With our attractive benefits and stringent entry requirements, TBTL has earned a reputation for being one of the most competitive companies to join. It is a proud moment when clients say 'when TBTL runs it, it is definitely different'.

The One Who Spoilt the Market

**MELVIN CHONG
CHEE LEONG**

TBTL Pte Ltd

Class of 2009

Higher Nitec in Sport Management

📍 ITE College East

Ballooning Dreams into Reality

**JOCELYN
NG LI ZHEN**

Jocelyn Balloons

Class of 2009

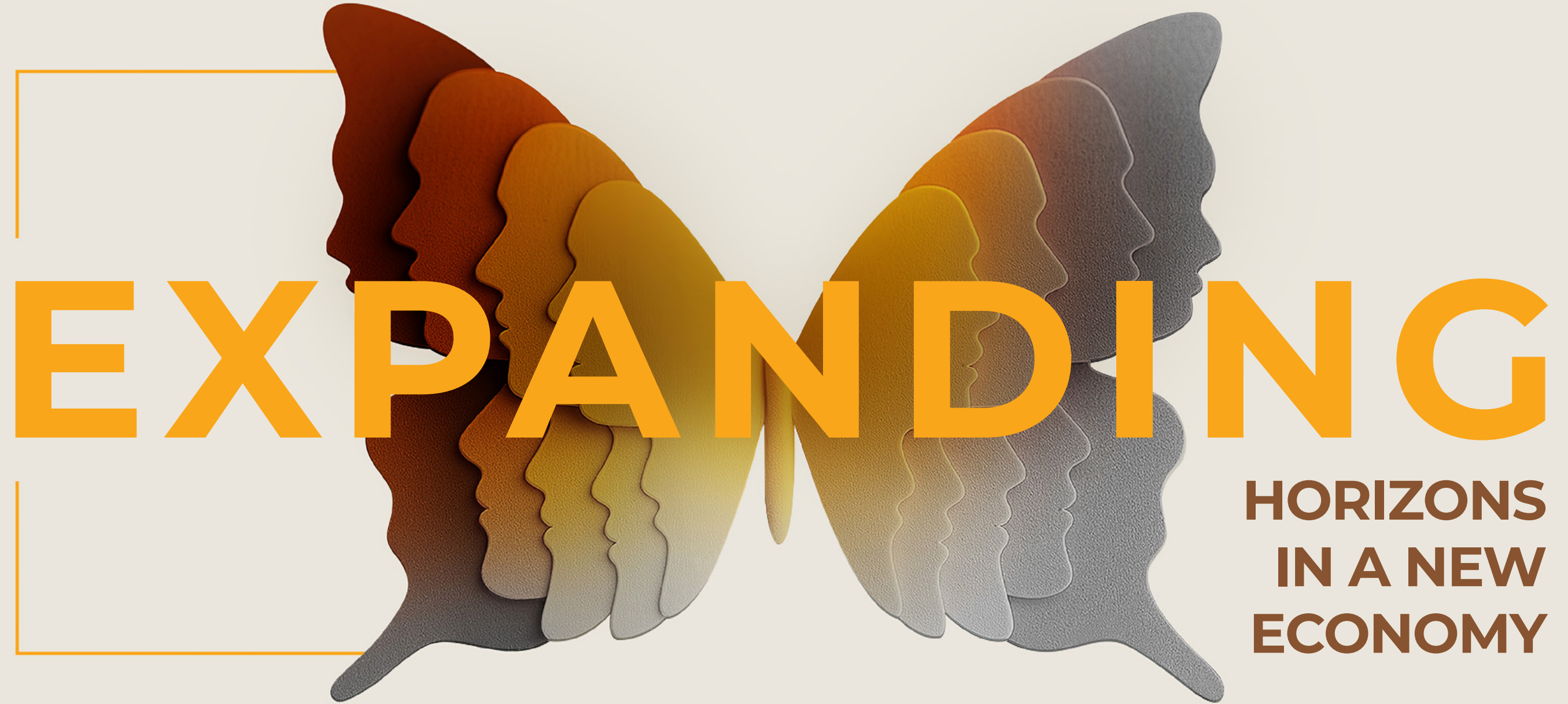
Nitec in Service Skills (Retail)

📍 ITE Clementi

My entrepreneurial journey began with a simple yet powerful observation: balloons have the ability to light up a child's face and transform ordinary events into unforgettable celebrations. As a creative balloon artist with a passion for spreading joy, I founded Jocelyn Balloons in 2010. It is a balloon sculpting and decoration service that was born from my desire to build something uniquely my own. The early days were far from easy.

I faced cash flow challenges and often underpriced my services just to secure bookings. I did not let those hurdles define my path. Instead, I immersed myself in studying business fundamentals and seeking advice from industry peers. I gradually built confidence in the value of my work. Over time, I discovered that the most successful entrepreneurs are those who truly listen.

By paying close attention to my customers, I learnt to identify emerging needs and test new ideas through pilot offerings. This approach allowed me to stay agile and responsive, ensuring my business continued to evolve alongside my audience. With creativity, resilience and customer insight I aim to turn passion into a thriving enterprise – one balloon at a time.



EXPANDING

**HORIZONS
IN A NEW
ECONOMY**

NOEL NG SING GUAN

Class of 2010
Nitec in Hair Fashion & Design

Class of 2012
*Nitec in Hair Services
(Hair & Scalp Therapy)*

📍 ITE College East

Noel is the owner of **Harts** and **Hove Salons**. He co-owns **Hint Salon** and **Hei Ardour**. In 2010 and 2011, he represented Singapore in regional and international WorldSkills competitions, earning a Gold medal in Bangkok and a Medallion for Excellence in London.



GIVING HAIRSTYLING A NEW LOOK

My path into hairdressing was sparked by my aunt, a hairstylist whose craft always fascinated me during my regular trips from Tampines to Woodlands for a haircut.

Another significant factor in my decision was the highly competitive society we live in. While many pursued degrees and diplomas, my academic results were rather average. Coming from a modest background, with my mother as the primary breadwinner and my father working odd jobs, our household income was approximately S\$3,000. I knew that pursuing traditional educational paths would require substantial financial investment. My favourite subject in secondary school was 'Design Technology', which led me to consider a creative, hands-on career. Initially, my parents were hesitant, concerned about the stability of a hairdressing career and the challenges I might face in an industry they did not fully understand. Eventually, they relented.

ITE provided me with the essential structure and valuable real-world exposure. I was deeply impressed by the dedication of the lecturers and their commitment to instilling discipline. Collectively, they consistently went the extra mile – often spending their days off to help me hone my skills and prepare for international competitions. Learning from both local and international stylists broadened my perspective significantly. Observing how my lecturers managed their classrooms also ignited a desire within me to lead my own team one day.

I began my professional career as an apprentice at a salon on Orchard Road. When a colleague decided to open her own salon, I eagerly asked to join her, driven

by a desire to understand the intricacies of building a business from scratch. She was very open to the idea, and through this experience, I witnessed firsthand how a salon was established from the ground up.

I paid close attention to customer feedback and identified gaps in the industry. Many clients, for instance, expressed frustration with unclear pricing and rushed service. This crystallised my vision to create a salon that prioritised transparency, client comfort, and personalised consultations.

When I opened my own salon, I financed it using my personal savings and a loan from my family. I focused on growing the business by reinvesting profits and meticulously keeping costs lean.

Entrepreneurship itself posed the biggest hurdles, from hiring and retaining staff to managing rent, building a brand, and cultivating customer loyalty. I navigated these challenges by cultivating patience and learning to select the right people to collaborate with. In retrospect, I wish I had learnt to delegate earlier and trusted my team more from the onset. Trying to handle everything myself initially hindered our growth.

Looking ahead, I am committed to help shape the future of the hairstyling industry. I firmly believe it can be a fulfilling and sustainable long-term career. My ambition is to collaborate with more ITE graduates and provide them with valuable career opportunities. By improving working conditions, such as offering more flexible hours, and creating clearer development paths, I believe we can attract even more talented individuals to the field – a cause to which I am eager to contribute. 🙌

EVANGELINE HUM YAN XIN

Class of 2010
Nitec in Tourism
📍 ITE Clementi

Class of 2013
Higher Nitec in Hospitality Operations
📍 ITE College West

Evangeline is the co-founder of **MIL Event SG**. Her company specialises in organising corporate and private events with handmade and local specialties and unique craft workshops.



BAKED INTO BUSINESS

My journey into entrepreneurship unfolded as a blend of foresight and spontaneity. While I had always set five-year life plans, including a goal to create my own product by age 30, it was my mother-in-law's egg tart that truly catapulted me into business.

The idea came about on a casual day during COVID-19, when my mother-in-law baked her egg tarts for the family. Upon tasting them, I immediately recognised their commercial potential. We envisioned a brand, 'Mother-in-Law Egg Tart', and its debut at our concept store in Jurong Point captivated customers.

At that time, I was still working full-time as a secretary in a multinational consultancy firm. It was a job that I found stimulating. However, the demanding 24/7 nature of my role, coupled with my husband and mother-in-law struggling to manage the burgeoning business alone, led me to make the difficult decision to resign. We were considering expanding with a mall outlet and even franchising. With two young children and a helper to look after them, I had a family to support, which made taking this leap of faith into our own venture even more significant.

Our path was largely one of trial and error, as we lacked any direct guidance. For instance, our attempt to diversify

with quiches, based on their similarity to egg tarts, did not succeed. Conversely, our 'Mother-in-Law Yusheng' with its unique sauce became a hit.

Cash flow presented another significant challenge, requiring creative solutions. Instances where suppliers insisted on upfront payment taught us valuable negotiation skills.

Our first major setback came about just as borders reopened and we launched our first mall outlet. Although we anticipated high demand for gift boxes in December, sales unexpectedly plummeted by 50 per cent. This downturn underscored the critical need for a change in strategy.

Consequently, we initiated a gradual transition from a business-to-consumer (B2C) to a business-to-business (B2B) model. This was not an abrupt 'pivot' but a deliberate shift that allowed time for our new direction to gain traction. Eventually, the B2B segment thrived.

Today, my company primarily focuses on B2B services, offering mobile food stations for corporate events. Our catering menu boasts a variety of options, from gourmet soups to popiah, and of course, our renowned 'Mother-in-Law Egg Tarts'. 🥟

DERRICK LEE MING YANG

Class of 2012

Higher Nitec in Information Technology

ITE College East

Derrick is the co-founder of **Accredify**, a service provider for the issuance of verifiable documents and information. Accredify safeguards information and ensures data accuracy.



SHIP, LEARN, PIVOT, REPEAT

At a time when most parents saw university as the surest route to success, my decision to enrol in ITE raised understandable concerns. Over dinner, I shared my plans with my parents. I explained to them that I was not choosing the conventional path, I was choosing the right one for me. I laid out my vision to pursue a career in technology and emphasised that ITE's Information Technology course offered the fastest, most hands-on way to gain real-world experience. I knew what I was doing, and I was confident that this path would equip me with the skills I needed to move quickly and purposefully toward my goals.

As a kinaesthetic learner, I thrived in ITE's hands-on learning environment. The practical approach did not just help me understand concepts better; it gave me real-world experience from the start. I began applying what I learnt almost immediately, taking on freelance jobs in my spare time. One of my earliest breakthroughs came after completing a module in web design. Armed with fresh skills, I jumped into freelance web projects, turning classroom knowledge into tangible results. Each job deepened my understanding, and the experience fed back into my studies, making me stronger both in school and in the field.

Looking back, I have always been entrepreneurial. My first startup began because I was into bodybuilding but could not afford a gym membership or equipment. I found a personal trainer and brokered a deal with him: training sessions in return for creating a website. I began importing gym equipment and resold them as bundles. Most of my startups follow this pattern:

I had a personal interest, I saw an opportunity to solve a problem, I created a business.

Before Accredify, I had already experimented with five different startups of my own. When I launched Accredify with my co-founders in 2018, I knew what to expect. My co-founders and I identified a few key challenges in education. For the schools, they needed a way to secure degrees and reduce the time spent on authenticating their credentials for employers. For the learners, they found it cumbersome to manage academic credentials for job applications. The tedious process hinders job mobility.

Hence, we created a software as a service (SaaS) platform that enabled institutions to automate the issuance of secure, verifiable digital credentials that can be instantly authenticated. For students, they can easily store and access their digital credentials in SkillsFuture Singapore's Careers & Skills Passport, and readily share them with employers.

I have learnt to adapt to major external shifts. During COVID-19, there was a sudden gap when governments, including immigration authorities, needed secure test results overnight. We quickly repackaged our education-focused credential engine for healthcare and launched verifiable COVID-19 test certificates within four weeks.

Through my years of entrepreneurship, I run on this model: ship, learn, pivot. Get a minimum viable product in front of real users, collect feedback, and then iterate. Perfection is a moving target. ☒

FATHANAH BINTI SUHAIRI

Class of 2012

Higher Nitec in Business Studies
(Service Management)

📍 ITE College West

Fathanah is the co-founder of **AF Infinity Pte Ltd**, the company that owns the brand **Tashkila**, an online fashion retailer for individuals seeking stylish and modest options.



LISTENING TO CRAFT A PERFECT SHAWL

My entrepreneurial journey began in an ITE classroom with an e-commerce project. Our group created a website and a brand called 'Shayla' to sell shawls, with a playful logo featuring a cat wearing one. That class assignment became the spark that lit a lifelong passion. I realised that fashion could be more than aesthetics; it could be empowering.

During the school holidays, I began selling shawls casually, but I took every detail seriously. Each piece was carefully wrapped in brown craft paper and tied with jute string. Customers loved the personal touch, and I loved the process of presenting something that was truly mine. The experience taught me an early lesson: presentation, care and consistency form the foundation of a meaningful brand.

Through failures and experimentation, I discovered the limits of reselling others' designs. Price competition, supplier constraints and the lack of creative freedom pushed me to build something that reflected my own vision. I wanted to create products that embodied grace, confidence and individuality.

The breakthrough came from listening closely to my community. Many women shared how challenging it was to find shawls that combined quality, comfort and a modern appeal. I spent months researching, testing and refining until I found the perfect balance of drape and opacity. Quality without compromise, as well as the pursuit of perfection became the defining traits of Tashkila's DNA.

Innovation also drives the brand forward. From the launch of the Ezy Series designed for busy modern women, to the introduction of Tashkila's Activewear Collection, the brand constantly evolves to meet the needs of today's Muslim women.

Entrepreneurship, however, is never without sacrifice. In the early days, I handled everything myself, from sales and packing to customer service and procurement. I often worked late into the night to meet orders. As the business expanded, I visited overseas partners while heavily pregnant in my third trimester. The trip also meant time away from my young children. Those experiences taught me that building something meaningful often requires deep personal commitment.

What started as a solo endeavour has become a growing enterprise. Today, my role as founder extends beyond creating products. It is about imparting my vision to the team, cultivating a culture of ownership, creativity and continuous improvement. Together, we aim to shape Tashkila into a brand that inspires women through design and purpose.

Over the years, Tashkila has achieved milestones that reflect its growth and dedication. From winning the Singtel-Shopify Competition II (2016) for top sales, being listed among Singapore's Top 10 Muslimah Fashion Brands (2018) by TallyPress, to earning a spot in the Singapore Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) 500 (2022), the brand's journey has been marked by persistence and progress. Our growing online following, now exceeding 40,000 followers across all platforms, reflects a community that connects deeply with our story and values. Tashkila's designs have also been featured in Harper's Bazaar and Berita Harian, most recently for our National Day scarf prints (2025).

Today, Tashkila stands as more than a modest fashion brand. It is a reflection of innovation, discipline, and an unwavering pursuit of excellence. My greatest fulfilment comes not from accolades, but from knowing that every design we create empowers women to feel beautiful, confident, and ready to take on the world. @

Soaring to New Heights

LIM YAN HONG

Mythical Cave (Hong's Jewellery)
Soaring Knights Pte Ltd
Song Fish Dealer Pte Ltd

Class of 2008
 Nitec in Product Design
 ITE Bishan

I am a naturally curious person, and that curiosity has driven me to explore and develop a wide range of skills. I began my journey at Song Fish Dealer, a family business that was started by my grandfather. It was passed down to my father. Over the past decade, I have taken on various roles, starting as graphic designer and eventually moving into sales and marketing, where I combine my creative strengths with strategy.

Driven by a desire to build something of my own and pursue ventures aligned with my personal interests, I co-founded Soaring Knights Automotive Detailing in 2017. I have always had a passion for automotives and had aspired to go into automotive design. Ultimately, I settled on detailing which was a more accessible entry into the industry. For me, experience is king, and I am always seeking new markets.

More recently, I developed an interest in jade and crystals. I launched Mythical Cave in 2025, which offers me another creative outlet.

Across these experiences, I have learnt an important lesson. Working within an established structure like Song Fish provides stability. However, building my own businesses from scratch, has been a far tougher, but richer, learning experience.

To aspiring entrepreneurs: go all out and explore every possibility. The world is your oyster.

My time at Ogilvy empowered me to pursue entrepreneurship. I managed high-pressure campaigns, built client relationships, and led cross-functional teams. A turning point came when I was invited to join a consortium, where I took on a dual role of overseeing both strategic directions and daily operations. That experience led me to see what I was capable of and ignited my passion for building something of my own.

I went on to start Inkmaginary, a creative studio. I built the business from the ground up, relying on personal savings and channelling early profits back into the company to drive growth. One of the biggest challenges was having to wear multiple hats. It was a constant juggling act that demanded both focus and flexibility. Over time, I have learnt to prioritise and delegate.

Today, I seek out creative solutions to make a real impact. For me, success is about creating a legacy that matters.

Inkspired to Create

REGINA HO RONG MING

Inkmaginary Pte Ltd

Class of 2010
 Nitec in Product Design
 ITE Bishan

Shifting Gears into Entrepreneurial Success

DARYL WONG RUI ZHI

FDK Automobile & Leasing Services Pte Ltd
FDK insurance Agency LLP

Class of 2010
 Nitec in Product Design
 ITE Bishan

The need for challenge and the pursuit of freedom led me to pursue entrepreneurship. I crave independence. As an entrepreneur, I have the freedom to make my own decisions and set my own goals.

I built my foundation in automotive at ITE, where hands-on learning taught me to work on vehicles and diagnose problems in real-time. I gained access to industry-standard tools and techniques, and connected with instructors who had real-world experience. While these skills were important, my most important takeaway was my problem-solving attitude. That, along with everything I learnt, gave me the confidence to start my own venture.

Since then, the car market has evolved, with consumer expectations shifting. Armed to problem-solve, I trained my team on eco-friendly repair techniques and sustainable parts.

Looking ahead, I plan to grow this business and continue sharpening my skills. I am all in to make it work.

Some entrepreneurial journeys begin with a product. Others begin with a question. For me, it was a conversation that changed everything. During a competition at ITE, a chance exchange with Member of Parliament, Ms Jessica Tan, became the catalyst. She asked, 'If you have been building solutions to solve your own problems, have you considered building solutions for businesses?' That moment reframed my vision.

What started as personal problem-solving evolved into a mission to empower companies. I set up Noggin as an agile, forward-thinking technology company. Its mission was to help businesses protect their data, streamline operations, and embrace the power of automation. From our humble beginnings as a bootstrapped venture, Noggin has grown into a trusted name in business solutions. With a decade of experience under our belt, the company continues to stay ahead of the curve, integrating artificial intelligence to help clients automate tasks and operate smarter.

Our philosophy is simple but powerful: Businesses can start with zero capital – the key is to take action and refine as you go. Noggin's story is a testament to the power of perspective, persistence, and purpose. It reminds us that sometimes, the right question can spark a solution that transforms industries.

Tailored for a Purpose

**NURADLIN
HAMZAH**
Gadis.cos

Class of 2011
Higher Nitec in Business Studies
(Service Management)
ITE College West

I did not start a business because I had some fancy business plan but because I noticed the everyday struggles as a woman wearing the hijab. I struggled to find colours and designs that I enjoyed and that challenge became the inspiration for my brand. I wanted young Muslim women to see themselves in fashion – as the face of beauty, strength, and style while staying modest.

When I first started, people were happy just to find a hijab in the right colour or fabric. Today, customers want premium materials, sustainability, and fast delivery, all at a fair price. This pushed me to raise my standards, streamline operations, and treat every customer as a brand ambassador.

Over time, I have learnt to focus on my customers, not just the products I sell. When customers tell me that they feel beautiful and comfortable, to me, that is success.

A Solution that Sparked Business

AOW JIA RONG
Noggin Pte Ltd

Class of 2011
Nitec in Infocomm Technology
ITE College West

From Oven to Opportunity

**NUR ATIQAH
BINTE JASMAN**
CedokCedokSG

Class of 2013
Higher Nitec in Business Administration
ITE College West

Baking was more than a pastime. It was a legacy. Inspired by the warmth and generosity of my mother and grandmother who baked simply to bring joy to others, I began my entrepreneurial journey by selling homemade treats to family members. What started as a hobby soon blossomed into a thriving home-based business, fuelled by my love for creating wholesome, heartfelt bakes.

Social media played a pivotal role in expanding my reach, allowing me to connect with a wider audience who appreciated the authenticity and care behind each product. Yet, like many entrepreneurs, I faced challenges – particularly during slow sales periods.

Rather than letting those moments discourage me, I used them as motivation to innovate and refine my offerings. One such innovation came from a personal need: my desire for cookies that were less sweet and more health-conscious for my children. This led to the creation of my signature low-sugar cookies, a product that resonated with health-conscious customers seeking indulgence without compromise. Through my journey, I learnt the importance of adaptability, resilience, and staying true to my roots.

Growing up, I watched my father struggle to make ends meet. That drove me to break the poverty cycle, and I saw business as a path to financial independence.

I started by selling pre-order headphones to classmates in secondary school. During my ITE years, I got my motorcycle licence and began selling parts on Carousell. Over time, I learnt to spot gaps where people were underserved. This eventually led me to set up Arising Cleaning Group in 2019, after noticing that hotels struggled with cleaning manpower.

Today, Arising has earned recognition from various hotels for service excellence, having undertaken numerous large-scale cleaning operations, and successfully cleaning over 2,000 homes.

For me, success is about building a legacy. I aim to create something that lasts, not just another small business, but something that will live on beyond me.

The Rise of Arising

SUYADI BIN SUJAYA

Arising Group
Arising Cleaning Group
Arising Academic Ventures Singapore
Arising Academic Ventures Philippines
Arising Capital Advisory

Class of 2014
Nitec in Electronics
ITE College Central

Class of 2017
Higher Nitec in Cyber
Network & Security
ITE College West

ANDREA LIM MENG YAN

Class of 2010

Nitec in Western Culinary Arts

Class of 2013

Technical Diploma in Culinary Arts
with Restaurant Management

📍 ITE College West

Andrea is the co-founder of **5 Senses Bistro**, a group of three restaurants that serves affordable and quality food to excite the senses. He is also Singapore's brand ambassador for Australian beef.



THE APPETITE FOR RISK AND FOOD

My life partner and I first crossed paths while pursuing our Technical Diploma in Culinary Arts at ITE. For the initial year and a half, we barely interacted until we were assigned to the same group for the Principles of Accounting module. I was struggling with the profit and loss statement, and she patiently guided me through it. She became my first and only girlfriend, and now, my wife.

We shared a common aspiration of opening our own restaurant, and we began saving diligently even while we were students. Eventually, we invested all our accumulated savings into the business, incurring a debt of S\$200,000.

I firmly believe that true entrepreneurship necessitates a willingness to take risks. My own risk appetite is substantial; I do not believe in having a fallback plan, because if you dwell on 'what ifs', it can be detrimental to the business. Instead of succumbing to worry, I channel that energy into actively seeking ways to generate more revenue.

If you were to ask me whether I recommend starting a business with your significant other, the only thing I can confidently state is that the food and beverage (F&B) industry is exceptionally challenging. While working together as business partners has undeniably strengthened our marriage, I cannot recount the countless disagreements we have had.

Even during our culinary modules at school, the intensity was high, with our lecturers often pushing us to our

limits. Yet, we also learnt the invaluable mentality of 'tomorrow is a new day'.

We have made numerous sacrifices together. Typically, a chef works from 10am to 10pm, five days a week. As chef-owners, we operate seven days a week. After our wedding luncheon, we returned directly to the restaurant to prepare for dinner service.

To this day, we have yet to take a honeymoon. When my wife was pregnant, she remained on her feet in the restaurant right up to the day before she delivered.

Less than a month later, she was back at work. We cared for our daughter in a pram next to the cashier, preparing her milk whenever she cried. Our former lecturer was astonished when she visited us, but what alternative did we have? The staff who have weathered these challenges with us hold a great deal of respect for us. Most are students from ITE, and we have sponsored their diploma programmes.

Currently, the restaurant industry is experiencing a downturn. Dining out crowds have not fully returned after COVID-19, as many people have grown accustomed to food deliveries. More than 3,000 establishments closed in 2024, and I anticipate that this number may increase this year.

Why do we persist? I genuinely love connecting with people, and food is truly the most universal language. I have never regretted venturing into the F&B industry, and I am grateful every single day to be part of it. 🍴

LEE SYAFIQ BIN MD RIDZUAN

Class of 2010
Nitec in Western
Culinary Arts

Class of 2013
Technical Diploma in
Culinary Arts with
Restaurant Management

📍 ITE College West

Syafiq is the founder of **Ashes Burnnit**, a gourmet burger hawker chain with eight branches across Singapore.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

After gaining experience working in restaurants, I wanted to build something of my own. At 24, my colleagues and I decided to pool our life savings to establish a hawker stall. This approach offered a low-risk avenue to test our culinary ideas without incurring the significant costs associated with opening a full-fledged restaurant. My ambition was to bridge the gap between sophisticated restaurant cuisine and beloved local hawker favourites.

My first venture was Burgs by Project Warung, where my two partners and I served gourmet burgers at affordable prices. The initial two years were an intensive masterclass in running a business. I quickly learnt how to cater to customer needs by keenly observing their preferences and interactions. I also gained invaluable experience in managing partners and staff.

However, the hands-on demands of the business proved physically and financially taxing. Working 16 to 18 hours a day was exhausting. As every dollar earned was immediately reinvested, I was unable to draw a salary for six months. When I eventually exited the business, I did so without receiving any financial returns. Although the separation felt like a setback at the time, it prompted me to refine the recipe and build my second business, Ashes Burnnit from scratch.

This time, I was fortunate to have staff and supporters who stayed with me since my first venture. They demonstrated incredible trust in my vision, willing to accept salary cuts to help me build the company from the ground up while our cash flow steadily improved.

When COVID-19 hit, we adapted by leveraging social media to promote our business. I made the conscious decision to personally represent my brand rather than engaging influencers, realising that audiences resonated more with the personal touch of an owner. What began as a necessity eventually garnered national media attention. Food bloggers lauded our food as restaurant-quality, leading to features on prominent platforms such as The Straits Times and CNA.

In 2022, I was deeply honoured to receive the Berita Harian Young Achiever Award, an accolade that recognises individuals for both their successes and their contributions to society. That recognition embodied a belief I have always held: '*sikit sikit jadi bukit*', meaning 'little by little, it will grow into a hill'. This mindset has guided me from my humble beginnings to overseeing an enterprise of 50 individuals today. Following that milestone, I also had the privilege of cooking for then-President Mdm Halimah Yacob and then-Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong, an experience that made all the preceding hard work feel profoundly meaningful.

Empowered by these opportunities, I now dedicate time to mentor young hawkerpreneurs through the NEA Hawkers' Development Programme. While most mentors typically come from older generations, as a first-generation hawker myself, I am committed to fostering new opportunities for young hawkers with fresh, innovative ideas. After all, when I first started, very few believed that it was possible to successfully sell gourmet burgers in a hawker centre. 🍔



SHEILA MANOKARAN

Class of 2012

Nitec in Chemical Process
Technology (Biologics)

📍 ITE College East

Class of 2015

Higher Nitec in Process Plant Design

📍 ITE College Central

Sheila is the founder of **River Valley Irregulars**, a social enterprise that seeks to enrich youths' personal and professional lives.

RIVER VALLEY'S UNLIKELY GARDENER

I never imagined myself as an entrepreneur. ITE believed in my potential long before I did. Their support helped me stop waiting for a seat at the table and to build my own instead.

River Valley Irregulars (RVI) began not from a master plan, but from listening. Youths opened up about their struggles, which included a lack of mentorship, limited access to internships, and insufficient real-world exposure. At the same time, schools and companies shared their frustrations. They needed committed interns who knew how to build portfolios and present themselves with confidence.

That gap became our starting point. From it, we built our Internship Matching platform and Youths Opportunity Marketplace, simple tools designed to connect intent with opportunity.

In the early days, we relied on community support and partnerships with those who believed in our mission. We learnt to be resourceful, turning pain points into purposeful solutions. As our work grew, so did our network, expanding to include institutions and partners like the National Youth Council.

Today, our approach has evolved. We have moved beyond programme-based work towards digital tools and scalable solutions. The market shifts quickly, but our foundation remains the same: empathy, experimentation, and collaboration, with a focus on equipping youths with skills that extend far beyond the classroom.

I see myself in every young person we meet: hopeful, waiting for a chance, eager to learn. RVI is the very ecosystem I wished I had.

I came from a modest background, but people like Mr Chong Leong Fatt and Ms Fiona Karan saw something in me. Mr Chong reminded me that ITE should not define my limits; it should expand them. Ms Karan made me the President of the Student Ambassadors, giving me a platform to find my voice.

Starting a social enterprise was never smooth. In the beginning, I felt I had something to prove, that I needed to do it all on my own. But over time, I have learnt that collaboration is a strength. Mentorship from people like Mr Lee Han Shih, a generous philanthropist and guide, showed me that leadership does not mean doing it alone. It means knowing when to listen, when to ask for help, and when to give back. I do not forget those who helped me grow, those who watered the seed.

Since ITE, I have walked a path different from many. I began without clarity, and had I waited for everything to be perfect, RVI would never have taken off. The truth? Entrepreneurship is not glamorous. It is hard, messy, and often lonely.

If you are seeking stability, structure, and boundaries, then employment might be the right path for you. If you want to build something from nothing, to lead from the heart, and to stay the course even when it is unclear, then maybe, just maybe, this path is for you too. ☺

A portrait of Adrian Gan Jun Wei, a young man with short dark hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and blue jeans, sitting on a white stool against a bright yellow background. He is smiling and looking directly at the camera.

ADRIAN GAN JUN WEI

Class of 2013

Nitec in Electronics

📍 ITE College East

Adrian is the founder of **Goodfellas Auto Service Centre**, a one-stop shop for automotive servicing, repairs, and performance modifications.

DRIVEN TO SUCCEED

My fascination with automobiles began in childhood. Whenever my parents sent their car for servicing, I would watch the mechanics intensely, asking endless questions about how everything worked. I was captivated by the evolving technology and the problem-solving needed to keep vehicles running.

Yet my parents' experience as French car owners was far from smooth. Their vehicle was complex and difficult to maintain, and reliable service was scarce. This frustration revealed a clear market gap: many workshops in Singapore struggled with French brands, despite their significant numbers. I recognised this underserved niche and chose to specialise in Peugeot, Citroën, Renault, and Opel.

As I entered the industry, I noticed another widespread issue: trust. Customers often struggled to find transparent, reliable service providers who could meet all their needs. Most workshops handled only basic maintenance, forcing customers to seek accessories, performance upgrades, or customised work elsewhere.

This sparked my vision: to build a one-stop workshop offering comprehensive services while placing customers first through honesty and clear communication. In Singapore's saturated market, I knew that differentiation was essential.

My ITE experience was instrumental in shaping this mindset. Unlike traditional academic paths, ITE encouraged diverse ambitions and valued individual perspectives. That support kept me focused and helped me to set realistic goals. Much of my business education came through practice and research, including unique selling points, customer psychology, and the value of trust.

Winning trust was the greatest challenge. Many customers hesitated to try my services when I first entered the market. Price-conscious customers often sought the cheapest option, but I resisted competing on cost. Instead, we built confidence by solving problems reliably, and ensuring positive experiences. Over time, loyalty grew, and customers began calling us the 'king of French cars' in Singapore.

Strategic partnerships fuelled our expansion. I forged strong relationships with collaborators in France and Türkiye, many of whom I have never met in person. Through transparent communication and aligned goals, we built resources together, collaborating instead of competing.

To secure funding, I attracted shareholders from various industries by offering clear returns on investment plans. This enabled them to invest with confidence while allowing us to expand steadily. For me, success means offering 'dynamic products', which are services that evolve with customer needs and industry changes.

The automotive landscape is shifting quickly. Chinese electric vehicles are entering the market, while demand for French cars is declining. We are already adapting, focusing on flexibility while continuing to serve the niche that values our expertise.

Entrepreneurship is never easy. It requires sacrifices of hobbies, health, family time, and even youth. Anyone choosing this path must build strong support systems, both mental and physical, and prepare for constant challenges. Unlike climbing a corporate ladder, business ownership in Singapore is unpredictable, demanding continuous adaptation. Yet for those who embrace uncertainty and persist with resilience, the rewards can be profound. 🌀

I chose to become an entrepreneur out of a simple passion: to be my own boss. Starting out, I had no clear direction. Realising I needed a stronger business foundation, I upskilled myself with a Diploma in Marketing. I founded Products Purchasing & Supply Services in 1988, a company that sources and supplies hard-to-find machinery for government agencies and companies.

After years in business, I realised my lack of technical knowledge was holding me back. In my 50s, I decided to upskill at ITE through part-time courses. I completed a *Higher Nitec* in Electrical Engineering and using the technical knowledge I gained, I could confidently interpret technical specifications and requirements in tender documents.

I believe being an entrepreneur is no easy task. Starting a business and getting it right at the first attempt is rare. Entrepreneurs need to stay persistent and keep learning in an ever-changing environment.

50 Years Young and Just Getting Started

GOH MIAH MENG Products Purchasing & Supply Services

Class of 2012
Higher Nitec in Electrical Engineering
ITE College East

Beauty That Feels Like Home

LU HUI WEN w.onebeauty

Class of 2013
Nitec in Hair Services
ITE College East

Starting a business has always been a dream of mine. I wanted a cozy space to showcase my work without feeling restricted, combining my passion with the chance to grow and improve.

My mother's support was crucial in the launch of my business. She offered her home as the base for w.onebeauty, allowing me to start my small beauty service business using my savings. This gave me the control I needed to grow the business step by step. Since then, I have grown w.onebeauty into a thriving all-in-one salon, offering lashes, nails, makeup, hair, and even spa services. Built from the ground up without formal mentors, the journey has taught me resilience and independence.

Beauty trends are constantly changing. I have learnt that staying updated is essential, regardless of how experienced you are. Adopting a mindset of continuous learning has helped me to serve clients with more sincerity and passion. When clients love and trust your work, and become regulars, that is what I consider true success.

The most important advice I can give to any aspiring entrepreneur: dream big. If you never try, you will never know how far you can go.

Four Syllables began as a passion project rooted in my love for design and manufacturing. Today, it is a growing business that supports Small and Medium Enterprises with advanced 3D design and product development services.

My mission goes beyond profitability. I am determined to challenge industry misconceptions about 3D materials, particularly the belief that they cannot withstand high stress or temperature. Through well-engineered solutions, I aim to prove that 3D materials can be both durable and transformative for modern manufacturing.

As a lean startup, Four Syllables operates with low overheads, allowing me to focus on quality without excessive costs. Still, my vision is ambitious: to evolve into a full-fledged rapid prototyping and manufacturing company. I am currently seeking venture capital to scale up operations, fully aware that the journey ahead will be demanding. My time at ITE taught me that challenges are temporary, and with consistent effort and a commitment to excellence, growth is inevitable.

Three Dimensions, Four Syllables

LIM CHIN SOON Four Syllables Pte Ltd

Class of 2014
Nitec in Electronics (Instrumentation)
ITE College Central

My love for games and storytelling, developed through my hobby of drawing pixel art, led me to game design as a way of bringing my characters to life. Driven by my desire to create something of my own, I designed my first board game, Carrier, and started my game studio, Kodecco.

Carrier was inspired by the well-known game Werewolf. I wanted to experiment with post-apocalyptic themes and player-driven narratives. The outcome was a social deduction and survival board game. Starting small, I had initially helmed Kodecco alone, keeping costs low by doing everything myself. It forced me to be resourceful, learning new skills from graphic design to marketing.

My community of players was instrumental in improving the game through their feedback during playtests. It was a surreal experience when I saw people play Carrier at the Asian Board Game Festival 2024. After all, the festival was the largest English-speaking board game convention in Asia.

Building Carrier Pixel by Pixel

SEAH BI YANG Kodecco Pte Ltd

Class of 2014
Nitec in Mechanical Technology
📍 ITE College Central

Class of 2016
Higher Nitec in Mechanical Engineering
📍 ITE College West

Class of 2018
Technical Engineer Diploma in Machine Technology
📍 ITE College Central

Handcrafted with Purpose

NUR IZZATI BINTE MOHAMAD YUSLI

Love by Zati Yus

Class of 2015
Higher Nitec in Business Studies (Service Management)
📍 ITE College West

My entrepreneurial journey was shaped by the quiet strength of the women in my life – my mother and grandmother, who balanced family responsibilities while pursuing side hustles. Their example instilled in me a belief that I, too, could build something meaningful.

That belief took root during COVID-19, when I identified a unique challenge faced by hijabis: the discomfort of wearing ear-loop masks. In response, I designed a head-loop alternative, launching my first handmade product and igniting my business. This experience taught me a powerful lesson: where there is a problem, there is a need and often, a creative solution waiting to be made.

As the world transitioned back to normalcy and mask demand declined, I embraced change. I began exploring new handmade creations, from accessories to lifestyle items, always guided by the needs of my community. Flexibility became my greatest asset. It allowed me to evolve, stay relevant, and deepen my connection with the people I serve.

Jumping into Business

ERNEST CHEW CHUN KIAT

Bouncepark

Class of 2016
Higher Nitec in Mechanical Engineering
📍 ITE College Central

I realised my calling for creative pursuits during an ITE entrepreneurship fair, where I assisted a friend in creating a unique product that had potential market value. This experience inspired me to pursue entrepreneurship.

Wanting my business to be fun and creative, I founded Bouncepark, a bouncy castle rental company. Fortunately, I had a loan from my father and savings from part-time jobs to start the business. I was often tempted by the stability of a traditional career, but I reminded myself that entrepreneurship was not about short bursts of adrenaline or overnight success.

Today, Bouncepark has served clients such as Singapore Sports Hub and Resorts World Sentosa. My wife and I also own businesses under The Bespoke Group. Although my multiple streams of income provide security, there is no escaping the fact that entrepreneurship involves risk and uncertainty. Nonetheless, there is time to fall, learn, and bounce back.

Independence has always been part of who I am. Even when I was working part-time jobs, I found myself chafing under the limits of working for someone else. I wanted freedom to create, to express, to build something that was truly mine. That is when I decided to invest in a camera and pursue photography seriously. It was not easy at first. Building confidence took time, and I had to learn not just the technical side of photography, but how to trust my own creative instincts.

A major turning point came when I took part in ITE's Makerfest challenge, which celebrates student entrepreneurship and innovation. With the funding I received, I was able to purchase professional equipment. That upgrade transformed the quality of my work and made a noticeable difference in how clients responded.

Client loyalty did not happen overnight. I had to earn it through discipline, consistency, and a genuine commitment to delivering my best. To me, the most rewarding part of the journey is when clients come back, not just because they liked the photos, but because they trust me. That trust means everything. I believe I am where I am today because I combined passion with discipline. Dreams are powerful, but it is the actions we take that turn them into reality. For me, every photo I take is a step forward, one shot at a time.

One Shot at a Time

**HAFIZ-ZUL
HASIF BIN
HASAN**

Stardust Studios

Class of 2017
Nitec in Business Services
📍 ITE College West

Class of 2020
Higher Nitec in Service Management
📍 ITE College West

Since my school days, I had a dream of starting my own business. That dream began to take shape when I discovered my passion for event planning through hands-on lessons at ITE. The practical exposure gave me the confidence to pursue it seriously, and I realised how much joy I found in creating memorable experiences for others.

However, the early phase of entrepreneurship was anything but easy. The biggest hurdle was raising capital, because starting a business takes more than just ideas and passion. I worked multiple part-time jobs, saving diligently until I had enough to launch Bespoke Events in 2017.

My goal was simple: to craft unforgettable parties and events that left lasting impressions. Yet, challenges continued to surface. Marketing was a major struggle. Without the funds to hire professionals, I took matters into my own hands by enrolling in extra courses to learn design, branding, and strategy. I became my own creative team, learning everything from scratch. It was exhausting, but deeply rewarding.

Entrepreneurship is not for everyone, it demands resilience, sacrifice, and constant learning. For those willing to persevere, it can be the most fulfilling journey you will ever take.

Fuelling Success On-The-Go

KOOCESTER
Koocester Group Pte Ltd

Class of 2021
Higher Nitec in Passenger Services
📍 ITE College East

Sometimes, the road to entrepreneurship begins, quite literally, on the road. For me, it started with food deliveries and a curious mind. While weaving through Singapore's streets, I often found myself face-to-face with gleaming supercars. Intrigued by the lives behind the luxury, I began striking up conversations with their owners. What I discovered was eye-opening: many were self-made entrepreneurs, each with a unique story and valuable insights.

Inspired, I began filming these conversations, turning casual chats into compelling content. Over time, these videos did not just inform, they elevated everyday business owners into temporary celebrities, sparking conversations across social media. What began as a side project evolved into a full-fledged content creation business: Koocester, founded in 2023.

At its heart, Koocester is about sharing knowledge and amplifying voices. It is built on the belief that access to real-world wisdom can transform lives. For me, the journey has been deeply personal. Through these interviews, I gained mentorships, new perspectives, and a guiding principle that continues to shape my business: be people-oriented. When you take care of your people, they will take care of your clients, and your clients will take care of your business.

Turning Passion and Purpose into Parties

BONNIE CHAN
Bespoke Events SG

Class of 2018
Higher Nitec in Event Management
📍 ITE College Central

HERRON HO WEI CHONG

Class of 2017

Higher Nitec in
Sport Management

📍 ITE College West

Herron is the co-founder of **Swimwerks**, a provider of lifeguard services, aquatic event management, and professional courses such as swimming instruction, swimming lessons, lifesaving technologies, and aquatic products.



MAKING WAVES THE SWIMWERKS WAY

My entrepreneurial venture began at the age of 19. I approached it with the mindset that I had nothing to lose and everything to gain, especially since I was already freelancing as a swimming instructor and lifeguard. The idea for a swim school first sparked during a casual conversation with a friend while we were teaching swimming and life-saving to National Servicemen. For me, the risk felt minimal; I was young and confident that I could always find work even if it did not pan out. I dived into the opportunity without hesitation.

Today, Swimwerks operates with two primary business arms. One focuses on manpower, supplying lifeguards to a diverse clientele, including five-star hotels, theme parks, schools and country clubs. The other is Swimwerks Academy, which provides swimming and life-saving courses, alongside instructor training programmes.

Over time, I expanded my portfolio to include Happi Loft, an event space for birthdays and other functions, and Cold Flings, a gelato and acai cafe in Sengkang. While these businesses might appear disparate at first glance, they collectively form an ecosystem centred around families and children. Given that parents are consistently willing to invest in their kids, I view these ventures as thriving, 'sunshine' industries.

I have found people management to be the most challenging aspect of entrepreneurship. Initially, I was too accommodating and shied away from confrontation. However, I learnt that effective leadership requires a

balance of firmness and empathy. Recognising that I could not do everything myself, building the right team became paramount. Our team's retention rate is one of my proudest achievements in this area. We now have close to 100 individuals across our different entities, operating with remarkable synergy. The team's morale is also noticeably improving, which to me, is a clear indicator that we are on the right path.

Nevertheless, being responsible for so many livelihoods can be daunting. For instance, in manpower services, clients often have payment terms extending up to 90 days, whereas salaries must be paid punctually. When the amounts reach six figures, it undeniably generates stress. Ultimately, it is our responsibility to ensure our team members can comfortably sustain themselves, never knowing the personal challenges they might be facing.

Running a business has been far from easy. We often joke that our unit number, 07-11, is like a 7-Eleven store, because the work truly never ends. I have had to sacrifice both family and personal time, enduring sleepless nights consumed by work-related thoughts. Along the way, I have come to understand that health is paramount. Yet, sometimes in business, you are compelled to make trade-offs between your well-being and time.

While accolades like the Spirit of Enterprise Award are gratifying, for me, the true reward lies in providing livelihoods, fostering connections with people, and transforming passion into a sustainable means of living. 🌊

MOVINT RAO S/O BALAKRISHNAN

Class of 2018

Higher Nitec in Shipping
Operations & Services

ITE College Central

Movint Rao is the founder and CEO of **Crush Media Network**, a creative performance and consulting company that works with over 100,000 influencers in Asia.



A BODY OF WORK

At 17, weighing 130 kilograms, I faced a health crisis. Determined to change, I shed almost 70 kilograms in three months using questionable methods. The wake-up call pushed me to approach fitness more sustainably, and I began sharing my research and discoveries on Instagram. Within three months, my following grew from 200 to 40,000.

At first, my dream was modest: to become the first Gymshark influencer in the ASEAN region. While researching on how to grow my online presence, I came across a blog post which argued that 'marketing is about reverse-engineering the end customer'. In other words, what the marketer should do is to focus on the person behind the screen rather than simply broadcasting your message. I realised that I had been applying this principle unconsciously in my social media content. That insight sparked my decision to study marketing.

The path was far from easy. At ITE, I struggled to balance school, part-time work, and building a business. I often skipped lunch with friends and left immediately after class. Though some peers found me distant, my closest friends encouraged me, and their belief became my strength. My lecturers offered invaluable mentorship. Coming from a non-business background, I benefitted greatly from their guidance.

Sales proved the harshest challenge. I knocked on more than 100 doors, but few believed a 17-year-old could deliver results. At last, one potential client reconsidered my proposal. They had rejected my S\$5,000 package and offered S\$300 instead. I turned it down but then realised how wrong I was. They were the first to show genuine interest. I needed them more than they needed me.

I worked for free in exchange for testimonials and referrals. A Valentine's Day campaign with them exceeded expectations, leading to several new restaurant clients through word of mouth. That experience taught me that sometimes you must prove your worth before you can charge for it.

When I began a decade ago, many dismissed social media as a fad. Yet I was convinced it would define the future. From day one, I bootstrapped the business. Crush Media Network has never raised external funding – growth came from savings, closed deals, and lean operations.

Today, we serve clients across ASEAN, guided by a core advantage: localisation at scale. Many brands treat ASEAN as a single market, running identical campaigns across five countries and then wonder why nothing resonates with audiences.

The landscape has shifted rapidly. Attention spans have shortened, paid media has become highly technical, aesthetics alone are not enough, and content must feel authentic. We built local teams, blending cultural insight with performance-driven strategies. We aimed beyond viral reach, going for campaigns that convert. As TikTok surged and artificial intelligence emerged, we evolved even faster.

My philosophy remains constant: reverse-engineer from the end customer. Whether helping an individual pursue fitness or enabling brands to connect with ASEAN consumers, success depends on understanding the person you are seeking to reach. This principle continues to drive Crush Media Network today. 📧

LEONG SIEW YONG

Class of 2022

Higher Nitec in Technology -
Facility Management

ITE College West

Siew Yong is the director of **Able Fire Control Pte Ltd**, a company that specialises in fire protection services. Able Fire Control Pte Ltd provides service, maintenance, installation of fire systems, as well as firefighting equipment to commercial, industrial and residential buildings.



FIRED UP TO LEARN

At 17, a moment of youthful indiscretion became a pivotal turning point. I still vividly recalled my father's disappointed expression as he led me home. It was in that instant I realised I needed to change my trajectory. Soon after, I began working alongside him in the fire protection maintenance industry, a field I grew to find profoundly impactful, knowing it was a business that saved lives.

My father had a long-standing presence in the industry, and I was privileged to learn directly from him as he built the foundation of Excellent Fire Equipment. Yet, I still felt a strong desire to establish my own business from scratch. After completing National Service, an opportunity arose when my aunt offered to hand over her business. Stepping in as director marked the inception of Able Fire Control.

Now, with over a decade of experience running my own company, I am also in the process of taking over my father's business as he approaches retirement.

I firmly believe that continuous self-investment is key to business strength. Recently, I sought to upskill by applying for the Fire Safety Manager scheme under the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF). Discovering that my previous education did not meet the entry qualifications, I enrolled in part-time studies at ITE while continuing to manage my business.

My time at ITE was enlightening; it revealed numerous areas in which I could innovate and enhance our operations. I gained valuable knowledge in safety regulations, systems design, and updated industry practices. These studies provided fresh perspectives, leading to improvements in our service quality, compliance, and documentation.

I was able to apply directly what I had learnt to my business. Balancing ITE and my entrepreneurial responsibilities was a defining period, often involving moving directly from job sites to classes, which was physically demanding. However, I hold the conviction that regardless of one's experience, there is always something new to learn.

I have overcome many entrepreneurial challenges by maintaining a commitment to learning, both through formal education and real-world experiences. The fire protection maintenance industry has changed significantly since I first started. My studies at ITE have been instrumental in modernising my business, and I believe that the willingness to evolve is the only sure path to survival for business owners.

Today, I have successfully obtained my Fire Safety Manager certification from SCDF, and I have recently decided to further my education. As an entrepreneur, it is crucial to be optimistic, but equally important to remain realistic. Being well prepared allows me to take smarter, more calculated risks. 📖

Before jumping straight into entrepreneurship, I kept my eye out on what was in demand. I noticed how widespread services like food delivery and transport had become. Essentially, everything was accessible through a phone, delivered straight to the doorstep. I saw an opportunity when I recognised that car grooming services had not caught up with that same level of accessibility.

That gap inspired me to start Adriv Detailing, where customers could book automotive detailing services at their convenience. In the beginning, clients were sceptical. I recall one of my earliest clients asking, 'You are so young, you sure you know?' I did not want to embarrass myself so I would spend days preparing, predicting their questions and working out solutions in advance.

I have learnt to push through doubt, and prove people wrong through hard work. Today, my business is stable. I have always believed that setbacks are simply experience and motivation to do better.

Polishing Up for a Brighter Future

CHANDPREET SINGH S/O PRITAM SINGH

Whush Clean Pte Ltd

Class of 2021
Higher Nitec in Accounting
ITE College West

Starting Whush Clean was never just about personal wealth. It was about creating the means to make a meaningful difference. After completing national service, I launched my cleaning startup with a clear goal: to build a financially sustainable business that could one day benefit others.

One of my earliest challenges was cashflow management, a common hurdle for young businesses. Fortunately, my foundational training in accounting during my time at ITE proved invaluable. With a strong grasp of budgeting and financial discipline, I was able to navigate tight margins and keep the business afloat. Nonetheless, the learning did not stop there.

Without formal mentors, I turned to observation, including studying successful entrepreneurs, analysing competitors, and learning from those around me. I live by the saying, 'Spend time with five entrepreneurs, and you will become the sixth.' Purpose, resourcefulness, and a commitment to growth can transform a simple idea into a business that shines with potential.

Taking the Wheel to Succeed

ALWIN NG ZI EN

**Adriv Detailing
BuddyWash.Sg**

Class of 2020
Higher Nitec in Accounting
ITE College Central

For some entrepreneurs, business begins with a market opportunity. For others, it begins from the heart. Pawloft was born from the latter: a deep compassion for animals and a desire to serve the growing community of pet owners in Singapore.

As birthrates decline and more people turn to pets to complete their families, the demand for quality grooming services has surged. Recognising this shift, Pawloft, my home-based pet grooming business, was launched in April 2024. It was a natural choice, rooted in love and empathy for animals.

Like many startups, the early days were challenging. Building a customer base from scratch meant slow growth and tight finances. Yet, through trial and error, one key insight emerged: investing in advertising is not just an expense, it is a catalyst.

With strategic outreach, Pawloft began attracting new clients, many of whom became loyal regulars. For me, success is not defined by numbers alone. It is about creating a life of comfort and security for my family, including my beloved dog, where no one has to worry about affording what they need or want. Pawloft's journey is a reminder that businesses built on compassion can thrive with the right mix of strategy and heart. It is not just grooming; it is care, connection, and community.

Starting Small, Dreaming Big

JESS TAN

JT Prints Pte Ltd

Class of 2022
Higher Nitec in IT Applications Development
ITE College Central

I believe that one can start a business by being resourceful and willing to start small. With basic machinery, I began with thoughtful, custom products, like mugs with heat-embossed names. However, budget constraints and balancing schoolwork made fulfilling demands feel impossible. These challenges prompted me to prioritise my business' sustainability, implementing measures like minimum order quantities.

Since my business proved to be workable, ITE granted me funding, enabling me to diversify my product range. With new materials came new offerings, like vinyl decals for more surfaces. I observed customers' wants and customised everyday essentials, like TraceTogether tokens during COVID-19.

I shared resources by collaborating with my ex-company, venturing into large-format printing. Adapting to the now-saturated customisation market, I moved into ultraviolet (UV) printing and streamlined operations. My business' evolution shows you can build something that solves problems, brings value, or tells a story – just by using what you have.

A Paw-sitive Passion for Animals

CHRISTINA SOH XUAN NI

Pawloft

Class of 2022
Higher Nitec in Accounting
ITE College West

I believe in taking control of my own path rather than waiting for opportunities to be handed to me. At 20, I entered the automotive industry through my brother.

He taught me the fundamentals, from surface prepping a car for painting and basic on-site rim spraying techniques to customer service. I started with hands-on experience and quickly observed a gap: most workshops were either overpriced or inconvenient.

I invested in portable gear and offered high-quality, on-site services at competitive prices. This convenience, paired with professional results, helped me stand out. Many doubted me and assumed workshop prices meant better quality, but I proved that by focusing on details and the right techniques, top-tier results do not require powder coating or a premium price tag. Being my own boss pushes me to improve constantly, think creatively, and own every decision.

Creativity for a Cause

VANITHA D/O ANBAZHAGAN

Artistico Life

Class of 2023
Nitec in Precision Engineering
ITE College Central

My business was born from a desire to combine two things close to my heart: my love for art and my passion for animals. Using sustainable materials to create handmade ornaments and wearables, I give discarded items a new life and turn waste into beautiful objects.

Through my craft, I aim to raise awareness about protecting animals and the environment. What began as a creative outlet has grown to serve a greater purpose. I have connected with non-profit organisations like Causes for Animals and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). In 2023, I donated proceeds earned to WWF and was named Top Fundraiser during WWF's Earth Hour Campaign.

Starting out was not easy but every time someone supports my work or connects with the cause, it reminds me of why I started. To aspiring entrepreneurs: follow what excites you. It will keep you going when things get tough.

In the Driver's Seat

TEH JUN XIONG

Jayspray

Class of 2022
Higher Nitec in Accounting
ITE College West

It began with a passion to spread joy and connection through flowers. Motivated by this, I applied for the Student Enterprise Fund, which gave me the push I needed to take my ideas seriously. I was guided by assigned mentors to pitch fun and creative ideas like snack bouquets, inspired by those who wanted to give others something unique and practical.

By taking the time to understand customers' intentions, I discovered my unique selling point: the personalised touch I bring to every bouquet. I paid close attention to details and feedback, regularly checking in with my customers to ensure they are satisfied.

This level of care builds trust and keeps them coming back, but getting noticed and building a consistent customer base was not easy. This challenge encouraged me to use social media to build a strong online presence, offering customers not just a bouquet, but a whole experience.

From Spark to Sparkle

GENEVIEVE SEAH

Evie Jewels

Class of 2024
Higher Nitec in Service Management
ITE College West

My entrepreneurial journey began with a simple observation: many young people loved crystal jewellery, but most options on the market were priced out of reach. Driven by my love for crystals and a desire to make stylish, handcrafted pieces more accessible, I launched Evie Jewels – a brand built on affordability, creativity, and connection.

Starting the business while I was still a student came with its own set of challenges. I had to juggle schoolwork, livestream sales, bracelet-making, and packing orders, all without formal mentorship. I did not let that stop me. Instead, I turned to observation and self-study, analysing competitors, and learning from them what worked in branding, product development, and customer engagement.

Though the journey was often overwhelming, I leaned into resourcefulness, time management, and consistency. Entrepreneurship is not just about having a great product. It is also about the willingness to learn, adapt, persevere, and build a brand that sparkles with purpose.

Bouquets and Budding Success

JOLIN SAO JING XUAN

03daisy.co

Class of 2023
Nitec in Floristry
ITE College Central

I have always had a passion for art and a desire to build something of my own. For me, nail design is more than a service. It is a medium for creative expression and connection. I founded Yuuna Nails to create a space where artistry meets meaning, offering clients not just beautiful nails but a sense of comfort and care.

As a home-based entrepreneur without formal mentorship, I relied on trial and error, with YouTube and Instagram as my guides. My passion for branding was sparked during a Digital Marketing module at ITE, where I was so captivated I memorised parts of the textbook, lessons that proved invaluable when promoting my business.

Today, success means more than profits; it is the joy of building genuine rapport with clients who return not just for nails, but for the safe space I have created. That trust and connection are what I cherish most.

Success? Nailed It

NUR HAZWANI BINTE MUHAMAD FADZIL

Yuuna Nails

Class of 2024
Higher Nitec in Service Management
📍 ITE College West

A Curious Case of Entrepreneurship

JUSTIN LIM WEI DE

ResoCase

Class of 2024
Higher Nitec in Accounting
📍 ITE College Central

My constant curiosity pushed me to explore different prototyping methods. I explored creating products using my strongest skill, sublimation printing.

After conducting market research to ensure I was delivering what customers needed, I began producing phone cases. I started by using the ITE Makerspace to develop and test my ideas. Once the business became profitable, I reinvested the profits to expand our range to include more phone models and accessories like AirPods cases. Recognising that I had a workable business plan, the Student Enterprise Fund funded my expansion, enabling me to upgrade my equipment and bring the production process home.

Growing my business brought new challenges like juggling leadership roles in CCAs and other commitments. This taught me to prioritise and avoid burnout. Ultimately, what fuels me is the joy of someone genuinely loving my products. Their smile motivates me to keep producing high-quality products.

Business in Full Bloom

TAY WOON TENG

Floral Dream Designs

Class of 2024
Nitec in Visual Communication
📍 ITE College Central

I started my business from humble beginnings as a member of the entrepreneurship club at ITE. It was through this CCA that I got my first exposure to running a business. I was given countless opportunities to run pop-up booths on campus, where I could showcase and sell my creations.

I decided that I wanted to turn my passion of painting loose florals into something profitable. That was how I found my niche: floral-themed products.

I still remember the day I made my first sale. That was the day I founded Floral Dream Designs. Since then, I began designing and selling my own range, including greeting cards, stickers, hand-painted coasters, and other artwork. I also offer workshops in loose floral watercolour painting.

Looking back, I wish I had started my business earlier. If you are thinking about starting your own business, my advice? Just do it.

ITE will continue to grow in tandem with the nation, advancing with Singapore's progress while shaping new opportunities for its students. Guided by its vision to be a globally distinguished institution for skills and careers development in the coming years, ITE will be pursuing three strategic intents under its *ITE Elevate (2025–2029)* strategic plan with a focus on entrepreneurship:

- 1 Build an entrepreneurship ecosystem in support of alumni becoming business owners.
- 2 Partner Small and Medium Enterprises in their workforce transformation and industry solutions.
- 3 Develop student entrepreneurship thinking, skills and mindsets.

Through these directions, ITE will ensure that its graduates are all-rounders who are work-ready, life-ready and world-ready to make their mark in a changing world. Above all, ITE stays true to its mission of ***Inspiring Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs.***

SHARPEN SKILLS, SHAPE TOMORROW



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are deeply grateful to all the entrepreneurs who opened their hearts to share their journeys, challenges and triumphs, and to the team whose hard work and creativity made this publication possible.

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