Double your success

Mrs Carissa Mann realised her dreams of starting not one, but two companies within a year

BY CHARLOTTE KNG

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evome regional sales manager Carissa Mann contemplated a career search several years before a visit at the ESSEC & Mannheim EMBA Asia-Pacific Programme convinced her to take a step in a different direction. She had just made her first career move to Takeda Pharmaceuticals Asia Pacific, and the bucket-list item of becoming a founder and managing director of Place Solutions, a green building material trading company, as well as Magazines Singapore, which manufactures and retail’s online platform for reading material.

“I was 34-year-old German, who moved to Singapore 11 years ago, shares her entrepreneurial journey.

What inspired you to enrol in the ESSEC & Mannheim EMBA Asia-Pacific Programme? I got an invite on LinkedIn for the programme’s trial lecture. At that time, I had been working at the same company for 16 years but was feeling a bit restless. I’ve wanted to do something new and take on a new challenge. But I wasn’t sure if I should look for a new job or start my own business.

The programme is known to cater to budding entrepreneurs so I decided to give it a go. During the application process, a professor asked me to come up with a business idea. My answer was “green building materials” – and that sparked the idea for me to launch my first business venture, Place Solutions.

What do you think sets this programme apart from other MBA programmes? I liked that it was a very small, yet diverse class. There were only about 15 to 20 of us, including entrepreneurs from France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Switzerland. It is a unique industry and this offered a broad range of perspectives on the difference in cultures.

Was the programme helpful in growing your businesses? It definitely was. Running Place Solutions and ESSEC & Mannheim EMBA Asia-Pacific Programme?

What were your key takeaways from the programme? I learnt how having different perspectives can really help build a business. It also made me realise the importance of having people who are able to challenge my viewpoints and broaden the way I look at things. Only then will we be able to break out of our own moulds and improve ourselves.

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