

SPAN NEWS

SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC ALUMNI NETWORK NEWS

ISSUE 22/2005

Congratulations!

A warm welcome to all our graduands as this marks your membership in our 130,000-strong alumni body. As you enter into a new phase of your life – be it a career, a university education or National Service or even a start-up company – remember that it's all about networking.

You have many successful alumni to look up to. Be as passionate as them, especially those we have featured in today's issue of SPAN News, our Alumni magazine. They have the courage to follow their hearts and minds as they pursue their passion and dreams.

We have several alumni bodies such as the SP Graduates' Guild and the SP Entrepreneurs' Club for you to join. There are also Alumni Special Interest Groups (ASIGs) like the Concert Band and Adventurers supporting the respective student clubs. Come talk to us and we'll help you make the connections.

Having a network of fellow alumni to share with is certainly a bonus in today's globalised world.

Keep in touch and all the best in your endeavours.



Liew Beng Keong
Acting Director
Department of Student & Alumni Affairs



Tracer Survey on 1999 Alumni

A survey among the 1999 graduation cohort shows that their overall employment rate stood at 97.4%, with 1,663 out of the 1,708 graduates working either full time or part-time.

The main objectives of the survey were to understand the employment experiences of SP graduates and to examine the relevance of training provided by SP. A total of 1,941 graduates responded to the survey that was conducted at the end of last year.

The total monthly salary which includes overtime pay, commission and bonus, received by all graduates stood at \$2,794. Graduates from the part-time courses and full-time courses received a mean total monthly salary of \$3,524, which was \$894 (34.0%) higher compared to the full-time diploma graduates.

A total of 4.5% said that they were entrepreneurs. About 42.6% had worked in only one company while 32.9% had worked in two companies. About 29.9% had been promoted two

times or more while another 28.6% had been promoted at least once. As for overseas stints, 8.2% of the graduates had worked overseas continuously for one month or more. A good 75.2% indicated that they were willing to be posted overseas for work.

When asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with their current/last full-time jobs, 52.2% said they were satisfied with their present job designation, 49.5% with their present job and 46.7% with their present salary. They appeared to be most dissatisfied with their promotional prospects (27%).

Further education continues to be of top priority. Over 33.4% had already obtained university qualifications and another 19.4% were currently pursuing degree courses. Apart from these two groups, another 23.9% intended to pursue a degree course within the next five years. Therefore, about 76.7% of the graduates are expected to have a university qualification eventually.



Bringing out Truth in music

At 15, he wrote his first song titled "Tell Me Why", about his first crush in school. Now at 27, Alex Wang has composed hundreds of songs and has just launched his second album "Veritas", with the revenue that he had earned from his two business entities - enterprise/music that arranges and composes songs, and empathy, productions which deals with interactive web design and training courses.

Currently a third-year Business Administration student at the National University of Singapore, Alex does everything with panache. He personally oversaw every detail of the launch of his CD, from the designing, recording and photography, to sending his music to Germany for professional mastering.

"Veritas is different from the first album. It has more substance and there's a storyline to follow as you go from song to song. I see it more as a concept album revolving around "Truth" - which is the theme," he explained.

He certainly learnt from the experience he had in the launch of his first album "Someday" in 2003. There were

distribution problems as no record company wanted to pick up the works of local artistes. With no proper channel to move the album off the shelves, he had to get more performing stints to expose his music to the public.

Song-writing may be second nature for him and his business sense may complement it, but Alex admits that it is tough in this small market to make it big. But he shrugs, "Failure is no big deal. It's no big monster, really."

Things are looking up. A song he wrote in 2001 to mark the his final year of studies in SP made it to the top ten list in the "Our Story, Our Chords, Our Song" North East Original Song Composition & MV Award 2005 organised by Northeast CDC.

When asked how he wishes to be remembered as a performer, he quipped: "I want to be known as someone who writes with honesty - one who writes with soul and intent, with thoughts, feeling and emotions." Surely one day his dream of moving people through music will come true as he sings from his heart.

Ringling in a Revolution

In the very near future, your telephone call will likely to be through the Internet. MediaRing CEO, Khaw Kheng Joo confidently asserts, "We are going to change the world."

In their last half year, for the first time, MediaRing, the second largest VoIP (voice-over Internet protocol) service provider in the world turned profitable when sales surged to \$48.3 million. Every month, call traffic volume is more than 60 million minutes. Figures may appear modest but MediaRing is well-poised to grow its slice of the global Internet telephony market.

Its proprietary technology and products like the PC Phone, the IP phone, and the Enterprise, are targeted at different users - home users, users in third world countries that do not have broadband, and SMEs and large corporations. Its extensive network of distribution partners allows call terminations in more than 240 countries.

The man leading MediaRing has an impressive record of being in the forefront of technology. Mr Khaw joined Hewlett Packard in 1973 after getting his Diploma in Electronics & Communications. His long career at HP - in Singapore and the US - is marked by various technological and business achievements

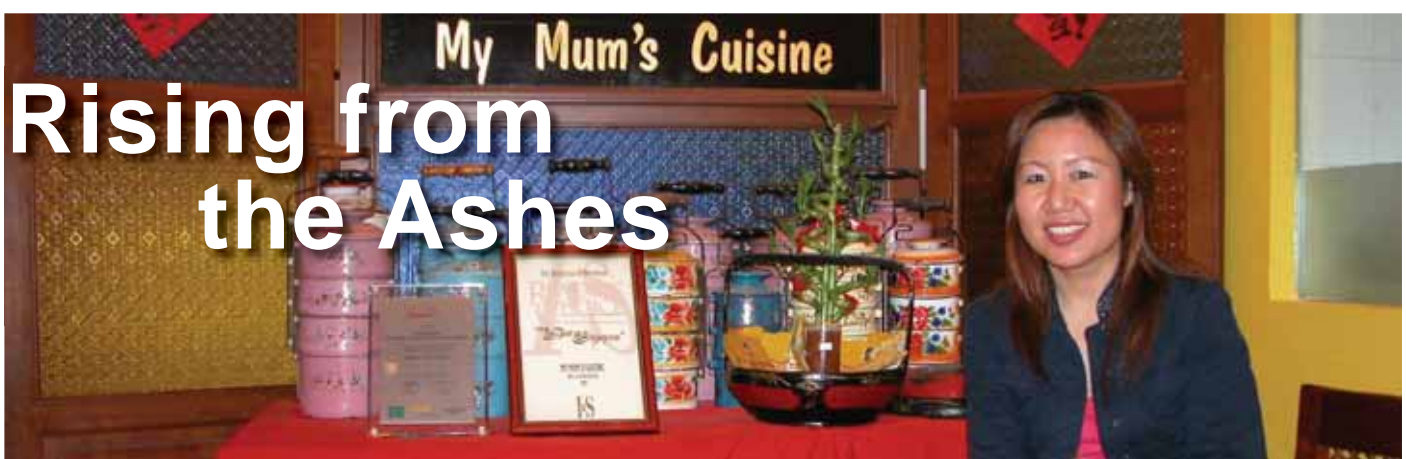
that have helped to put Singapore at the centre of the Pocket PC industry. Amongst other milestones, he pioneered the Win CE and GSM/GPRS wireless communication for PDA that led to the Jornada line of products. From producing the world's first wide-screen palmtop PC with Windows CE, his Singapore team within seven months gave the world its first colour-display Pocket PC.

Mr Khaw left HP in 1999 to become the president of Omni Electronics for two years before Omni Industries was acquired by Celestica. He served as Senior Vice President before joining MediaRing in 2002 because "it is one of the leading companies in VoIP technology and that interests me." Being in the centre of world-class technology excites him. He quickly set about to ensure that MediaRing would stay in the forefront of VoIP technology.

He says: "VoIP is basically an Internet story. The intelligence of the internet is provided by the applications and devices connected to it at the edges. Basically, the centre of innovation has been shifted from the core to the edges. VoIP and the Internet will do to the whole Telco what the PC has done to the main frame computer two decades ago. Making a telephone call will be just one of the plain applications on the Internet."

While on working stints in the US, Mr Khaw managed to study for two degrees - BSc, in Electrical & Computer Engineering with Highest Scholarship from Oregon State University, and MBA with Distinction from Santa Clara University.

His advice to young alumni: "It's a very competitive environment and you must find the right work-life balance. Unfortunately, we don't get to dictate that we will only work from 9.00am to 5.00pm as the competitive environment sets the pace. What we could do is that in the midst of the crazy pace, be very clear about a thing or two, which are dear to us. Make no compromise for that one thing or two."



In 1995, at the age of 26, Diana Cheng was the owner of My Mum's Cuisine restaurant in Holland Village. She and her friends then opened a few more restaurants in the Central Business area. Sadly she was soon in debt and waiting for her creditors to sue her.

She had one restaurant left, at the Paragon. She needed a break. On the advice of her ex-SP lecturer, Mr Willy Wong, she flew off to do a Master's degree in Hospitality Management in Cornell University.

Now, ten years down the road, Diana is the Managing Director of My Mum's Cuisine Restaurant Group which owns My Mum's Cuisine in Paragon, three Noodle Hut Restaurants - at IMM, United Square and Harbourfront - and Heng Café at Wisma Atria. She is also packaging her desserts and sauces such as Pulot hitam and Sichuan sauce. Her \$2.5 million factory in Tuas was opened in Oct 2002 and the products were launched in March 2003. You can find My Mum's Cuisine products at

supermarkets. Diana also has distributors in London, Australia, Japan and Canada.

She realises that focus is very important to run a successful business. Noodle Hut serves mainly traditional Northern Chinese dishes infused with local flavours, like curry chicken and la mian. Heng Café serves authentic local dishes such as laksa and Hainanese Curry Chicken.

Her next move is to bring her restaurant to the region such as Indonesia. Diana hopes that her mum's dishes would be served everywhere. What a way to go, Diana!

Visit My Mum's Cuisine website at www.mymumscuisine.com for more details.

When Diana was at Cornell University, the business was constantly on her mind even though she had a great team of people helping her. She wanted to finish her course quickly and come back to apply what she had learnt. Diana completed her Masters in 2001 and was back at the University for a talk last Nov. She has also been appointed by Cornell University as an Advisory Board member of its Entrepreneurship Centre.

Diana's advice to young people who aspire to be entrepreneurs is: "Running a business is never easy. It has its risks. You must be prepared to put in a lot of hard work and work your way up from the bottom. And never give up."

Her next move is to bring her restaurant to the region such as Indonesia. Diana hopes that her mum's dishes would be served everywhere. What a way to go, Diana!

Visit My Mum's Cuisine website at www.mymumscuisine.com for more details.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special Invitation to All SP Alumni

Regional Industrial Networking Conference 2005

ADOPTION & DEVELOPMENT OF 3G in INDUSTRY

Date/ Time : 13 & 14 Oct 2005, 9:00am - 5:00pm
Venue: SP Convention Centre (near Dover MRT). Admission FREE if register by 12 September 2005, after which, an administration fee of \$20 will be charged.
Register on-line <http://www.sp.edu.sg/rinc> starting July 05 2005.
Enquiries: Chia Chow Leong Tel: 6772 1355 Email: CLCHIA@sp.edu.sg

Singapore Polytechnic Graduates' Guild

Join the Singapore Polytechnic Graduates' Guild for the exclusive Fresh Graduate Membership Scheme for Graduating Students only! Valid till 8 August 2005. For membership queries, kindly contact Ms Ellen Alexander at 6796-9988 or email to: marketing@spgg.org.sg

Foreign Languages Anyone?

Wondering how to spend your Saturdays off? Sign up for Basic Korean, Beginners' French or Beginning Japanese in eight easy lessons from August to September. **15% off for Alumni.**
Visit <http://www.sp.edu.sg/departments/dis-cec.htm> for more details.

NEW! SP Alumni Visa Credit and Debit Card



The first ever SP Alumni Visa Credit and Debit card will be launched with waiver of annual card fees for life. This card will sustain your affiliation with Singapore Polytechnic and raise funds for the SP Endowment Fund! Many attractive privileges and offers are lined up specially for the SP Alumni cardmember. We need your support. There will be more contributions to the Endowment Fund as you charge more to the card. This will benefit present and future SP students in need of financial assistance. Call Eng Luan at 68790408 or email annaneo@sp.edu.sg

SP Career Portal

Exclusive to SP students/alumni - an online portal to facilitate your job search, get basic job search tips and employment market information. Go into SP website at <http://www.sp.edu.sg>

Alumni Scholarship Award 2005

Alumni Scholarship Award 2005 is now open for application. The announcement is posted in SAA website (<http://www.saa.sp.edu.sg>) under the title "Alumni Scholarship Award 2005". The funds are raised from donations by alumni and from events organised by Alumni Office. Eligible alumni are those who graduated from SP up to three years ago. Closing date: 31 Aug 2005.

Car Rally 2005

Help us raise funds for the Alumni Scholarship Award. Join the Car Rally on Sat, 12 Nov 2005. Interested? Email Kwee Chek at kweechek@sp.edu.sg.

SPAN News is published quarterly - twice in magazine format and twice in the media. If you have not been receiving SPAN News the magazine, please contact:

Dept. of Student & Alumni Affairs
Tel: Eng Luan at 68790408 or Connie at 67721342
Fax: 67721960 Editor's email: PearlyG@sp.edu.sg
Website: <http://www.saa.sp.edu.sg>

