

Ms Bianca Leong takes a break from working to fulfil her MBA dream at NUS



PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

# Spotting new opportunities

## HAZEL TAN

**A**FTER 12 years, Ms Bianca Leong quit her job in the film distribution industry to fulfil a long-cherished dream — pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA).

The 38-year-old former business development and operations manager decided last year that the time was right for her to take a leap of faith and embark on a new career journey.

“It was something that I had always wanted to do. I suppose it appealed to my self-actualisation needs. I had been deferring my studies for many years, as there was no good time at work to take time off. It has taken me many years to go back to school,” she says.

Once her mind was made up, Ms Leong spared no efforts to thoroughly research her options. In the end, she decided on her alma mater, the National University of Singapore (NUS).

“I chose to do my MBA at NUS full-time because I wanted the best MBA experience while staying in Singapore.

“I felt that my future lies here, and I wanted the support of my family when I went back to school. Also, NUS awarded me a scholarship to pursue this master’s degree,” says Ms Leong, who has a Bachelor of Science in Applied Chemistry (Honours) from NUS.

### Exploring possibilities

Ms Leong is mid-way through her 17-month programme. “My MBA thus far has opened my eyes to a lot of opportunities, especially in terms of entrepreneurship and starting my own firm,” she says.

She and her classmates have secured an office, and a source of funding for their start-up venture to

market Huxley cosmetics in Singapore and South-east Asia.

Huxley is a skincare brand from Korea that is known for its unique key ingredient, the prickly pear cactus seed oil used by Moroccan women in the Saharan desert to keep their skin hydrated and supple.

But it is not just business that she is thinking about these days. Her course work has introduced her to other things, like how she might be able to give back to society.

“The teachers at NUS have told us that our purpose in business is not profit. Profit is only the means to keep the business running. Our purpose has to be about contributing to society; to stakeholders beyond the shareholders,” says Ms Leong.

It is the unspoken theme throughout all the classes, she adds.

“In accounting, we not only talk about profit and loss, but also discuss how social costs are not included in balance sheets. In corporate strategy, we talk about green strategies as a competitive advantage. And for my management practicum project, we were tasked to figure out how to use loyalty principles to incentivise green behaviour in corporations and individuals.”

### Peerless connections

For Ms Leong, one of the best things to come out of the MBA programme was the connections she made.

“I have developed deep trusting relationships with people whom I have only known for about eight months. Some of them hail from places so far away I might never have met them if not for the MBA,” she says.

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MS BIANCA LEONG  
postgraduate student  
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