

Entrepreneur Asia-Pacific



Chairman's Message **Women and Entrepreneurship**

In recent years, the developing countries of the world have been focusing attention on the most disadvantaged group in the society – the women. Realization has gradually dawned on all concerned that a society cannot afford to waste half of its human resources by discrimination on grounds of gender. And why not? The women's sector comprises 60 percent of the world population. From a business perspective, this sector is a large market segment just by the sheer number of women and their varied interests. This increasing awareness on the part of various governments has led to the adoption of national and international policies to facilitate a development process involving women in all spheres particularly in economic activities focusing especially on entrepreneurship development.

In the article on Emerging Women Entrepreneurs in Asia-Pacific, it states that there has arisen a new class - the women entrepreneurs, who have accepted the challenges of life and have emerged as leaders in the socio-economic development - earning for themselves and for their families or contributing towards the socio-political upliftment of women. Not only have their greater participation in remunerative work improved their living conditions and provided bargaining positions in the households and wider community, but they are also creating opportunities for the general womenfolk leading to their economic progress and paving the way for a dignified survival through sustainable development.

Women have now become aware of their socio-economic rights and have ventured to avail the opportunities initiated for them. Asia-Pacific is now a changed scenario for the women who have gathered courage to break barriers and enter the off-house working force as entrepreneurs and workers - a situation not accepted by the society in the past. The urban areas have greater opportunities for business development but the areas where women lack assistance is in the access to credit, provision of skill training, and market facilities.

Entrepreneurship today has become an important profession among the women in different parts of the world at various levels of the society, both in the urban and the rural areas. Many women have taken up entrepreneurship and become businesswomen not necessarily to earn and survive and raise the living standards, but to form their careers and become professionals in order to establish their rights through the development of a sector and thereby contribute towards the progress of the society and the nation.

The changing role of women shows that over the last two decades, there has been a steady upward trend in the participation of women in economic activities in developing countries. Despite the problem of serious under-enumeration of women's involvement in economic activities in a sex segregated society as ours, the potential of women's economic contribution is now well recognized.

Women have achieved good prospects in industry, especially the small and cottage and micro home-based ones. Their present involvement in manufacturing and in the recent trends of their involvement in information and technology activities in growing numbers is likely to continue. Women have emerged as exporters and their control of export-oriented industries, are promising areas for enhanced female participation and employment. Incentives could stimulate enterprises to develop female entrepreneurial skills and income-generating activities. Women's growing involvement in the construction of civil works gives evidence to their potential regarding market growth opportunities and should be encouraged. To stimulate female entrepreneurship and create further employment opportunities, training programs for relevant issues, need to be provided to women currently in business. Where women have access to market information and display of products they can increase their business acumen, especially with respect to demand for a wide-range of products they might choose to produce.

Ever since, I have pinned my high hopes on the strength of women as entrepreneurs.. I believe the entrepreneurial talent of a woman in business is an asset to the economy.

Cheers to women and entrepreneurship!

Anna Marie Periquet
Chairman, YEGAP

YEGAP Prepares for Colombo Conference

In separate teleconferences arranged by the CACCI Secretariat on 17 March 2010, key members of the Young Entrepreneurs Group Asia Pacific (YEGAP) discussed preparations for its breakout sessions to be held in conjunction with the 24th CACCI Conference on July 5-7, 2010 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The teleconference participants discussed the format of the breakout session, exchanged views on their planned activities for the year, identified specific tasks to be done, and designated the persons responsible for implementing them. Executives of the CACCI Secretariat also joined in the discussions.

Teleconference Participants

The teleconference among key members of the YEGAP took place on the afternoon of March 17. The participants included: (a) Ms. Anna Marie Periquet, Chairman, YEGAP, Chair, Enterprise Development, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, President, Anna Marie Home Collection, Inc; (b) Mr. Teisuke Suzuki, Former Chairman, The Federation of Young Entrepreneurs Group (YEG), The Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Executive Vice President, Suzuhiro Kamaboko Co. Ltd.; (c) Mr. Mian Waqas Masud, Member and Advisor, Youth Committee, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Director, Fazal Industries; (d) Dr. Webster Kiang, Director-General, CACCI and Senior Executive Vice President, Chinatrust Commercial Bank; and (e) Mr. Amador Honrado, Jr., Deputy Director-General, CACCI.

Decisions and Recommendations

Among the decisions and recommendations made during the teleconference were the following:

Organizational Structure

Mr. Mian Waqas Masud accepted Ms. Periquet's invitation to take an



active role in YEGAP by, among others, assuming the chairmanship of the Committee on Programs that she proposed to be created during a previous YEGAP meeting. The Committee will be responsible for formulating and implementing YEGAP programs and activities, such as the Asia-Pacific Young Entrepreneur Awards and training programs.

The participants underscored the need to further expand the geographical scope of its membership to include all the 27 member countries to ensure a more broad-based and fuller representation of CACCI members in YEGAP.

Breakout Session Agenda

As regards the program of the breakout session in Colombo, it was agreed that: (a) Ms. Periquet would make a presentation on the trend and developments in youth entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific region; (b) a government representative from Sri Lanka would be invited by Ceylon Chamber of Commerce to talk about the official policies to encourage and support entrepreneurship development

in the country, as well as one or two local entrepreneurs from the private sector to share their experiences in starting up, expanding their businesses and doing business in Sri Lanka; and (c) Mr. Masud would make a presentation on the state of youth entrepreneurship in Pakistan during the panel discussion, and Mr. Suzuki would request someone from Japan to speak about the Japanese experience

Future YEGAP Activities

It was suggested that a fifth edition of the YEGAP Newsletter be prepared and published prior to the July meeting. The Secretariat requested Ms. Periquet, Mr. Suzuki, and Mr. Masud to contribute articles for the next issue of the Newsletter. For the topics of the articles, Mr. Masud suggested focusing on such issues as business internship and microfinance, among others.

It was agreed that selected past issues of the YEGAP Column published in The Manila Times will be distributed during the Breakout Session.

Ms. Periquet reported that YEGAP hopes to publish its first book entitled "Entrepreneurship in the Region: Doing Business in Asia-Pacific" under the full sponsorship of Manila Times, with the information needed for the book to be provided by CACCI members

Mr. Masud agreed to present at the breakout session in Colombo his proposal for YEGAP to conduct a Young Entrepreneur Exchange Program. ■



YEGAP Breakout session in Yokohama in 2009

If there is one entrepreneur I look forward to seeing during our annual YEGAP conferences, it is my dear colleague from India, Mukta Nandini Jain, the Chairman of the Women Entrepreneurs Council of Asia Pacific. Mukta is full of optimism and hope for entrepreneurs, in general, and women entrepreneurs, in particular. Her passion for the cause of women entrepreneurs goes beyond dreaming, as she transforms every dream into a reality. In her own words, she tells us to dream beyond what is possible.

Dream Beyond What Is Possible

By Mukta Nandini Jain



We need to dream beyond what is possible.

Every day somewhere, somehow the ubiquitous glass ceiling is continuously being broken. Sometimes, the women who conquer unexpected challenges make headlines; often, they find themselves steering a course or cause with no acclaim or recognition. In whichever manner, they still manage to change the way in which other more ordinary women think and act.

There is no such thing as a glass ceiling – just look up and you will find a clear and open sky. The limitation is self made. Let me share with you a simple story of Santosini who comes from a remote village of Orissa in eastern India. India is known for disaster stories of farmers. More often than not returns are very low. Farmers have to sell paddy at throwaway prices. Santosini was just a simple housewife in just a similar poverty stricken situation. She chose to take her life in her hands because she believed she could make things happen. She had read about medicinal plants. She visited farms in other parts of India; all were doing what she also wanted to do. Now she was even more convinced about its workability. By investing INR 3 Lakhs (approx. US \$7500) in her 3.5 acres of land, she made a reasonable margin, thus encouraging her to take the next step forward. She had the wisdom to take on lease 15 acres of farmland belonging to other farmers and also had the courage to take a loan of INR 35 Lakhs (US\$90,000) from Andhra Bank.

She seriously started the cultivation of a wide variety of medicinal plants. In the 1st year itself

she repaid INR 20 Lakhs (US\$50,000). She was comfortable and farsighted to use time tested organic- traditional fertilizers like cow dung – neem and chicken wastes. Today she is a role model for other farmers and employs 50 persons. She is a true woman entrepreneur and now has ventured into trading and consulting. We salute her entrepreneurial skill. “Good things don’t happen – we have to make them happen.” Listen to your heart and follow your dreams.

Let me share with you a few of the scientific information on why women are not only the fairer gender, but also the superior gender. Allan and Barbara Peace, authors of “Why

Men don’t Listen and Women Can’t Read Maps”, thank nature because “women are born with wider peripheral vision than men. A woman has brain software that allows her to receive an arc of at least 45 degree clear vision to each side of her head above and below her nose. Men’s brains, on the other hand, are pre-wired for hunting, which is why they see a much narrower field, focusing on what is directly ahead of them. Women are always more tactful while assigning tasks and attempt to ‘bond’ with who they are writing to. E-mail by women also tend to be more polite than those typed by the boys, says a study conducted by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India.

A typical morning in every woman’s life usually goes something like this: brush your teeth, answer the phone, take down a number, prepare or organize breakfast, get kids, yourself and husband ready all at once – Nokia’s recent global

online survey revealed “women are better at multitasking than men”. We always knew that, not only are we better we are marvels at multitasking.

Women tend to use more parts of their brains to accomplish tasks. Rober Doll, President and Chief Investment officer at Merrill Lynch Investment Management U.S, says “While all investors make mistakes, women make fewer mistakes and are less likely to repeat the same mistakes.” So is it any wonder that women are doing better at the stock market and heading several banks as well?

According to a study conducted over several years and covering over 900 managers from a wide range of companies, women managers in 28 out of 31 outperformed males. From producing high quality work, goal –setting, mentoring employees, to managerial skill areas, women tend to think through decisions better than men. “Women get high ratings on exactly those skills needed to succeed in the global information age, where teamwork and partnering are so important,” Harvard Business School Professor Rosabeth Moss Kauter said.

Today the world is asking all of you to give;

Your hands are soft yet capable;
Remember where you came from;
But never loose sight of where you are going.

Be modern and modest;
Fashionable yet family oriented;
Cling to your traditions lightly but never be afraid of change.

Today is ours, yours and mine.

I leave you with all this to think and act upon till the next time. ■

My Quest to Become a 'Spiritpreneur'

By Cynthia Romero Mamon Ph.D.

I have always believed that Jesus, is my real CEO, my Real Boss in everything I do. I also believe that the Bible is not only a good source of spiritual guidance but also provides a great collection of leadership case studies and management methods. In many ways we can use the inspiring stories about Jesus and other Biblical figures and use them as role models and emulate the same values as we perform our role as business leaders.

I am inspired by the books, *Jesus, CEO and Jesus Inc.*, as written by Laurie Beth Jones. It was through her that I learned about "Spiritpreneurship." "Spiritpreneur" which obviously comes from "spirit" and "entrepreneur." She defines "Spiritpreneurs" as those who fully integrate their souls in a workplace enterprise. As soon as I learned of this, I immediately wanted to become one and so when asked to write about my journey as an entrepreneur I thought of writing about my quest, my attempt to become an authentic "spiritpreneur." I added the word "authentic" because this, for me is a real challenge in what we try to become.

Jones poses the following basic questions to test if we are "spiritpreneurs."

"Would I be doing the work even if I weren't paid?"

"Am I doing this work as unto the Lord?"

If we answered yes to both questions then we are on our way to "spiritpreneurship."

But before one can become a "spiritpreneur," one must know the life of the original, the true and the ultimate "spiritpreneur," Jesus of Nazareth. Simply put, Jesus had taken over his "father's business," did his Father's will and successfully achieved his mission. "He created a new category of work for himself and was able to make a living doing what he most loved."

Jesus was a "spiritpreneur" because "He wanted more than anything to do what he came to do, and he wanted more than anything for others to have an abundant life as well."

Jesus was a "spiritpreneur." "He fully integrated his spiritual gifts and his daily work and he made a living doing it." Aren't we all aspiring to follow His example—to use our God given talents, the skills and knowledge we acquire to help others and please God in the process?

With a perfect role model of a "spiritpreneur," I started my journey, my quest, and my aspiration to become an authentic "spiritpreneur."

Managing the first joint venture of a global information technology (I.T.) company is not easy. Typical of any technology marketing organization, we are given sales targets, business objectives that we should meet with limited resources and face the challenges of the global financial crisis on the local businesses.

With an organization that had transformed from a family-owned entrepreneurial company into the local representative of a multinational I.T.



Ms. Mamon receives an IT Award

company, people management and shepherding the "flock" to promote values of stewardship, servant leadership and shepherd leadership cannot be possible without strength in faith and dependence on God's wisdom and guidance.

The first three years of the



company was faced with financial challenges to the point of bankruptcy as we introduced new technologies into a new country and just when the economy was not performing well.

On its third year, and on the first year when my husband and I took over the leadership of the company, God's miracle unfolded: the company turned around and reached the first million dollars in sales. On my second year, we had been awarded one of the biggest World Bank funded government projects worth \$33M and the rest is history. Boasting 70-percent compounded annual growth, the local company became the first joint venture of the parent company and was hailed as the model of the new joint venture business to be duplicated in other countries.

All in all, business grew, the staff not only grew in number but their jobs also became enhanced as projects became bigger and more complicated. With the transformation of the company, people's lives were also transformed, our own leadership skills further strengthened, reaping the benefits of the partnership with highly developed and mature business partners. The greatest challenge was dealing with government projects where we had to prove that we were the best technology provider, meeting all the stringent requirements in managing its I.T. projects, despite the challenges. But we were also blessed with government agencies whose leaders shared our values of integrity and transparency and who had a sense

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DIAMOND MEMORIES

By Noemi Lirag Saludo

Seventy-five years of living one's life is a great achievement if one considers her life as the greatest blessing from the Lord. I consider my life a success not because of what I have achieved but rather how I began living life, facing obstacles, enduring the pains, and overcoming challenges to get to where I am now.

I was born into an impoverished family. Both my parents, Basilio Lirag, and Regina Kasilag, started their married life from very humble beginnings. My father was the son of a farmer and was an errand boy for a goldsmith enterprise. My mother sold a variety of "kakanin" around Padre Garcia town in Lipa City.

It was by fate that my parents met and eventually got married. Having

learned the art of jewelry-making as an errand boy in Goldsmith, my father started a small business with my mother as his partner. My father crafted jewelry while my mother sold these in the city.

One day, my father purchased a small quantity of gold and tiny diamonds which he produced into jewelry. When he opened the package of the gold and diamonds, to his surprise the contents were large diamonds valued at a much higher price than what he paid for. He immediately returned the package to Oceanic Commercial, and the manager was just so thankful that he consigned the diamonds to my father. To provide for working capital, the kind manager guaranteed a loan with BPI for my father. The business flourished many times over. All of us children were given each our respective tasks to help in the family business.

Another business opportunity opened up to our family when my mother began producing garments in minimal volume. Every Sunday, we would sell these garments in front of the Lipa Cathedral. My brother Peping

and I assisted our mother. I would call on parishioners to buy our garments by singing at the top of my voice. I would even dance just to attract people to buy our merchandise. By 8 in the morning, all our goods were sold.

My parents concentrated their business in the importation of remnants. A Jewish named Max Cohen was my mother's supplier of remnants before the war. He gave our parents the opportunity to be the sole distributor of remnants coming from the US soon after the war.

Perhaps it was his way of expressing gratitude to my father for while he was imprisoned in the concentration camp at the UST complex during World War II, my father would always visit and bring him food. After the war my father thought that he was killed during the invasion of Manila by the Americans.

We were surprised one day when my father received word from Max that he was sending two shiploads of to be distributed here in Manila. This was another big break for the family. For

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My Quest

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of mission in the work that we did together.

All these years, I tried my very best to practice "spiritreneur-ship." With my team, we experienced the power of prayer as we prayed for our clients, our projects, sought God's wisdom in major decisions and when faced with uncertainties. Our vision was not to be the top hardware company but to be the role model in the industry. We wanted to be "salt of the earth, light of the world," (Pardon the pun).

And then the recognition came when the Catholic Businessmen's Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)

through the Institutional Spirituality Quotient (ISQ) Program packaged into a book with the same title developed and written by Ms. Sabsy Palanca, awarded my company with a Certificate of Recognition. We were one of the first three recipients of this unique recognition. We were the only representative of a multinational IT company. The other awardees were an NGO and a Catholic formation center.

We passed several tests of this ISQ based on interviews with suppliers, competitors, customers, employees, directors and partners and we received high scores. These were tests on how we lived our values in the work place. The ISQ Certificate of Recognition with the slogan "Living our Values

in the Workplace" was indeed an affirmation that somehow we are on the way to "spiritreneur-ship."

We thank God for the gift of Service as my husband (who I also help in another business) and I share the inspiration "my business is my ministry."

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17).

About the Author: Ms. Cynthia Romero Mamon is President of Sun Microsystems Philippines; and Vice President for Enchanted Kingdom's SMILE (sales, marketing, imagineering, leisure and entertainment) division. ■

DIAMOND MEMORIES

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several years our business was doing so well that my father decided to put up Lirag Textile Mills. He was the only Filipino industrialist to join such a major venture.

It was during this time when I was sent to Georgian Court University when two years later my father sent me back home to Manila. I decided to go into importation of remnants until 1967. Then I worked for my father at Lirag Textile Mills, Inc. as Personnel Manager. It was my mother's wish before she passed away that year.

I then started my own garment and export business, Philippine Integrated (MFTRS) Exporters, Inc. (PIE) in the seventies. Just to start the business I sold all my jewelry, I sold a property in Paco, and I asked my guardian in the US to lend me money.

The first few years were very difficult for us. There were numerous times during the first three years of our operations when I wanted to throw in the towel. But then after three years the business started to grow. PIE was conceived with the mission of presenting to government a new approach in helping SMEs especially those in the garment industry. Through our efforts, the operation of a Customs Common Bonded Warehouse soon became a program of the government to support the SMEs.

The operation of PIE was very crucial in its infancy stage. We practically had to attend to all areas especially in rules and regulations, terms of reference, and financial needs of the company. I can very well say that in all those years of struggle, Sto. Nino was always there to help us. There was a statue of Sto. Nino which was given to me by a friend from Laguna when we were just starting the company. We experienced quite a number of miracles at times when we felt most helpless and hopeless.

By 1979, PIE joined the Garment Business Association (GBAP), the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce & Industry

(PCCI) upon the advice of the late Atty. Alex Dizon who was GBAP president at that time. I became very active with GBAP and PCCI on export promotion, customs affairs, country side development of SMEs, and International trade missions. The immense support of Alex led to my election as president of GBAP.

As GBAP president I was invited to attend the CACCI conference in New Delhi, India. On the first day of the conference, I met Dr. Aurelio Periquet, Jr. who was impressed with my presentation. Aurelio and I instantly became friends. He started giving me assignments at ECOP and PCCI. I felt that I was being recognized and this inspired me to actively participate in these two major organizations. I soon became a member of the board of ECOP representing the garment industry and I later joined the PCCI board.

I also chaired quite a number of trade missions to Japan, Europe, Panama and Colon, Taiwan, just to name a few. Whenever there was an opportunity, I always took the time to participate in different conferences, seminars, or workshops funded by foreign institutions such as UNDP. My most interesting work in the international level however was being appointed Secretary General of the Philippine-Chinese Business Council for twelve years. The council was instrumental in the entry of the Taiwanese investors at Subic Bay during the time of President Ramos.

I also had the distinct privilege of representing the PCCI to the BOC computerization program. The PCCI Entry Encoding Center was set up to allow the private sector to file their entries to the BOC through IT. This was one of the major sources of income of the PCCI for years.

By 2003, I was immersed as an active officer and member of PCCI. I was elected as the first and only woman president of PCCI in 2004. No less than President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo officiated our oath-taking at the Manila Hotel. My agenda and program as president focused on Regional and

SME Development. I made over 53 trips to provinces all over the country to meet with the PCCI local chambers.

I also earned the distinction of having invited Malaysian Prime Minister, Mohammed Mahathir to the Philippines. Through the help of former President Fidel V. Ramos, Dr. Mahathir keyed the Philippine Business Conference (PBC) under my helm. It was a very successful conference. For the first time in the history of the PBC, a record of over 2,500 participants remains unsurpassed! It was in 2005 when I finally decided to retire from the PCCI after serving the organization for 26 years.

It was during this time in my life wherein I found my true calling - to serve the Lord. The Bahay ng Diyos Foundation was thus created. It is my way of giving back and paying it forward. Touching the hearts of numerous individuals and corporations to dedicate their time, personal resources and network to raise funds and rebuild more churches is indeed heartwarming.

For more than fifty years I have worked very hard. So most recently, I have decided to call it a day and retire from business to start a new chapter in my life: to be a simple farmer in our farm located in Lipa City and to spend my time with Bahay ng Diyos Foundation.

I can truly say that the Lord designed my life. He gave me the best parents one could ever ask for: a father and a mother who moved heaven and earth to provide their offspring with the best life has to offer. My parents reared us to be good Christians worthy of His love and care. They gave me all the opportunity to be the woman that I am today.

I may be a Diamond Lady - all of 75 years - but I feel as though I am just starting to live this gift called LIFE.

Should I ask for more? All I can say is THANK YOU DEAR LORD.

Mrs. Noemi Lirag Saludo is Past President of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

■

My Journey as an Entrepreneur

By Maret Follosco Bautista

Preparing for the Journey: My Ticket

My ticket ride on the Entrepreneurial Express was booked even before I was born. My paternal and maternal grandparents were entrepreneurs. So are most of my relatives. After a brief but meteoric career in a multinational corporation, my father, a licensed engineer in multiple fields (mechanical, electrical, industrial, management and agriculture) and my lawyer mother began their first venture -Alpha Machinery and Engineering Corporation. This was the first of what would evolve to be 11 companies under the CL Follosco Group.

First Leg of the Journey: All Aboard Apprenticeship

I grew up in an environment where productivity, innovation and excellence were championed. Family vacations and meals were occasions to learn, share ideas, raise questions and challenge opinions.

Our parents made sure that my 3 brothers and I were exposed to business early on. Summer breaks were spent working in the office. My first chore was to type promotional letters with the same content (no computers then). My brothers, on the other hand, would always come home all greasy from

cleaning the bodega.

Youth Entrepreneurship

I became an entrepreneur at a tender age. I started my own 'business' when I was 6 years old. I would purchase a gallon of A&W Root beer and sell this by the glass to my relatives. That initial venture gave me my first taste of inventory losses and collection woes. With little profits earned and lessons learned, I shifted to selling toys, snacks, T-shirts and bags until my teenage years.

Refueling: Continuous Education

College and graduate business school equipped me with theoretical skills I needed in business. I have been trained to always aim for excellence, growth and improvement. To this day, I continue to attend seminars, business fora and read up on new business and management concepts. In our family, education is a top priority.

Second Leg of the Journey: Taking Flight

Growing the Business:

I officially joined the family corporation in 1988 after working 'outside' the company and completing my MBA. At that time, my parents, with the help of my elder brothers, had already set up 4 companies. I was assigned as the Finance Manager of the group.

It didn't take long for me to set up our fifth company – Active Alliance Finance Company. After 22 years, this small unit has grown with 6 major branches all over the country.

Innovation and Creativity

Realizing the tight competition in the finance sector, we came up with innovative loan

products, process and systems to be able to be competitive. We set up a unit servicing businesses with special requirements plus another one to fund joint ventures and provide equity for individuals and SMEs.

We also changed the way we evaluated client's capacity to repay by looking for values that didn't appear in the balance sheet such as management competence, potential growth of the business, character and entrepreneurial drive of the owner.

We gave added value to our clients by meeting with them regularly and advised them on managing and growing their business. We also offered common services and facilities like credit and collection systems and use of conference and meeting rooms.

We have since established new ventures in our manufacturing and trading clusters and are on track to sustain growth and expansion. Looking back, it is evident that the gains we made in our businesses were made possible by our willingness to take on new challenges and our commitment to excellence. Only by doing this can we remain viable in an increasingly competitive global business environment.

Side Trips

Family and Motherhood

Marriage and motherhood did not slow down my entrepreneurial drive. Like my parents, my husband and I also sought to pass on the entrepreneurial torch to our 2 children. During their elementary years, we bought them a recording machine which they used to transfer VHS and Betamax tapes to DVD. They called their titas and titos to offer their recording services. In two months, they were able to repay us the cost of the machine and generated hefty profits thereafter. This experience made them appreciate the value of working hard for their own money thus, making them frugal even at an early age.

When my children were in primary school, I was very active in the Parents' Organization. I saw this as my opportunity to hone my management

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The author (2nd from right) with her husband Jun (right) and their sons John (left) and David (2nd from left).

Helping Women and Women Entrepreneurs to Help Themselves

By Shelley Wang

Women's Status in Taiwan

Since the 1970s, with Ms. Hsiu-lien Lu's advocacy of "New Feminism" and Ms. Yuan-chen Li's establishment of The Awakening magazine, gender issues gradually caught public attention in Taiwan. Later, the number of women's groups and the influence of women's movements have had considerable progress after the lifting of Martial Law in 1987. Thus, the following 1990s became the 'rapid-growing period' for women movements in Taiwan. Several regulations related to women's rights were promulgated during this period, and many women-related NGOs were established to provide different services for women of different backgrounds. Although gender issues are much highly emphasized in Taiwan nowadays, there is still a long way to go in many aspects.

From a comparative viewpoint, women in Taiwan's business world own a relatively higher profile and enjoy much more freedom than their counterparts in other Asian countries. Statistics can justify this statement. For example, 33.87% of enterprises in Taiwan are women-owned and 10% of large-sized enterprises are run by women. The performance of Taiwanese business women is as good as their counterparts in the developed societies such as the United States and Canada. Apart from that, there are plenty of business owner's wives who do not appear in the category of official statistics mentioned above, yet play important roles in running small and medium enterprises. Actually they are de facto women entrepreneurs.

The culture background of women entrepreneurs in Taiwan

However, if we go into the detail and make a qualitative analysis of the



business they run, we then can find that there are still a lot for Taiwanese business women to catch up. Several things can be mentioned:

Firstly, the business women run are largely micro-business, small and medium enterprises, and the average turnover of women-owned business is only one-third of their male-counterparts.

Secondly, women entrepreneurs tend to focus on some specific kinds of business, such as retailing business, service-oriented business, education-related business and business mainly catering for domestic markets.

Thirdly, married women tend to be less enterprising and less adventurous than married men. In short, there is still a wide space waiting to be developed by women entrepreneurs.

Take myself as an example. As a middle-aged business woman, I have experienced various difficulties in the process of setting up and managing my own business. Some are especially notable. Before the age of thirty-five, the idea of setting up my own business had never occurred to me. Since a kid, I had been taught that the ideal life was being a housewife. To play domestic roles properly, bringing up children and serving my husband are the ideas occupying my mind and directing my life-style. It is a cultural matter, and there was, and still is, plenty of Taiwanese women like me then.

After opening up my own business, the pressure then immediately came from my family. My husband, a university professor, was very much stuck by the traditional notion of a good family. That means a rather simple life. I was expected to fix dinner for the whole family members and to have family get-together every Sunday. That was just impossible for a business woman who was at the initial stage of establishing her own business.

My husband eventually changed his idea, but it took a painful long time in doing that. Inevitably I was bound to face other difficulties that nearly all business women would encounter. As our adventure would not be taken seriously and normally would not get the whole-heart support from our spouse or other family members, our start-up investment capital would be limited.

The difficulties for start-ups

My start-up capital came from my personal savings. It is therefore not surprising to understand that women entrepreneurs are often owners of micro-business or small and medium enterprises.

For many Taiwanese businesswomen, to secure adequate loan from banks or other financial institutions can be a difficult matter. They often involve complicated procedures. In addition to this, women are often victims of bankers' prejudices; women are not reckoned by bankers to be credible in new business start-ups. Most notably, as women are less adventurous and more reserved in taking initiatives the size of their business is no wonder small.

So long as they start up their business, women then would come across other challenges. To name only some, business women are often short of professional knowledge and skills in the down-to-earth management of their business. They are also in difficult position to win business partners as the world of business is mostly dominated

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Helping Women

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by male. Above all, their personal connection is normally confined to their own kind, which would restrict their stretching capacity.

How can the Taiwanese government help on these matters?

I have given a rough sketch regarding the difficulties that business women may come across in Taiwan. One category concerns with the Chinese culture that Taiwanese women inherit; the other has more to do with the real world of business. How can the Taiwanese government help on these matters? As far as I know, Taiwanese government has done something for women who want to have their own business. To mention just one thing, since the year of 2002, National Youth Commission of the Executive Yuan, set up Free and Young Program (Flying Goose Program) aimed at incubating women entrepreneurs. More than that, several central government agencies are also offering start-up loan for the young and for women. For women who want to start up their business and to pick new skills, there is abundant information available from websites. On the whole, there is no doubt that the government policies take a rather encouraging stance towards women entrepreneurship.

Whether these are effective, that is another issue

How about the cultural element which may hinder the development of women entrepreneurship in the first place? Taiwan has been under dramatic social change. And the direction of change is towards western democracy within which the development of individuality and individual autonomy are highly valued. So much so that I think woman's gain of a more equal social and economic status in the near

future is a must. It is on this ground that I am quite optimistic about the flourishing of women entrepreneurship for the time to come in Taiwan.

We need more help to help ourselves!

Having said that, I do not mean that the government has done enough as far as the promotion of women entrepreneurship is concerned. Even though the government has taken various sorts of policy to encourage women to start-up their business and to support their management, it has not managed to obtain sufficient statistics on women entrepreneurs. It is therefore doubtful whether the government is able to take effective strategies to help businesswomen. Apart from that, the government ought to look at how other nations are doing in terms of helping women entrepreneurs. As far as I know, the United States, Russia, Canada, South Korea etc. already have government agency especially for women entrepreneurs, so that they can secure professional help, and financial support if necessary. These countries have set examples for Taiwan. It is the government's job to take preferential treatment in helping women entrepreneurs without hesitation.

For the sake of women themselves and the society as a whole, the government is obligated to take positive actions in helping women. Conference like this is most appreciated here.

Ms. Shelley Wang is a Vice-Chairperson of the CWEC and Member of the Board of Directors of the Global Federation of Chinese Businesswomen (GFCBW).

This article is the full text of the presentation made by Ms. Shelley Wang during the breakout session of the CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (CWEC) held in conjunction with the 21st CACCI Conference in Taipei. ■

My Journey as an Entrepreneur

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skills by helping raise funds and organize activities for the school. On the side, I would also mentor parents and teachers to become financially independent or give advice on how to manage their financial resources.

Turbulence

All of us have experienced setbacks -- failures, losses, errors in judgment, people problems, natural disasters and economic crises. These turbulences are learning experiences for me. The 3 R's – Right attitude, Re-evaluation of the situation and Reengineering – are my guide to each situation.

The Continuing Journey: Entrepreneurship as an Advocacy Teacher/Mentor

In the course of my entrepreneurial journey, I had the opportunity to share my experiences as an entrepreneur, as well as learn from the experiences of others. I have been invited as guest speaker or as country representative to international conferences organized by the ASEAN, APEC and United Nations. I have also conducted business clinics and workshops for OFWs, medical practitioners, real estate brokers and local chambers of commerce.

I have made it a personal mission to pass on the entrepreneurial skills I have acquired through free consultations and seminars. Despite the unending challenges in business, success stories from entrepreneurs that I have mentored come as gusts of fresh air that keeps my entrepreneurial sails moving forward, faster and farther.

As I explore new markets, develop new products and services and enter new businesses, I will make sure that lessons, skills and knowledge I learn will be passed on to those who care to join my continuing journey.

Ms. Maret FolloSCO Bautista is Treasurer of CL FolloSCO Group. ■

The Journey

By Marichu Liwag-Carstensen

My journey from a backyard candle making hobby to a global lighting business all started from a book that I found at National Bookstore in Cubao. I was then waiting for my medical board exam results. Little did I know that the 700 peso investment on that book will lead to a craft business that would employ people not only in my community but in other parts of the country as well.

I headed to Divisoria and bought all the materials listed in the book. With no moulds on hand, I borrowed some plastic toys from a relative. After a week, I was able to make almost all of the candle designs. They looked nice but gave off a lot of smoke. Awful! So I called my Mom then working in Germany and asked her to send me the finest wick that she can find.

Candle making became my hobby for a couple of years until there were candles all over the place.

Upon getting my medical license, I practiced in a local private hospital. Later, I established my own clinic and pharmacy in our family compound in Lipa City.

Patients were scarce, few paid, and I had to give lots of medicines for free. Kids hanging around my neighborhood caught my attention and I decided to teach them basic drawing and pastel painting in a vacant lot next to my clinic. Starting a youth art club became an idea but I was short of funds. This led me to turn my candle making hobby into a money-making venture.

Money from the first batch of candles that I sold helped give birth to the Lipeno Youth Art Club. From the simple aim of teaching kids to draw, it



became a place where creativity and love for country is nurtured, where they learn the value of planning their lives early on.

The real candle business was born when I got a big order on my first trade show in 1999. My boyfriend then, Morten Carstensen (now my husband), joined my venture and turned it into a viable business. Within a few years, Doc's Candles had regular clients and stores all over the country.

I love my workers. They have been with me through thick and thin. I still have workers who were with me from day one, who continue to make flawless candles everyday. Why? Maybe because I deal with them with respect. They are happy in what they do and feel appreciated when they do their jobs well.

I show the same respect to every customer through good quality candles. I continuously innovate and make new designs to keep them happy.

Out of respect, I don't copy my competitors. Doc's Candles is now collaborating with a former competitor, another big candle factory who has established market and a network of

dealers all over Europe. We have combined our techniques to make the most beautiful candles of the highest quality. By working hard and focusing on our product, doors of opportunity are opening.

I have a very useful and reliable tool which I call MAGIC NOTEBOOK. On this notebook, I write everything that comes to mind. My plans for the whole year, for the whole month and on hectic days, I write my to do list. I draw my designs there, the lay-out for my next exhibition, the new ideas for my paintings, the stage set up for my parties, etc. This is

my strategy to hold on to my dreams. Before I had this, my goals were a big pile of crazy and useless ideas. When I began to write them down, things got easier to accomplish. I've been thinking of traveling to Florence for years but it was only when I wrote down the details that it finally happened. I also planned my first one-woman exhibition using this notebook. I drew my first factory floor plan on my very first MAGIC NOTEBOOK.

When I do career talks, I teach the kids how to start using this tool. I try to help them map their future with it. I believe that when an idea is formed in my thoughts and I draw or write it down, it is almost real already.

To all the women out there, keep on dreaming! Draw and write your ideas down then work on them everyday. Put your heart in it. One day, you'll wake up and realize that everything you have thought of have become a reality. I am a woman. If I can do it, all women can.

Ms. Marichu Liwag-Carstensen is President of DOC's Candles, Inc. ■

Maintaining Motivation

By Pacita Juan

There comes a time in an entrepreneur's life that a business idea goes south or a business relationship goes sour. Like business failures, a business taking an unprecedented direction makes an entrepreneur think again. Did I do the right thing? Should I close shop? Should I change partners?

An entrepreneur must always maintain his or her composure and just coast along. This is where maintaining motivation is key. Motivation and inspiration comes from exposing oneself to new ideas, new trends and strategizing to go with the economic tides.

I used to buy books on Corporate Innovation, New Age Marketing and developing organizations. Not anymore. Today's economic crunch and a global market closing in on the small and medium entrepreneurs require an entrepreneurial mindset more than ever. It is time to read up on climate change, saving the planet and somehow aligning our small business ideas to sustainable ventures.

Now my reading materials weigh heavily on sustainable lifestyle, eating green and living green. Entrepreneurs

will find new businesses in the green category whether they are in retail, food and beverage or services.

Motivation and inspiration are very important ingredients in pushing a new business forward. The best motivation is the fact that entrepreneurs never give up. The best inspiration is in knowing that we can do a small thing and make its effect radiate and ripple through society.

Take a look at your present business and check your profits against the triple bottom line: ECONOMIC-are you profitable money-wise? SOCIAL-are you helping more people get jobs? ENVIRONMENTAL- are you harming the environment in the course of your business or are you helping save the planet?

If one of the answers is NO, it is time to tweak the business to ensure sustainability. If you said YES to all three, rest assured you are on the right track.

Now, what better motivation is there than a business that does well and then can you can also give back to society and in the process help save the planet?



Entrepreneurs only have themselves to look up to when charting the next path or phase of their thriving business. There are no boards or senior officials who provide the check and balance. This is the reason why we must continue to motivate ourselves and draw inspiration from our businesses.

Maintaining motivation is our job and no one else's. When we stop dreaming, we stop doing. When we stop doing, we stop everything else. The world is now looking to entrepreneurs and getting inspired by their agility to move with the flow or roll with the punches. This is our core competence and we should not lose sight of it. Entrepreneurs are God's gifts to corporates, to address corporate greed and corporate strait-laced management styles. Somehow there is beauty in being small, being agile and being more responsive to changes in society, the economy and the planet.

As long as entrepreneurs continue to comprise majority of the business sector the world still has a chance for survival. Because there are small companies with big hearts and large companies who follow suit.

Ms. Pacita Juan is President and CEO of Figaro Coffee Company. ■



Ms. Pacita Juan in the Farm