

PROGRAMMING SUCCESS

By Mah Yen Ling

Aow Jia Rong

Age_
27

Occupation_
Founder of Ezsofe, a software company

ITE Courses_
Nitec in InfoComm Technology

Year of Graduation from ITE_
2011

College_
ITE College West



“
ITE students are fortunate to have great campus facilities. It is up to them to use these facilities to enrich their learning. I can give you gold but you must recognise its value. Once you know the value, you will be motivated to become better versions of yourself. This mentality applies both to studies and work.”

Get to know him.

Jia Rong admitted that he wasn't the best student in class, but his Class Advisor (CA) never gave up on him and exposed him to many competitions. Fast forward 10 years later, the self-professed opportunist owns a company and is a member of a Digital Readiness Network headed by Singapore's Ministry of Communications and Information.

> What made you interested in Information Technology (IT)?

It is a combination of a natural inclination and stubbornness. I found coding intriguing and challenging. There are infinite things to solve in IT. In my teens, I learnt to build a game server, just by surfing online. Back then, I was already earning approximately USD700 to 800 (equivalent to approximately SGD1,600 today!) per month by hosting my own game server. I even learnt about cyber security the hard way when someone tried to steal my gamers. It pushed me to research on ways to prevent hacking.

> What were your #lifegoals while you were in ITE?

I had already set my sights on being an IT professional. I can fix computers and code but I wanted to attain the proper qualifications. The InfoComm Technology course at ITE was a logical choice. I'm an opportunist, so if a learning opportunity brings me closer to my goal, I will grasp it.

> How has ITE helped you in your journey?

ITE provided me with a strong foundation in IT. I was also given opportunities to participate in technology-related competitions. It expanded my knowledge and exposure to the industry. At a mobile app competition in 2010, I met an industry expert who suggested that I could use my IT skills to help others, and that sparked my interest in setting up a business. I also benefitted from a nurturing class environment. My CA and classmates were very encouraging. I hung out with a group of like-minded friends who would meet frequently to study together.

> What challenges did you face when you started your own company?

It wasn't easy to transform a lofty idea into reality. Some business ventures that my business partner and I were interested in, have already been implemented in

the market. Eventually, we decided to do what we are good at — providing customised software solutions. Although we are a small start-up, we always believe in investing in our clients. As we strive to give the best value to them, a trusted working relationship is established. Over time, through hard work and word of mouth, we gained more clients.

> What are your #lifegoals now?

I want to make programming more fun and accessible to everyone, especially for those who want a way out of challenging circumstances and to improve themselves. It is best to start coding as young as possible. I believe programming teaches important life skills, like having the grit to pull through tough times.

> What kind of boss are you?

I'm Boss Angel! I play a mentoring role at work. I encourage my staff to share their problems with me. When they face challenges, I lend a listening ear and ask questions to lead them to self-reflect. The more you mentor, the more you are forced to learn and improve. If I cannot solve a problem that my staff has trouble with, it spurs me on to find alternative solutions.

> Describe your work culture.

I want to cultivate a culture of giving back to society. I will volunteer myself and my staff at community events, such as teaching the elderly to use mobile apps. My staff should seek to understand how their product works for different audiences, so that they can develop solutions from the customers' perspectives.

> Why did you hire ITE Work-Study Diploma trainees? What is your impression of them?

This decision is aligned with my goal to help others in their personal growth. I would like to provide a way for my juniors to invest in their future and improve their lives. The trainees' work attitude is great! They take the job seriously and are eager to learn and prove themselves. I need people who are excited about technology as they must have a passion in IT to survive in this industry.