FISHTY BUSINESS

SUFFERING a fracture during his national service stint turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Kenny Su. Downgraded from his original vocation as a sergeant trainee, he became a storeman in the Republic of Singapore Air Force.

The eight-to-five job gave the then 20-year-old time to ponder plans to make extra money.

In 2003, he registered Sime Holdings, a trading company supplying seafood to food caterers, restaurants and other distributors here. He changed its name to SZ Kindley (Asia) earlier this year.

His initial start-up cost — most of which went to buying seafood — was about $30,000. About $20,000 came from his parents — Mum is a lab assistant and Dad a semi-retired businessman. The rest came from his savings of about $5,000 and credit he had negotiated from his suppliers.

Seeking guidance from his friends’ parents who were businessmen, he flew to Myanmar to study how the seafood business worked.

Now 21 and a first-year business management student at Singapore Management University, he makes an average profit of about $1,000 a month.

He employs a driver who ferries supplies to customers and manages the sales aspect of the business himself.

He says it was the challenge of dealing with the unfamiliar that got him into business. “How many young people can say they are in the seafood business?”

His flexible university schedule allows him to meet customers after school, but most of the work is done during the holidays. The former student from Anglo Chinese Junior College also scores “generally As” for examinations.

Doing business is tiring, but his passion for the job keeps him going. “If you have no interest, it’s better not to do it because problems are bound to come up, even for an established businessman.”

He adds: “It’s okay to fail. As long as you learn from it and stand up after.”