Master of multi-tasking

Young entrepreneur Jason Goh speaks to KELVIN SAM about the challenges of juggling a business, university assignments and family obligations

IFFT’S no bed of roses for Jason Goh. He has, however, managed to create a flourishing business of flowers in the process.

This is because, as a student entrepreneur for the past eight years, Jason has been consistently making couples happy with his flower bouquet business.

Take this year’s Valentine’s Day, for example. Jason spent Feb 14 driving all over Singapore to deliver over 60 elaborate bouquets of roses, earning him a profit of $3,000.

Apart from doing floral bouquets, the Singapore Management University (SMU) accounting graduate provides flower stands, baby hampers and wreaths, and has even decorated wedding receptions. Having graduated last year, Jason now has to juggle his time between his tax consulting job and creating new flower arrangements at night.

Started in JC

Jason’s entrepreneurial journey began when he was a junior college student, when he part-timed as a hamper packer for flower supplier Far East Flora during his month-long school holidays. He soon discovered that he had an interest in flowers and often found himself studying the varieties available. Acting on a whim one Mother’s Day, Jason bought a few dozen flowers from the company, arranged them and sold six bouquets to his friends.

Encouraged by their response, Jason decided to continue supplying flower bouquets and christened his company, Creative Gifts.

And Jason’s customers, who have been impressed by his dedication and his lovingly-customised creations, have in turn referred him to various corporations, including even an airline.

The soft-spoken entrepreneur chuckled as he recalled securing his corporate clients.

“I still remember feeling stunned and exhilarated at the same time when I received the call from this particular airline,” said Jason.

“After tracking down the string of referrals, I realised that a friend of a friend of a friend recommended me to the airline. I am where I am because of my clients and I’m really grateful to them.”

The flower industry in Singapore is a competitive industry with many florists leveraging on economies of scale to offer lower prices. Jason also attributes his success to his customised products, which he keeps reasonably priced. “Exceeding expectations is essential. When attending to corporate clients, I make a special effort in asking about their requirements,” he said.

Being a student entrepreneur is often a difficult process that requires great time management skills and a penchant for multi-tasking. Jason is particularly grateful to his understanding team-mates who are willing to accommodate his busy schedule. “I believe the key to multi-tasking involves working independently. I enjoy working with team-mates who arrange meetings only when necessary. Excessive meetings can be counter-productive.”

Jason also emphasised the importance of having a supportive family. “My parents and my brother have been very encouraging. During my busy days, they would lend a hand by helping me deliver the flowers.”

Another intimidating aspect of the business involves pleasing one’s clients. Jason recalls having to cater to all kinds of demands, including delivering a bouquet of flowers at midnight for a Valentine’s Day surprise. And to prepare for the hectic delivery schedules the next day, the young florist recalled frantically calling up friends for help.

To aspiring florists and entrepreneurs, Jason offers this advice: “You must be willing to take the first step in order for others to give you opportunities. Don’t just wait for an opportunity to come by; you might miss the chance of a lifetime.”