

STARTING YOUNG

Renovation boss wishes he'd started even earlier

By Gladys Yeo

THE founder of One Stop Builders (OSB) believes strongly in pursuing a career only in something that one is passionate about, and also the old adage that the early bird gets the worm.

Thus, Shane Ng, 36, chose the road less travelled by running his own firm at age 30 instead of having a corporate career. And if the Singapore Management University (SMU) accountancy graduate had to do it over again, he would start even earlier.

"At the start of building up a business, you need a lot of energy to complete all the tasks and to push forward with growth," he says. "Starting younger means that you have more physical energy, fewer family commitments and a higher chance of starting again if the business does not succeed."

OSB is a renovation firm that provides interior design and building services to homeowners.

The father of two young children says that his image as a family man is reflected in his design philosophy. "My philosophy is to design and build a space that enables harmonious living among home dwellers. Most of us may be living in confined HDB spaces but we do not need to feel like we are living in cramped quarters. Life outside the home is hard enough and everyone should look forward to going home."

At his HDB flat in Punggol, which he designed and renovated himself, Mr Ng recounts some of the experiences that led him to his position today.

Since Secondary One, he would work part-time whenever he had spare time. This was simply because he wanted to start saving up from a young age.

Although he has a diploma in mass communications from a local polytechnic, he decided to enrol in SMU's accountancy programme after a few years of working.

"They say accounting is the language of business and I wanted to learn this language for my future ventures."

Upon graduation, Mr Ng was offered a job in China in the wood products industry. There, he found his love for materials, which led to his dream of starting a renovation firm.

After a 1½-year stint in China, he returned



PHOTO: YEN MENG JIN

to Singapore and started OSB in 2010.

However, OSB was not his first start-up. That was a Web design firm that he set up in his teens with a few friends that did not take off because they had no idea how to canvass business.

His second was a food trading firm that he set up during his university years with his buddy from National Service. However, as soon as he realised that he had no interest in food trading, he sold off his share of the company.

Even though he did not continue with his

first two companies, Mr Ng says that he has no regrets. They provided him with a chance to learn from his mistakes and gain experience for his next venture, he says.

While starting OSB, he faced many difficulties. With little capital and no portfolio, he suffered losses in the first two years before business started to pick up.

He relied on friends who gave him opportunities by letting him renovate their homes which helped build up his portfolio.

Today, OSB, together with two subsidiaries, has a six-member team. OS Concepts fo

cuses on commercial renovation while Intriq Design does interior design.

Mr Ng is looking to expand to Jakarta by the end of the year, as he has handled many Indonesian clients in Singapore. He has lofty aspirations. His eventual goal is to have OSB offices all around South-east Asia.

"What is particularly satisfying about this business is the ability to turn an empty or old space into something that is beautiful and that fits the client's needs."

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Shane Ng, founder of One Stop Builders, on his design philosophy

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