

A rewarding experience

Mr Aum
Ayawongs
gets to put his
new skills to
the test while
pursuing the
IE-SMU MBA
course



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MR AUM AYAWONGS
global key account
marketing manager
Total

PHOTO: CHONG JIN LIANG

TEO KUAN YEE

THE Singapore Management University (SMU) was Mr Aum Ayawongs' educational institution of choice when he decided to continue developing his knowledge and skills while working as a global key account marketing manager at Total, a French multinational integrated oil and gas company.

The 33-year-old enrolled in the part-time IE-SMU MBA programme in October 2016 and graduated in December last year.

The IE-SMU MBA programme is jointly offered by IE Business School in Spain and SMU.

He finds the programme outstanding and unique because of the academic synergy of both top business schools.

It enables students to combine their learning time with their careers in an accelerated format. Within 13 months, students can attain all the skills provided by a full-time MBA, as well as develop their personal skills in critical thinking, coaching and networking.

He also got to test new concepts, skills and management techniques during the programme.

As part of project-based learning, Mr Ayawongs and his team collaborated with GlascoSmith-Kline in a unique 10-month Action Research Project to apply what they have studied to design and test real change with the aim of creating value.

They also got to collaborate with companies such as LVMH, ABN-AMRO, Decathlon.

Blended methodology

As Mr Ayawongs had to travel often for work, he appreciated the virtual classes that he was able to attend from anywhere in the world.

"The world has changed a lot in the past decade — we are more connected and travelling globally more than ever, which means that we need a programme capable of meeting the requirements and overcoming the challenges in this day and age," he says.

The IE-SMU MBA programme is a blend of online and face-to-face sessions. All students are expected to physically attend classes in Spain and Singapore several times a year, and access an online learning platform.

To Mr Ayawongs, online classes offer interesting learning experiences. He finds that they are, after all, representative of daily work life today, given the different time zones, nationalities, and online connectivity and tools that one has to work with.

The marketing module was his favourite subject because he finds it crucial in helping him understand one of the key strategic pillars of any business.

"There are many myths and misconceptions about marketing, and the course really helps people to look past the surface and see the depth and expansiveness of the subject," he says.

In addition, having an inspiring professor who is a marketing expert helped him to gain further insights into the marketing aspect of business.

Looking back, he says that it was his privilege to go on this MBA journey and benefit from the enriching learning experience.