

# Environmental business solutions

There is much potential for companies to benefit from adopting green business models, says **DARYL NEO**

**J**OINING “Business Solutions”, the business case club of Nanyang Business School (NBS) at Nanyang Technological University was a turning point in my life as it helped shape a lifetime goal.

My first contact with business cases was when I signed up to compete in the NBS Internal Case Competition in 2006. An advertisement for the competition during freshman orientation day was the trigger to form a team by gathering a bunch of friends I had made during that period.

We were barely a month into our business school education, and already found ourselves competing against students from the other levels. We finished as runners-up. That got me hooked on business cases and I accepted the invitation to join Business Solutions and never looked back.

At that time, Business Solutions had just begun planning for the organising of the inaugural Asian Business Case Competition (ABCC). The event comprises of two main portions, the roundtable discussion lunch – where students and industry guests gather to discuss certain issues, and the business case competition itself.

As a freshman, I was assigned to be the logistics director and subsequently the financial controller for the competition. For ABCC 2007, the theme for the roundtable discussion lunch was on the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and how Singapore had emerged and learnt from the crisis a decade on.

A year later, I had the privilege of spending five months as an exchange student for a programme in Maastricht in The Netherlands. During that time, I experienced first-hand what it was like to live in a community that takes the conser-



**Like-minded:** ‘Business Solutions’, the business case club of Nanyang Business School at NTU organised ABCC 2008, where the theme for the roundtable discussion lunch was ‘The Coming of the Green Economy’. The writer is on the right (front row)

vation of its environment seriously.

The Dutch have designed systems and built businesses that have developed into a thriving “green industry”. The government’s implementation of a waste disposal system that incentivises citizens to use less plastic bags, and Shell Petroleum’s development and testing of wind and tidal energy systems across the country are good examples of such systems and businesses.

That sparked off a deep desire in me to discover ways in which society can go green. I realised that there was much potential for companies to benefit from adopting green business models, and it

dawned that businesses will play a big part in any successful green movement. It was so compelling and I decided then that I wanted to be involved in pushing the green movement in Singapore.

Inspired, I proposed it as a concept for ABCC 2008. Hence, the theme for the roundtable discussion lunch that year was “The Coming of the Green Economy”.

The lunch turned out to be a fantastic platform for the exchange of green business ideas and experience between professionals from various industries and students from all over the world.

The “green” theme was also incorporated into the business case

competition. The business case that was given to participants to solve was about a company wanting to expand into another country using its green business model.

Students may not always have the opportunity to make business decisions and policy changes that will impact the environment. However, the ABCC has proven that students can still make a meaningful contribution by organising similar events to provide a platform for the meeting of like-minded people to brainstorm, share ideas and to form networks for future inter-industry collaboration.

I have since graduated from NBS in July this year. Currently, as

part of my work at the Singapore Exchange, I have the opportunity to develop and hone my skills in making policy changes and understanding business decisions.

Though I am still not in a position to make business decisions and policy changes that will impact the environment, I am confident that I will be able to find ways to contribute meaningfully, just as I did when I was a student at NBS.

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