

“Opportunity Comes When You Least Expect It”

by Jacob Hanks

I had been living in Taiwan for about 6 years before I decided to apply for the GMBA program at National Chao Tung University. I was doing what most foreigners who come to Taiwan to do, which is teach English. I had enjoyed this job for many years, however I knew from the beginning that it was not a career. The money and free time were great perks of teaching English, but there was no challenge.

I shouldn't say that the actual work wasn't challenging, because dealing with little kids who don't speak the same language as you is not as easy as you might think. By challenging, I mean that there was no incentive to work harder or to go above and beyond your duty. It became a mundane task in my life and I didn't enjoy it anymore.

When I began studying at NCTU I began to get that feeling back again, like when I first came to Taiwan. Once again there was a purpose to the things that I did on a day to day basis and those things were always different with each day as well. I realized that I had become stuck in the mud of teaching in Taiwan. It happens to lots of foreigners who come here, and I don't blame them, but it wasn't for me. I loved living in Taiwan, but I knew that my days as a teacher were numbered.

After the first year of the GMBA program, all the students were asked to find a summer internship. I had a few ideas, however none were that exciting and I wasn't really looking forward to them. Then one morning, I checked my email while having breakfast and I got a message from a company in Jhubei. They were asking for students who would be interested in a summer internship. The company was called Amaryllo and the internship was for the sales and marketing department. Without hesitation, I replied and showed my interest in the opportunity.

A year has now passed since I replied to that email about the internship, and I'm now graduated from the GMBA program and working full-time at Amaryllo. The job is difficult with long hours and a lot of learning that I still need to accomplish, however I had finally found the challenge that I was looking for. I go to work everyday knowing that something new is going to approach me, be it something difficult or mundane, it's still something that I couldn't expect.

My basic tasks at Amaryllo are to maintain close business relationships with our distributors, primarily in Europe. I also actively participate in product development. This is important for our company because I'm one of only two foreign employees. Our input on design and functionality of the products is taken into careful consideration by the engineers and graphic designers. On top of that, I get to travel to Europe on a regular basis for trade shows and meetings with customers.

The company itself seems to be different from most startups because it has unique products for an up and coming industry. Smarthome products are becoming more and more a part of our

lives and therefore the market for these kinds of products is growing at a fast pace. This creates a great opportunity for our company to grow quickly and for me to learn a lot of important skills that I can use for the rest of my career.

It's a bit surreal to look at where I was 2 years ago compared to where I am now. I owe it all to my decision to enroll in the GMBA program. If it weren't for that, I would probably still be teaching English and uncertain about my future. Now, I have a direction and goals that I can strive for.

The future for me opened up when I decided to go for an MBA and with the help of my professors and encouragement of my classmates I know that I have the ability to succeed.

