

Women Achiever Spl: Dr Sidney Yee: Accelerating the transformation of innovations into diagnostic devices

December 5, 2017 | Opinion

Dr Sidney Yee is the CEO at Diagnostics Development (DxD) Hub and Executive Vice President at Exploit Technologies Pte Ltd (ETPL).



Dr Sidney Yee is the CEO at Diagnostics Development (DxD) Hub and Executive Vice President at *Exploit Technologies Pte Ltd* (ETPL). A trained chemist and a research scholar, Dr Yee works with her team at DxD Hub to productise innovative diagnostic technologies and leads the A*Star's incubation and Start-up management team.

Not yet four years in the making, the DxD Hub aims to accelerate the transformation of innovations into clinically validated diagnostic devices that are ready for market adoption. The hub is already engaging with close to 100 partners in private and public sectors, and will soon be seeing real patient impact of their first few diagnostic solutions. Through impactful products, empowering local enterprises and anchoring global companies in Singapore, the DxD Hub contributes to the development of an effective diagnostic devices ecosystem in Singapore.

According to Dr Yee, the 'business plan' of DxD Hub was made possible only with the support, trust and collaboration of the A*STAR and ETPL leadership. She adds, "DxD Hub had proven to be such an aggregator of diagnostics community. The business model of committing to the risk-sharing and upside-sharing profile of building the diagnostics solutions to better lives resonated well with our partners."

On maintaining balance between her personal and professional life, she says, "Balance can only be done with a lot of understanding and support from family, as well as proper planning. When work needs to be done at home, it will only be done after family time. It is ok to have work and family time at home, I make sure the boundary is drawn clearly. I try not to do both at the same time, but allocate time for each."

Dr Yee is also the executive vice-president of A*Star's incubation and start-up management division, A*START Central. However, Dr Yee is not a stranger to start-ups and have been a serial entrepreneur. Prior to joining ETPL, she has led and also been involved in fund-raising activities for biotech start-ups, which exited through initial public offering (IPO) and acquisition.

Talking about gender disparity in the industry, Dr Sidney Yee says that while she has been fortunate enough to never have been subjected to gender biases in her career, she does believe that women often have self-imposed limitations while trying to balance career and family commitments and these can have consequences for professional development and progression. "I was never made to feel any differently because of my gender. The challenge, if any, would be an inherent one because of the many facets of responsibility a woman bears as a mother, wife, daughter, sister and a professional. Rather than seeing those as limitations, I would like to think of those as privileges I have as a mother and wife, to choose to spend more time with family, for example by limiting the number and length of overseas trips. In fact, I think being a woman has been at times a positive factor in my career journey. The multi-tasking capability and the natural sense of humility has helped build relationships and partnerships", she adds.

She summons all entrepreneurs to be ready to evolve, be humble to learn, and be perseverant. She has special advice to women entrepreneurs. "Womanhood and career can co-exist and progress, learn to prioritise at different stages", she says.

Singapore's founding father Lee Kuan Yew, and her own father closer home, have both been her life's role models and a source of inspiration while trying to keep a positive attitude and in having the conviction and confidence to act in the face of challenges, adversity and criticism. An ability to make a real difference to people and society through her work is what truly motivates her.