



USEFUL ADVICE

“ Just believe in yourself, decide what you want and you will get it. ”

#5 Alexandra Schmutterer, German

PREVIOUS CAREER:

Director Marketing Communications, Pan Pacific Singapore. Prior to that: Regional Marketing Communications Manager, Siemens Water Technologies, Singapore.

Best part of the job: Hospitality was always my dream industry; it's fast-paced, it's never boring and every day is a new challenge. Hoteliers are fun to work with, and it was so different to the technical environment at Siemens.

Biggest challenges: At Siemens, it was standing one's ground as a woman in a male-dominated technology company; at the Pan Pacific, it was the 24/7 non-stop hotel industry, which affected my work-life balance.

Inspiration for career change: After working hard for years to realise my first dream at the Pan Pacific, I decided to move on to my second dream: starting my own business.

NEW CAREER:

Managing Director and Founder, Saakalya Pte Ltd, Singapore. We focus on three concepts: décor solutions focused on wellbeing, holistic weekend breaks to the countries from which the Saakalya Collection has been sourced, and yoga.

Reason for choice: Saakalya Pte Ltd is a lifestyle and wellness concept, but that is a coincidence. I discovered the products sold under the Saakalya Collection on a tour of Asia's various furniture trade shows back in 2010, for an unrelated reason. Later, curious friends asked to join me on sourcing trips to remote areas of Indonesia and Thailand. And with this, Saakalya Travel was born: themed, holistic weekend trips. I decided to become a yoga teacher after I left the hotel, and this also became part of the business.

Best part of the job: That I started something from zero; it's my own idea and all my effort and time is invested in this business. It's an endless learning process and I never stop learning.

Biggest challenge: Setting targets and goals sometimes means working long hours, including weekends. I've had to learn that our bodies are not machines, and that we need a break once in a while.

Most satisfying achievement: Our official launch in December 2014 was an important milestone; the support from friends and business partners was fantastic, motivating me and keeping me going.

Old job versus new job: The new always wins over the old. Nothing is more important for me than continuous learning and change.