

# Technopreneurship: Status Quo is Never Enough

"I am always looking for the next higher mountain to climb because the higher I go, the more opportunities and possibilities I see. It's exciting and I am totally up for it!"

## MARCUS CHENG

President, SCS IT Youth Council

**Age:** 35

**Experience:** 11 years

**Current:** Chief Executive Officer, Acclivis Technologies and Solutions

**Earliest Tech Experience:** 9 years old

**First Tech Gadget:**

IBM XT – a generation before Intel 286

**Current Pet Topic:**

FinTech



**What does it take for one to give up a high-flying career with a big multinational company to start a company from scratch? Marcus Cheng, Chief Executive Officer, Acclivis, lets *The IT Society* in on his decision to go with the route less travelled.**

### AN AFFINITY WITH ALL THINGS TECH

#### My love for technology traces back to...

when I was nine years old. I had great fun attending computing enrichment classes. I owned my first computer at 10 and that's also when I first tried my hands at coding using BASIC programming language.

#### My love affair with technology continues...

even during my 'A' Level. I was one of the lucky few to be able to take Computing as a subject. Then one thing led to another. We were in the thick of the dot-

com boom when it came time to select a University course. Naturally, I chose Computer Engineering.

#### I stayed faithful to technology because...

although the dot-com crisis struck before I could complete my degree, I was quietly confident that there is a future in technology. In fact, I was fascinated to see such quick developments within a short span of time and wanted to experience it for myself.

Then I graduated and enjoyed a good run with IBM. That experience strengthened my resolve – I may quit my job, but I will not quit the industry.

**A CAREER THAT IS STILL UNFOLDING**

**I left IBM because...**

despite many high points during my time there, I was starting to feel restless. As a person who is very forward-looking, I am constantly looking for my next goal post. And adrenaline rush aside, I was looking to commit myself to a cause that I am truly passionate about.

**I decided to take the plunge and start my own business because...**

standing at the crossroads and considering my position and experience, there were much at stake but also nothing much to lose. After all, I was fairly young at 29 with drive, passion, energy and, most importantly, opportunity. So, I just went for it.

I am happy with my decision. The journey is not always smooth, but it has definitely been fulfilling. Besides being able to see the bigger picture, I have the power to bring my ideas to life. Of course, not all ideas bear fruits, but at least we

can reinvest the lessons learnt on new ideas. That is a feat hard to accomplish anywhere else.

**A DESIGNATION THAT SAYS "BOSS"**

**The changes that came along with the designation...**

go beyond relinquishing the IBM badge for a business card that nobody knows. It was a sobering experience. As a new kid on the block, there was neither track record nor reputation to fall back on. People peer harder at you. They not only size up your capabilities, but also evaluate you as a person. It means going back to ground zero to build your contacts and network anew.

**The first big break came when...**

we were awarded our first major project from Infocomm Development Authority. That was a turning point for us. Industry players and potential customers alike began to get interested in Acclivis and what we have to offer. Consequently, this growing interest also made it easier for us to attract talents to join the team.

**It is not the ticket to a perfect life because...**

if you imagine being the boss means you have absolute control over everything, you'll be disappointed to know that there are still shareholders to answer to. You are also under the watchful eyes of your staff who are looking to you for directions and inspiration. There is no defined job scope for a boss. You'll have to do anything and everything and the list just keeps expanding as the company grows.

**It is a position that requires...**

strength, which comes along with mental clarity and a fit body. For me, working out is a good way to de-stress, so is catching up on my favourite shows – particularly basketball matches. The clockwork precision of the players, their immaculate teamwork and their sheer determination to turn a losing game around never cease to inspire me to do the same when confronting adversity.



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**Date:** 12 July 2016 (Tuesday)

**Time:** 7pm to 9pm

**Venue:** Temasek Polytechnic School of Informatics & IT

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