



**24 March 2012**  
**Singapore Graduation Ceremony**  
**Guest Speech**

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Chancellor - Mrs Bobbie Brazil, Vice Chancellor – Professor Jan Thomas, Distinguished Faculty members, USC Graduates, Honoured Guests, a very good evening to you all.

Thank you for inviting me to be a part of this momentous occasion. I am proud to be standing here as a USQ Alumni and extremely honoured to be able to dedicate the Graduation Speech this year.

Firstly let me say to all the Graduates - Congratulations on completing your degree studies! You have now taken the First Step of your learning journey. Let me explain why I say this, by sharing with you some of my own learning journey.

I remember very clearly my first graduation ceremony, way back when I received my degree in Chemistry from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.

I was just like one of you, sitting there, with my family and friends in the guest section, and extremely excited at what the future holds for me. The world was my oyster and I felt that I was ready to make my mark in the world.

My first job was working for a food company in Thailand. As I progressed through the ranks and files at work, it became obvious to me that while I had a good base of knowledge, it was not enough to help me to fully understand my client needs and their market requirements. It was then I started reading voraciously especially marketing and business books and journals.

After some time, I realized it was necessary for me to supplement my existing knowledge in order to become more competitive and more effective. So I decided to take up an MBA in marketing – an area which I was getting pretty good at but where I lacked the depth of understanding for certain specialized aspects of marketing and also I needed to learn more general management principles.

Following my MBA, I was able to make a clear and positive difference in my job and so my responsibilities grew. As I started recognizing how consumer behavior started changing faster according to the trends, it became even more important for me to constantly upgrade myself to keep up with the times, keep up with the competition and gain deeper insight into the industry that I was in.

In the end, I decided to further my studies with a doctorate in business so as to stay relevant to the constantly changing trends in my home country of Thailand, as well as the Asia Pacific region where my company is focused on.

I'm sure all of us have heard the old adage that change is the only constant – this has never been more true! In fact, changing global trends constantly re-shape the tastes and preferences of consumers. Because of this, I'm constantly watching, listening, reading and learning to gain new or better insights in order to excel at my job and bring the business to greater heights.

In 2010, I had a change of portfolio and became a CEO based in Singapore instead of Thailand. As part of my new portfolio, I had to look after many countries instead of just the Thailand market. It became even more important for me to understand consumer behaviour across Asian markets in order to create effective campaigns that have synergy across countries.

We now live in a digital era and markets have become almost borderless. Information is shared much faster than before with trends, tastes, and even the market environment changing at phenomenal speed especially with the widespread use of new media. Everyone, from institutions to businesses and individuals, are quickly utilizing social media in their daily lives. In the past, who would ever think of using Tweets as a form of class participation! We thought the school's online discussion forums were good enough! Now companies are embracing Twitter to ensure good consumer engagement and to strengthen brand commitment. So, there is a need for business people to get up to speed on the use of digital media and make appropriate use of them in commercial strategy.

To cut a long story short, my point is that our world is constantly evolving and so must you. To rest on your laurels now would not do justice to the independent learning skills that USQ has given you.

Today marks the culmination of much hard work and sacrifice. I sincerely applaud you for your achievements and you should enjoy the celebrations. The moral of my story this evening is simply this: As you take the next step in your Life journey, be aware it is also the first step of your Learning journey -- To continuously seek lifelong learning, to upgrade your skills and to understand your key stakeholders. It is only then that we can remain relevant and even achieve leadership in our chosen field.

USQ has given all of us a great education, a solid foundation and strong theoretical knowledge. This high degree of academic excellence will benefit all of you, as it has benefited me, and whether you intend to continue your formal education or not, you will benefit from what you learned here.

As you move on and take on the new challenges that come next, it is up to your imagination and creativity to make best use of this knowledge and turn it into something useful for the organizations where you work and for the betterment of your respective communities -- the most important success factor is that you should never stop learning and never stop imagining.

My final bit of advice is to treasure the friendships that you have made here at USQ as they will last a lifetime and will form your best network. I hope you will continue to support each other in your future endeavours.

Remember, you are the next generation of leaders and how you decide to make your mark in life will shape the future.

So congratulations on your Graduation and good luck on your journey forward!

Thank you for your attention.