

Tech entrepreneurs under 30

Tech Storm Saturday, Jul 11, 2015

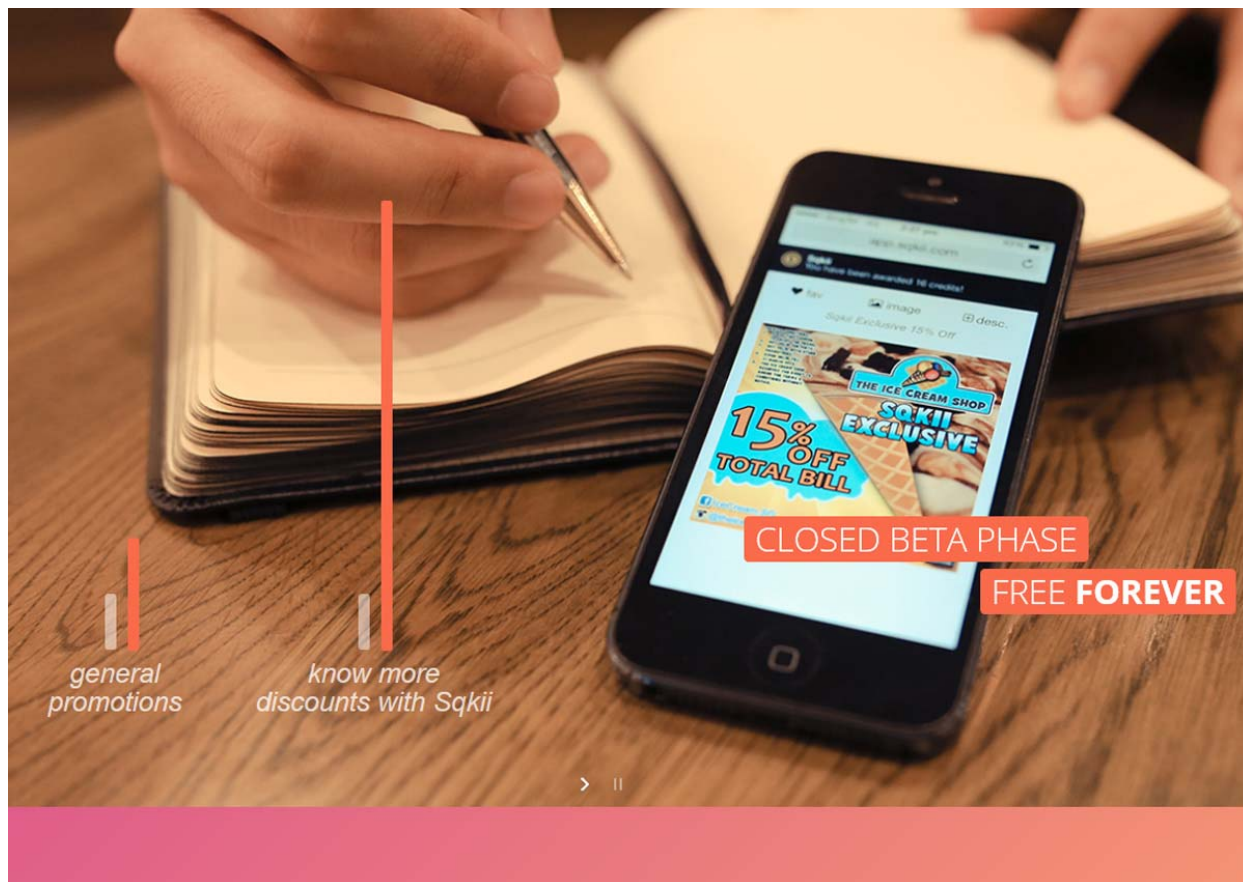


Meet these three handpicked start-ups that are trailblazers of Singapore's, tech and Internet entrepreneurship scene. As a part of our entrepreneurship series, this week we turn the spotlight on Entrepreneurs under 30.

These budding successors of the next generation, prove that there is no age too young to get started in a business. As long as there is a strong drive and persistence to see things through to the very end.

We spoke to three rising entrepreneur stars under the age of 30, to get to know more about the challenges that they have faced, in order to attain the success they have to date.

Sqkii



Sqkii is founded by Kenny Choy, 25 and Marcus Ng, 24 who have just graduated from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Eleazar Lim, 26 from Singapore Management University (SMU).

A relatively young start-up founded in November 2012, by a trio who were still in school when their idea for Sqkii was conceived. Sqkii is a mobile web application that gives back to its consumers for discovering promotions. Now what will really interest you is its unique proposition, Sqkii gives back in the form of cold hard cash - Now this is brilliant isn't it?

As larger companies have the luxury of bigger budgets for advertising their wares, but a smaller company would not. This is where Sqkii comes in, what it wants to achieve is to create a fair advertising playing ground for all business no matter how small or large they may be.

You may be wondering how two former NTU students got to know another from SMU. It is quite a funny story on how they managed to find Lim as their tech guru. Choy and Ng asked their social circle for the best tech guru around and were given two names from SMU.

They then "conducted a Facebook search, printed their faces and waited for them at the lobby of SMU School of Information Systems (SMU SIS) - the place where most IS students have to walk past every day," says Choy.

They sighted Lim after some waiting, introduced themselves, shared their entrepreneurship idea (after signing a non-disclosure agreement) and the rest is now history.

Although geniuses in their own respective fields, the success of Sqkii was hardly anything close to overnight. The trio faced, "rejections from merchants is a common thing, played out by an accelerator, technical bottlenecks, rejected PIC application, commitment and hiring issues," says Choy.

Amidst all the waves of obstacles, they managed to conquer each and every one of them. Choy attributes this to the trio's "habit of downplaying the seriousness of each obstacle, so it becomes easier for us to get over with the emotional part and quickly work on the issue."

"In essence, we kept trying," says Choy.

Fashory



Meet Faith Teo, 26, Rena Koh, 28 and Emmy Teo, 29 who are the co-founders of Fashory. A one stop mobile application named Fashory that allows its users to do just about everything and anything when fashion is concerned.

Publication: AsiaOne

Date: 11 July 2015

Headline: Tech entrepreneurs under 30

Fashory allows its users to discover or explore new trends, create their own fashion story, shop for their favourite pieces and share the latest trends with your community or friends. You could also maybe say that they are the saving grace of many wardrobe disasters.

The trio first met when Koh met Faith Teo and Emmy Teo when they were working on another start-up. Since then, the trio has been working together in synchrony and the rest is pretty much history.

Nothing is ever easy when you are a start-up especially when you have no experience and little validation in the industry. "We met a lot of people that tend to discredit our capabilities due to our age, not to forget that we are an all-girls team and look younger than our age," says Koh.

When asked about their expansion plans, "We've received overwhelming demands by our fashion designer partner to launch in China and we will be launching a series of meetup and events focused on that," says Koh.

SkolaFund



Publication: AsiaOne

Date: 11 July 2015

Headline: Tech entrepreneurs under 30

A start-up with a cause. SkolaFund is a web-based platform that was just launched earlier in April. They aim to give less privileged students an opportunity to attain an education with CrowdFunded donations, bursaries, scholarships or even loans.

This is a social start-up founded by Syakir Hashim, 22 and Tengku Ahmad Syamil, 24, first met during their Junior College (JC) years. Both envisioned to be entrepreneurs since the very start, who wanted to "change the world in ways that are meaningful and a tech start-up has the potential to scale very big and make a huge impact beyond the country we live in," says Syakir.

The idea to create SkolaFund come about as the founders noticed that many students in university, were neck deep in school loans - To the point of not being able to cover their basic necessities like food.

Unlike most of the start-ups, Syakir's parents were actually supportive of this entrepreneurship. "My family has given me the freedom to explore and do whatever I want, as long as it is something positive. So I receive no pushbacks from them," says Syakir.

However, as with any start-up there are bound to be challenges to overcome. "Finding talent and getting funding. It was really tough to get more technical guys to join our development team and even if we could find one we could not afford to pay their salary."

Slowly and just within a two months of their launch, they have now close to 1000 sponsors on their site and have raised more than RM10,000 (S\$3,568) in funding for less privileged students to stay in school. Thanks to the community of supporters they have on Twitter and local Malaysian celebrities that helped gain attention and supporters for SkolaFund.

Tech Storm is a brand new avenue for you to get plugged in to addictive tech trends, reviews on gadgets, apps and be inspired by the coolest start-up stories. Check us out at www.techstorm.tv