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From left to right: Dr. Vance Roley, Shidler Dean and Dr. Tung Bui, VEMBA Faculty Director congratulate Mr. Henry (Hoang) Nguyen, the Managing General Partner of IDG Ventures Vietnam for his 2014 VEMBA Entrepreneurship Award of the Year.
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Leading Change, Leading Vietnamese Logistics
Opportunity - Merit - Prosperity

VE MBA Alumni Updates
Welcome to the 2015 issue of the VEMBA’ Ohana Newsletter. As we are just done with the year-end festivities and are about to start celebrating the upcoming Tet At Mui, I could not help but reflect on the major milestones that we have achieved in 2014.

Per alumni’s desire to keep interacting with the program, we launched in February 2014 an experimental blog project as a forum to bridge MBA education to real-life daily events around the world and in Vietnam. With 15 bi-lingual articles to date, the project has enjoyed a bigger than expected number of readers; Many of the blogs were reprinted in major Vietnamese media. We hope we would be able to offer more contributions to this forum this year, and generate more business discussion as well.

In July, we had a remarkable turnout of alumni and friends in both Hanoi and HCMC to congratulate the VEMBA8-HAN and VEMBA7-HCMC graduates. It was another remarkable group of executive-students with outstanding academic records and exceptional entrepreneurial spirits. We also awarded the “Entrepreneur of the Year” to two young, successful and still rising businessmen – Dr. Henry B. Nguyen of IDG Ventures, and Dr. Tran Luong Son of VietSoftware.

Another noted milestone was the welcoming of 73 new students, the largest annual intake since our presence in Vietnam during the Residence Weekends at the Imperial Hotel, Vung Tau and at the Asean Resort, Thach That. The class of 2016 is going international, with 13 executives from Canada, France, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Russia and the USA.

This issue also features the commitment of Deloitte, Vietnam to VEMBA. As we welcomed two new students from Deloitte, we congratulate Mr. Pham Van Thinh (VEMBA2-HCMC) to become the new President & CEO of Deloitte Vietnam, replacing Ms. Ha Thi Thu Thanh (VEMBA-HAN’03). The career success of these two alumni along with thirteen other VEMBA graduates at Deloitte exemplifies the impact of our graduates on Vietnam’s economy.

It is gratifying to read in this newsletter the level of enthusiasm and commitment of our graduates in making a difference in their professional lives. Speaking of which, I would like to commend the sustained entrepreneurial drive of our VEMBA O’hana. This issue showcases the entrepreneurship of some of our recent graduates – from a rising plastics firm in Hanoi with four VEMBA alumni in the management board to a newly opened concept restaurant in HCMC co-founded by four other VEMBA classmates.

Perhaps the biggest achievement in 2014 has been the numerous extra-curricular events organized by the VEMBA O’hana. I keep hearing memorable anecdotes about the first national summer networking event in Danang. Not only our graduates and students had lots of fun, but they also managed to pull out a couple of business deals at the event. Last but not least, I am looking forward to thanking many of you in person during my next trip to Vietnam for your sustained charity work on behalf of the less privileged.

This issue demonstrates what VEMBA really means to its students, graduates, faculty and staff, and me.

Best wishes for 2015.

Tung X. Bui, PhD
VEMBA Faculty Director
Matson Navigation Chair of Global Business
Professor and Chair, Department of IT Management
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ALOHA FROM THE CLASS OF 2016

With the Residence Weekend’s kick-off of VEMBA 9 Hanoi Cohort and VEMBA 8 HCMC Cohort in Mid-October 2014, VEMBA’ Ohana has welcomed 73 more executive students.

Deloitte Vietnam has sent 15 executives to Vietnam Executive MBA, University of Hawai’i; All of them are very successful in our firm, and recognized by our staff and clients as world-class leaders and advisors. In 2012, we were very proud that our Deloitte Vietnam CEO, Ms. Ha Thi Thu Thanh (VEMBA-HAN’03) was inducted into the Hall of Honor Award from University of Hawai’i at Manoa. As I believe I would not be successful if I do not continuously advance my education, for years, I have always wanted to enroll in such an excellent program.

The first memorable challenge for me was achieving the IELTS score of 7.0 and above. Even though I have used English daily during my last 14 working years, I was still nervous before the exam. The second challenge was having a final interview with VEMBA Faculty Director, Professor Tung Bui. That was the first time I had opportunity talking to an American professor. It turned out smooth and successful, but nonetheless challenging.

Professor Tung Bui told me that I should prepare for my wife and two sons in the next 21 months, and that I would be extremely busy with studying and probably would not have any family vacation. Then, I talked to myself that even though I would have to sacrifice my time as well as interests, I would be fine. I know that my family would support me and the more challenges I have, the more knowledge and professional skills I could gain. And more importantly, it would be worthwhile having a privileged access to foreign MBA professors, a talented cohort and valuable alumni networks.

The Residence Weekend at the Asian Resort was really an amazing experience. I used to think that people normally go to the resort to take rest and enjoy life but I was wrong. We have attended three intensive days studying the first course - Leadership and Organizational Behavior - with lots of rigorous and challenging homework. We barely knew each other before and come from various industries, i.e. Banking, Finance, Oil and Gas, Manufacturing, Automobile, Education, Non-Government Office. Through the very first lessons about teaming, culture, group case studies and discussions, along with new theories and concepts taught by Professor David Bess and Professor Tung Bui, each of us brought different quality business perspectives and experience to the class, which helped broaden our knowledge about this fast changing business world. I appreciate all sharing from our cohort about not only their businesses but also the way they organize their personal life.

As the President of Class 2016 in Hanoi, I am trying to be the role model to our cohort at study and more. With an aspiration to become successful leaders in our own organizations, I believe, we will embark many creative learning and social activities together in the 21-month journey not only within Hanoi class but also together with Class 2016 in HCMC. Personally, I would also want each and every member of our cohort to truly become an Executive MBA Ambassador at large in Vietnam.

By BUI Tuan Minh, VEMBA-HAN’16
Partner, Tax and Business Advisory, Deloitte Vietnam
Our journey began in October 2007 with the Residence Weekend in Vung Tau. It was very hot on the top floor of the Dic Star Hotel and the stand-alone air con unit was not really working so well. This was not the most conducive environment to start the Reflective Notes due during that weekend, in that heat, except we did not care because we were now part of the premiere MBA program in Vietnam. We were a group of strangers, creating a new network, embarking on a 22-month program and we happened to be the first class for the Shidler College of Business Executive MBA Program in HCMC.

We broke the ice for the program here in HCMC, the newest test site, extending the program from Hanoi (Of course we also broke a lot of ice for the beer.) We were shuffled from the campus on Nguyen Dinh Chieu to Le Thanh Ton. Oh how we remember the screaming kids at the SEAMEO building on weekends there. We definitely did not have the facility, coffee machine or the snacks that the following Cohorts enjoy at the current campus. (Ok, Cohort Two did start at SEAMEO as well.)

We had a strong camaraderie during our two years together which set the stage for other cohorts to follow. As a smaller class, it was good for bonding and relationship building which to this day is the biggest benefit for all Cohorts, our powerful and highly respected VEMBA network. Our class was quite close even though now, about half of them have left HCMC and/or Vietnam, continuing their journeys with new families, new children, new locations and new careers.

One of the highlights was our class trip to Mui Ne, August 2008, starting a tradition for other cohorts to continue. We enjoyed interesting team building games, some strenuous and “uplifting,” while some games utilized objects suitable for “The 50 Shades of Grey,” forever leaving a long lasting memory embedded in our minds and on our bodies. As with each Cohort, everyone had their favorite Professor or class and of course, we witnessed the creation of the chief and guru of the VEMBA office, Anh Thanh! Watching him guide each cohort, year on year since 2007, we must salute both him and the staff keeping us all together and organized. I was part of Akahi, the group that refused to change members during the entire program. Sorry for the stress Anh Thanh, except our group had matching Aloha Shirts, we could not be separated.

Of course, how could we not have survived without the in-class antics and entertainment of our “Class Monitor,” President B-O-T? He always kept us laughing and still does entertain us with his unique style and sense of humor. We appreciate all your sponsorship B-O-T!

Even at graduation, our youngest, Giang, was days away from giving birth to the next generation of future VEMBA Alumni.

There is not enough room here for all the stories I could share, yet I know each cohort can relate to what I am saying. Each class has their special memories.

Getting together at our 5 Year Reunion (August 14, 2014),

“One thing you cannot take away from any VEMBA Cohort, is that special feeling each one of us experiences, a closeness and sense of pride of being VEMBA”
we surely missed the rest of our Cohort One ‘Ohana, dispersed throughout the region and overseas, except they were with us at heart. Besides, they could check out the pics, posts and comments on Facebook.
One thing you cannot take away from any VEMBA Cohort, is that special feeling each one of us experiences, a closeness and sense of pride of being VEMBA. Yes we are Alumni and others will be Alumni soon. It’s a cycle we all need to help continue. This program must remain number one. All Alumni are Ambassadors of VEMBA.

One more thing about our reunion; it was nice to prove that... yes, exactly, there is a Cohort 1 in HCMC, much to the amazement of the doubters. We do exist and we paved the way for you to experience your VEMBA journey here in HCMC. We must also say ‘Mahalo’ for Cohort 1 in Hanoi that built the foundation for all of us, some 15 years ago.

Below are some unedited Facebook comments regarding our reunion...Enjoy!
ALOHA!

“Hieu Thieu: Good is not enough...We can have a better ratio. The question is HOW are we going to do this!”
“Thanh Phan: Many thanks to the Platinum Sponsor, Mr. Bot Nguyen and everyone for a great 5-year reunion of the Vemba1 HCMC. Lots of fond memories, especially the outing to Mui Ne in Aug 2008!”
“Viet Hung Nguyen: Hi Anh ThanhPhan. I found that it’s quite interesting to hear stories from each of us. If we can have some kinda casual meetups with other cohort during the year, just to share whatever stories from us, it may have a lot of fun. As well as we can learn from each other from there, after MBA time...”
“Giang Nguyen: Hang Nguyen, not president. He called himself CLASS MONITOR”
“Hang Nguyen Shouldn’t we investigate again: “How (HOW??) did BOT get the President position”? How did he do it?”
“Tran Khang: PANANA, STRING... Still hot topics last night, unbelievable... Let’s do it again soon.”
“Chucky Lopez: It was great to see so many people, now we can prove to the rest of VEMBA that Cohort One (HCMC) really does exist :))”
“Giang Nguyen: It was so much fun. Guess we are older but haven’t changed so much. Especially Mr. BOT”
“Viet Hung Nguyen: 5 years. Some of us even look younger. Congrat. I am so glad to see you all today.”
“Thanh Phan: Missing anh Khuong. Tran Dinh Nhi Ha has just arrived”
“Khuong Dao Huu You guys look awesome! Till the last drops, Cheeeerrrrrrssss!!!!”

By Chuck LOPEZ, VEMBA-HCMC’09
“This gift transformed the College of Business from what it was, to a leading institution in our state, in the nation and in the world.”

“Today, I am honored to announce that Jay Shidler has extended his commitment to the college and the extent of this commitment is $100 million,” proclaimed Shidler College of Business Dean Vance Roley to a round of applause during the official announcement at the college on October 17, 2014.

It’s the largest donation ever to the University of Hawaii.

Shidler is an investor and philanthropist who graduated from UH in 1968. The College of Business was renamed in his honor in 2006 after he donated $25 million. He later quietly donated another $6 million.

Shidler decided to increase his visionary gift by $69 million because of what the college was able to achieve with his initial donations.

“We were able to establish a full-time MBA program as a result of that gift, we established a distance learning Executive MBA program serving the neighbor islands and we also established a Freshmen Direct Admit Program targeting high achieving freshmen, not only from Hawaii but all around the globe,” said Roley.

The Shidler College of Business also aggressively pursued and attracted top tier faculty, awarded millions of dollars in scholarships, completed much needed renovations to the classrooms, courtyard and facilities and funded the expansion of the Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship that serves the entire UH System.

“This gift transformed the College of Business from what it was, to a leading institution in our state, in the nation and in the world.” said UH President David Lassner. “And it’s really shown the rest of the university what’s possible.”

“Because the transformations that I have seen here at the Shidler College of Business have exceeded all of my expectations, I really am inspired by this remarkable event...”
that I want to guarantee that it continues in the future,” said Shidler.

In addition to gifts of cash and marketable securities, Shidler is also giving the college ownership interests and lease fees from various properties in the central business districts of major cities in the continental United States.

“This is a long term investment in the future of the college,” said Lassner. “It will provide stable, secure and predictable source of funding over many, many years. And that's almost unheard of.”

“This does put us in a different league among top universities who have been gifted, philanthropic gifts of this magnitude,” said Donna Vuchinich, the UH Foundation president and CEO. “So it's just a point we can pivot from and go to new heights.”

The Shidler College of Business is aiming to be on par with the best in the country like the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School.

“My dream is in 30 years or so is that the top students around the world will think of Warton in one hand and Shidler on the other hand,” said Roley.

“It's so exciting,” said Ashley Kawagishi, a senior at the Shidler College of Business. “We are already afforded amazing opportunities here at the college and I think this is really only going to expand what's offered to us.”

As for Shidler, he hopes that others are also inspired to donate to the University of Hawaii.

“This college and this university really deserve an investment, it’s really worth it,” said Shidler.

By Media Production
External Affairs and University Relations
University of Hawaii System
VEMBA YEAR-END PARTIES
“After some discussion over beer and wine both in Hanoi and HCMC, representatives of nearly all cohorts decided to co-organize the first VEMBA networking summer holiday in Da Nang.”

VEMBA was going to welcome the 9th cohort in Hanoi and the 8th cohort in HCMC. Since the distance between two cities is more than 1,000 miles but that of human is even longer, we – VEMBA alumni – desired to do something to bring all alumni and students closer to each other. That is how our initiative of the “One alumni, One Family” event began.

After some discussion over beer and wine both in Hanoi and HCMC, representatives of nearly all cohorts decided to co-organize the first VEMBA networking summer holiday in Da Nang - a charming beach city in the Central Vietnam and one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. It took one hour to fly from Hanoi and HCMC.

We gathered at a cafeteria in Ocean Villas and got to know each other first. While golfers were participating in VEMBA Golf Tournament, non-golfers played some funny games to break the ice and strengthen our teamwork. In the evening, we visited Hoi An – the World Heritage’s Ancient City and together enjoyed dinner full of delicious local foods. Afterwards, all headed for New Phuong Dong night club on a big travel bus for dancing and drinking until late night. Guess what? Eight bottles of 15-year-old Glenlivet and four bottles of Vodka Absolut were all gone.

On the second day, while golfers were on golf course again, non-golfers enjoyed the city tour, card playing and networking activities on the beach. The Gala Dinner that night was unforgettable; We dressed in Hawaiian style, danced and laughed so much. We could not sleep and continued to move to the beach and share with each other until early morning. Something “crazy”, we all agreed what happened in Da Nang, would stay in Da Nang.

It seemed hard to say goodbye. Thanks to “Sorry Airlines” and “Delay Airlines” for making our conversations at the airport more in depth. And we could not help being thankful for VEMBA bringing us together.

Are you ready for “ONE ALUMNI, ONE FAMILY” 2016?

By PHAM Duc Huy, VEMBA-HAN'13
Chief Purchasing Officer, OPEC Plastics JSC
VEMBA LEADER TALKS

VEMBA Hawaii Leader Talks Channel on Youtube
www.youtube.com/vembahawaii

FBNC Smart Money Talk show “Angel investors”
Speaker: Dr. Tung Bui, VEMBA Faculty Director
13th July, 2014 at FBNC Studio, HCMC

“Free Trade Agreements in Asia – Pacific: APEC, TPP and RCEP” Workshop
Speaker: Dr. Vinod Aggarwal, Director of the Berkeley APEC Study Center & VEMBA Instructor
8th August, 2014 at Foreign Trade University, Hanoi
EuroCham Business Luncheon “Entrepreneurship & Angel Investment”

Speaker: Ms. Susan Yamada, Executive Director, the University of Hawaii Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship & Mr. Frederick Lins, VEMBA Instructor

11th July, 2014 at Sofitel Plaza Hotel, Hanoi

International Friendship Day 2014 – Leading entrepreneurs

Speaker: Mr. NGUYEN Quang Huy, VEMBA Director of External Relations and Recruitment

29th November, 2014 at Grand Plaza Hotel, Hanoi
DEAN VANCE ROLEY’S VISIT TO DELOITTE VIETNAM

“There are nearly 30,000 University of Hawaii Shidler College of Business Alumni living in 40 countries around the world.”

Dean Vance Roley, VEMBA Faculty Director Tung Bui and Professor Frederick Lins paid a visit to Deloitte Vietnam HCMC Office at the invitation of Ms. Ha Thi Thu Thanh (VEMBA-HAN’03) – President and CEO. They took an office tour and met some of Deloitte Vietnam’s VEMBA graduates, who are now holding high positions in our management team such as Mr. PHAM Van Thinh (VEMBA HCM ’10) – Deputy CEO, Mr. TRAN Dinh Nghi Ha (VEMBA HCM ’09) - Audit Partner cum Chief Talent Officer, Mr. VO Thai Hoa (VEMBA HCM ’11) – Audit Partner.

In 2014, Deloitte Vietnam had four more VEMBA graduates, including three in HCMC (Mr. NGUYEN Quang Trung – Audit Partner, Mr. NGUYEN Minh Thao – Audit Director and Mr. PHAM Van Tan – Audit Director) and one in Hanoi (Mr. VU Duc Nguyen – Audit Partner).

B NGUYEN Le Nhung
Deloitte Vietnam
Left to right: Mr. Tran Dinh Nghi Ha – Audit Partner cum Chief Talent Officer, Mr. Pham Van Tan – Audit Director, Mr. Vo Thai Hoa – Audit Partner, Mr. Nguyen Minh Thao – Audit Director, Mr. Pham Van Thinh – Deputy CEO, Professor Frederick Lins, Madam Ha Thu Thanh – President cum CEO, Dean Vance Roley, Professor Tung Bui.
A REUNION CRUISE OF VEMBA 3 HANOI FRIENDSHIP

September 13-14, 2014

“A good network is now active to facilitate the business and family connection among VEMBA 3 members, and we even think of connecting our next generation together.”

Time has been flying fast! The year of 2014 remarks our 10th year since the first day we joined VEMBA together (the Intake 2004-2006). All of us have been developing very far from that date with many great achievements and success in life and career. By adopting knowledge from the program and sharing ideas among classmates, whilst many members are still in the same organization but now at top executive levels, a large number of the class members have established their-own businesses and developed very well, some are working overseas.

On the occasion of 10 years’ dating anniversary, five active members formed a Steering Committee (SCOM) (two of us included) for VEMBA 3 HAN Class and then organized a two-day Reunion Trip. During September 13-14, 2014, on a beautiful cruise in Ha Long Bay, we recalled sweet and funny moments and memories during our study time. It was our honor to receive a greeting-video clip from Dr. V. Vance Roley, Dean of University of Hawaii Shidler College of Business. Dean congratulated on successes that VEMBA 3 members have achieved and thanked for the event idea of getting friends closer.

SCOM worked very hard and creatively for the preparation of this Reunion Trip. A special logo was designed and used in flag, banner, backdrop, uniform of the event. A few video clips were created from collecting many photos from the first days we met each other, during the program,
as well as our unforgettable trip to Hawaii. Those who joined the reunion trip were moved into tears; they had not expected that the event would go that well and meaningful. Some members showed VEMBA’s Got Talents by doing a magic show and even more heart-moving, a poem about VEMBA friendship.

To memorize the event and to make the whole class as one, SCOM prepared a colorful thumb-tree for all members, collecting their thumps and signatures. This truly indicates the VEMBA 3 members’ commitment to actively participating in our future activities and developing the network.

The two-day reunion was not long but enough to update about how our friends are living and doing, and what opportunities we could do business together. A good network is now active to facilitate the business and family connection among VEMBA 3 members, and we even think of connecting our next generation together.

By BUI Ngoc Tuan, VEMBA-HAN’06
Partner | Tax & Business Advisory Services, Deloitte Vietnam
& NGUYEN Phu An, VEMBA-HAN’06
Vice CEO, SmartMedia JSC
VEMBA CHARITY FUND TRIP: HEART TO HEART

October 3-4, 2014

“In 2014, VEMBA Charity Fund called for around VND 101 million from 66 individual contributions. Since its inception in 2009, the total fund has reached nearly VND 700 million.”

On a nice day in early October, I joined the VEMBA Charity Fund (VCF) to Lao Chai Hamlet, Y Ty Commune, Lao Cai Province. We attended the handover ceremony of Lao Chai 2 Nursery School, which was built and co-funded by VCF and Canon Vietnam. That is one of the most memorable trips I have ever joined.

Needy children in mountainous areas and VCF volunteers impressed me most during the three days’ trip. Twelve enthusiastic volunteers are children lovers. Some are VEMBAers, some are non-VEMBAers but we shared the same passion and of doing charity.

We were always side by side to overcome many obstacles on the long way with strong mind and solidarity. Sometimes, we hold breath and closed eyes when our car was driven through the hazardous stretches of mountainous roads. We even felt upon to rescue the car when it got stuck on the repaired road.

Our hearts nearly melt when we saw smile and happiness on needy children’s face entering the new class. The romping boys and girls laughed in clanging peals when they played with some new toys we brought there. The fragmentation of happiness was pervasive when they were presented other gifts such as warm clothes, blankets, books, outdoor toys.

We are planning for the next trip soon because we look forward to seeing children’s smiles and happiness. VCF is a place where hearts meet hearts!

By LUU Thi Dzung, VEMBA-HAN’15
Associate, IDG Ventures Vietnam
OKTOBERFEST – A NOT-TO-BE-MISSED EVENT WITH VEMBA

October 17th, 2014

“If you have not attended an Oktoberfest with VEMBA before, better mark it on your calendar, as it is an event not to be missed.”

Taking its roots from the original Oktoberfest held in the Bavarian city of Munich, Germany, Oktoberfest Vietnam is now celebrating its 22nd anniversary of introducing German culture to Vietnam. This annual event recreates the authentic atmosphere found in the massive beer halls of the original Oktoberfest, complete with savory German cuisine, premium imported German beer, and traditional Bavarian music.

In Vietnam, the Windsor Plaza Hotel and the German Business Association have been hosting the event since 2005. Oktoberfest Vietnam was recognized by Reuters as one of the Top 10 Oktoberfest celebrations outside Germany, and was also featured in the Chicago Tribune. Participation from all of our cohorts.

The event has become a popular one for VEMBA as it marks the beginning for the incoming cohort and a great occasion for our alumni to gather and enjoy great food, beer, music and festivities. The night usually starts off innocently, but as the night moves on, the chants of “mot, hai, ba, dzol!” over top of festive music begin to get louder and louder. At this point the usual dancing on top of benches and tables becomes the standard.

If you have not attended an Oktoberfest with VEMBA before, better mark it on your calendar, as it is an event not to be missed.

By Siheng TANG, VEMBA HCMC ‘12
Director of Digital Strategy, Windsor Property Management Corporation
“Growing up in an exhausted land of the central Vietnam, I witnessed the hard life of farmers, who are very hard working but still poor. I have had a dream of helping their lives by improving the soil. I decided to enter the HCMC Forestry and Agricultural University. Upon graduation, I continued to pursue the master and PhD degrees in Agriculture.”

November 3, 2014
As an engineer originally, I met a lot of difficulties in managing business activities of Thien Sinh JSC, which produces and distributes biochemical organic fertilizers under the brand name KOMIX. Our company achieves the annual revenues around $20 million, recruiting about 200 white-collar workers with graduated certificate up and over 700 physical workers.

I decided to apply for Vietnam Executive MBA, University of Hawaii, which I recognize now is a judicious choice of my life. I thank excellent VEMBA faculty for their experience and enthusiasm; I studied a lot from discussing real and updated case studies of international business.

Recently, I attended the workshop on "Integrating small farmers into regional and global value chains through contract farming", which was organized by Vietnam National Productivity Institute, and sponsored by Asian Productivity Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and University of Hawai‘i in early November, 2014. The workshop brought nearly 40 researchers, economists and experts to Hanoi to share ideas and experience on contract farming. Many cases and lessons from Cambodia, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brazil, Indonesia, Republic of China, Taiwan and Iran were presented. A value chain can be defined as “a network of horizontally and vertically-related businesses that jointly aims at working together towards providing products and services to a market” and viewed as “a standard approach to small business development and a pro-poor or inclusive approach to development”. The value chain analysis should focus on network structure and relationships, added values and competitiveness, governance and sustainability. Accordingly, contracts would be an appealing mode of governance. The contract farming roadmap includes evaluating the market and enabling environment, learning from existing experiences and getting stakeholder buy-in, selecting and farmers, designing and negotiating contracts, preventing conflict and monitoring.

Through this workshop, I understand deeply about integrating farmers into value chains that bring profit for all parties sustainably. I will apply what I got from the workshop as well as the VEMBA program to planning my company’s projects of developing organic products such as tea, coffee, rice and vegetable.

By VO Quoc Khanh, VEMBA-HCMC’14
Deputy General Director, Thien Sinh Corporation
GRADUATION CLASS OF 2014, HCMC
GRADUATION CLASS OF 2014, HANOI
SUCCESS STORY
CESSRIES
GOING FULL CIRCLE

“Ms. Quyen Nguyen or Qynn (VEMBA-HCMC’12) is currently leading the Google Play Movies North and Latin America Studio Operations Partnerships team at Google’s global headquarters in Mountain View, California. Responsible for a team of studio account managers for all of the major and independent film studios in the Americas, Quyen recently relocated back to the San Francisco Bay Area, going full circle, now back in the Silicon Valley where she first started her career.”

If you have ever paid for a movie (to rent or own) on Google Play, it is Quyen’s team that got the assets (video, artwork, metadata, pricing) into the Play store and available for purchase and playback. Quyen personally manages the Walt Disney Pictures, Warner Brothers Entertainment, and Starz Inc. studio accounts, working closely with these key partners to grow Google Play’s movie inventory, influencing Hollywood’s digital future, one film at a time.

Prior to joining Play, Quyen led Google’s Global Customer Experience team in SouthEast Asia from their Singapore office, with a focus on the Vietnam market. Quyen and her team, the largest team of Vietnamese Googlers in the company, consulted and supported small and medium businesses in Vietnam on how online marketing and digital advertising could help achieve their business goals.

Born in a refugee camp on an island in east Malaysia, Quyen and her family came to the US, settling in Sacramento, California. After completing her undergraduate studies, Quyen joined KPMG in their Mountain View office. After working in the Silicon Valley for six years, an opportunity came up at KPMG in Vietnam to help grow the firm there. Quyen, not knowing anything about Vietnam, jumped at the opportunity to do something completely out of her comfort zone. After a 30 minute conversation with the managing partner, Quyen knew this was the opportunity she was waiting for. Six weeks later, she arrived in Hanoi, not knowing a single person there.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR YOU TO MOVE TO VIETNAM FOR THE FIRST TIME?

The adjustment to the lifestyle and working culture in Hanoi was extremely challenging at first, especially the first six months. Once I started to focus on learning and embracing the culture, people, history, and customs instead of imposing my own values and ideas on others, my experience completely changed. I changed. And I knew I needed to stay in Vietnam much longer than my
original two year contract.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII EXECUTIVE MBA?

After a year and a half in Hanoi, I transferred to KPMG in Ho Chi Minh City and after another two years in various operations, IT/SAP project management, consulting, and resource management roles, I was ready to pursue the next challenge.
I heard about the University of Hawaii EMBA program in Vietnam from a friend. I called the office and stopped by to meet Mr. Thanh Phan (Director of Marketing and Recruitment) and soon after interviewed with Dr. Tung Bui (Faculty Director) of the Vietnam Executive MBA program (VEMBA).

WHAT IS THE MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE FOR YOU DURING THE PROGRAM?

The entire program was a humbling experience. The rigor of the program was memorable in itself. Financial modeling, estimating market size, analyzing countless 10-K’s, structuring one management model after another, and extensive debates on perceived value filled our evenings and weekends for almost two years. This rigor set us each up nicely for our next endeavors. For myself, it prepared me well for my transition to a new industry at Google. That’s the great thing about this program. It prepared us for just about anything since the program was so comprehensive. The knowledge that I took away from VEMBA is a small representation of the collective knowledge of my peers in Cohort 4 (and Hanoi Cohort 6) as well as the first-class faculty who took time out of their busy schedules to impart their knowledge with our class.
“Founded in 2009, OPEC Plastics JSC is the market leader in plastics distribution in Vietnam. The company has reached the turnover of $500 million in 2014 and ranked among the TOP500 Vietnam enterprises since 2012. The Editorial Board of VEMBA’ Ohana had an interview with Mr. DINH Duc Thang, VEMBA Hanoi ’13 – Chairman and CEO of OPEC Plastics JSC.”

COULD YOU SHARE MORE ABOUT THE OPEC PLASTICS JSC SUCCESS?

Mr. DINH Duc Thang: What we are doing is not new. The global trading houses have been doing this business for decades. Our success is simply the combination of international standards and local expertise. We have always focused on attracting talents and combined our strength for one goal, one direction with a long-term commitment. There are four graduates of VEMBA 6 Hanoi on our management board now.

HOW DO YOU ENVISION THE OPEC PLASTICS JSC IN THE UPCOMING YEARS?

Mr. DINH Duc Thang: We aim to become a multi-sector, multinational company. We are committed to creating thousands of job opportunities, bringing great values to shareholders and investors, and achieving sustainable development.

With the expansion to chemical and polyester fiber - Maruni Chemical and Fiber Co., forestry and production of wooden pellets - Vinomig Green Energy Co., regional
trading - Vinomig Singapore Ltd. and the expansion of OPEC Plastics Plant for polyethylene bags at 30,000 metric tons per annum, we are heading to a new high level to fulfill our goal: Prosperity Together.

**IS THERE ANY MESSAGE YOU WANT TO GIVE VEMBA-HAN’13 GRADUATES AND VEMBA STUDENTS NOW?**

Mr. ĐINH Duc Thang: The course “Business Ethics” of VEMBA does not specifically tell us what to do, but it always stays inside and constantly reminds us of our contributions to the society and country. Many good things can be done without learning MBA programs; also a lot of knowledge from VEMBA is waiting for opportunities of execution and application after tens of years. I would like to quote famous words from U.S President John Kenedy: “Do not ask what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country”.

Wish you all health and success on your chosen journey widely opening ahead!
VENOUS IN AND OUT OF CLASS
MBA OUTSIDE ROOM
Imagine - me, a student again. After four years of engineering school, eight years of medical school and residency, and then another three years of graduate public health school, I thought I was done with school, exams, term papers, and such. The last time that I had to sit in a class for lectures and burn the midnight oil for a term paper, it was more than fifteen years ago. I had refused numerous opportunities for doctorate studies because employment in the “real world” was beckoning. So it was a bit of a stretch to imagine myself going back to school when I was only two years from celebrating the mid-century mark of my life last year. But a career-changing opportunity, in the form of the closing of the philanthropic program that I was working with, that opened up for me the possibilities to do something different with the rest of my life had caused me to reconsider my options. So here I am, devouring text books, cramming for exams and writing term papers for the last twelve months.

Before starting the program, I had asked around about what it was like for folks who have gone through it. I got the usual feedback of the need for time management, adequate preparation, and how age can affect your capacity to learn and study. It was this last “warning” that got me worried. Looking at my classmates, most of whom are in their early to mid-30s, I cannot help but wondered how will I fare going up against “the best of the best”, and in their prime no less? What was I thinking?

My reason for taking on this challenge was simple enough. Having been in the philanthropic sector for fifteen years, I was intrigued by the potential power of social enterprises as an effective and sustainable way to address unmet social needs such as healthcare, education, and community development. I felt I was adequately well-versed on the “social” side of the equation; it was the “enterprise”, or the business, side that caused me some angst. Do I know anything about making money and running a business? I don’t even have many friends who are business people. So it was in the spirit of learning and readying me for the future that I reached out to Professor Tung Bui, who coincidentally is a friend and colleague from my past philanthropic days, to learn about the Vietnam Executive MBA program; and, as they say, the rest is history.

So, how has it been so far? The part of about having too much homework and not enough time, that is definitely true. However, sitting in a class full of people with diverse life experience and expanding several generations made me feel rejuvenated and energized that I have never felt before. With a couple of decades of work experience,
I found going back to school is more meaningful now that it was when I was younger. Grades do not seem as important anymore and I am able to distinguish between what is “real” and what is “fluff”, which allowed me to focus on things that really mattered. I am constantly impressed by the quality of the professors that University of Hawaii provided to us and found myself genuinely enthralled by the lectures and the wealth and depth of materials given. So it is truly fitting that at this “late” stage of my life, I re-discovered the true joy of learning and the art of being a student again. To paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, “youth is [indeed] wasted on the young”.

Of course, not everything is hunky-dory all the time. There were times when the differences of background and learning experience among the students surfaced in major way that caused conflicts in our group work and class participation. For example, some of our classmates came from a more rigid didactic pedagogy background and found active participation difficult. Also, since English is the language of instruction, those who are less fluent are more inhibited to contribute to discussions. Another problem is the degree of dependability (in terms of being accountable to your class/teammates) varies significantly between students, perhaps a product of already having a full life in addition to school. And then there were the adrenaline rush of deadlines and the scrambles to get things done on time, which can strain relationships inside and outside of class, including at home and office. On the whole, I see these issues are par for the course, to use a golf phrase that I am sure familiar to many of my classmates, and do not diminish the value of learning received. These problems can also be viewed as part of the microcosm of the real business world outside, and thus are part of our learning experience.

With the American Thanksgiving holiday just around the corner, it is appropriate to think about all the things that we have to be thankful for. For me, it is the support of my beautiful and loving family who allows me to follow my dream. Part of living in this dream is, of course, being a member of the VEMBA family, with all its beauty and dysfunctions, to create new opportunities and new possibilities for a better world.

Hanoi, November 24, 2014

By LE Nhan Phuong, VEMBA-HAN’15
Vietnam Country Director, The Atlantic Philanthropies
ENJOYABLE TIME OF STUDY AND PLAY

“We share knowledge and ideas in business as well as in life and we enjoy spending time together especially with the “green drug” - Golf.”

Mr. NGUYEN Manh Truc: fourth from right to left
My name is Nguyen Manh TRUC, President of VEMBA 7 Hanoi. We, VEMBA 7 Hanoi, are 15 different people at different ages, 15 characters, with different experience and social lifestyle from various business fields; therefore, we find ourselves extremely valuable to each other. We share knowledge and ideas in business as well as in life and we enjoy spending time together especially with the “green drug” - Golf.

Only few of us played golf before the VEMBA started but we graduated 12 out of 15 VEMBA students playing golf. Starting by practice sessions at driving range after VEMBA courses, followed by challenging on field golf games and ending by VEMBA annual golf tournament, we enjoyed together.

Golf pushes golfer’s brain in the single mode in which the golfer can only think about one thing, playing golf, otherwise he cannot swing. The night golf games after VEMBA weekend courses were beautiful and unforgettable. We started at 4PM to 5PM and ended around 9PM, we spent together five amazing hours, had funs and de-stressed and got refreshed for the next working day.

Golf is a mental game; you play against yourselves not against each other. Golfers need to be faithful to get better result. Nowadays, business people try to understand their suppliers, partners via social activities and golf is one of the most useful activities especially for senior management level. Spending 5 to 8 hours together is a good opportunity for business people to get closer to each other and build up mutual business relationship. Never tell lie, never overcommit is golfers’ culture. Golfers trust each other, even with verbal commitment, and this helps us to develop business much more easily.

Fifteen years passed since I graduated from university. The working environment is totally different from the academic one. I developed myself a lot and achieved some success but sometimes I had the feeling that I reached the limit of knowledge, lacking of energy and aggressiveness and being confused on career path direction, until I made a right decision to study VEMBA.

Many sources of up-to-date information and business ideas were provided during the course. Studying with classmates who are at the same age of my staff is really refreshing - the young people can freely share with me their ideas and opinions without any hesitation. They made me feel younger and full of energy. I can review myself and reform my mind. VEMBA not only gives me motivation to “Aim high, Work hard and Enjoy the moment of success” but also equips me with a lot of know-how and experience for my new business development.

VEMBA is really Executive MBA providing students with the business management skills in general. All business management fields are covered but at senior level for executive people. The program’s content is not very detailed but enough to equip managers with complete know-how to either start up business or transform an existing business. I think VEMBA is suitable for experienced businessmen who are at middle management level or C-level.

By NGUYEN Manh Truc, VEMBA-HAN’14
General Manager, China Mobil International
As the famous neurologist Viktor E. Frankl said in his book - *Man’s search for meaning* - “Those who have a ‘why’ to live, can bear with almost any ‘how’”; Taking Vietnam Executive MBA program helps me to answer one of the first ‘how’ questions.

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

Six years ago today, I was sitting in the office of Siemens Vietnam and ordering the very last machine to successfully close a ten-million-dollar electricity project on a nice autumn afternoon. At the same time but half the world away, a catastrophic event was taking place - the crash of Lehman Brothers that led to the 2008 financial crisis.

I read the news and wondered myself what was happening out there. A lot of things are changing by minutes, or even seconds all around the world, and my thought was that I want to catch as much as I can. I also realize that finance is center of everything. It is like a movie series plotting all aspects of life from government election to household spending. Each hours and minutes are a chapter named “Heaven is for real” and the next couldpossibly be “Drag me to Hell”.

With that thought, I was looking for a chance and finally moved to ANZ Bank Vietnam. The job was exactly
what I want, a position in Global Markets Department specializing in foreign exchange trading. My daily work basically is to follow the movements of the changes out there in the world. I read the news from many channels like Bloomberg, Reuters, CNN. I talk to people from other banks and my colleagues in ANZ hubs from New York, Melbourne, Hong Kong and Singapore. I hold meetings within my team at any time. All of those things are vital to our team to catch with the evolution of the markets and to make important trading decisions.

Moreover, my work exposes me to a lot of areas of the bank, from government bond to commodity trading, from customer handling to risk management, in both local and regional scale. The interaction with other departments helps me to build a solid knowledge for the bank business and toughens my leadership.

Through my daily work, I am more aware of the difficult time for Vietnam economy. The ninety-million-people country, though having a huge potential, is going through a real tough time of which non-performing loans and corruptions are a few problems to name. In a conversation with my firm CEO, he shared with me that just looking at the banks’ financial reports alone, no one would accept a CEO job in Vietnam, but when you take a broader view, you find the light at the end of the tunnel. Then his brilliant work to lead ANZ Vietnam ship through the crisis storm is so remarkable and inspiring to me. He is really my role model!

For the last six years, each has contributed one character to the word “VISION” of mine. It is a clear picture I see myself in ten years to be the bank management team who deals with everyday movement of the most sophisticated industry, and at the same time, a respective banker holding a position in the development of Vietnam banking industry. As the famous neurologist Viktor E. Frankl said in his book - Man’s search for meaning - “Those who have a ‘why’ to live, can bear with almost any ‘how’”, taking Vietnam Executive MBA program helps me to answer one of the first ‘how’ questions.

By LE Gia Phong, VEMBA-HAN’16
Trading Manager, ANZ Vietnam

At 2008, I was promoted to be Head of Human Resources of Military Bank, after four years as the branch and regional director. We hired two U.K experts to help initiate the organizational restructuring and strategy project.

Even with two bachelor degrees and eight years of hard work, I had a lot of difficulties in understanding new management issues and applying expertise advice to deploying strategic plans. How could we set up business units in alignment with our future strategy? Or how could we design a salary and benefits scheme as a replacement for the ten year one?

“After researching and comparing to other master programs in Vietnam, I was determined to apply for VEMBA – what I had actually been seeking for.”

The first challenge when I applied for VEMBA was the English requirement. I had not attended any exam for a long time. It took me a lot of efforts to study IELTS very intensively within one week.

The work load of VEMBA is really heavy but worthwhile. During and after studying the program, I have been assigned to different positions as Head of Retail Banking, IT, Securities and now member of Board of Directors of Military Bank. At each position, I have always made full use of VEMBA knowledge and skills and delivered good results.

By LUU Trung Thai, VEMBA-HAN’10
Board of Directors, Military Bank
Ms. TRANG Thi Lan Anh: first from left to right
THE PROGRAM OF INDUSTRY LEADERS

“Steve Jobs once said ‘If today were the last day of your life, would you want to do what you are about to do today?’...Think about this and I hope you all enjoy the ‘now and here’ moment of your life!”

It has been five years since the day I graduated from VEMBA program.

So many things have changed from that day. I have changed my job and moved into a new apartment. But one thing that has not changed so far is the friendship that I have got from VEMBA program.

Every year, we figure out some days from our busy executive schedules to have ‘VEMBA 2 Outing’ together, to meet and remember our past good times, to tease each other :-) Those are the great moments that we share with VEMBA friends every year.

Steve Jobs once said ‘If today were the last day of your life, would you want to do what you are about to do today?’...Think about this and I hope you all enjoy the ‘now and here’ moment of your life!

By TRAN Thi Lan Anh, VEMBA-HCMC’10
Country General Manager, Jollibee Food Corporation
Vietnam
THE PROGRAM OF INDUSTRY LEADERS

“You teach people the knowledge, they will forget; you share people real experience, they will remember; and you involved people in, they will have the lessons”

In 2010, the Vietnam capital market was crashed and the economy went into a crisis cycle. It was the results of financial bubble from previous years when many businessmen were excited with new projects and invested in many different sectors, some added the word “Group” to the end of their company name as an implication of “Chaebol” in South Korea.

The market corrected itself quickly, and everywhere people talked about new trendy norms, whereby enterprises should focus on their core businesses and build competitive advantages. Entrepreneurship spirit was good but not enough; the economy was under restructuring.

That was the time I walked into the VEMBA classroom in HCMC, the second cohort in the Vietnam’s business hub. As an investment director from a leading asset management firm, I intended to learn modern management knowledge, or in simple words, part of the management.

What impressed me was a quite big number of questions raised in the classroom. I quickly realized how lucky I was to be in this program with many industry leaders. Imagine how a person from the financial industry with the deals mindset now was learning organizational behavior, corporate marketing, and supply chain management and so on. Real cases, real questions, and real expertise – I enjoyed learning so much from my classmates. At the end of the program, I feel confident to have further sight and thorough thoughts for any business decision making.

And the good study chapter is not ended that quickly. Our classmates become closer; some ended up doing business together lately, some joined work team together. Years passing by, our alumni network becomes bigger and stronger. We all feel grateful to become a part of that valuable group, and of course, I have always been active in most of alumni events.

There is an old idiom that “You teach people the knowledge, they will forget; you share people real experience, they will remember; and you involved people
in, they will have the lessons”. I came to the VEMBA classroom with the expectation of the first one, but actually I got the second one in the classroom and over the time, I got the last part.

When I was finishing this write-up, I received several calls from Hanoi key alumni. They urged me to join VEMBA Hanoi Year-end Party with Hanoi alumni and students, many of whom I call as friends now although we are in two different cities. We first knew each other through the program but lately catch up very often, playing golf and hanging out together.

By LE Anh Hao, VEMBA-HCMC’10
Head of Capital Markets, Jones Lang LaSalle Vietnam
“I still remember how eager I was in VEMBA to read new textbooks, meeting professors and classmates. The VEMBA program comprehensively covered all business aspects, from overview to details, from vision and strategy to specific methods and skills. And VEMBA instructors were so enthusiastic and supportive to students.”

I still remember one session in our field study course. When we were asked “What is your purpose of joining this program?”, some responses were to broaden knowledge, to develop network or to work more effectively. The instructor smiled, saying that “You seem to be wasting your time and money for those purposes. To me, one EMBA graduate is to be PROMOTED or to CHANGE”.

VEMBA has changed me and my life. I have got what I wished for so far: knowledge of global business, energy to overcome challenges, and aspiration for doing new things to bring value to the society. As each person only lives once, every moment of life should be precious experience whether it is hard or easy. Upon VEMBA graduation in December 2007, I decided to leave VNPT and set up Brainwork Vietnam, which provides training and consulting services to individuals and organizations.

On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of VEMBA (2001-2015), I would like send sincere thanks to
VEMBA Professors, who flew over ten hours to Vietnam for teaching and encouraging us, to VEMBA 4 Hanoi friends, who accompanied and motivated me during the study time. If there is one wish, I wish we could take a flight back to the past and our class had the opportunity of studying together. That would be another interesting experience in my life!

*By PHAN Nam Binh, VEMBA-HAN’07  
Managing Director, Brainwork Vietnam*
“It is the deep connections they have made with their classmates over the course of two years, and then later as alumni of the VEMBA program.”

Having taught in the VEMBA program now for three years, one of the highlights of coming back to HCMC each year is meeting former VEMBA students. Almost without exception, graduates speak in glowing terms about their experiences in the program. It is not just the materials they have learned and the skills they have developed - although those are formidable indeed. Rather, it is something more. It is the deep connections they have made with their classmates over the course of two years, and then later as alumni of the VEMBA program. In the course of teaching in the program, I spend many hours getting to know the students as individuals and as people, along with getting to know their hopes and dreams. I feel a deep sense of connection with many of them, and the optimism they show is truly inspiring to me.

As a developing country, the potential of Vietnam to play a key role on the world stage, and to improve the lives of its citizens, is immense. So also is the potential of VEMBA graduates to help shape that future. As the country develops, and as more of its citizens become middle-class consumers, the demand for higher-quality goods and services will increase dramatically. To satisfy that demand, management talent - including the talent to manage people effectively throughout their careers - will be eagerly sought by organizations throughout the country and also throughout the broader Southeast Asia region. In my view, VEMBA graduates are in the demographic “sweet spot” to take personal advantage of this increasing demand over the next twenty years or so.

By giving its graduates the tools they need to succeed - tools in the fundamental business disciplines of marketing, finance, economics, accounting, IT, operations, and management - the VEMBA program will enrich their lives. Over the longer term, their advanced degree from a prestigious institution such as the University of Hawaii will help them to secure a high quality of life, not only for themselves, but also for their families. For me personally, it is an honor to play a small role in helping to make this happen.

By Dr. Wayne F. CASCIO
Distinguished Professor, University of Colorado Denver, and Robert H. Reynolds Chair in Global Leadership
WHERE THE BIG LOVE OF OUR LIVES GREW

“The power of love has helped us overcome all challenges in pursuit of our dream.”

What does one usually expect when it comes to taking an MBA course? A fashionable degree, a promotion or an on-purpose networking opportunity, to name; I had thought of somewhat similarly until I met Yen - my wife now - by serendipity.

According to the statistics theory, the chances of coming across a suitable life partner when you join MBA are pretty low. However, in the peak of luck, I found her in early December 2012. Only God knows if I could apply any strategy learnt from VEMBA to winning her heart whilst she keeps on telling me that my patience, open mind and creativeness did play an essential role.

Within one month, we were making plans to visit each other. Within a few months, we were planning for our future. Five months later, we got engaged. Twelve months later, after we had been through 02 Halloween parties, 02 Christmas Balls, 02 graduation ceremonies together with VEMBA, we got married!

Other than being a classmate, Yen is my true soul-mate. After completing the program, we realize that we have been well prepared to enter the international workforce with the same passion, vision and capability.

They say that love distracts us from learning but we
think differently; love is also a course of life, and we must learn to love everyday. The power of love has helped us overcome all challenges in pursuit of our dream.

Thanks to VEMBA, where the big love of our lives grew.

By HUYNH Minh Thong, VEMBA-HCMC’13  
Business Analyst, HSBC Vietnam Ltd  
&  
TRAN Thi Phi Yen, VEMBA-HCMC’14  
Director of Academics & Student Services, PSB College
MBA
&
Enterprise
“Our partnership team worked nights and weekends on the planning, design, construction, marketing, staffing and operation as if it were a VEMBA consulting practicum.”

18 Ngo Van Nam, District 1, HCMC
www.urbankitchenbar.com

Newly opened in August 2014, Urban Kitchen + Bar is the latest addition to the HCMC restaurant and bar scene. With an emphasis on modern cuisine, the passionate culinary team uses the freshest of ingredients in their creations for brunch, lunch and dinner, which seamlessly complement their selection of signature cocktails and spirits. When the lights go down, Urban Kitchen + Bar transforms into a lively setting where friends can enjoy after work drinks or prepare for a night out on the town.

The conceptual interior of Urban Kitchen + Bar is a blend of modern industrial and rustic, using a combination of steel, brick and wood throughout its open ceiling design. The two-level building is fitted with floor-to-ceiling windows on the main floor and three signature-arched windows lining the second floor balcony, bringing plenty of warm, natural light into the restaurant in the day. In the evening, the eight-meter long bar illuminates a warm amber glow outlining silhouettes of the rock wall that was furnished by reclaimed stones from the building’s original structure.
So how did the idea for Urban Kitchen + Bar come to be? It was Jen’s birthday in October of 2013 when one of our friends (and now business partner) asked if we had ever thought about opening a restaurant. The main reason they asked was because of Jen’s passion for food and her reputation for cooking for our friends on special occasions. Before this, it was not anything that neither one of us would have thought much about. But as we started brainstorming more about it, the ideas and creative concept began to take shape. The next nine months, our partnership team worked nights and weekends on the planning, design, construction, marketing, staffing and operation as if it were a VEMBA consulting practicum. Throughout the process, we were able to apply the knowledge from so many of the courses we attended during our time in the University of Hawaii EMBA program.

By Jennifer Yi, VEMBA-HCMC’11
& SiHeng TANG, VEMBA-HCMC’12
LEADING CHANGE, LEADING VIETNAMESE LOGISTICS

“I have always been doubtful about the MBA benefits in the past but really changed that mindset since I joined the Vietnam Executive MBA, University of Hawaii program in October 2014. I now enjoy learning new knowledge and skills in the program and applying to my organization and leadership for change.”

I co-founded Bee Group in 2004, which is consisted of two member companies in Vietnam named Bee Logistics Corp and Dolphin Sea Air Services Corp (with twelve branch offices), two foreign offices in Cambodia and Bee Logistics Myanmar Ltd in Myanmar. We have had the Agency Agreement with over 120 nations in international freight forwarding, and more than 300 staffs in the group. After 10 years of development, we are proud to be among the most active forwarders of the biggest scale in Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar for freight consol (LCL), container sea freight (FCL), airfreight, customs clearance, inland trucking, cross border transportation within the Indochina Region, project cargo transportation and so on.

Our core values are based on the Bee’s characteristics (being hard-working, well-organized, team-spirited and giving honey) and the Dolphin’s characteristics (being speedy, flexible, attentive, helpful and friendly). Taking the slogan of “Empowering your supply chain” and “be expert in logistics”, we are committed to the standards of modern supply chain management as well as the value-added services to our customers and partners.
I have always been doubtful about the MBA benefits in the past but really changed that mindset since I joined the Vietnam Executive MBA, University of Hawaii program in October 2014. I now enjoy learning new knowledge and skills in the program and applying to my organization and leadership for change. Furthermore, I highly appreciate the VEMBA network and development of long-time relations here.

At the beginning of the first course - Communication, Leadership and Organizational Behavior - I was a little shocked at getting familiar with the VEMBA learning style. However, after some sessions, I enjoyed and learned a lot from class discussion, reflective notes, group assignments as well as interaction with VEMBA professors and classmates. Now I better understand knowledge and skills about change, personality, motivation, communication, conflict and power in shaping the leadership for change.

For example, I always want to design our company as the best workplace where you are yourself and invested in. It is very interesting to discover in the class how to build better empowerment through granting employees the autonomy, strengthening their senses of effectiveness, sharing information and responsibility as much as possible. I know more clearly that leadership is not to control but develop good values within the company and recognize employees’ contribution.

Our group vision is to become a global logistics service provider, providing professional and enjoyable services and contributing to the community development. We are still continuously opening more offices, subsidiaries and joint ventures not only domestically but also overseas. I set the dream and target that upon VEMBA graduation, our yearly turnovers will reach 50 million USD.

By TRAN Dang Nam, VEMBA-HAN’16
Co-founder and President, Dolphin Sea Air Services Corp
The year of 2015 marks the 22th year of my professional life. I always ask myself five below questions every year:

**Career:** Is it interesting and enjoyable? Will your job allow you to fulfill your career ambitions?

For nearly 18 years, I was in Sales and Marketing positions at a 5-star international hotel. Throughout this period, I accomplished significant achievements and experienced many ups and downs.

In 2011, I joined Vuong Luc Trading Service Co. Ltd that specializes in providing laundry solutions for the hospitality, healthcare industries and factories. As the laundry industry is still young in Vietnam, I had the opportunities to apply many innovative concepts learned from VEMBA to my business. It really paid off.

Just early December, 2014, inspired by VEMBA 5 friends and alumni, I set up OMP Alliance. OMP is short for both O My Phuong – my full name and for Opportunity - Merit - Prosperity. I desire to fulfill my business ambitions together with my alliance and alumni network.

To me, it is important to plan your career early in order to keep it moving up and forward.

**Money:** Do you make enough now? Would it be better if you spent less time earning money and more time for other areas of your life?

In my opinion, having ambitions based on 6A- principle: (Ability, Aspiration, Defined Actions, Right Attitude and Availability) will determine what and how we can do. As a result, more success will come.
Health: Do you feel in good physical shape? Do you get enough exercise? How about your diet? Are you eating and drinking as you should?

Drinking two glasses of red wine every evening really keeps doctors away. That is my person experience.

Relationships: Do you see enough of your family and friends? Are you happy with your significant other or your spouse? How committed are you?

The power of love and care matters. I learned that one can create a loving world only when one has learned to love. My success is not without great encouragement and spiritual guidance from beloved family members and friends.

Self: Is there something you have always wanted to learn or a hobby you have wanted to explore, but have never done anything about it?

“Just do it”...as long as you feel it is right time.
It has already been one year from the date I graduated from VEMBA. I still remember the last message of my speech that I was honorable to deliver on the graduation day “…At this most meaningful event of our life, my VEMBA 5 classmates, we may learn sooner than most Vietnamese generations the hard lesson that we must always make the path for ourselves. There may be no secret society out there that will tap you on your shoulder one night and show you the way. Because the true secret in our modern Vietnam life will not be defined by the society our ancestors have left us. I believe we have been given a gift from the University of Hawaii classes - the ability to think independently in the ever-changing business world”.

MBA graduates often talk about having aspirations, facing dilemmas or seeking different career paths. To me, craft a career trajectory that is both successful and meaningful to them first, and then achieve better balance between work and life.

By O My Phuong, VEMBA-HCMC’13
CEO, OMP Alliance
Congratulations to Mr. TRAN Trong Kien (VEMBA-HAN’03), CEO of Thien Minh Group. On 22 May 2014, the World Economic Forum announced its selection of Global Growth Companies (GGCs) in East Asia and recognized Thien Minh Group as one of these 20 GGCs. Potential GGCs are evaluated according to the following criteria: business model, annual revenue, management team and major influence in their industry.

Mr. HUYNH Buu Quang (VEMBA-HCMC’11) has been promoted to be HSBC Indonesia Managing Director, Head of Commercial Banking. He has overall responsibility for the entire Commercial Banking operations of HSBC in Indonesia including relationship management, transaction banking (including global trade and receivables finance, global payments and cash management) and credit and lending activities.

Ms. NGUYEN Thuy Hang (VEMBA-HCMC’09) has been elected to Baker & McKenzie (Vietnam) Partner since July 1, 2014. Beginning at Baker & McKenzie in 2006, Ms. Hang has focused her practice on M&A, employment and labor, compliance, and other corporate and commercial matters. She also heads the American Chamber of Commerce, Ho Chi Minh City Chapter’s HR Committee, and is a prominent speaker in Vietnam and throughout the region on Vietnam’s employment and labor laws.

Ms. NGUYEN Phuong Mai (VEMBA-HCMC’11) has become Southern Regional Director of Navigos Search – the leading provider of executive search services in Vietnam. In her career, she has held leadership roles in famous international organizations, including Chief Representative in Vietnam for ACCA – a UK-based professional accountancy body, Business Development Director for Deloitte Vietnam, and General Director for eSilicon Vietnam. With the knowledge gained from the Executive MBA program, University of Hawai‘i, she successfully supported eSilicon Vietnam during its post M&A transition period by laying down the fundamental operational and corporate governance framework as well as growing up the team of talents.

Congratulations to Mr. Michael YOONG (VEMBA-HCMC’13) and Ms. LE Bao Uyen (VEMBA-HCMC’13) for their first baby - Qarah on November 19, 2014. Qarah is Hebrew for “being at the right place at the right time”. As Christians, they pray for God to grant them “Qarah” so that they will always be at the right place at the right time.

Congratulations to Mr. HUYNH Minh Thong (VEMBA-HCMC’13) and TRAN Thi Phi Yen (VEMBA-HCMC’14) upon their recent marriage. Their wedding was on October 18th, 2014 at Caravelle Hotel, HCMC.
Alumni Update