

ECHOES

MBA NEWSLETTER | FROM MBA NEWSLETTER TEAM

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From the Newsletter team: Message from Editors

By Justin Gu

Dear fellow classmates,

I am delighted to present, on behalf of the MBA Newsletter Team, the March 2024 Issue of ECHOES Newsletter.

I guess MBA is not an easy journey for most of us, my dear fellow classmates of the 2023 batch, considering the job market status and your high expectation to continue your excellence stemming from your past experiences. Many of you are not mentally prepared for what is happening, and have solutions in hand because you thought everything would become better and that the world will become better.

In our future lives, we are going to have many more setbacks - and so it's fortunate to have setbacks early on rather than later. You will learn to be persistent; you will learn to develop the mentality to embrace setbacks and develop the necessary muscle to conquer setbacks and most importantly: you will learn not to give up. There are good things always and good people around you as said in the lyrics of the song "If you are going to San Francisco"

If you are going to NUS MBA, you are going to meet some gentle people there, and summertime will be a loving time there.



Within this Issue, we will introduce several beautiful events that happened in February, including the Gardens by the Bay tour, the Japan GIP trip, Microsoft visit, Chinese New Year event, Toastmasters' club event and the Sales and Strategy Planning speaker session. Always keep in your mind that "there are so many beautiful people and things around you" when you have setbacks. We also would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome our new members, Ankit Verma, Amy Tran and Joy Tran to join the newsletter team.

Warm regards,
Justin Gu
Editor of the MBA Newsletter Team

A Tour to Gardens by the Bay

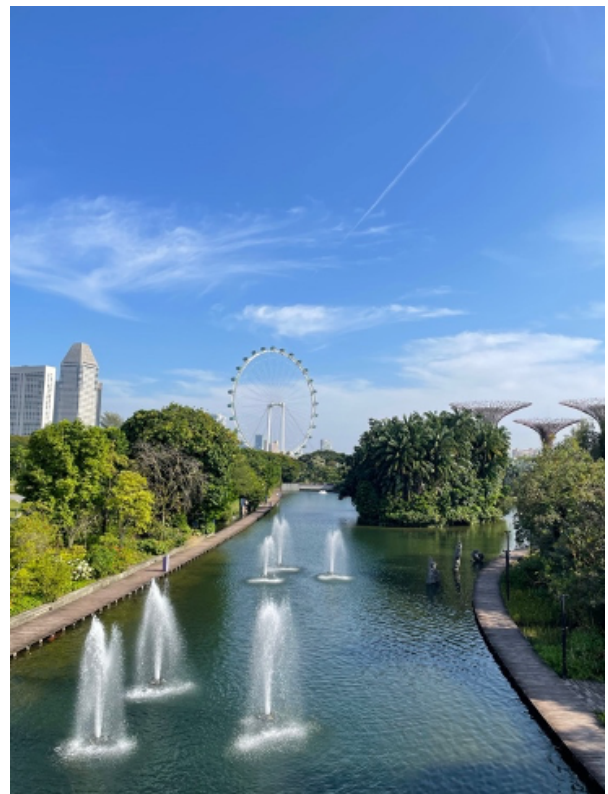
By Justin Gu

If you are going to the Gardens by the Bay, you are going to meet some gentle people there.

In 1967, Scott McKenzie wrote a song "If you are going to San Francisco"
If you're going to San Francisco
Be sure to wear some flowers in your hair
If you're going to San Francisco
You're gonna meet some gentle people there
For those who come to San Francisco
Summer time will be a loving there
In the streets of San Francisco
Gentle people with flowers in their hair

This is a wonderful song that depicted a fabulous city called San Francisco, with people being happy and friendly towards each other in the incredible time of the 60s.

Likewise, in the 20s of 21st century, in the tropical metropolitan city of Singapore, a group of like-minded MBA students from the NUS MBA and its exchange network universities gathered at Gardens by the bay, enjoyed the beautiful scenery, exchanged bright opinions, warmed each other's heart and filled each other with happiness and joy.



A big group of more than 70 people headed to the Gardens by the Bay



Under careful planning of Bryan Xie (PT NUS MBA), a total of more than 70 students registered for the event by paying only 10\$ each [I was also in this group – spot me if you can!]. To reach the first destination Flower Dome, we had to cross an overbridge; and when we were there, a whole new realm opened to us -so beautiful, so fancy and so exciting!

Dragon themed Flower Dome

As it was during the Chinese New Year period, there were many kinds of dragon designs in the year of dragon. In traditional Chinese culture, every parent wants their child to become a dragon because a dragon is omnipotent, it could hide in the deep sea, it could walk in the land, and it could fly high in the sky. Let's wish that all our MBA students become a dragon in their MBA study, career and future life!



Cool Cloud Forest in Hot Summer



Inside of cloud forest, there was a massive waterfall that plunged from the top of the structure and became a winding path around the base of the dome. Although it was hot summer outside, our MBA students talked to each other in a very chilled way - splashes of mind were generated in the cozy environment.

Hospitality to MBA-Exchange students

Among the 70 participants, more than half were MBA-Exchange students. All of them felt the hospitality, gentleness and friendly vibes expressed by the NUS MBA students. Through clear communication, they got to know more about Singapore, NUS and even a few little things in life. Quite a few of them became good friends and some of them were even going on holiday together during recess week! Let's welcome them again and wish them all the best for their exchange semester at NUS and in Singapore.



GIP 2024: Meaningful and enjoyable Japan 2024

By Ken Kurataki

Under the leadership of Yoshi, Ryoko, Shin, Ken and Tad, we successfully conducted a pretty meaningful and enjoyable GIP from February 25 to March 1 in Japan. The first half of the itinerary was spent in Tokyo, and the second half in Kansai (Osaka/Kyoto/Kobe) for company visits and cultural experiences, plus networking dinners and parties with Alumni and KBS. There are so many beautiful memories to share for this small column, so please allow me to share some of my experiences along with photos.



On the first day of the GIP, as a part of the cultural experience, a team building session was held in Asakusa, one of the traditional downtown areas of Japan, and although it was an orientation-like experience on the first day of the MBA, the temperature was about 5 degrees Celsius, and the scenery was very different from that of the modern tropical Singapore.



Our Japanese Princeling Shin Kudo surrounded by happy and beautiful girls at Asakusa

I think the highlight of the company visit was TESSEI. Many of the participants had already learned about "Seven Minutes Miracles" in class, and we believe that the combination of desk-based case study learning and hands-on experience made for a very meaningful and practical learning experience.



We also visited Tokyo Gas, the largest infrastructure company in Japan, to which TAD (our classmate) belongs, and experienced the forefront of smart energy (we all wore helmets).



The highlight of the cultural experience was a party at “Yakatabune” and the visit to a Sake brewery alongside a wrap-up dinner there. The Yakatabune is a traditional Japanese yacht-styled dinner/meeting place used for Samurai’s secret meeting, where guests enjoyed Japanese food (and karaoke) with a night view of Tokyo’s bayfront.



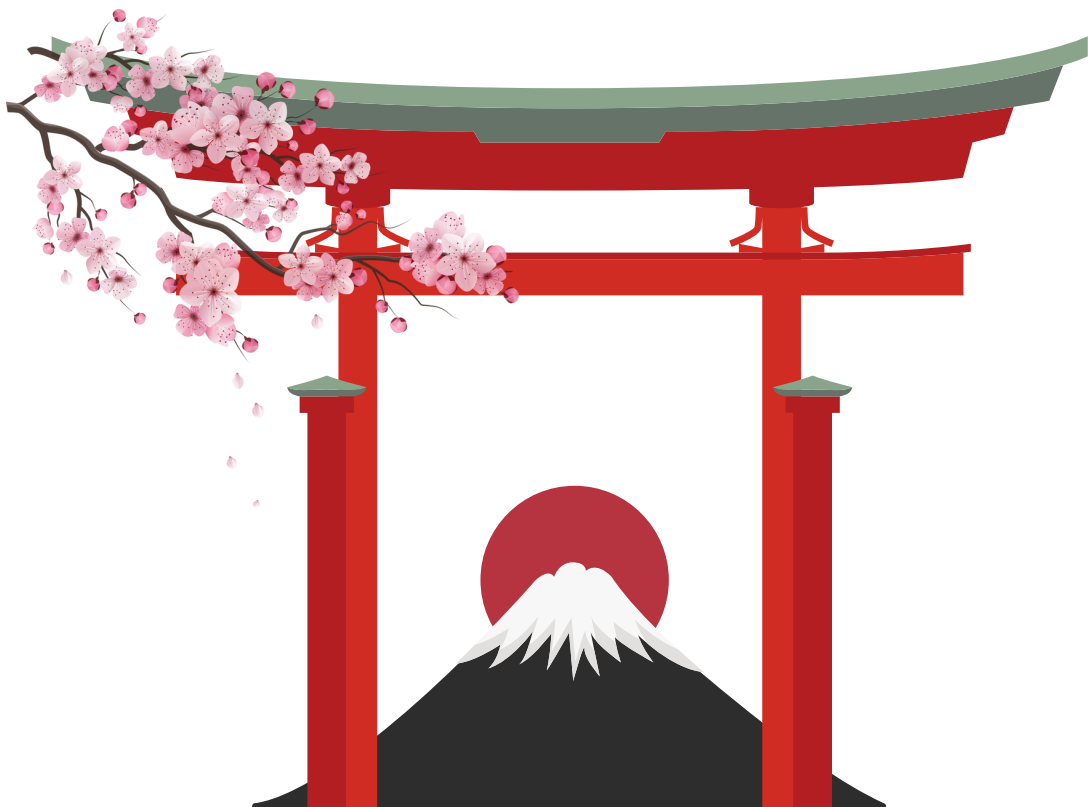


During the Japanese sake brewery visit, participants learned about a new ESG-related initiative called Zero Carbon Sake, while enjoying a GIP wrap-up dinner at the brewery at the end of the visit.





The schedule, including company visits, was extremely tight in very cold weather, and the participants must have been very tired, but we believe it was a valuable opportunity to experience the culture and atmosphere of a Japanese company that continues to boast one of the highest GDPs in the world and is leading the cutting edge in Asia.



NUS MBA D&I Club and WIB Club Partner: Inspiring Visit to Microsoft on Diversity and Inclusion

By Siddesh & Grace Nguyen

In celebration of International Women's Day and with the spirit of fostering collaboration, the NUS MBA Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Club joined forces with the NUS Women in Business (WIB) Club for a captivating visit to Microsoft on February 15, 2024.

This event brought together over 50 enthusiastic students from the MBA, undergraduate, and EMBA programs for an insightful exploration of Microsoft's D&I initiatives. The event was warmly hosted by a dedicated Microsoft team, including Manuela Neumeier, Jacqui Miranda, Melanie Sharpe Nseir, and Hitesh Bhikabhai, who shared valuable insights into Microsoft's journey towards building an empowering and inclusive workplace culture.



Inspirational sharing from NUS and Microsoft representatives

The interactive session kicked off with an inspiring presentation by Vivien Yao (MBA) and Nishtha Birla (BBA), who shared personal anecdotes about their experiences growing up as women in Asian families. Their impactful message resonated deeply with the audience, highlighting the importance of diverse perspectives, and lived experiences.

Beyond theory, Melanie Nseir offered a relatable glimpse into the real-world implementation of inclusive practices at Microsoft through her personal experiences. Hitesh Bhikabhai further enriched the discussion by delving into the concept of allyship and sharing his unique experiences within the organization. Their candid and insightful perspectives provided valuable takeaways for attendees, encouraging them to become active advocates for D&I in their own communities.



Rare opportunity to engage with giant firm and learnings on D&I

The success of this event is a testament to the tireless efforts of the NUS MBA D&I Club members and WIB members who collaborated to make this a reality. This impactful visit served as a potent reminder of the transformative power of D&I initiatives, igniting a collective passion for fostering inclusive communities within our spheres of influence.



The opportunity to engage with a forward-thinking organization like Microsoft has been incredibly enriching, and we look forward to exploring further avenues of collaboration in the future. Inspired by Microsoft's dedication to building a diverse and inclusive workplace, the NUS MBA D&I Club pledges to continue advocating for equal opportunities and celebrating the richness of diverse perspectives. This journey towards a more inclusive future demands collective action, and we invite you to join us in making a difference. Together, let's strive to create a world where everyone feels empowered to succeed and contribute their unique talents.

NUS MBA CSC Club's Lunar New Year Event to welcome the Year of the Dragon

By Min Thaw Hut

The CSC club hosted the Lunar New Year event on February 17, marking the joyous commencement of the Year of the Dragon. Recognized as the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, this culturally significant occasion is celebrated with enthusiasm by various East Asian communities, including the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean cultures. The event proved to be a delightful and enriching cultural experience, drawing a substantial turnout from our cohort, esteemed professors, families, exchange students, and MBA students from NTU.

Among the captivating highlights of the event was the Lo Hei tradition, a captivating ritual involving the tossing of salad to usher in prosperity for the New Year. The festivities not only featured delectable Chinese and Vietnamese cuisine but also included an exciting lucky draw towards the end, offering participants the chance to win fabulous prizes.



Lo Hei Festival in action: our fellow classmates look thrilled as they toss the salad to welcome prosperity and success into this current year

Beyond the culinary delights and festive activities, the event served as a unifying platform, bringing together individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds for a truly wholesome experience. For a visual journey through the vibrant moments of CSC's Lunar New Year event, check out the photo highlights below, allowing you to either relive or discover the enchanting happenings of this cultural celebration.



Family fun:
Riyas brings his family so they can join the fun of the lunar new year.

A time of fun and laughter as our fellow classmates exchange jokes and banter





....A beautiful moment as Ken and his lovely daughter enjoy their CNY snacks



Our three Vietnamese classmates (Grace, Amy, and Jade) pose in front of the Tet Viet sign. Tet Viet is the Vietnamese term for the Lunar New Year and is the most significant and celebrated festival in Vietnamese culture.



NUS MBA Sandbox Club & Toastmasters Club of Singapore: Make an Impact

By Dhruv Madan Gopal

The NUS MBA Sandbox Club teamed up with the Toastmaster's Club of Singapore to hold an amazing workshop on making an impact and becoming exceptional speakers and leaders. Led by three powerhouse speakers - *Life coach and Master Storyteller Irina Iashvili, transformational life coach and public speaker Antonia Varbanova and Public Speaking champion Adeline Ng*, the session was engaging, entertaining and indeed made an impact.

As someone who is usually quite nervous before any presentations, I was curious to see what I could get from out of this workshop. I found it very helpful and as advertised, it did Make an Impact. The speakers shared some useful techniques not just for speeches but also for interviews or networking events. A few brave souls also volunteered to be put on the spot and practically apply the techniques. The feedback was also provided in a prompt and constructive manner.



My takeaways from this session

1. **Facts tell, stories sell.** Rather than just narrating the facts, putting them across as a story makes it more engaging and thus impactful.
2. **Make your opening count.** The right opening captures the audience and sets the tone for the rest of the speech.
3. **Structure matters.** A well-structured speech has multiple components and flows well.
4. **Body language and vocal variety** are as important as the content. How you stand, how you move and how you speak enhance the quality of your speech.
5. **Use humor effectively.** I loved how Adeline introduced herself as Adeline from Bedok given the fact that the other speakers were from Georgia and Bulgaria. It was a lighthearted moment but one that I still remember.

I also liked the personal touch that each speaker brought to the session. They each shared what got them into Toastmasters and how it has helped them in their respective paths. Sessions like this are about more than just public speaking. It gives us all a platform to connect, share and learn. Kudos to both the Toastmasters Club of Singapore and our wonderful Sandbox club for making this session happen. Cheers to many more such events in the future.



NUS MBA Marketing Club: A Pragmatist's Guide to Sales Strategy and Planning

By Liyu Fu

Madhura Kulkarni's session titled **A Pragmatist's Guide to Sales Strategy and Planning**, delivered at the NUS MBA Marketing Club event, was a deep dive into the essential elements of developing and executing effective sales strategies in today's complex and rapidly changing business environment. Kulkarni, with her extensive experience in GTM (Go-To-Market) & StratOps at LinkedIn, brought unique insights into how businesses can align their sales strategies with broader organizational goals and market dynamics.

The presentation began with an overview of the current market landscape, emphasizing the need for agility and innovation in sales strategies. She stressed the importance of understanding customer needs and market trends as a foundation for any successful sales plan. She also argued that a pragmatic approach to sales involves a combination of strategic planning, operational efficiency, and the effective use of technology to streamline sales processes and improve customer engagement.

Kulkarni also discussed the importance of aligning sales strategies with the overall business objectives. She emphasized that sales teams should work closely with other departments, such as marketing and product development, to ensure a cohesive approach to market penetration and customer acquisition. Collaboration across teams helps in creating a unified customer experience and maximizes the impact of sales efforts.



In the Q&A session that followed, Kulkarni addressed specific challenges faced by sales teams, offering advice on overcoming common obstacles such as market saturation, competition, and customer retention. She advocated for a customer-centric approach, suggesting that understanding and meeting customer needs is paramount to achieving long-term sales success.

In conclusion, Madhura Kulkarni's presentation provided a comprehensive guide to developing and implementing effective sales strategies. Her emphasis on pragmatic planning, operational excellence, and continuous adaptation offered valuable insights for sales professionals looking to navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape. The session was not only informative but also inspirational, motivating attendees to pursue excellence in their sales endeavours with a strategic, data-driven, and customer-focused approach.



Congratulations to our 3 most engaged participants **Taha, Margaret and Rana** who received free 6 months' LinkedIn Premium Subscriptions (personally sponsored by our esteemed speaker) for asking great questions and being very enthusiastic about Sales Strategy!



Baby Romper Giveaway



In case you didn't know, there is a **MBA baby romper giveaway!** Perfect for our littlest MBA enthusiast aged 6 to 12 months!
Redeem a baby romper for your little one via this link [here](#)

Already redeemed your romper? Submit photograph of your little one(s) in the baby romper by emailing the MBA Programmes Office (mba_programmes@nus.edu.sg), and be featured in the ECHOES Newsletter!

This giveaway is open to all MBAs and MBA Alumni.



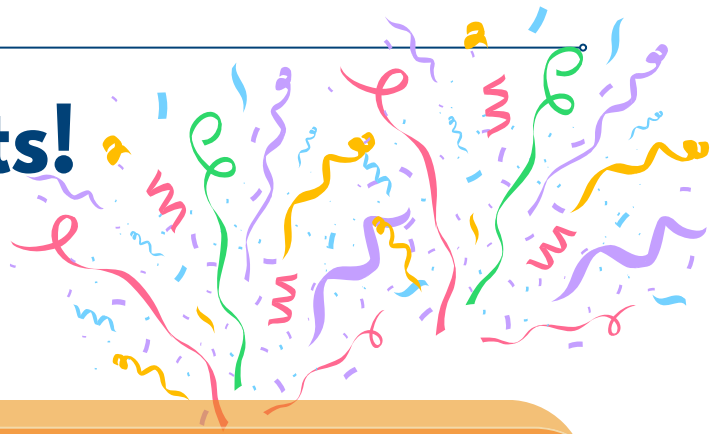
Amy Yao (2023PT)'s daughter:
Baby Ava





Birthday Shoutouts!

March MBAers



Happy Birthday To



EUFRASIA MARLITA KURNIAWAN
GUPTA SAMEER RAJ
KEH CHEE TAT
LEE WEI XUN ENRIQUE
MANUDATTA MURALIDHARA
MARGARET CHRISTIANY
ONG SHENG YUAN
RISHABH JAIN
SNG WEE HONG
XU YITENG JERVIS
YUYI DING
ZAMIR ALYKHAN HABIB
ZHANG XIAOZHENG
ZHANG SHAOGONG
CHENG KONG LEONG
HU RUOBING
XIN XIAN
WANG YIFAN

TAKETOMO KIKUCHI
CHAN YUEN YING
LEE HO YIN
PHANTILA JINDASATAPORN
SATISH NAGINENI
WANG LINGFENG
SIANGHIO ED MARTIN ASUNCION
TILLA MARTINA CAVENG
YITING LIANG
KOH SHU HUI LISA
TAN TSE TENG TRENDY
YANG SHAOMU
AGARWAL SANSHRAY
JOHANES ILIADI
CAI JINGFENG
LOH JIA XI
DHEA MARIESTA CHANJAYA
SUBBIAHAN PALANIKUMAR
PRADEEPKUMAR

