



Australian School of Business

Synergy Protection Agency Scholarship

Never Stand Still

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Joseph Merhi MBA (Exec) Class of 2011 has, through his firm Synergy Protection Agency, established a new Scholarship for students completing the Strategic Management Year (SMY) as part of the AGSM MBA Program. The \$4000 Scholarship will assist a student in need complete the final year of their MBA.

Professor Chris Styles, Deputy Dean and Director AGSM said:

“The AGSM MBA program has a high impact on our students and their careers. The experience and learnings of the MBA culminate in the final Strategic Management Year which is truly transformational. By ensuring talented students complete their SMY year studies, this scholarship makes a powerful difference to the lives of our MBA students and in turn, the organisations and communities in which they work.”



Joseph explains his motivations for establishing this Scholarship and reflects on his experience of the AGSM MBA Program:

Throughout my executive MBA, I met a number of people that chose not to go on and complete the SMY due to the cost. Some of these people became and remain my friends. Having been fortunate enough to have completed the SMY myself and experience the value derived from it, I felt compelled to help those less fortunate in some way to have the same opportunity.

I have longed lived by some wise words my late father shared with me, “Son, we learn something new everyday, and we die stupid”. I decided to study the MBA program at AGSM because I felt that there was great value in it. Whilst some in my inner circle questioned why, as a CEO of my own successful medium sized firm, would I contemplate such a seemingly torturous adventure! Thankfully, I see the world through a different prism - my view was that if big corporations valued people with an MBA and consequently paid them more, then surely the MBA would provide some value to me and my firm. In fact, our firm is currently completely funding an AGSM MBA (Executive) program for one of our senior executives.

Studying the MBA with a family of three children certainly comes with its challenges. However, being self employed and without the need to climb the ‘corporate ladder’, there was no urgency to finish the MBA quickly, as others often aim to. This allowed me to choose subjects that I could see would benefit my firm sooner and then set out to complete them at a pace that allowed some life balance. The SMY on the other hand, which must be completed within one year, was in itself demanding, but nonetheless rewarding and extremely enjoyable – we had a lot of fun notwithstanding the heat of battle that sometimes ensued!

I think the true value of an MBA, particularly a good one, is that it provides a broad but a wholesome and firm understanding of all the essential aspects of a business, its life cycle and the ecosystem in which it exists. Whilst there were not many ‘light bulb’ moments for me throughout the course, the most powerful learning for me was how to bring all the aspects of a business together in the most effective way to achieve synergy.