At seven, Bryan Loo was already a successful entrepreneur. Then in Class One at primary school in Perlis, Malaysia, he would create comic books and rent them out to his classmates for fifty cents a go.

“That's how I earned my pocket money,” says Loo, 28, founder and CEO of Chatime Malaysia, a successful outpost of the famous Taiwanese “bubble tea” company.

Loo opened his first store in 2010 and now has more than 110 outlets in some of Malaysia’s most upmarket shopping malls.

**Award for his business**

It’s a business success story that has landed him as the winner for Malaysia’s Ernst & Young “young entrepreneur of the year” award.

Making tea-drinking fashionable in Malaysia was a challenge, he explains.

People associated “bubble tea” or “pearl milk” tea -- a blend of tea, syrup, tapioca pearls, fruit and milk -- with night-market stalls. Hip and health-conscious young people drank coffee.

So he had to convince sceptical shopping mall owners that a Chatime outlet would attract the same kind of customers as a Starbucks.

Running a business had been Loo's dream right through school. Yet, when it was time for university, he chose a science course.

**Science a valuable addition**

“I felt I already knew a lot about business from watching my parents in their engineering business,” he says. He wanted university to offer him something new.

He had always been interested in biology and how human and animal bodies actually work.

So he did a major in biotechnology, returning to Malaysia and working as a sales executive for StemLife, a stem cell biotech company which “banked” newborns’ umbilical cord blood for future use.

After two years selling someone else’s product, Loo wanted to strike out on his own. His scientific training still helps in business, particularly with critical thinking, he says, while it’s especially relevant to the company's research and development.

**Bryan Loo**

Course graduated from: BSc majoring in biotechnology

Year of graduation: 2007

Job: CEO of Malaysian lifestyle tea company Chatime

Career: Account executive with Malaysian biotech company StemLife, then set about planning his own business

Reflection: “Science can enhance the creativity in anyone. It’s about critical thinking and new ideas.”

“The interest that you apply to your study will eventually reflect back to your business.”

“This means experimenting with new flavours and testing if they match local taste -- or the tastes of people from different age groups. It’s a methodology of ingredients. We also have raw materials -- tea leaves, fruits, toppings -- coming in from all over the world and they have to be tested.”

Loo also advises would-be entrepreneurs to study the topics that intrigue them.

“The interest that you apply to your study will eventually reflect back into your business.”

**Tell us your story and get involved**

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