

# THE UNTOLD STORY

MUIC ALUMNI | CHAPTER 3

ABOUT VORAVUDH

GET TO KNOW HIM

A portrait of a man with short dark hair, wearing glasses and a blue and white plaid blazer over a white shirt. He is smiling and standing against a yellow background. The portrait is framed by a white border.

VORAVUDH VARIKARN

(VUDH)

MUIC Class of 2000

Major: Business Administration

Position: Chief Executive Officer at Direct Asia (Thailand)

THE JOURNEY OF MR. NICE GUY



## THE UNTOLD STORY - MUIC ALUMNI #3

**MR. VORAVUDH  
VARIKARN**

*MUIC Class of 2000*

*Major: Business  
Administration*

# ABOUT

Voravudh Varikarn (Vudh)

I am CEO of Direct Asia. Direct Asia is the first digital car insurance broker in Thailand. What makes Direct Asia unique is we offer the personalized base pricing which is not the case in Thailand going back eight years ago. As the company CEO, I set the strategy for the business and ensure we get there as planned. It sounds simple and it is fun when we get there. 😊

My career highlights have been in two main sectors, finance and tech. What have taken me this far are grit and resilience.

What will take us far is

“doing something others can’t or won’t.”

- VUDH -



## WORK

Chief Executive Officer  
at Direct Asia (Thailand)



## BACK IN 2000,

Back in 2000, I was 21 and quite sure that I had no clue what work I wanted to do. I was taught and told to live a happy life and enjoy what you do ("chill chill, sabai sabai"). I realized four years after I had started working that this kind of life wouldn't be worth living. I recalled I was then working at GE and I felt the pressure of not getting anywhere in my career. I recalled asking two senior members back then to coach / mentor me (K. Teeravuth who is currently CEO of Cigna and K. Nayanee who is currently CEO of Krungsri Consumer). That might have been the turning point of my career.

Later, I attended many trainings and I read a lot of self-improvement books and I started planning a few key milestones by breaking my career into four different phases where each phase lasts 5 years.

- Phase 1: Learn Leadership from GE (2006-2011)
- Phase 2: Utilize that into something new (e-commerce with ensogo back in 2011-2014)
- Phase 3: Getting the right exposure (Go inter with Casino Group/ C Discount France 2014 - now)
- Phase 4: Recycling Phase 3 in a different industry



I am pretty much in Phase 4 and I am in a different industry from e-commerce -> e-career improvement with JobsDB -> Insuretech with Direct Asia. Question is, when do we know that we are ready for the next phase? The simple answer is when all the KPI/ OKRs are met and we manage to identify the successor of the business.

Highlight: Most of the great people back in 2010 wouldn't move to tech just like when Internet was in 2000, 2010 with e-commerce, 2020 with the hype of digital money.

# WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER GRADUATION? HOW DID YOU MAP YOUR CAREER?







## WHAT INTERESTED YOU ABOUT E-COMMERCE?

Moving sideways and then move up...e-commerce is open 24-7, e-commerce doesn't pay utility, e-commerce cut middle man (that was my original thought). Back then, there was only Talad Rakuten, Deal DD, Groupon and Ensogo. There were no Lazada, Shopee and JD.

I want to be honest with all of MUIC students and alumni and true to myself. I won't be a rock star by sticking to my career at GE. There are so many great talents back then. I was far from great. I remembered I told the CEO of GE Capital (K. Philip Tan) that with the tech and online, I can become greater than those who knows only finance and no tech. I spent four years learning e-business and I believe it was a good decision (in terms of learning).

# CULTURE SHOCK AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT?

**There is no such thing as culture shock. Every industry and company are special and unique on their own. I want to stress the essence of:**

- Learning: Learn from the interview, learn about the expectations, learn more about the predecessor
- Adapt: Know what are the do's and don't's and find ways to make effective use of resources (people and tech)
- Deliver: As a CEO, everything is on you. The whole company rises and falls because of the leader

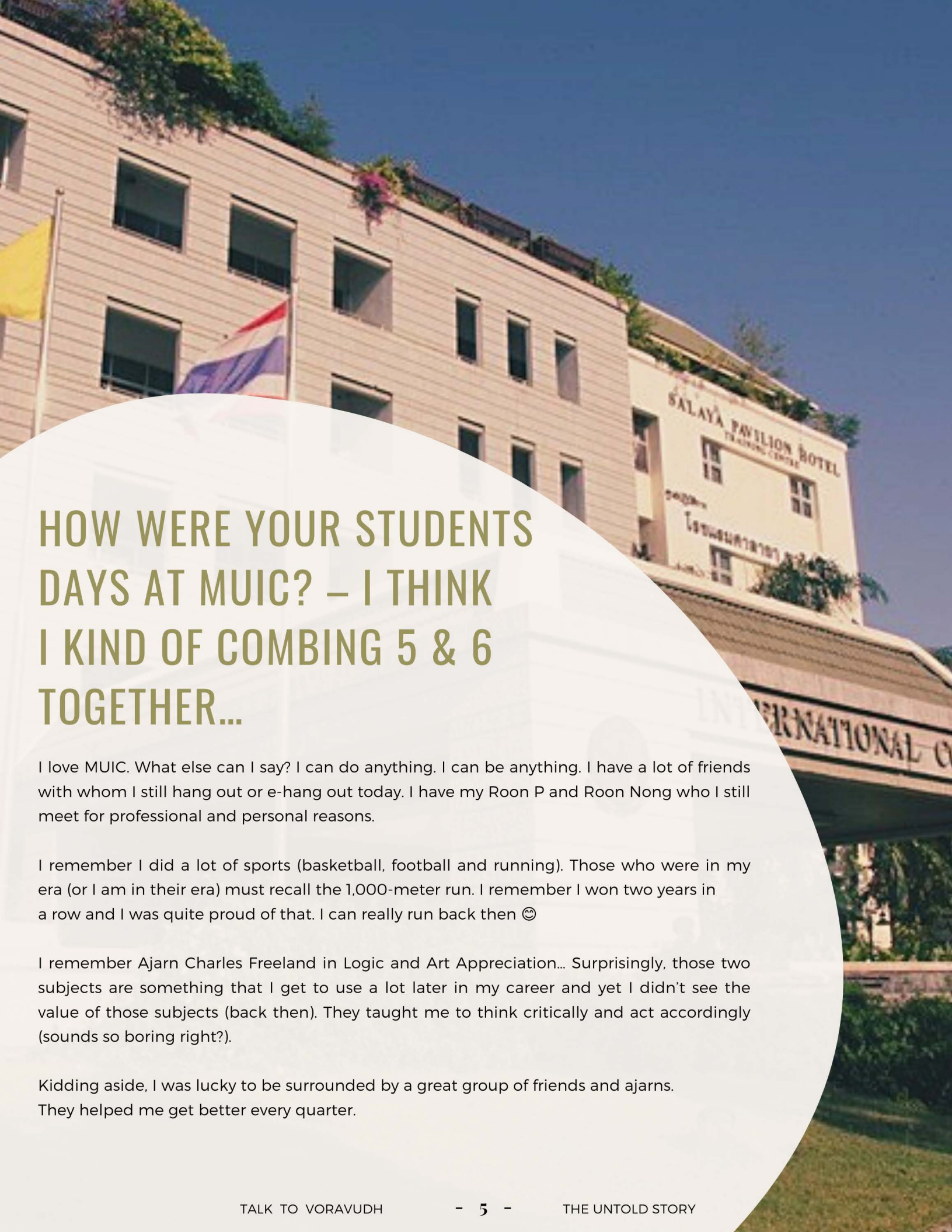


**Voravudh Varikarn**

MUIC Class of 2000







## HOW WERE YOUR STUDENTS DAYS AT MUIC? – I THINK I KIND OF COMBING 5 & 6 TOGETHER...

I love MUIC. What else can I say? I can do anything. I can be anything. I have a lot of friends with whom I still hang out or e-hang out today. I have my Roon P and Roon Nong who I still meet for professional and personal reasons.

I remember I did a lot of sports (basketball, football and running). Those who were in my era (or I am in their era) must recall the 1,000-meter run. I remember I won two years in a row and I was quite proud of that. I can really run back then 😊

I remember Ajarn Charles Freeland in Logic and Art Appreciation... Surprisingly, those two subjects are something that I get to use a lot later in my career and yet I didn't see the value of those subjects (back then). They taught me to think critically and act accordingly (sounds so boring right?).

Kidding aside, I was lucky to be surrounded by a great group of friends and ajarns. They helped me get better every quarter.

# WHAT DO I VALUE THE MOST?



Humility. It is not important who you are, what position you hold. It is nice to be important, but It is more important to be nice. At MUIC, I learned this. In the early days of my career I was a “yes sayer.” I do anything—any job—as long as I learn something new. Later, I started to lead and I know what it is like to be left out and I try to keep (my team mates) inside the circle and get them involved (inclusiveness, this is part of GE Value too 😊).

Remarks:

This was also when the problem started when I worked in 2000. I was too nice. I compromised relationship. Because I want to be nice. In the workplace, we develop professional relationships which is not the same as friendship in school. The ability to get the job done is important. So, to be nice in the workplace is to get the job done and not be easy going and let the goal slip away.

## TIPS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

I want everyone who reads this article to be able to travel through time and have their end goal in mind (combination of Avenger End Game and The Classic Lesson we learn in 7 Habits).

- o Travel Time: To see what the future is like. What is needed for now? Then, position yourself currently for now so that you are in a better position in the future.

- o Begin with the end in mind: Similar to what I just mentioned earlier but really to understand what you want in life, how to get there, where you are now.

Time is the most important resource in the world and you would only want to spend it wisely.



MOTTO:

*Do something  
others can't.*



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Special thanks to Mr. Charles Freeland and P' Sri (Charoonsri) who taught me logic and a strong sense of ownership and urgency to me, respectively. 🙏