**6. Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.**

It started with cereal. Specifically, a video about cereal, explaining how Tony the Tiger’s eyes would point downwards to make direct eye contact with kids, his target market. This was my introduction to marketing. A 15-second clip had me questioning my every single purchase—was it really my decision or had I fallen for a marketing ploy?

Since then, the compelling lectures my business teacher gave us started to feel insufficient. Learning about Maslow and Herzberg was interesting, but the theory felt baseless with nowhere to apply it.

Not long after, I signed up for NUS Business Camp. My main project was to create a disruptive business model, something I had never done before. I learned to do basic market research, identifying target markets and problems that needed solutions. Eventually, I came up with the idea for an app called Green Scheme, a multipurpose app like Uber that only provides transport with electric vehicles and focuses on selling goods from ethical and small businesses. The professors complimented our creativity and admired how I tried to improve on something that was widely used today, instead of creating something entirely new. I left Singapore feeling slightly more accomplished; carrying not only the know-how to develop a business model, but also knowledge from lecturers on how the business landscape would look like in the future.

Later, I signed up for the national PETRA Business Accounting Competition, where the challenge was to make a profitable business that would also help the environment. This time, however, I had to have a detailed SWOT analysis, financial, marketing and production plans, and calculate the yearly expenses and return of investment of the company I coined as BAYWATCH. It was a rewarding challenge that required a degree of critical thinking I never did before. We came in third, and one of the professors offered to put BAYWATCH in their idea bank, where it would be available for funding by investors.

These experiences were just a taste of what starting an actual company would be like, but it was clear that this was what I wanted to do. Turning an idea into a profitable business in a way that satisfies customers and employees, calculating costs and finding the right production and marketing methods, this excites me.

It started with cereal, but who knows how it’ll end?