

Land of Opportunity Networks Social Niche

Geng Chunya (MPhil Physics and Materials Sciences 2004)

Geng Chunya is a film buff and his favourite movie is *Comrades, Almost a Love Story*. Set in the 1980s, the runaway success starring Maggie Cheung and Leon Lai revolves around two mainlanders who migrate to Hong Kong to make a living and end up falling in love. Chunya, an IT professional, envisions that in a contemporary version, instead of working at a fast food shop, the protagonists would work at investment banks and law firms.

"The movie reflects the challenges we faced – language, career and love," says the native of Anhui who pursued his Masters degree at the Department of Physics and Materials Science in 2004 after graduating from Tsinghua University. "But mainland students these days have more choices."

On graduation, the young entrepreneur used HK government funding to help start up his IT business at the Hong Kong Science Park. The 30-year-old wunderkind is now the CEO of social networking company EastSpider.

His company is pioneering provision of social networking services, maintaining databases and organising activities for a broad spectrum of clientele ranging from schools to non-profit organisations and corporations. Within six years, his company has grown from a one-man start-up to now supporting 18 staff members. He is currently planning to set up an office in Beijing to complement the Hong Kong and Shenzhen ones.



To Chunya, Hong Kong is a land of opportunities, especially for his business. "Hong Kong is a social networking-oriented community. Many companies are expanding business on the mainland. There is a growing demand for developing systems to maintain professional connections and networks across cities," he says.

He acknowledges that his two-year studies at CityU paved the way for his promising career. "I'm grateful to the nurture of my professors at CityU," Chunya says. "They gave me advice to turn my ideas into a career."

While attending CityU, he grabbed the opportunity to join various IT and business competitions. His proud resumé includes being the champion in the "YDC Entrepreneurs Challenge", a business competition organised by the Young Entrepreneurs Development Council in collaboration with Stanford University. Through the competitions, he met other like-minded mainland students who have become his lifelong friends.

Apart from the accomplishments in his career, Chunya is also passionate about helping fellow mainland graduates. Being the President of the Hong Kong Association of Mainland Graduates, he steered his group to provide networking opportunities and career advice for fellow mainland graduates. He is also an Alumni Ambassador of CityU and has recently shared his experiences with fresh graduates.

Life never lacks challenges. But Chunya doesn't let the hurdles let him down. "Challenge is never a problem. It's your attitude and action that count."

Chunya's own version of *Comrades, Almost a Love Story* will surely deserve a happy ending. **B**

Try the quiz:

How many graduates from CityU are now residing in mainland China?

- a. Less than 500
- b. Around 1,000
- c. Over 1,500



Answer: c