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FEMPRENEUR

TLC x Fempreneurs Series: Amanda Koo (eClarity)



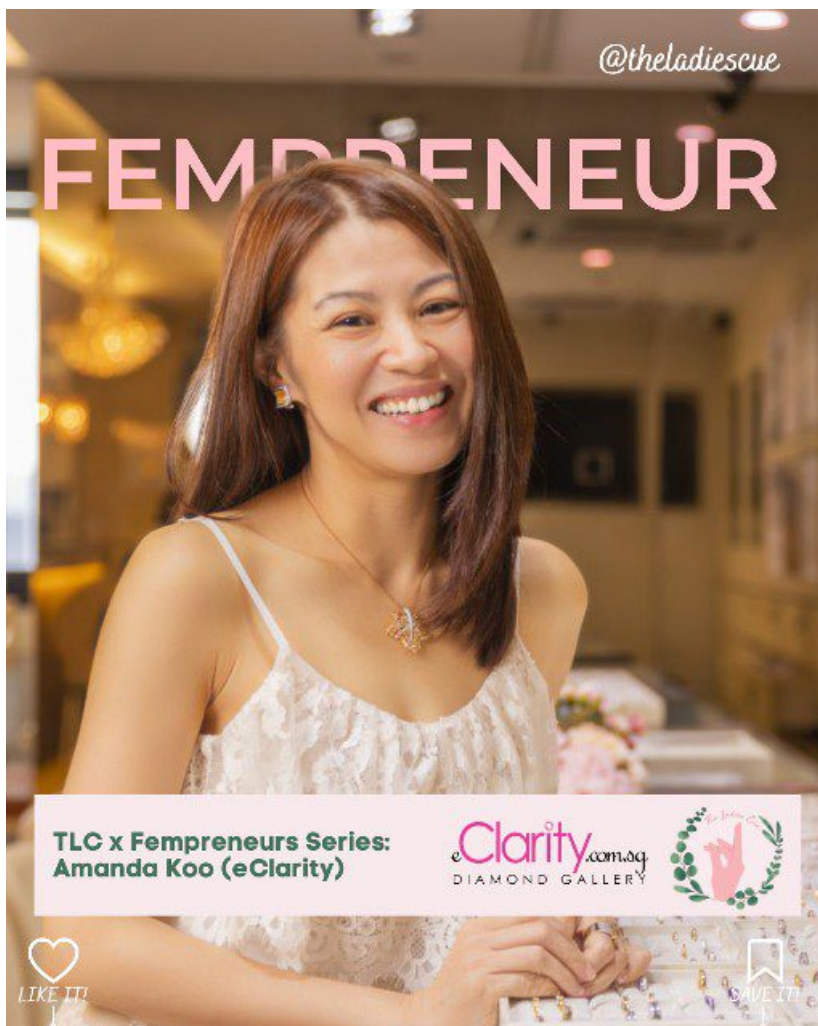
BY THE LADIES CUE

Fempreneur

In this special column called the **“TLC x Fempreneurs Series”**, we will be featuring inspiring Female Entrepreneurs (Fempreneurs) in short. You will be able to have a sneak peek at their mindsets and their daily habits.

Believe in the power of community. On some days when you feel big goals are impossible, or when you feel like giving up, you need to lean on your like-minded community. You can even “borrow” motivation, and in turn “return” with your own inspiring stories to pay it forward.

Meet Amanda Koo (eClarity)



TLC x Fempreneurs Series: Amanda Koo (eClarity)

Tell us a little about yourself. What is your business/brand about?

Amanda Koo, I am a mother of 3 teenagers, a graduate from NUS Computer Science, GIA Gemologist with a Monash Master's in Counselling, and the founder of eClarity.

I started eClarity in 2005 with SG\$80k I saved from working for Citibank and M1, in Shaw Centre, after selling jewellery on eBay and meeting buyers at Shaw Centre Macdonald's for a year. We were the first to offer bespoke wedding band experience and real-time diamond database.

eClarity is now an award-winning bespoke jewellery brand. Featuring over 20,000 GIA certified natural diamonds and IGI certified labgrown diamonds, eClarity has crafted more than 5000 masterpieces of customised jewellery.

eClarity now has 2 sub-brands, namely BA.sg, offering a large online inventory of diamonds, and The Sample Line, offering monthly and yearly jewellery as well as luxury bag rental subscriptions. All of which are incorporated into our global Best Price Challenge that aims to match the price of diamonds customers can find worldwide, to provide the best value and prices guaranteed for their diamonds. We also specialized in wedding bands, baby push gift and anniversary gift customisations, heirloom repurposing and tailored engravings using high technology of laser or personalized handwriting.

What got you started on your business?

Growing up, I have always wanted to start my own business since young. My earliest memory of sales was when I drew on monopoly cards or cardboard papers and sold them in school to my peers. I was also very interested in crafts since young. As a frugal person, my whole room was also filled with handmade crafts – as a teenager, I would even sew curtains, and stick boxes together to form shelves and pen holders. Then, as I grew older, it was almost by default internally, that while pursuing my academic interests, I was involved in a lot of side hustles like selling nail stickers from Japan, nail polish from New York and Manuka Honey from Australia.

I was also selling clothes and crafts at Tanglin Mall's flea markets, and Nokia phone covers from Malaysia. On top of that, when I started there wasn't any mainstream customisation of wedding bands and engagement rings before 2005. Everyone was wearing the same designs and customisation was understood as copying designs from magazines. Plus, the prices of diamonds were high, and there was only one platform that sold diamonds online, a US company at that. That's when I realised that there was a gap in the market and my purpose was to revolutionise the jewellery market with my knowledge and expertise. When you put this passion for sales, and a personality for seeking new ideas and experiences together, starting a business seemed to be the most natural thing to do.

Before you started on your business, what did you do on a full-time basis?

While pursuing my degree at NUS, I worked as an intern at Citibank, and then part-time later in year 3. I then went on to M1 as a Project Manager of Product Development for another 3.5 years. That was where I managed cross-departmental efforts from marketing, engineers, systems, vendors, customer service, and finance. Facilitating the teams of specialized experts, I led the launch of RingTone downloads, SMS Chats, WAP services, and other value-added services.



What were some difficulties you faced in your life and how did you overcome them?

Growing up, my parents were busy setting up their own goldsmith businesses which required their time from 10AM to 10PM. I was either at home alone with an aunty, or in the shop. I have also lost 2 brothers to pregnancy deficiency-related health problems, and followed by traumatic robbery and kidnapping experiences.

At the age of 13, I was sent to Singapore to pursue study alone. Living alone without family, friends and help, I grew up overnight and learnt to be responsible for myself.

When I finally graduated from NUS, worked for corporate for 3.5 years and saved enough to start a small business, I also just became pregnant. At the delivery suite, I was anxious to apologize to my customers who were upset by my late response, and appointments that needed rescheduled. The nurses had to remind me a few times to put my phone away, as they were going to insert tubes into me.

I had 7 days of confinement and went straight back to work after. Running a business right after giving birth to and taking care of 3 lovely boys is not only challenging, but it was also heart-breaking. I was suffering from chronic migraines, and going through marital problems, when my mum passed away from a selective surgery. There were moments when I doubt myself.

I think right from the start, it is a life goal to live a full life that drives me. As I mature up, the drive is further empowered by my life purpose, which is to inspire and provide.



eClarity Jewellery

What excites you most about your industry?

How it empowers others to love and feel beautiful and sophisticated.

What is your vision / personal motto?

To shine, love, provide. To inspire and empower others to pursue happiness and health.

Do you have any word of advice for other ladies who are starting their business/ starting to pursue their dream?

Visualise your end game in life, then plan the path towards it. Don't do it the other way round and end up on the wrong wall.

What have you learnt recently that you hope the other ladies can take back?

"Make your home more fun than outside" I've heard of this phrase recently and it stuck with me, reminding me how I should go about bringing up my teenage sons. My sons and I have staycations at my friends' place/and vice versa on Saturdays. I drive my mini cooper and explores parts of Malaysia and Singapore while playing tunes on Spotify. And I now have a TikTok account which probably has more followers than them!

If we were to expand this theory and apply it to the business, it also means making your company more "fun" to be in for your staff and customers. Make your relationship more "fun" than what's being offered outside.

How do you think you can help ladies to feel confident and empowered?

Keep yourself in your best physique that you can maintain and feel comfortable with it. I used to be weighing between 59kg-82kg (my height is 161cm). After a health scare, I slowly reduced my weight slowly to 48kg through walking, omitting sweet beverage.

Secondly, be involved in a cause, an activity, a business, or a vision, that you genuinely care about, and be as good at it as you can.



Children of Fempreneur Amanda Koo

What is one thing you are grateful for?

I am grateful that I have the wisdom of a 45-year-old, looks of a 35-year-old, the energy of a 25-year-old, and 3 lovely boys with an average age of 15-year-old.

What do you do in your free time as self-care? How do you unwind?

Dancing, listening to audio books, singing and chatting with my loved ones.



eClarity Brand Logo

Let us know more about what you do!

Treasure true love.

eClarity is created with love, to craft love momentos, and celebrate love. Founded by an NUS graduate and GIA Gemologist, eClarity is an award-winning jeweller specialising in bespoke jewellery, and a leader in trends and environmentalism. It offers 20,000 certified natural/ lab-grown diamonds, and diamond workshops/webinars. Enquire more at 98331220.

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