

3.19 Case Study of Thailand¹

3.19.1 Profile of a Woman Entrepreneur



Woman Entrepreneur: Mrs. Sirinut Chimplee Source: <https://www.ccdkm.org>

The ‘Thai Fighting Fish Online’ is one of the interesting, popular and successful SMEs in Thailand led by Mrs. Sirinut Chimplee. She is from Muang district, Nakhon Pathom province, the outskirts of Bangkok. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration from Sripatum University. She has gained lots of innovation awards, and some of the latest ones include the National Outstanding Farmer Award in 2015 in the category of ‘ornamental fish and aquatic plants’ and the National Smart Young Women Entrepreneurs in 2017. She is the first startup or SME who uses ICT as a main tool to facilitate her startup business. She is the first Thai entrepreneur who exports the LIVE Thai fighting fish abroad.

“I can do this. I sell my fighting fish online to global because I learned from the other global cases. I keep trying till possible and finally win...”.

“Without ICTs, I am quite sure that such a miracle opportunity and income cannot happen to my life, my family as well as my community”.

¹ This case study was conducted by Kamolrat Intaratat, Director, The Research Center of Communication and Development Knowledge Management (CCDKM), Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand.



National Smart Young Woman Entrepreneur Award: Mrs. Sirinut Chimplee Source: www.sirinutbettafarm.com

In 1999, after the ASEAN economic crisis in 1997 after her graduation Mrs. Chimplee came back home because of no job to do in Bangkok. She started to help her family business in a fish farm in “the ornamental fish farm” category. It was just a small family business which focused on only breeding and selling the fighting fish to all the middlemen who came to buy fish from her family with a small pay. She finally got some new ideas to see more market chains instead of only breeding and selling the fighting fish at home. She studied very hard on her own from the internet and also visited various groups of customers to see their real situation, real demands and real problems. Then she got back to develop her own farm with her family, because she found lots of new potential and creative ways to overcome existing challenges and to grow business.

Along the way, Mrs. Chimplee also joined many relevant trainings or meetings and had direct contacts with relevant agencies, partners, and academic institutes, including the Faculty of Business Management of Rajabhat Nakornpratom local university. In particular, she received assistance from the academic institutes as regards the ways of breeding, which is the most important success factor in the ornamental fish business. She said,

“We must select only the best breeder very carefully. Then our fish will keep developing its own breeds. We always can learn to compare our fish with the other breeds either local or global. The easiest way is to study from the internet besides from the physical trail. Then finally, we apply the method nto our own local breeding”.

Mrs. Chimplee joined the Ornamental Fish Association of Thailand and became a member of many of the potential Fish Clubs at different levels. These efforts helped her gradually develop a small farm into a more professional farm along with other professional farms and agencies.



Breeding and database Source: www.sirinutbettafarm.com

3.19.2 Profile of a Company

- Name: Sirinut Betta Farm (Local Thai Fighting Fish Farm)
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Sirinut Betta Farm, Thailand with its 18 years (since 1999)

Source: www.sirinutbettafarm.com



One of the Signature Breeds from Sirinut Betta Farm

Source: www.sirinutbettafarm.com

“The fish breeder is considered to be one among the stable and proud career. If we continue our learning and developing ourselves all the time, ICT can facilitate all...not only learning but also advertising, PR and marketing”



National Smart Women Entrepreneur Award Winner, 2017

Source: www.sirinutbettafarm.com

If the farmers or the breeders do not keep learning and developing themselves it will be quite tough because the breeding is very sensitive with all kinds of contexts. ICT, especially internet, is very important and affordable tool to help in all aspects because without the internet, it would be very difficult to learn any update and even learn from each other. Besides, the internet can easily help in doing all kinds of PR activities especially among all the social media. Mr. importantly, Ms. Chimplee has been using internet for her self-studies especially from all kinds of e-handbooks, as well as training (both physical and e-training) about Online Marketing, the Website Marketing, the Social Media Marketing, PR, and advertising.

“Local Fighting Fish Farm actively uses ICT to facilitate all operational system both local and global market”.

“Ornamental fish and aquatic plants is like a fashion, so we need to keep updating all the times, and in the process ICT is really the right tool”.

Currently Ms. Chimpee is the owner of one of the famous fish farms in the Central region of Thailand. Her fish farm is continuously growing to the extent that it currently has 500 breeding wells with more than one hundred thousand ornamental fishes, managed by herself and her family. In addition, many community members join the farm to help develop this business to the world known.

“My farm keeps growing quite fast because we try to keep learning all the time mostly from the internet”.

Ms. Chimplee and her farm gained all levels of recognition from local to global for nearly 2 decades till currently. Her startup business that she has been running with commitment and confidence is not a benefit only for herself but a benefit for her local community and also for the whole Thai nation.

“At the first start, people thought that I am crazy because I am the only woman with least experiences in this field and especially my education background is not relevant n to this field. But I tried to keep studying by myself from all kinds of learning sources both online and offline. Meanwhile, Internet is always alongside with me...along with my farm development”.

She admits that, in the early years, she experienced lots of trials and errors because she never had any knowledge and skills in this field, so she spent several years to test and try all the breeding on her own. Her business started with only 5 to 10 pairs of fish breeding but then gradually increased to the extent that it gained professional recognition locally and globally.

3.19.3 Findings

3.19.3.1 Success Factors

Use of ICT

“One of my great tools for this amazing success is the internet. Without the internet, it must be very difficult for me to do well and grow fast like currently...”

“Without the internet, I am not sure that all the current success of my farm can happen”



Awards from All Levels

Source: www.sirinutbettafarm.com

At the beginning, Ms. Chimplee used only the simple internet to seek all kinds of relevant information especially about the best breeder both from local and international markets, but then she moved on to learn about the ways to develop her farm breeding and farm management skills.

“ICT as one among the main tools, both directly and indirectly in the development process of my fish business to be more stable, competitive and professional .”

In 2013, her fighting fish was sent to show and join in Australia for a global contest among the other famous farms from all over the world, and till currently, her fighting fish farm is invited to join all levels of events from international, national, and local.

“Currently, our small farm has won more than 60 beautiful fish award categories from all levels, from local to global, and it made our small farm gain more and more reputation”.

ICT is one of the most important success tools in all kinds of visibility and applicable. It helped her to start up a business with her own small farm. She always takes all kinds of photo to show how beautiful of her new breeding fish to all sectors.

“In the fish market business and fashion, we need to use a very clear and bright photo sending back and forth via the internet channel, especially among all kinds of social media”.



Clear and Bright Photo is a Must
Source www.sirinutbettafarm.com

“ICT can help to create and maintain networks to lessen many kinds of burdens and costs. It can help to share and learn from each other, and most importantly, ICT is a powerful tool to enhance public visibility, marketing accessibility, visibility, and professional business management.”



Simple ICT Especially the Smart Phone is Enough

Source: www.sirinutbettafarm.com

Continuous R&D and Learning

Breeding lies at the heart of Fighting Fish farm business, so the continuous R&D as well as any kind of relevant learning is “*a Must*”. Apart from the breeding, other knowledge and skills about feeding, food, vitamin, logistics requirements, and regulations is “*a Must*” too. Thus, working with both academia institutes and other relevant professional institutes is always necessary.

Partnership Strategies with Relevant Stakeholders

All kinds of partnership with both local and international organizations is very essential for becoming a smart farm because establishing collaborative partnership with relevant stakeholders will help businesses to better acquire necessary knowledge, skills, PR and marketing strategies.

Policy Support

Apart from the partnership mechanism, policy supports is also another key success factor. The Smart Start Ups, the Smart Entrepreneurs under the national Digital Economy of Thailand: Thailand 4.0 policy is one of the key policies to support entrepreneurship.



The Smart Start Ups: Thailand 4.0 policy

Source: <https://www.bangkokbanksme.com/article/20121>

3.19.3.2 Challenges

Selling fish online is its first ever business in Thailand in the past 20 years back, so all kinds of regulations and procedure had to be tackled.

“I myself as well as some of my networks in this business know very little about any regulation, procedure, tax, etc. as well as some of the relevant sensitive issues about inter-culture of each foreign customers, etc. We need this kinds of to avoid any error or mistake”.

Lack of relevant skills and knowledge about breeding was another obstacle to deal with. Also, lack of fundamental knowledge about different cultures, particularly cultures of the countries which import the fighting fish, was a challenge because the “*Fighting Fish*” is one of the cultural symbols of the local and global fashion. For example, people in some of the Arabic countries believe that its radiant red color of the fish will bring all good lucks and happiness to the owner.

3.19.3.3 Policy Recommendations

The Entrepreneurship Academies Should Be Integrated into All Educational Levels and Systems

According to the relevant information of the women entrepreneurs, the age of women entrepreneurs is getting lower into younger ages. Many youths keep entering into the entrepreneur world even in their college or university years, so a policy should be established to integrate entrepreneurship education into all educational levels and systems.

“The young should be promoted at their early age to be the smart entrepreneurs because they are born as the digital native...they are very fast learners”

Positive Policy for the Entrepreneurs

Because most of the entrepreneurs, especially the Start Ups, generally begin their business at a young age, most of their businesses are small-scale in nature (86.3% having from 1-9 employees). So, the support from relevant policies should be provided such as the tax system, the loan with free/ least interest, and all kinds of incentive.

“No doubt about the ICT skills among the young Start Ups, but for the policy support is very important for them”.

The Stable and Affordable Internet Networks and Tools

Many research studies found that one of the main tools for business success is the internet. So, a policy should be established to provide the possible and enabling internet system for people. Besides, ICT literacy should also be promoted for doing business and marketing.

“Without internet, my local networks and I could not thrive. Internet is very essential for us as the Start Ups, but internet fee is still quite expensive for our business. The government should try to provide the special internet support for all the Start Ups”.

Online Learning, E-Training

Learning opportunities including online learning should be designed and provided for empowering purposes.

“As the Start Ups entrepreneurs, we all have to do everything by ourselves, which gave us difficulties in taking any physical class or training. Applicable e-class or e- training is very important to us”.

3.19.3.4 Advice for Women Entrepreneurs

Access and Literate Yourself to ICT

Although Thai women traditionally have to take care of domestic works, they also have more right to join the formal work force. ICT keeps opening up all the opportunities to develop all kinds of aspects. So, it could say that ICT is currently an effective tool for including women as smart entrepreneurs. Women must keep opening up themselves to access to ICT and to literate themselves with ICT, and make the best use of ICT both for their personal lives and for their startups.

“I myself can’t believe that I will be here today as one among the success Start Ups, it could not be happen without internet”.

Partnership Working

Women entrepreneurs should seek for opportunities for partnership with business partners, the research partners.

“In this rapid world both local and global, we cannot walk alone because it is too slow, we must walk and work along with the others and share together. Then we can grow up together”.

Create Alongside Business

Creativity is an appropriate fit to all women entrepreneurs. Women can create any non-stop business opportunities in any relevant contexts based on their unique experiences as a woman. Possible businesses include a souvenir business and a study visit package tour, apart from the Thai Fighting Fish.

3.19.3.5 Summary and Discussion

“Sirinut betta farm” led by a young smart woman is one of the small startups, which grew up rapidly with the help of ICT. ICT helped the company to create all holistic processes of their business. Besides, ICT helped the company to be more professional too.

“I am very proud that I can use ICT to do my own Start Up, to sustain the Thai pride of this local wisdom: Thai Fighting Fish to the global pride. I can add more value especially the price from local price to global price with global standard Q.C. I can train my local communities as well as the others to care for global standard Q.C. besides from their professional and passion”

Reference

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