

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When one thought school argues that entrepreneurs are borne, the other school argues that entrepreneurs are made rather than born. This wonderful species are capable of creating disequilibrium in the market, exploiting opportunities and operating in ambiguity to create wealth for their stakeholders. They are the ones who create corporations with their envisioning and in return, drive the wheels of a country's economy.

This is what Preethi and Neelamani Jayawardena, the founding owners of House of Fashions have accomplished. This seemingly ordinary couple has accomplished something extraordinary, the first mega mall in Sri Lanka. Possessing neither the wealth nor exposure to garment industry, they have reached the pinnacle of success by making their dream a reality. They dreamt of building and operating the largest, single owned departmental store in South Asia and that dream have now become a reality. Armed only with secondary level education, determination and commitment the couple started off their business in the early 1990's, where they supplied their own made party wear to clothing shops. Slow and steady growth enabled them to deploy a few sewing machines and few aids to expand their operations that enabled them to produce to a capacity where they reached a point where they could conduct trade stalls at Gam Udawa. They were able to build relationships with garment manufacturers, who later offered excess export quality garments to the couple to be sold at their established network of clothing stores. After sensing success, they started their own shop the Emporium End thereafter.

After phenomenal success at their rented store space, they moved to their own building and rebranded themselves as House of Fashions. They introduced many novelties that later became standards, especially in the garment retail industry. They pioneered the introduction of garment displays, Point of Sales (PoS) systems, bar coding of garments and security tags to name a few. They expanded from a clothing retailer to a departmental store by widening their product offering. Based solely on the power of observing and investor acumen, they decided to build the country's second and the largest departmental store in the late 1990's. They took the meaning of employee welfare to a new height and embraced technology to pave way to success.

The final result was the emergence of House of Fashions as the country's first department store that became the place for quality at affordable price. This case study narrates the

story of how the founding entrepreneurs built the business from strength to strength by exploiting opportunities that the prevailing circumstances offered. The authors will be narrating the story of House of Fashions with the aid of findings gathered through qualitative research, depicting as to how facets under the aspects of entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial management were utilized to achieve success.

Their success will be measured in terms of the growth in workforce at each point of departure from the perspective of the founding entrepreneurs in the form of accomplishing their vision of building and operating the largest, single owned departmental store in South Asia. The case study will be constructed with the objective of learning the insights as to how the business was built in order to share those insights with reader and budding entrepreneurs.