

THE ACHIEVER

SHE'S IN THE FAST LINE, BUT SHE KNOWS HOW TO BALANCE LIFE

BRENDA PEK IS A BUSY CORPORATE LADY, BUT SHE KNOWS HOW TO JUGGLE WORK, FAMILY AND HER GOLFING PURSUITS

BY JUSTINE MOSS

Brenda Pek joined BMW Group Asia in October 2015 as a Network Development Manager before taking on the role of Marketing Director two years later. Here she shares her passion for both family life and career with Golf Women editor Justine Moss.

Describe a typical day in the life of Brenda Pek.

I'm up at 5.30am to send the kids (two boys and a girl aged 10, 9 and 7) to school; am in the office by 7.30am to spend the first hours catching up on emails; first meeting starts as early as 8.30am and I'd be in multiple back-to-back meetings with internal teams, agencies and partners. I try to leave the office by 6.30pm to spend time with the family. I'd do some reading, attend to some home administration matters and try to be in bed by 10.30pm.

Who or what inspires you? What gets you out of bed in the morning?

My faith as a Catholic keeps me reminded of the virtues of humility and gratitude. I'm grateful for every new day that I'm presented with, and I endeavour to embrace each day's new experiences and challenges. To have breakfast with my husband and kids is one big reason to jump out of bed early on weekends!

Talk about some of the sacrifices you've gone through in your career journey.

When my kids were younger, I decided to put a short hold on pursuing career opportunities, especially one that needed me to travel extensively. I don't see it as a sacrifice per se in my career, but rather to phase my career development in alignment with the priorities at that point in time.

The auto industry is a typically male dominated industry — what made you decide to enter the industry?

I've never thought about the industry from a gender perspective. It was about the brand, the opportunity and scope of the role that attracted me to join the BMW Group.

Describe your time at BMW Group Asia — the highlights and challenges.

In the last two years, BMW has been on the largest model offensive. I've had the opportunity to launch many exciting BMW models such as the all-new 8 Series, X7, X2 and M5 across the region.

Tips for women who want to enter the industry?

I know many successful and highly-competent women in the industry. These women have common traits of being analytical, knowledgeable, very reliable and results-oriented. I would say be humble, confident, recognise your abilities, and proactively contribute in your role. Do not be afraid to express yourself respectfully.

What are you driving at the moment and what do you love about it?

BMW 6 series Gran Turismo (BMW 640i xDrive M Sport) — effortless drive, generous passenger space and legroom. My kids love being in this car!

Golf handicap?

Awfully high at 28! I'm working to get this down — having stopped playing for 10 years!

What do you like most about golf?

Overcoming challenges a golf course presents, and being out on beautiful scenic green courses!

Where do you play golf? Memberships?

I'm a member of Tanah Merah Country Club, but if I do get time to play, it'd be mostly in support of corporate games at various clubs.

What is your personal take on golf? Is it worth the resource of time and effort spent?

Golf is a continuous pursuit of challenging oneself to keep improving. As the saying goes, the only constant in golf is in its inconsistency! I enjoy the technicality of the game, and the art of overcoming various challenges on a course. As golf is time-consuming, finding time for it is tricky given my busy schedule. Nonetheless, I plan little pockets of time to hit the driving range.

Favourite golfing destination? And why?

I enjoy playing at various courses in Thailand. The caddies are very hospitable and provide helpful tips which I definitely need!

Do your family golf as well?

My husband is an avid golfer. We both started learning the game 20 years ago. He's clearly far more competent in the game than I am now. My three kids are taking golf lessons. It's our plan to be able to play more golf in the future as a family!

Tell us something we don't know about Brenda Pek that will surprise us.

I love theatre and was very active in stage acting when I was in school. Just before I graduated, I was torn between pursuing a career as a corporate executive or in the area of theatre. However, as I was successful in my first job interview, and managed to clinch a regional marketing role in a company which I was very keen to join, I jumped at that opportunity and never looked back. I now regularly attend theatre — my way of maintaining my appreciation for theatre.

