

# Passing on the BEAUTY crown

Taking over Mom:  
Keeping the beauty  
business fresh

Photography Majella's Studios



The story behind successful home-grown brand Fresver Beauty is one of rags to riches. It began with an enterprising woman putting herself through beauty college with hard-earned money from door-to-door product sales, running a home facial business for years before amassing the funds to start her beauty salon in the heartlands of Singapore.

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This inspiring figure is Ms Alice Lim, beautician turned CEO who single-handedly grew Fresver from humble beginnings to the multi-award-winning brand it is today. Lately, she has named her daughter Ms Jessica Seah as successor to her beauty empire, an unsurprising fact given the young lady had clearly inherited her mother’s entrepreneurial drive and is committed to continuing her mother’s legacy.

Our interview with this dynamic mother-daughter duo saw light-hearted banter between the two who behaved like best friends and the genuine outpouring of affection and love.

#### **ALICE**

**Back in the 1980s, it was harder to start a business than it is today. What gave you the notion to start Fresver?**

“I’ve always believed we can change our destiny. It starts with moulding ourselves into who we want to be, how we want to look in others’ eyes. When I started out doing door-to-door sales, I made sure that I looked as good as I possibly could. Looking my best gave me self-esteem that enabled me to effectively acquire customers and form valuable business connections.

Gradually, I wanted to help my customers look their best too. Starting a business to help others look their best became my driving force.”

**The name Fresver is an invented term. Could you share the meaning and inspiration behind it?**

“Fresver is the fusion of ‘Fresh’ and ‘Forever’, with the meaning of ‘Fresh Forever’.

the after-effect of my facial treatments. They called it my magic touch. My customers loved that they could leave my salon bare-faced yet glowing, radiant and comfortable in their own skin.

This made me realise the importance of providing a consistently fresh skincare experience for my customers, so that they could always put their best face forward.”

**While juggling a business, you made sure you devoted much time and attention to raising and understanding your children. How is Jessica as a daughter?**

She’s much wiser than her years, and has always been very mature in the way she thinks and behaves. In her teens, she chose to spend majority of her time in my beauty salon helping me out with simple tasks like



Ms Alice Lim, CEO of Fresver Beauty



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cashiering. She would proactively make small but significant observations like bringing in scented candles to construct a soothing ambience in the treatment rooms for my customers.

Now at her prime, Jessica came into Fresver to breathe fresh life into this long standing brand so that I have the time to enjoy leisurely pursuits. In thoughtful ways like this, Jessica becomes my dependable source of comfort and support."

**You have named Jessica as a successor to your business. How do you feel about this decision?**

"I believe Jessica has it in her to successfully helm and grow the business.

Since young, Jessica has been regarded as a beauty guru to her friends! When she went through puberty, her good complexion was much envied by her friends who often approached her for skincare advice that she generously dispensed. Having a beautician for a mother built her fundamentals in skincare and I believe that would make it much easier for her to build mastery in beauty, elevate our beauty standards and stay ahead of trends.

Besides that, Jessica has an indomitable spirit which will see her far in this competitive beauty industry. Her acquired love for numbers would aid her in making sound financial plans to drive profitability of the business."

**As you entrust Fresver - the culmination of your life's work - to your daughter, what would be the words you want her to remember most?**

"I am incredibly fortunate to have Jessica first as a daughter, second a successor to my business. My friends owning businesses told me that it's hard to interest their children to take over the family business, as they often want to make a mark of their own or pursue self interests.

If there's anything I want her to remember for life, it would be that Mom has absolute faith and trust in her. I have no doubt that she will lead the Fresver team effectively to scale and power up the business."

**Fresver is running a campaign featuring Jessica as the brand ambassador. What gave you this idea?**

"Putting a face to Fresver would enable our customers to better relate to the brand and identify with the skincare results they can expect from us. We decided against celebrities to endorse our brand, favouring instead 'real people' who have been long term users of Fresver treatments to derive a credible testimonial. We want our customers to feel assured of the results from Fresver.

Jessica was a natural choice for the role because she has been a loyal user of Fresver and has glowing, flawless skin that speaks for the efficacy of our treatments. In addition to her affability and engaging personality, she possesses a wealth of brand and category knowledge that enables her to represent Fresver with aplomb and confidence."

**JESSICA**

**We know Alice is an enterprising, risk-taking businesswoman. On the personal front, how is she like as a mother?**

"She's a very committed mother who places a great deal of emphasis on our upbringing and education. I don't even know how she could find the time - but somehow she does - to monitor how I did in school.



She wasn't well-schooled growing up as her family wasn't well to do, so she wanted a different environment and only the best for me and my brother.

I remember that no matter how tired she was after a long day at her beauty salon, she would find time after work to personally prepare me for Chinese dictation tests. She had no qualms burning the midnight oil with me to ensure I ace my tests. By morning, being the superwoman she is, she would be up and ready to tirelessly tackle another (gruelling) day at work. She is my role model."

**You've just taken over the business, so we're all very curious - what are your initial plans for Fresver?**

"We've mostly relied primarily on word-of-mouth as our key driver of customer acquisition and growth. I would be relaunching Fresver with high-visibility marketing campaigns to heighten brand awareness among our target audience."

**As the next-generation business owner of Fresver, what is your long-term vision for the business?**

"I would focus on Research & Development to introduce more breakthrough skincare treatments and develop efficacious yet affordable products, elevating our beauty standards. The ability to harness state of the art technologies would enable us to consistently provide The Fresh Experience to our customers, empowering them to be beautiful and confident inside out."

**You are confident and have sound strategies in place to grow Fresver. Do you foresee any challenges ahead?**

"I am still very new as an entrepreneur, so I'm finding the style of leadership that works best for me and enables me to build rapport with the team that has worked with my mother for decades.

My mother definitely left huge shoes to fill."

**Your mother has given you much guidance through the years - what would you think is the most important piece of advice?**

"That would be the need to devote ourselves to continual learning and skill upgrade, not only for myself but for all Fresver employees.

That is the only proven way we can stay ahead of the game, and always outdo ourselves and outdo competition."



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