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Thrive by knowing your strengths and weaknesses to explore new domain#Women's Day 2020

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In conversation with Ms Daphne Teo, CEO and Founder, NSG Biolabs, Singapore to applaud her inspiring journey through her mission to explore Biotech industry

International Women's Day 2020 embraced the world with its new campaign #EachForEqual, aiming to draw attention to the difference each woman can bring out. Gender equality is essential for economies and communities to thrive. The campaign is expected to bring about change by raising awareness of bias and calling out inequality and to cheer women's achievement. Asian Women have always pioneered in the healthcare sector with venturesome women heading the most influential positions in the different domains of health and medicine. Biospectrum Asia has always been mesmerized by our courageous women leaders in the healthcare industry and is celebrating this women's day with one such spectacular achiever**Ms Daphne Teo, CEO and Founder, NSG Biolabs, Singapore**.

Daphne is an experienced investor and company builder, with over a decade of experience in real estate, biotech, and investment banking. She is the founder and CEO of NSG BioLabs, Singapore's largest and leading biotech co-working laboratory and office space. She led the entire setup of NSG, including financing, operational setup, and recruited a team of internationally renowned professors, investors, and biotech executives to advise NSG and its companies.

She was one of the initial shareholders and co-founders of the Singapore- and US-based Engine Biosciences and previously served as a board director and head of finance and operations in its critical early days before and after venture financing. She continues to serve as an advisor to Engine Bio.

On this special occasion of Women's Day, Ms Daphne Teo gracefully shared herviews and journey with **BioSpectrum Asia** to inspire millions of women in healthcare and Biotech Industry.

- **What is your opinion on the lower percentage of women leaders in the Life sciences industry?**

According to Oliver Wyman, women in healthcare represent 65% of the workforce, higher than other industries like financial services (46%) and Tech (26%). However, women only represent 30% of C-suite roles and only 13% of CEOs, which is troubling given the workforce statistics. I see this phenomenon as well in Singapore and Asia from the companies I meet. Things appear to be improving but not fast enough. Studies show that diversity in the boardroom and company leadership improves value creation and culture. The industry and the world is likely missing out because of this phenomenon.

- **Share your experience as an achiever in the Life Science industry and how you excelled to reach your goals.**

My experience as a founder and CEO in the life sciences industry has been a steep learning curve as I did not have a biology background. As the founder and CEO of NSG BioLabs and the co-founder of Engine Biosciences, I needed to learn quickly about a field that is notoriously difficult and enter an industry that is known to be insular in nature. I believe in knowing my strengths and weaknesses, leveraging on my strengths and surrounding myself with great people to help with my weaknesses. I had a track record in building companies to value inflections, corporate finance, and real estate, which has been relevant to my ventures. Also, I built a strong network of advisors, mentors, and friends with extensive experience who saw something in me and generously shared their time, for which I'm deeply grateful. To enhance my knowledge, I also enrolled into Johns Hopkins University to pursue my Master's Degree in Biotechnology. With some tenacity, creativity, and luck, I feel fortunate that things have worked out well so far, but there is much more I want to do and am working to achieve.

- **What would be your suggestion to encourage women towards leadership roles and how a prolonged change can be achieved**?

To advance more women towards leadership role, I believe we need to address societal issues. For example, we need to be more proactive in primary and secondary school, promoting leadership to young women and educating men and women alike on meritocracy and equal opportunity. Also, one major reason women slow their ascent and don't reach their potential is the pressure to have children and be homemakers. Obviously, being a mother is hugely important, but spouses should share household responsibilities and each give-and-take to support each other's career aspirations. Growing up in such households will give young children and our future leaders great role models.

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