



A 'PAWAR'FUL BRAND!



SWATHI CHATRAPATHY

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“The ms. business is like an art. I create things on a daily basis,” begins 33-year-old Nayanika Pawar, who, in a very Amsterdam-like manner, cycles to work in Indiranagar every morning. Confident and enterprising, Nayanika is the CEO of Classmate in India, a Dutch innerwear brand, which she brought to Bengaluru because she felt Indian economy was booming, while Europe was in recession. But to her, it’s not plain business. She has been a one-trait-er since the inception of the company here two years ago. “It’s like my baby and I’m very protective about it,” quips a chatty Nayanika, who, like most other 30-year-olds, loves to dress up, throw parties and travel the world.

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glam-cham

She was born in Ukraine, has lived in Latvia, did her engineering in Manipal and an MBA in Holland. Now, she runs a Dutch innerwear brand in Bengaluru, which is worth ₹200 crore worldwide

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Born and schooled in Ukraine, and having moved to Latvia later, Nayanika grew up learning to adapt quickly. Her father, a retired naval officer and her mother, who runs a textile boutique, acted as her guiding lights. “If there’s anything they’ve taught me, it’s to dream big,” says the Bengalurean, who grew up auditing accounts for her mother during her college days. After her engineering at Manipal Institute of Technology (MIT) and MBA in Tias School of Business, Holland, she had a strong foresight to bring back a Dutch brand to India. She met with the founders of the company, Gerard Den Boer and Deborah Blauw, and apparently caught on with them like wild fire. “It took them just four hours to decide to partner with me,” she laughs, now fearlessly heading a company, worth ₹200 crores internationally, in Bengaluru. The company specialises in inner wear for children in India, because she believes that “underwear is something that will

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never become irrelevant.”

Besides, if there’s one thing that Nayanika is confident about, it’s her decisions and her foresight. “Until a few years ago, nobody paid attention to inner wear. Now, women’s lingerie brands are picking up. I’m quite clear-headed about where the company is headed,” she states. Ask her if those around her take her seriously, and she shrugs — “You know a lot of people step into my office and say, ‘papa kahan hai?’ And I have a hard time convincing them that I am the boss,” laughs the girl, who thinks it

sounds pretentious to dish out her designation to everyone. Nevertheless, this perfectionist has gone through the hardships of hiring and firing, of finding office space, painting the walls herself, designing clothes, clicking pictures of products, doing the supply chain management, pricing the products, packaging, pretty much everything. “It’s not really difficult. It gives me a high to do so many things! I’m kind of a control freak, so I like doing everything myself,” she says. Running business from the gut, backed with a little bit of logic is what this well-travelled business woman aces at. “Ask Tim Cook or Bill Gates. They’ll tell you that instinct has a huge role to play in running a business,” she says.

Always fashionably turned out, Nayanika has a natural instinct when it comes to fashion. Now, she’s set to instill that sense of dressing in children! Imbued with a tremendous amount of European culture, this pretty damsel, a “risk-taker,” is out to face this daunting business world with a confident smile.