

[All Posts](#)[Members Spotlight](#)[Alumni Spotlight](#)[GBM](#)

bowcomms

Feb 2 · 4 min read

Rachel Leng '13

An award-winning speaker and writer, Rachel is a former Miss Singapore titleholder and an expert on East Asia. She graduated with double highest honors from Duke University (B.A.) and Harvard University (M.A.). Her insights have been featured in over 50 global media outlets, covering topics such as cross-border business, cultural perspectives, and wellness.

In addition to her professional pursuits, Rachel actively mentors startups and entrepreneurship programs. She was recognized as the 2017 Best Mentor of the Year by the Human Resource Development Service of the Government of South Korea. Fluent in English, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and some Korean, she is currently learning Thai. Rachel also maintains a popular bilingual blog ranked among the top Japan blogs.



1. Thinking back, what led you to join BOW?

I was drawn to BOW because of its strong commitment to empowering women in business. At Duke, I majored in Public Policy and AMES, with a minor in Economics, but I knew that having a solid and diverse understanding of business would be valuable for my career, regardless of the industry I ultimately chose. I was also excited by the chance to connect with like-minded women, to share experiences, and to learn from each other. Being part of a community that would support my personal and professional growth was incredibly appealing.

2. Could you talk a little bit about your transitions between different jobs and how they led you to ultimately co-found SeiRogai, Inc.?

My career path has been quite varied. I started at a policy think tank as a research associate in South Korea, then moved into investment at a private equity firm in Japan. Along the way, I took on freelance and independent projects, including roles in the entertainment and beauty industries. Looking back, I see that gaining a broad range of skills and experiences gave me insights into different aspects of running a business. My policy work honed my writing and critical thinking skills, which helped me structure my workflow effectively. Working in private equity gave me firsthand exposure to how business development operates in Japan across various industries. Meanwhile, my time in the entertainment industry highlighted the influential power of media. These experiences allowed me to identify gaps in the market, which eventually inspired me

[Home](#)[About](#)[Merch](#)[Events](#)[Apply](#)[Members](#)[Sponsors](#)[Blog](#)[Log In](#)

projects in tourism have us collaborating with government entities to promote lesser-known and rural regions, contributing to bridging the rural-urban divide as well as supporting local economies and sustainable tourism.

3. What led you to pursue a Master's and how has your degree shaped your career?

I pursued a Master's degree in Regional Studies East Asia (RSEA) at Harvard immediately after Duke. Although it wasn't the typical MBA that many in business might pursue, the rigorous academic environment challenged me to think critically and develop an analytical, flexible mindset. The interdisciplinary nature of the RSEA program, which involved courses across different departments, helped me develop skills in adaptability and project management. This background has shaped my approach to decision-making and problem-solving, providing a strong foundation for leading teams in my career.

4. Could you talk a little bit about what led you to co-found SeiRogai, Inc. and what your experience in the startup world has been like?

The inspiration to co-found SeiRogai, Inc. stemmed from a desire to innovate within the digital media industry. My co-founder and I saw an opportunity to blend our backgrounds to create content that combines education, entertainment, and engagement. Recently, we've been exploring virtual reality (VR) movies and saw an opportunity to leverage digital media technologies in new ways. The startup experience has been both challenging and exhilarating; it demands resilience and adaptability but also offers immense learning and rewards. There's nothing quite like seeing the fruits of your labor in the final product and watching audiences enjoy and benefit from what you've created.

5. What is the most difficult obstacle you have faced in your career?

One of the toughest challenges was navigating the early stages of a startup, especially as a foreigner in Japan—a market known for being difficult to access for outsiders. Initially, our business model relied on the demand for tourism promotion leading up to the Tokyo Olympics 2020, but when COVID hit, it disrupted our entire plan. We had to pivot quickly to keep the business afloat. Securing funding was challenging, as was applying for government grants in Japanese to support the Proof of Concept for our new direction. This experience taught me the importance of perseverance and building a strong support network.

6. Could you talk a little bit about what led you to work internationally and your experiences in these different countries?

Working internationally has always been a personal goal, as I believe that diverse perspectives fuel innovation. My experiences in different countries exposed me to varied business cultures and practices, broadening my understanding of global markets. This exposure has been invaluable in shaping SeiRogai's approach to our projects.

7. Could you share one piece of advice you have for current BOW members thinking about one day founding their own company?

My advice would be to embrace your passion and be willing to take risks. Surround yourself with a supportive network, and don't be afraid to learn from failures. Every setback offers a chance for growth, and resilience—or simply the determination not to give up—is essential for any entrepreneurial journey.