

A start-up for a lasting bond

Shivdhanya and Gautam, founders of the wedding planning company The Knottt, talk about how they are juggling work and education.

» ENTERPRISE

SAKINA VALSADWALA

Managing work and academics simultaneously can be a difficult task, but the founders of The Knottt are handling it with tenacity and efficiency. Started by college graduates three years ago, the Chennai-based wedding planning company has grown to become a trusted one in the city. The founders Shivdhanya and Gautam, who are currently pursuing their master's degree in business administration, have faced several challenges while juggling work and studies. Nevertheless, their passion for their profession and the desire to gain skills in management have enabled them to overcome the odds fairly well in the past two years.

Owing to the growing success and the need for investing time in their company, Shivdhanya and Gautam were a little hesitant about pursuing a full-time management course. However, after a one-year break from academics, they decided to pursue their instinct and do an MBA. "In order to enhance our knowledge in the management field, attaining an appropriate qualification was essential. The MBA programme will give an edge to our management skills and help us in curating events better," says Gautam.

Balancing their work and studies is undoubtedly chal-



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS | Gautam and Shivdhanya, founders of The Knottt. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

lenging. "Being able to multi-task is always a boon, but it also has its negative consequences. The challenge we faced was that we had to sacrifice our social life because of the hectic work timetable we followed. But the tight schedule was still exciting as we were always doing something we loved and enjoyed," explains Shivdhanya. Studying at the same institute helps the entrepreneurs to coordinate the work and studies. Another plus point was that the college timings hardly clashed with their meetings or caused a hindrance.

Building initial relationships in a start-up is the biggest challenge and a key to enhance the business. "The contacts, connections and networks we made while attending a business school have certainly made a huge difference to the success of our business," say Shivdhanya and Gautam. Despite the glitches, they are glad their

college authorities were supportive and encouraging of their venture. It was only during their semester exams that they had a tough time coordinating work; hence they signed up for fewer events so as to concentrate on their exams.

For Shivdhanya, a work-life balance is essential. "Wedding planning seemed like a perfect fit for our skill base and it is not a typical 9 to 5 desk job which we definitely did not want. As students, we were always interested in creative activities and events in our school and college. Moreover, creating relationships and working with people was our passion, so this job was our match made in heaven," says Shivdhanya laughing. The journey so far has been a voyage of self-discovery and improvement for both the founders. After completing their MBA exams in June, they plan to collaborate with more clients and expand their company.