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MARITIME

Search for challenges lands Zalina at free zone



PERSONALITY

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AS assistant general manager (service delivery and operations) of Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) Zalina M. Nasir's work scope involves liaising with over 40 government agencies on behalf of the free zone's clients.

She troubleshoots problems encountered in new applications from prospective investors at the country's first and biggest commercial and industrial free zone.

"I like challenging activities. For me, processing an application, getting approval from the various agencies and attending to a customer's problem within a stipulated period gives me the adrenaline rush that keeps me going for better results.

"My vision is to see PKFZ grow to be at par with the Jebel Ali Free Zone in Dubai or even better," she added. It was her search for a more challenging job that prompted her to switch from working as an investment officer in the Selangor State Investment Centre to PKFZ.

However, her contribution in the 10 years she was with the state agency did not go unnoticed as she was awarded the Darjah Kebesaran Ahli - Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah in 2004.

Right after graduation, the Mass Communication degree holder from Universiti Sains Malaysia had worked in broadcasting - producing RTM 1's Selamat Pagi Malaysia television programme for one and a half years.

Zalina, 37, said she had no problems working in a largely male world.

"I work well with my male counterparts and clients.

"What is more important is your career performance, to deliver the expected result. That has nothing to do with whether you are a man or a woman," she said.

Zalina added that she looked up to PKFZ chairman Datin Paduka O.C. Phang as a role model of a

woman who had succeeded in the male-dominated industry.

"She (Phang) has been my inspiration to be further involved in the maritime industry. She managed to excel at the helm of Port Klang Authority and now PKFZ. Her achievement has given me a boost of confidence to go for it in this industry," she said.

Zalina, who hails from Bota Kanan, Perak, was very athletic during her school days at Sekolah Menengah Iskandar Shah.

"I was a sprinter and also an active netball player. When I started working, the long hours restricted me from continuing to be active in sports."

However, her job has introduced her to a new sport in her life - golf.

"I took up golfing about a year ago to entertain clients. That was when I first joined PKFZ," said Zalina, who now considered golf her preferred sport.

"I've fallen in love with the game but I'm still very much a novice on the green.

"At the golf course, I can not only enjoy the game, but also discuss business with prospective

investors," said the 33 handicap golfer.

She was the sole female contestant at a recent golf tournament but this did not deter her at all. Whether at work or at play, Zalina has no qualms about being surrounded by men.

Even though Zalina is fascinated by the demanding challenges of her profession, she is very much in touch with her feminine side.

Besides pottering around in her garden, she loves cooking.

"My parents are still in my hometown in Bota Kanan. Sometimes when I miss home and crave my mum's cooking, I'd cook my favourite dishes myself."

She also tries new recipes when she feels adventurous.

And, like most women, Zalina loves shopping and is fond of strolling around shopping malls.

"There, I would meet my close friends and do our catching up sessions," she said.

The tall and attractive Zalina is still single. But she is not unduly worried because the important thing to her is not the age factor but the union of two mutually loving persons.

