Kindness, passion keys to success

By CONRAD TAN

BE kind to others, one of Singapore’s top bankers told graduating business students here yesterday.

“Be nice to people. That’s very different from being polite. Polite is easy, nice take a lot of work,” DBS Group chief executive Piyush Gupta said in a speech to graduating NUS Business School students at their commencement ceremony at the National University of Singapore.

“Contrary to conventional wisdom, in my experience, nice guys generally finish first,” said Mr Gupta, who is also the new chairman of the Association of Banks in Singapore.

“The work environment can make you pretty hard headed and cold nosed. At its best, it keeps you so busy that you have no time to think of others; at its worst, it becomes cut throat, so you have no desire to think of others.

“In such an environment, I have found that reaching out to do someone a favour can have hugely positive consequences. It not only makes you feel good about yourself, it also wins you a lot of friends. And in the long run friends matter.”

Speaking at another session of the commencement ceremony, Capitaland Group president and CEO Liew Mun Leong talked about the importance of having passion at work. He had in the past advocated a “3Ps” mantra for success – paranoia, perfection and perseverance.

“If you have the 3 Ps you could perform well as an executive or manager – you could survive and do well at that level,” he said. But those with higher aspirations will need all the passion in them to do more, Mr Liew stressed.

People must be passionate about their businesses or products, he added. “I don’t believe we can be a leading property developer if we just think of making money out of property development and not love what we design and develop.”

There must also be passion for people and core values at the workplace, he added.

Wise words: Mr Gupta (left) talked about being kind to others while Mr Liew stressed the importance of having passion at work