

# Live Your Dreams: Gain Practical Experience Early

by Victor-Andreas März



Why do employers value “practical experience” as their number one criterion when selecting candidates for a job? Do you wonder how people know exactly what they want to work as even before they graduate? Or how they get a top job they want without jumping through hoops?

Don't wait for an employer to offer you just any job – position yourself so you can choose your job and employer!

If you still believe that it's just your degree that is going to get you a great job, it's high time you wake up. Today, knowledge of foreign languages, computer applications, the Internet, and good grades on your transcript are just filtering criteria for employers offering good jobs. If you want more than an average employer can offer, you have to give more than the average graduate. Experience of working or studying abroad, a third or fourth language and extracurricular activities (AIESEC, Student Government, Volunteering, Social Engagements, etc.) are nice pluses. However, in the end, the most decisive argument for any employer will be how much job experience you have gained throughout your studies and what specific kind it is. Ideally, by the time you finish a 3-year degree you would have worked professionally for nine to twelve months across companies and their departments (i.e. 3 internships with three months time each).

The more experience you gain in the real world, the more you will get to know what you like and don't like to do once

you finish your studies. This will give you the focus which most people lack during their studies and enable you to weigh the pros and cons of an industry/company and department. With each internship or work experience you will gain practical exposure on how the world ticks and on top of this, you will build up your ability to appreciate job roles and tasks associated with the job. Most importantly, though, you will build up a repository of basic skills required for any professional job and potentially develop a first expertise. This will give you the edge recruiters are after when hiring graduates into top jobs.

For example, in my case, I did not do anything during the first four months of vacation I had after my first year of studies – what a big waste of time it was, judging retrospectively. Finishing the second year at WSB-NLU, a lucky coincidence allowed me to do some “mini”-internships starting at a German waste management company with 100 employees, followed by an international retail bank and then a Polish utility company. Each of the internships had a duration of about 2-3 weeks in total. I quickly learned one thing about each of the internships - I don't want to have anything to do with banking, utilities or waste management. That knowledge alone was enough reason for me to start applying for a longer term internship in another industry – trying out something new. After applying blindly to more than 60 internships across Europe, I finally managed to get two interviews, one of which resulted in a six months contract

assisting the CEO of a management consultancy in Germany. As I learned on my arrival and first day there, it turned out to be the largest human resource management consultancy in Germany (note: the lesson learned here is that I should have targeted my job hunt a lot more during my research of the company I wanted to work for – this way I could have avoided some 40 out of the 60 applications).

This internship, and another one at a global software house in Germany, gave me close to one-year's professional experience by the time I had finished my bachelor degree; I knew of several industries I didn't want to work in, and I found one that was appealing and interesting to me – professional services, specifically management consulting. The opportunity to write my bachelor thesis in a professional context and increasing my overall grade was an additional bonus I received from the work experience.

I continued to study in Australia and completed a Masters from Melbourne-based Monash University, the country's largest University and Asia-wide top-ranking in International Business. During my studies I worked part-time for the very same software house I completed my last internship in. I confirmed my interest of working in this country for this company and in the role as a Business Consultant.

So you see that trying out different work experiences until you find something good is essential. The earlier you start,

the better for you in the long-term. Doing internships throughout your studies minimizes the stress you might experience after you complete your degree when looking for a job. It's important to utilize the time you have at university and particularly in between semesters to find out about yourself, find a profession you would like to do and that you would be good at. Experiencing the pros and cons of a particular job/ industry/ place of work first hand is always better than being told and finding out retrospectively. The more diverse work experience you collect throughout your studies, the more you'll be able to appreciate different job roles and descriptions, which in turn will help you avoid the wrong employer or job in the first place when you apply for employment.

**Try various Industries** – there are many industries; try to get to know them

**Different Departments** – try to work in different divisions of a company with different people to get a taste of what people do differently and what say they have in the organization

**Start early** – the earlier you start working, the more experience you can gain before you finish your studies; this will benefit you in the long-run, i.e. you become more attractive to potential employers

**Pay** – most internships don't pay well, some don't pay at all. Some will pay you if you do a good job. Remember, it's not the money that counts here, but the experience you gain from doing the job and the ability to position yourself better

in the future.

In the next issue of Ampersand we will look into the topic of how to read and interpret diverse job roles/ descriptions and their requirements towards you. This will help you focus your job hunt and avoid the common pitfalls that lead to disappointment and frustration.

In the upcoming three articles we will together discuss the following topics:

“Learn how to read Job Role Descriptions” – Translation errors for “fresh” job applicants

“Line up the Right Jobs” – Prepare your choices sooner rather than later

“Develop a Transition Strategy” – Moving from university into the “real world”

# Globalization Nowadays

by Ewa Czech

It used to be that countries were independent from each other politically, financially and economically. Nowadays there have been a lot of changes and the world has become smaller since the distribution of products and information has become global. Because of technological progress, we can link to every country on the planet; the borders stay the same but their function is different. The creation of one global trade has made the most powerful countries even more influential and controlling. As the result, people start to worry about the real effects of globalization on their lives. They feel anxious that they gradually are starting to lose control of their lives and the situation in their countries. There are many corporations that are more powerful and better suited financially than many governments around the world. Will these big businesses that are driven by imperialistic motivations and profits decide the future of the world?

In the book “Financial globalization and the emerging economies” by José Antonio Ocampo, Stefano Zamagni, Ricardo Ffrench-Davis, Carlo Pietrobelli, it is stated that countries look only to improve its economic growth and this makes them blind towards problems

that can come up during the exchange of goods and services. The means to achieve the goal of maximum efficiency are often in conflict with the people's wants and needs. There are many countries in which the economies and politics are based on adhering to the aim to become

a financial world power. According to a study by Richard B. Freeman in 1985 “the global economic world comprised North America, Western Europe, Japan, as well as chunks of Latin America, Africa and the countries of East Asia.” There were around 2.5 billion people who engaged

