

Highlighted Alumni Profile - Chris Morgan

Posted on Sunday 24th July 2011

Degree and year of graduation - BSocSc Economics, 1997

Who are you currently working for and what is your job title?

Agility, Business Development Manager – Contract Logistics

How has your career developed since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

After graduation I joined British Steel to work in their Logistics department in South Wales. After 18 months (including 6 months doing shift work) I moved internally to their Head Office in London as their International Economist. This role developed into becoming their Industry Analyst after a year, and after a further two years in this role I again moved internally as an Internal Consultant in the Business Improvement department in our office in the Netherlands. I spent 18 great months there, took a career break to travel round the world for 8 months, and then joined a market analysis and consultancy company called Datamonitor, as Lead Analyst for Logistics and Express. I spent 4 years with the company and moved to Dubai to help set up their office there in the final six months of my time. I then worked as a freelance consultant for the Dubai Government for six months before joining Agility, where I have now been for two years, still based in Dubai.

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

The lifestyle here in Dubai is obviously completely different to that in London, with long commutes on overcrowded trains in miserable weather being replaced by a short drive to the office and being back in time in the evening to take a walk along the beach. The job itself is challenging given the economic climate, both globally and locally, over the past couple of years, but that is what keeps the job interesting. For me having the day-to-day interaction with clients that are looking for us to help them is the key factor in keeping me in this role.

Why did you originally apply to Birmingham?

One of my brother's friends had been to Birmingham University and recommended it, so I visited during an Open Day and really liked the campus. My Economics teacher at school also thought highly of the degree there.

What are your fondest memories of the University?

There is a large benefit to having a central campus (as opposed to one spread out as at Oxford or LSE) as well as a large amount of student accommodation within a very short walking distance. The staff was also excellent, as were other requirements such as the library and sports facilities. Add in Birmingham being a great city and in a very central location in the UK, as well as the social side of the University (pubs, clubs, organized events, sports teams) and I can't think of any better places to go.

How did you grow as a person by coming to University?

I think I did a lot of growing up the year before I came to Birmingham, as I took a gap year to work with disabled people and also travelled round the world for 6 months. However, the time there certainly taught me a lot about time management as well as developing your social skills, which are crucial when you move on into the working environment.

What did you think of the learning experience within the University?

The degree was a critical element in securing my move to British Steel Head Office, as all the elements covered formed the basis for the job (economic knowledge, report writing, analytical skills, data manipulation and interpretation).

Did you find the degree programme at Birmingham challenging or easy?

The hardest bits for me were the Statistics courses, while the Economic History was the easiest.

Did you find the University or your degree helpful to you in getting your first job?

I used the Careers Center to read up on previous interviews, as well as look at Annual Reports (this being pre-internet days).

What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

Don't worry too much about the non-core modules unless you are targeting a particular career already. Accommodation? I started at Mason Hall and moved to Selly Oak and can't complain about either. My advice though would be to not look at your first job purely from a money point of view. I've now been working for 13 years and you enjoy your life a lot more if you are doing something you want to do, not purely to pay the mortgage or car loan or for the latest flash gadget. If you do something you enjoy doing, then the money will eventually follow. And never stop learning when you leave uni. It is difficult to think of this while you are still studying, but I wish someone had said to me when I was 21 that I should read books such as "Rich Dad, Poor Dad" which give you a whole new perspective on key decisions that you could make then that will affect the rest of your life. In my mind there should be a module at uni that teaches people about real life issues that they will face, rather than just setting them up for their first potential job.