

Case Study: Alumni

Diana, MEng Computing
Graduation Year: 2009

Job Title: Delivery Manager & System Lead, Vice President

Employer: Morgan Stanley

Department: Operations Technology

Could give us some information about yourself and your role?

During my degree I undertook several work opportunities after my 2nd and 3rd academic years, both of which were at Morgan Stanley but involved supporting different business areas. The first one was in the International Prime Brokerage department, and the second in Loans which is where I currently work. I am a Project Delivery Manager and SDLC Lead in the Loans Practice Area, which is made up of a global team spanning London, New York, Montreal and India. Our systems cover large scale corporate lending, secondary loan trading, commercial real estate, residential real estate and warehouse lending. These are a mixture of both in-house built and vendor applications, and as a System Lead I am in charge of the support and development work which relates to one of our systems called LoanIQ. I tend to work simultaneously on a couple of different projects at a time, which makes time management and prioritisation very important, but also makes things more interesting. I am currently working on a large-scale system upgrade for the main application used by the Firm for Loans Processing, as well as driving the process of adoption of market initiatives affecting the Loans industry, and contributing to the efforts of core workstreams to help roll out common standards for capacity planning and SDLC across the department. Outside of my day job, I get involved in various diversity and recruitment activities to help the Firm meet its Diversity, Inclusion, and Recruitment goals. I have to say what I like the most of what I do is the versatility that my current role has, the sense of ownership that I have experienced with every piece of work I have done ever since I first joined, and the comfort I feel when I know I can count on a wide range of tools, resources and a myriad of talented people to help drive my decision-making process when I am designing, implementing, and delivering value-adding solutions for the business.

Could you tell us about your time at Imperial College London?

When I joined Imperial I was new to many things. Born and raised in Spain, this was my first experience which involved moving away from home. Needless to say being at university was in itself an exciting part of it. I was looking forward to exploring the city, making new friends, and most importantly acquiring the knowledge and skills which I would be using for a significant part of my near future. I felt very comfortable in the inclusive environment around me and came across many other individuals who were in the same boat as me. I formed part of various clubs and societies to make the most of my student life and maintain an appropriate balance, whether it was sports and fitness activities or more culturally oriented events. I



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was part of various committees as well, such as in my Halls of Residence and my departmental committee (DoCSoc), where I helped organise events for students. The communication and networking efforts at those early stages helped me to develop as a person, and it is one of the skills I currently use quite extensively both on the job and outside, as well as time management and leadership. In addition, during my degree I had the opportunity to apply the theory learnt to practical examples, which further prepared me to adapt to the challenging and fast-paced banking environment which I am currently a part of. Whilst I was applying for summer internships and industrial placements, I did consult with the Careers Service to help me put together an appropriate CV for my job applications, and I attended plenty of Careers events, fairs and employer talks to gain a better understanding of the various industrial opportunities available to me as a Computing student.

Could you give us one or more career tips for Imperial graduates?

After my 4-year experience at Imperial and almost 5 years working in the financial industry, I can admit that when I started my course at university I had no idea that I would be performing my current role. What I do realise now is that the interim steps I have taken throughout my journey have helped me get to the position where I am now. To start off with, I would advise anyone looking/applying for jobs to do the appropriate research about the job/role beforehand. It can be quite tempting at that stage to just “follow the crowd”, and we often don’t realise that a role that interests someone else may not necessarily have the same effect on us. Keeping this in mind, as an undergraduate I spoke to many of the senior experienced students in my department who had been through the process before me, in order to gather their opinions and seek advice on the various options available to someone with my academic background. In addition I made sure I attended the careers events where representatives from the recruiting companies were present, so that I could ask specific questions regarding their different programs and get an idea of their work culture. I would strongly recommend doing at least one summer internship whilst at university because the experience one gets is invaluable, and it also helps make a more informed decision as to whether a particular workplace is “right” or not. When it comes to interviews, the single most important piece of advice I would give is to be yourself. It is incredible how many people fear letting their true-self come out and thus go through a lot of preparation to portray themselves as what they believe to be the right candidate for a job. What is important to note is that more often than not, institutions look for the people with the right approach rather than the right answers. Above all, ensure you are passionate about whatever you do, as it will both motivate and inspire you to excel.

