

## Case Study: Alumni

**Sarah, MEng Chemical Engineering**

**Graduation Year:** 2009

**Job Title:** Associate

**Employer:** The Boston Consulting Group

**Department:** Consulting



### What has been your career path up until now?

I studied chemical engineering because I thought I wanted to be a chemical engineer, so in my second summer, I applied for an internship in engineering. That summer I worked for an oil and gas company, but I realised that this was not the industry for me. The following year, I applied for an internship in some of the “big four” accounting firms and, more importantly, for some management consultancies (although not many offered internships at that time). I was then offered the internship at BCG and I worked there for eight weeks. I really enjoyed my experience at BCG and it was great that I received a job offer after I graduated from Imperial, as I knew almost exactly what this would entail.

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- Sarah

### What does your job involve?

My role as an associate at BCG is very varied and it is hard to describe what a typical day looks like. I am continually changing projects, teams and industries, which is one of the great things about the company. For example, in just over a year at BCG I have worked in energy, private equity, pharmaceuticals and UK education. I spend quite a lot of my time researching data, analysing it and presenting it in PowerPoint. Depending on the type of project there may also be a lot of interviewing as well as meetings with the client, where you get to interact with some of the top people in their industries. The BCG people who I have worked in teams with have been incredibly smart but also very sociable and personable, which for me is a major plus point of working at here.

### Name the things you like about your job:

For me the best thing about working at BCG is the enormous responsibility you are given from very early on (even in the first few weeks!). This combined with the enormous exposure to different industries and the amazing people you work with, means that the speed at which you learn is incredibly fast. I believe this is a very rare pace of learning compared to many other graduate jobs, but it does also mean that you have to work hard while you are here.

### What part of your course did you particularly enjoy?

Throughout my time at Imperial, I realised that I was increasingly enjoying the business electives. I was,



however, very unsure about which industry I wanted to work in, so I think that carrying out two internships helped me a huge amount. It really meant that I was able to make the right decision by comparing the things I liked and didn't like across two very different industries.

### **Were you involved in any extracurricular activities?**

While at Imperial, I was involved in ChemEng society – helping to organise social events, but I also spent a lot of my time involved in charity work, outside of Imperial, as well as just being a student and going out with my friends!

### **Did you use the Careers Service or go to Careers events? E.g. job fairs, employer talks etc.**

I went to a number of presentations advertised by the IC Career Service across a number of industries – engineering, industry, banking and consulting. These gave me a very good view of what the different jobs might entail, but also enabled me to meet the people who worked in these companies and to see how well I got on with them. I also found the one-on-one CV advice session given by the Career Service incredibly useful and would recommend doing this even if you think your CV is perfect!

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

I don't think that an internship in your second year is essential, but if you are not sure about the industry you want to get into, then it provides amazing insight and are a good thing to talk about in further interviews. In my case, it was an eye opener into the real world and what I wanted from my career. My main tip is not to only focus on your academic grades when applying for a job. Everyone who applies to BCG is very strong academically, so it is really important to also have extra-curricular interests. In your CV and interview, be sure to talk about what you do out of IC and the skills that you have developed through this. Talk about what you enjoy and try to get your real personality across to the interviewer. The interview should very much be a two way conversation more than an interview!

