



**Alumna Subject**

Holly Simpson  
BSc Management with  
International Business  
2009



**Graduated Place of Work Position**

Procter & Gamble  
Assistant Brand Manager for Aussie and Pantene

P&G markets more than 300 branded products used in over 180 countries, including Pampers, Fairy, Gillette, Olay and Duracell. The company employs around 135,000 people.

As Assistant Brand Manager, Holly is primarily responsible for driving the growth of the Aussie Haircare brand, as well as being the gatekeeper of brand equity.

# Great minds *go on to* great places

**Why did you choose to study at Royal Holloway?**

I was very keen to do a business focused degree that included an international element, and the combination of course options offered at the College complemented my interests. I studied Management with International Business on campus in my first year, business at the University of Hong Kong in my second, before returning for my final year. The Founder's Building is stunning, and campus life was very friendly.

**What were the most enjoyable parts of your Management degree?**

I really enjoyed working with people from all over the world throughout my course. I had lots of opportunities to work in teams, as part of the course modules and outside of the classroom through participating in external business challenges. The communications course gave me greater confidence when presenting to an audience and really made me aware of how you represent yourself in the workplace – skills that I further developed throughout my degree and in my career to date. I particularly loved the Consumer Behaviour course, elements of which I use in my current position managing a consumer brand. The international business courses were

taught through case studies and engagement with industry experts, which were stimulating and brought real-life theory into the classroom.

**Were you part of any societies or clubs?**

I was the first year representative for the Management and International Business class, which was primarily a consultative role involving meetings with academics and students. As well as getting an insider view of the way the department works, the role enabled me to push for change and make a positive influence within the department on behalf of the students. I was involved with the cheerleading team in my first year, taking part in several competitions and SU performances, and was also a member of the Management Society. I enjoyed attending speaker events – including a great trip to the BBC where we had a go at presenting the weather and reading the news!

**Looking back, what was your overall student experience like?**

It's easy to look back on your time as a student and forget those long hours spent writing essays, preparing for seminars and doing a dissertation, but my overall experience was great: there are so many opportunities to grasp hold of. In particular, studying in Hong Kong during my second year

opened so many doors for me – it was the best year of my life! It really set me up for meeting challenges in the workplace, as well as opening my eyes to the world of business in Asia. Studying abroad is a life changing opportunity and I would recommend it to anyone.

**What skills did your degree teach you?**

The ability to think around a problem and assess a case strategically has proven very important. Practical soft skills such as presenting, team building and leadership are all important skills that I developed whilst studying. The combination of commercial examples and management theory was well balanced, so I could apply a wealth of experiences and knowledge in the workplace. In addition, I was a member of the Young Executives at the British Chamber of Commerce whilst studying in Hong Kong, thereby strengthening my business knowledge, enhancing my learning outside of lectures, and giving me the opportunity to expand my network of contacts abroad.

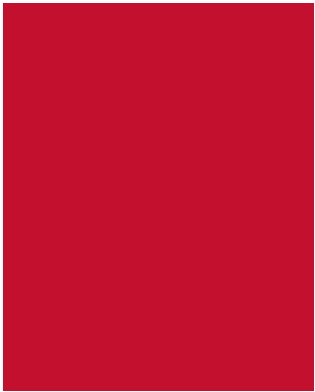
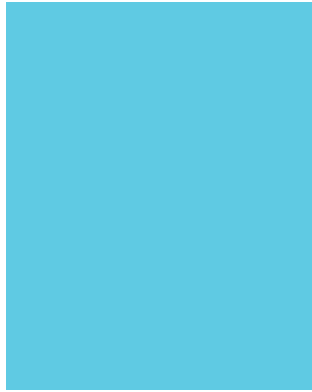
**What is your role at Procter and Gamble?**

I am the Assistant Brand Manager for Aussie and also do some work on Pantene. It is a commercially focused role but is also developing my skills as a marketer. I have the best of both worlds:



# people with passion

“Studying in Hong Kong during my second year opened so many doors for me – it was the best year of my life!”



I manage a large budget, am the gatekeeper of my brand equity, and, as I gain more experience, become even more involved in helping to set the strategic and commercial vision for growing the brand alongside the rest of the team. I work with agencies, retailers and consumers, giving me a 360 degree outlook on my business.

#### How have your studies helped you in your career?

Procter and Gamble recruit from a variety of degree backgrounds. I developed good commercial awareness through my studies, as well as a firm grounding in the process, behaviours and strategies of business, all of which have served me well in my role. The learning process hasn't stopped either; I am lucky to receive regular training sessions in marketing, communications, commercial business and leadership.

#### What do you do in a typical day, and what are the best parts?

There is never a 'typical' day, but you can always count on it being a busy one! I could be doing anything from aligning on shipment forecasts for a new product, approving local communications plans, preparing budgets and writing share reports, tracking store results or the performance of

competition, presenting new products to buyers, talking to or visiting my colleagues in Geneva, organising a recruitment event, visiting the Surrey Board of Young Enterprise or looking for ways to grow the business.

#### What motivates you to push yourself?

I love the feeling that I am leading my brand and making a real impact on business results. I can be working on something months before it launches to the public, so when the whole campaign comes to life in store, that I have been part of, or a radio ad that I have created, it really is exciting!

P&G offers the opportunity to market exciting household brands, sell leading beauty brands like Olay, Max Factor and Herbal Essences, or to be a part of the team designing the next breakthrough on Ariel laundry detergent.

These are brands people recognise and trust around the world – its a great place to be.

#### What are your top employability tips for current students?

Seek out leadership experiences and opportunities and look to where you can make your impact with a project. Employers want to know what you have accomplished, how you have made that happen and driven the result. This could be through

volunteering, competing in a sport and taking part in a society or participating in a music group. Don't just spend hours in the library: find a balance by trying new things, and just getting involved wherever you can!

#### What connection have you had with Royal Holloway since graduating?

I am the campus lead for P&G recruitment at Royal Holloway, so I have been back on campus giving presentations, talking to students, and representing P&G at recruitment fairs. I have also enjoyed manning the alumni stand during graduation week, which brought back memories of my own! I love being back. I don't think you ever appreciate student life enough until it's over.

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