Monday 17th October: Consultancy: Are you up for the Challenge?

SPEAKER PROFILES

James Bohrsmann

Business Consultant, IBM Global Business Services

James is currently in a Project Management role at IBM Global Business Services. He graduated from Royal Holloway in 2012 with a BSc in Management. His experience of the diversity of the student body at RHUL put him in good stead for consulting, as he has found himself working with and for people from all around the globe and with his skills acquired at Royal Holloway he has been able to build relationships with many international clients and staff.

His work is unpredictable, challenging and flexible and very rarely are two days the same. With ambitious and smart people surrounding him, he has been pushed to pursue certain paths.

A piece of advice: “Keep your options open, get lots of applications out there and really sell yourself. Once you're in, there are so many opportunities and you have a lot of freedom to shape your career. If you work hard and chase the opportunities you want, you can open a lot of doors for yourself.”

David Forde

Executive Business Consultant, Digital Transformation, Atos Consulting & Technology Services

David is the UK & Ireland lead for Customer Experience and Digital Marketing, with expertise within Digital Transformation and delivering Customer and User Experience in large organisations. In a dynamic, demanding and ever-changing job, David leads teams to deliver transformational change and positive business outcomes for clients, through the creation of customer-focused solutions and the application of new technologies.

David has a strong and successful track record in project and programme management, which has led him to manage and lead complex projects that have had a need to manage multiple stakeholders and business requirements. Each exciting change within the organisation means that every day is different for David, so it can be like starting a new job every few months without having to leave the organisation you work for. Despite the culture of long hours and high expectations from clients in the consulting industry, all the work he does makes the personal and professional rewards of successful delivery hugely satisfying.

A piece of advice: “If you want to achieve a good degree you really have to work for it as no-one will do it for you, something that is definitely transferable to the world of business.”
Manuel Betancourt Rubiano  
**M&A Analyst, KPMG UK**

After graduating from Royal Holloway in 2013 with a BSc (Hons) in Economics, Manuel joined the Audit Graduate programme at KPMG in the autumn after graduation. Here he studied towards the ACA professional qualification and worked with clients in the corporate, middle market and financial services sectors.

Manuel is part of an advisory team that helps clients who are looking to sell or buy a business and have other types of similar transactions. This role requires him to be able to perform market research, have an in-depth knowledge of the companies he works with and understand the different deal flows, regulations and valuations KPMG use.

**A piece of advice:** “Get involved and plan ahead. It helps to plan how and when you can get involved and this planning is also useful when applying for the different internships and graduate jobs you may be interested in. The Careers Service can help you plan well; it certainly helped me!“

David Varney  
**Business Development Director, Mastercard**

David is a Business Development Director for Growth Markets at Mastercard UK & Ireland. His role is focused on meeting customers’ needs. He finds the most challenging aspect of the work that he does is opening new doors and creating new solutions. However, the opportunities he had to meet new people whilst studying at Tulane University, New Orleans on an international exchange during his time at Royal Holloway definitely gave him a broader world view. Also, the learning habits and problem solving techniques developed in his Economics and Management degree gave him a solid base to build upon.

**A piece of advice:** “Summer internships are a fantastic place to start and can lead directly to employment on graduate programmes.“
Taj Padda
Management Consultant, PwC

After graduating from Royal Holloway with a BSc (Hons) in Economics in 2015, Taj joined PwC as part of the Management Consulting intake. He is now a Management Consultant in his final year of PwC’s graduate programme, spending most of his time on Risk related projects.

Taj has worked on many projects where large scale changes are needed for a businesses, which has helped his exposure to senior stakeholders. However, with this job it still remains a challenge to understand the expectations of others. He has worked with partners across different lines of services within PwC, including the Global Head for Risk & Regulation. He has also been able to influence the way they target clients in Financial Services and how they monitor their own performance both in the UK and globally.

A piece of advice: “Don’t be afraid to offer your opinion, especially if you are in a meeting with people more senior than you. Try to put your own mark on a piece of work and always be able to think on a strategic level.”

John Nicolaou
Senior Consultant, FS Advisory, EY

John is currently working as a Financial Services Consultant as part of the Wealth and Asset Management team at EY. He studied Economics at Royal Holloway and then joined the Advisory Consultant Programme at EY in September 2013. Their two-year graduate scheme focused on four 6-month rotations within Financials Services. Following his successful graduation, he has remained at EY and has specialised in consulting for Wealth and Asset Managers within Financial Services.

In his industry, John finds himself surrounded by intelligent, hard-working and like-minded people who have helped him to grow. John says that one of the main challenges in his job is “the unpredictable changes in responsibility. One day you’re following instructions, the next you may have to increase your confidence and take the lead in a role. It can be demanding but also very rewarding.”

A piece of advice: “To echo the majority of careers advice you will receive, you must ensure that you thoroughly research the industry. By way of a concrete example, look through what is available online and study what the company does, how and why. You will then have a holistic view, which will then feed through to confidence in the recruitment process and will help you better understand if this is the right job for you.”