



**Alumna Subject Graduated** Maria Matveeva  
Economics and Management  
2006  
**Place of Work** National Patient Safety Agency  
**Position** Operational Business Manager and Consultant



Maria is currently undertaking a piece of management consultancy work at the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) which involves reviewing, winding down non-essential and transferring essential business activities and contracts into new host organisations. She also runs her own project and property management business which grew out of doing translation work for various high net worth individuals and companies based in London.

# Great minds *go on to* great places

## Why did you choose to apply to Royal Holloway?

I visited my brother who studied in RHUL in my final year at Collège du Léman (Geneva, Switzerland). I visited a number of universities as I knew my decision would have a substantial impact on my future. I was looking for a university with a recognised name, good rating for the course and a balanced social life.

A big bonus for Royal Holloway compared with other London universities is that you have the campus environment. This gives you a great sense of belonging. It is big enough that you have variety, but small enough to be an individual.

## What most interested you about the course?

I loved Economics when I was doing my A Levels in Geneva. Economics, in my opinion, is like a blueprint to understanding how and why the world works in a particular way. With my university degree I wanted to expand my knowledge and gain understanding of how to make a significant impact.

Management gives you an insight into how to accomplish your company's goals and to make those changes that Economic analysis highlights. Economics is more about how the group acts whereas Management focuses on understanding individuals.

## Did you undertake any internships or placements whilst studying?

At the end of my second year I made two decisions that had a significant impact on my life and made it clear to me that I wanted to be a management consultant.

I was unsure about what profession to choose so I applied for Enterprisers Programme (Cambridge-MIT) as well as an internship in various departments of an insurance company in Moscow (Russia).

I was successful in securing a place in Cambridge MIT Enterprisers Programme. This course was a life changer. I learned a lot about how to apply my knowledge and skills in entrepreneurial ways to create new ventures or support existing ones through being more proactive and innovative. Above all I learned a lot about myself and was able to acknowledge my strength and weaknesses and learn the tools to enhance my performance and eradicate my shortcomings.

## What was the most helpful or interesting aspect of the course?

I had a number of favourite lectures such as Project Management, Macroeconomics, and Business in Modern Perspective. I now realise that what made them interesting is the lecturer's ability to keep structure and allow it to be interactive. I always learned through getting involved in the discussions,

asking questions, contributing my own views and debating with others.

Learning about people, change, how to bring a group together and how to delegate made line management a lot easier. The most helpful thing was learning about myself. I am quite an active individual, always on the go, analysing information and making decisions very quickly and sometimes this can alienate other team members. Slowing down and going through the process together keeps people on board, willing and motivated to implement the decisions.

## Were you part of any clubs or societies?

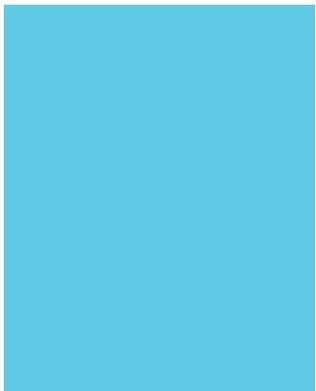
I was involved in a lot of extracurricular activities such as debating society, Thai boxing, charity fashion shows, and I also worked as a security guard in the Students' Union.

The one I am most proud of is the INSPIRE events that I initiated after my involvement in the Enterprisers programme. The aim was to inspire and empower young people and give them skills, inspiration and confidence to get involved in entrepreneurship. I got the team together, secured funding through a competition and networked to get a recognised high profile professor to lecture. The events were a great success and I was saddened that it was my final year and I would not be able to develop this idea further.



# people with passion

“University will be whatever you want it to be. Networking, recognising and acting upon opportunities you come across is extremely important.”



Recently I found out that now INSPIRE has developed into the Entrepreneur Society, one of the biggest societies at Royal Holloway. They are running competitions similar to the Dragon's Den television programme, where the most successful ideas get funding. It is incredible to see an impact an idea can make on the world around us.

In my final year I attended a number of entrepreneurial events. At a Rising Star event I, I met a course director for the Masters in Technological Ventures and Foundation of Entrepreneurship from University College London (UCL). The essence of the MSc was to give people skills essential for foundation of their own business. After our conversation at the event I was offered an unconditional place in the course.

Getting involved in things outside of your studies can provide you with new opportunities, but it is all about having a good balance.

### What did you do after graduating?

After my BSc I did my MSc Technological Ventures and Foundation of Entrepreneurship at University College London (UCL).

Once I graduated I found it very difficult to get my first job. Being fresh out of university, needing a visa to work, and not being able to afford to do unpaid work meant that I was looking for anything.

I created a company to do some freelance

translation work for high-net-worth individuals. The clients saw my potential and started requesting additional services such as property management, settling in UK, and organising their families' and friends' itineraries. This gave me an opportunity to utilise the research skills from my degree. A lot of people do not realise that buying and managing property in the UK is quite different from other countries as there are so many rules and regulations.

Business gradually grew and I am now involved with freelancing for different high-net-worth individuals and companies as a project manager and as a property manager.

### Tell us about your current position.

From my perspective, starting in a small business rather than joining a big corporation such as a bank made it easier to progress quickly.

I have always wanted to be a management consultant. I have been interested in development, innovation and entrepreneurship since my studies. The harder it is the more motivated I am to take on the challenge. I am currently doing a consulting project for the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA), which is shortly going to be abolished. This involves reviewing, winding down non-essential and transferring essential business activities and contracts into new host organisations. The project

requires a lot of project and change management skills, flexibility, particularly when negotiating with employees to place them in the other organisations that have been set up in place of the NPSA. This is one of the hardest programmes I had to work on. In any business activity involving people and change it is hard to keep staff motivated and ensure essential business activities continue. We overcame that hurdle and are now eager to transfer.

### Tell us about running your own business.

When the clients I was working for started requesting more services I recognised growing demand and a widened spectrum of services was provided. The secret to success is a good level of mutual respect, high level of customer focus, good problem solving ability with positive attitude and research skills. I never paid for any marketing or advertising, all of the clients came to us by referral through word of mouth. The demand currently exceeds supply so we can be selective.

I never take unnecessary risks, all of the decisions are logical and well thought through as I have an analytical and strategic mind. The thing with running your own business is that it really is about how much you are willing to put in and how hard you are willing to work, as you see the result of that directly impacting on your earnings and on how much you are learning.

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