



Alumnus Subject Graduated Myooressh Maheswaran
BSc Management Studies
2001
Place of Work Position Bank of America Merrill Lynch
Commodities IT Support



Bank of America Merrill Lynch is the corporate and investment banking division of Bank of America. Bank of America Merrill Lynch achieved the second highest revenues of any investment bank in 2010, with a global market share of 6.8 per cent. Myooressh joined Bank of America Merrill Lynch in September 2010 on a contract role, providing business analysis and IT solutions to the organisation.

Great minds go on to great places

Did you consider other universities before applying to Royal Holloway?

I was actually applying for Medicine in the year before I started university, but switched my focus to finance and business the summer before I was due to start. I applied to Birmingham and CASS, but chose Royal Holloway as it came with a personal recommendation from a family friend, who told me good things about the campus, degree, and School of Management. After I got an offer, I visited the campus and was happy with my decision to study there.

What were the most valuable aspects of the course?

The course had a good balance of theory and practical sessions, such as workshops. Many people don't realise at that stage that, if you are going to pursue a career in finance, you need those practical skills, so for me the balance was just right. There's one workshop I remember in particular; the class was split into groups and we had to act out the negotiation process in a model Middle East peace process. The aim of the exercise was to develop those skills of negotiation, both between yourselves as a 'country', and with the other groups involved in the process. I also remember a couple of lecturers in particular, Sukhdev Johal and Robert Fitzgerald. Sukhdev was a good lecturer and knew most of his students by first name;

Robert gave me a reference when I was applying for a Masters course after graduating.

Do you have a favourite memory from your time at Royal Holloway?

For me, it's being in Founders in the first year, walking out of that building on a sunny autumn afternoon: we probably didn't realise how privileged we were to be there. I played cricket and football, as well as joining other societies, all of which I got involved in regularly. It all definitely added to my university experience. I always tried to challenge myself and to make the most of leadership opportunities where I could, such as being captain of the football team in my second year.

I think that a lot of people look back on their time at university when they are older and think 'those were the best days of my life', but I consciously tried to live like that whilst I was studying. You have freedom to do what you want, but you also have responsibility: you are master of your own destiny. After you graduate, beyond your mid-twenties, other things get in the way and real responsibility comes in. It's fun in a different way, but you never really have that sense of freedom that you enjoyed at university.

What do you wish you had known?

Looking back, in the context of my career path, perhaps to have learnt something more solid regarding IT programming language. I did take a

couple of IT based modules – another good part of the course was that it's not all purely finance related. I also took a general IT course, which was compulsory, but this only takes you so far. Everyone knows IT is important, especially if you start working in a place that is driven by computers; even if you aren't working in that area you need to have an understanding of IT infrastructure and how it relates to your job.

How did you find applying for jobs after graduating?

Pretty awful! The year I graduated was the tail end of the dotcom bubble bursting, and then the Twin Towers were attacked in the September. I wasn't making any headway with my applications, so that's partly what prompted me to study for a Masters. I went to ICMA [International Capital Markets Association], a specialist Business School in Reading. Another reason for doing a Masters was to enhance my general knowledge by doing something more specialised and technical. I studied International Securities, Investment and Banking. After graduating in 2002, I managed to get an unofficial internship at Credit Agricole, as a result of sending a CV in directly. The money wasn't great, but it was important to get a name on my CV. I was mostly involved in doing due diligence on client files. I was offered a job there in FX banking, but left to do an internship at Lehman Brothers. So it all started to click into place.





people *with* passion

“A lot of people look back on their time at university and think ‘those were the best days of my life’, but I consciously tried to live like that.”



What has been your career path to date?

I was at Lehman Brothers on a three month internship then they offered me a job, but at that point I was offered a job at Goldman Sachs in Position Control, another Operations role. After three years there I went to Barclays Capital working in the Middle Office, which is primarily technical business analysis. I started using a specialist application, which allowed me to go into more specialist contracting roles, and from that point contracted for Credit Agricole, Shell and Eon. The link with the utility companies is through working in commodities i.e. Oil and Gas. So the reason that IT came into the picture was through the business analysis roles: you learn about the business process and you design software solutions to make that process possible, hence falling under the IT department. Having been in Commodities for 8 years, the business side is my speciality but I'm now enjoying marrying that with the IT side that I'm exposed to every day. I have almost had two or three career changes from Operations through to IT, so I've seen the business from front to back. Now I'm in Technology supporting Front, Middle and Back Office.

Tell us about your role at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

After finishing the contract with Eon, I started at Bank of America Merrill Lynch in 2010. I am in a

Business Analysis and IT Support role, which means that I support the applications used by the traders to do risk analysis and capture the deals, all the way through to the settlements and reconciliations in the back office. There are lots of opportunities to do enhancements, so it's like business analysis on a smaller scale, for instance, there might be a process that's not working efficiently and could be optimised, so you work on a small project to complete that. This is a contract role, which suits me for the moment. Most people go into contracting because you do a lot better financially, but the downside is that you are not really part of the career ladder and you are treated as a specialist: it can be a bit like 'plug in and play'! I am considering going permanent and I would hope to stay at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. I'm still picking up lots of things being relatively new to IT, the business is evolving which means there are more IT projects, so there's enough work to be here for a few years. At some stage I would like to study an MBA in the States, or work abroad.

What do you enjoy about working in IT?

In many respects, IT is a background thing, but the software the traders are using every day is rooted in IT processes. You have the chance to make it more automated, or to optimise the process and, through that, you are adding value to the person you are supporting. So there is definitely a buzz in

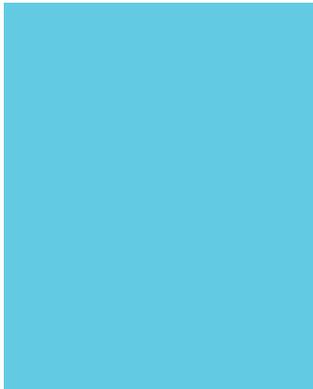
providing solutions: supporting others is helping my career development. And there's still a lot to learn; I think that if you get to a point in your job where you aren't learning, you won't want to stay there very long. So it's important to have creative input into the process.

What about the banking industry more generally?

The constant change: nothing stays the same. If I come back from a week's holiday, there might be a different person sat behind me: that's the small scale. On a larger scale, organisational changes are common, so there's always some kind of change happening. Similarly, in terms of my job, there is always something to be done – you can never sit back and think that you've got nothing to do. Banks are meritocratic environments...it's up to you how far and fast you want to progress.

What is the best piece of advice you could give to a student?

Take advantage of as many things as you can whilst at university. Apart from the social side, think about taking other courses, particularly in IT, or spend your own time teaching yourself something new such as a language. Give yourself a couple of skills that you can build on when you go into the working environment, because it does get more difficult to learn from scratch as you get older.



For more Alumni Profiles visit: www.rhul.ac.uk/alumni/profiles/