



Alumna Subject Graduated Qing Liu
MBA
2008
Place of Work Position Jovial and Tigi
Marketing Manager



Tigi and Jovial are leading haircare brands with global research, development and distribution operations. South East Asia is an increasing distribution market. Qing is responsible for devising and implementing a marketing strategy to bring the products to the mass market, from professional hair salons to supermarkets. She takes responsibility for projects involving hair fashion shows, selecting stylists and make-up artists to work on high profile events across China.

Great minds *go on to* great places

How did you find studying at Royal Holloway?

I think that the experience of studying at Royal Holloway was one of the most unique in my whole life. I spent two years there, the first studying for the bridging diploma and the second studying for my MBA. The bridging diploma was an excellent way to raise my standard of English prior to starting the course. The tutors were so kind, more like family to me than teachers, so you really feel like they care and you are able to talk about anything. The Support Services helped me to find a British family, whom I spent Christmas with one year. I lived in Gowar [Halls of Residence] whilst studying, which was great. The rooms are light and airy so it's a pleasant working and living environment.

Why did you apply for the MBA?

I established my own pet shops businesses before going to work for a Chinese IT company as a technician. My Bachelor degree was in Management of Information Systems, so I began my career in an IT focused role. However, I was much more interested in marketing so I started thinking about how I could break into that industry. This wasn't easy though, because my major was in

an unrelated discipline. The MBA was really like a stepping stone, because it gave me the opportunity to break into a completely different industry to that in which I had previously been working.

Although I applied for several MBAs in the UK I found that I liked the course at Royal Holloway the most. The course itself was great, but the location of the campus and its rich history really added to the whole study experience. I opted for the marketing profile on the MBA, choosing to specialise in courses like International Marketing and Market Research. Those parts of the course really help me a lot in what I'm doing now.

What was challenging about studying in the UK?

The MBA course is very intensive, and quite different to other Masters programmes. We were in a class of 70, with students from many different nationalities. It was a great learning environment, especially for group assignments, but you are aware of the competition and of the need to represent your country as well as yourself amongst all these different students. I was not so hard working in China, but in the UK it was different! The whole experience was a financial and career investment.

What was your favourite aspect of the course?

The most impressive course for me was about strategy. Strategy is very important for any aspect of business; if your boss thinks that you have a good overall understanding of the direction of the business then it makes everything else much more straightforward. In my case, I will discuss the marketing strategy with my boss to understand the strategic moves we want to make in the company, before applying these objectives in a marketing plan.

What is your strongest memory from your time at Royal Holloway?

I remember once I had a really bad argument with a Taiwanese girl. We were talking in class about the issue of Taiwan, and she thought that Taiwan should be a separate country from China. So we had this argument, because for my part I felt that Taiwan should remain part of China and I was so shocked to hear that Taiwanese people might not feel the same. It's a cultural and political shock, particularly to hear that young people might have this strong sense of political belief. So this was a moment of understanding for me, a realisation that people might feel strongly about something that I had taken for granted.



people with passion

“My MBA was like a stepping stone to starting something new”



Please tell us about your current role.

I am the marketing manager for two brands: Jovial, a French brand and Tigi, a British American brand. All their research, development and production takes place in Europe and America, so we import the product and deal with distribution. Most of our customers are salons, because we focus on promotion and distribution through the professional hair and beauty channels although some of our distribution is via national supermarkets as well. Recently, I have been moving into sales as a national account manager, which helps me to gain a better understanding of what the client wants, and so improves my knowledge of the markets.

What are the best parts of your job?

The most fascinating part for me is organising the national hair fashion shows, with one very high profile show per year and lots of smaller shows. We work with the hair and beauty stylists to decide the overall look for the show. We colour, perm, cut and style in preparation for the models walking the catwalk. I am responsible for every aspect of the show, from lighting to timings, customer care and selecting the stylists with whom we want to work. It's very intensive, because you often have to work

overnight to dress the room and get everything done before the show starts, but it's great fun and all worth it to see the models walk.

What projects are you currently involved in?

Right now, we are the main sponsor of the fifth Shanghai film festival so we are currently sourcing stylists and makeup artists to work with us on styling the movie stars. I select the stylists and technical directors from our clients and organise a training course for them, specialising in doing hair for this type of event since it's very different to working in a salon. As a simple example, when we do the marketing for Tigi, the styling is very street, funky and young, but you would never do this for the film festival, which demands something more classic. I pass this kind of information to the stylists, as well as managing the overall branding plan, from logo positioning to deciding how many media representatives we invite.

Do you have any tips for students thinking about studying abroad?

Before starting I had always thought that the one year length of the UK Masters programmes was an advantage, but I now think that two years is much

better because you have more time to learn the language and culture. I would recommend doing a language course so that you have a better level of oral English when you start your programme, and you will be more competitive. Another tip would be to try to make friends outside of your Chinese group. It's easy to stay in your comfort zone, but you have to push yourself to get the most out of the experience.

Do you have any tips for students looking to break into the business world?

Find some part time work (not necessarily work experience), including volunteering opportunities. One extracurricular project that I was involved in was a London College of Creative Arts organised competition. In a group, you are responsible for marketing a piece of art created at the university; the pricing, the brand story and so on. At the end of the competition, we presented our marketing strategy to the board and they decided which one they wanted to invest in. If you don't have any work experience, grab every opportunity to enhance your CV.



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

Royal Holloway, University of London
Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX
T: 01784 434455
www.rhul.ac.uk