

# **Bristol MBA - Information for Postgraduate Education**

## **My MBA Experience**

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I'm half way through the full time MBA at Bristol Business School and I can safely say that I have absolutely no regrets in taking a year off work for this experience.

My background is in marketing, which I fell into after graduating from the University of Bristol with a Politics degree in 1999. Leaving University, I went straight into a full time job with the employer I had been working for the previous two years on a part time basis. They were a charity fundraising agency, where I'd worked on the telemarketing components of wider direct marketing activity for the likes of Imperial Cancer Research Foundation and Mind amongst others. This was when I first considered an MBA and looked quite seriously at the Open University route. I got as far as filling in the application forms before deciding that I needed a bit more commercial experience before committing myself to something so intensive.

With a short detour through recruitment consultancy, I ended up at a niche B2B marketing agency where I was able to really roll my sleeves up. Three years with them exposed me to the full gamut of the marketing mix, from advertising, events, direct mail and web marketing for the likes of Microsoft, Dell and IBM. I'm one of those people who likes to prove myself and have a healthy respect for formal education [when mixed with solid practical experience], and my employers had supported me through the Chartered Institute of Marketing Advanced Certificate. Then one rainy December day, at a friend's flat in London I picked up a paper from the recycling pile - it was the Sunday Times MBA special supplement. Having reached the top of the account handling pile at the agency I was really up for a new challenge and my interest in the MBA was re-awakened.

I researched the AMBA accredited institutions within two hours of Bristol, where I live with my husband. BBS appealed because it seemed to have a mature approach to the course and none of the macho, Gecco-style, bravado that I saw at others. I met with Dr Ken Russell and sat in on a seminar. The thing that really stays with me is Ken's comment that an MBA is about knowing the right questions, not about sending you out in the world thinking you know all the answers. I decided on the full time route, with the support of my husband, to allow me to make a break with an employer with whom I had become fairly entrenched.

Receiving my offer gave me the confidence to leave and take up a six month contract with Lloyds TSB. Doing something completely different before starting the course was a really good move and broadened my commercial perspective. It's also been beneficial in terms of what I'm able to bring to the course, as well as confirming to myself that I can really handle new situations - which is

pretty essential, being as I want to pursue a career in consultancy.

The course itself has been tough, but I've really enjoyed it so far. The key is in keeping up to date with your reading, making an effort to contribute and listen to others and not being afraid to ask and ask when you don't understand. I'd recommend the full time route to anyone who's looking for change of direction and for perfectionists like me who would want to commit 100% to work and study if studying part time - a sure route to a breakdown. The full time route allows time to really get to grips with the subject and to do the best you can, without fear of a work deadline messing up an assessment. It's also the cohort with the most diverse cultural mix, which brings yet another dimension to the experience.