International Study Experiences Enriching My Future and My Career

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As a person I have grown and faced challenges I thought I would never have been able to do. It always seemed to me that there would be no way a student would be able to do this, make decisions that affected the outcome of customer perceptions and the effectiveness of Coca Cola Amatil’s supply chain for Victoria. I was able to contribute and have been listened to by my peers and managers. They really wanted to hear what a co-op student had to say and the advice which I gave. I have surprised myself as well in being able to contribute to resolutions in meetings with projects managers, warehouse managers, transport companies, customers, buyers and account managers. I can’t believe that all these important people would listen to me, take my advice and my opinions actually counted.

I can confidently say that the skills and development I gained from my UMAP experience to China in 2008 had a direct influence in enabling me to step up to the challenges I faced day in day out as a co-op student working as a Load Coordinator within Coca Cola Amatil’s Logistics department in 2009. I am currently headed for another overseas study experience, taking part in an undergraduate program sponsored by the China Government Scholarship Council where I will undertake 1 year of Chinese Language study followed by a Bachelors degree of International Politics. My experience of learning the Chinese language both at RMIT University and Nanjing University, China has enabled me to further my global learning and career.

International exposure through study abroad programs such as UMAP presents students with so many opportunities to grow both personally and professionally and these opportunities are absolutely unique.

I can personally state that from my experience in studying overseas it has developed me personally and has aided in building my professional skills. These days it is more than just grades that employers look for. They want to know if you have any life experience, if you have ever challenged yourself, if you have ever stepped outside your comfort zone and how you coped with and handled any difficulties you faced. You may not know it at the time but every overseas experience you have has an effect on you; it is the person you are at the other side of this experience that makes you unique and stand out from the crowd.

Overseas study truly gives you a well rounded educational experience. It is up to you as to how much you want to put in. The focus on a global level opens your understanding to the complexities and dealings of overseas living, study and opens your mind up to a cross cultural educational experience. It is challenging, but after all, challenging yourself and pushing your boundaries is what success in your career is all about.

If I can give one piece of advice to any student, I would say don’t spend your time going through university just attending lectures, hoping to pass and settling for average. University is so much more than that and it is overseas study opportunities like UMAP that provides you with that extra experience, and remember, an interviewer will never settle for someone average. Make the most of your university experience and take part in study abroad programs. Challenge yourself and you will see yourself develop and become a confident member when you enter the work force.

The options and avenues are endless and available if you just look. Nothing is ever handed to you, you have to work for it and take part and you will find that doors will open for you. Take part in extra-curricular activities, there is one to suit everyone. Make the most of travelling and studying overseas, it is one of the most amazing experiences you will ever have. The people you meet and the experiences you have will be with you for the rest of your life.

Program’s such as UMAP provides you with the opportunities to do all of this and more. It is entirely up to you and the only limitations will be the ones you place on yourself. Make the most of these opportunities as you will find that what makes you stand out from the graduate next to you in an interview is the experiences you have had and the knowledge and development you have gained through what you have put in.