ALVIN LIM



Executive Director, Head of Asia Environmental Products at Morgan Stanley
Bachelor of Business Administration - Finance (2012)

Done by: Hong Shanshan, NUS BBA Year 2

Alvin was an active student in the NUS Business School. He excelled in academics and co-curricular activities, winning numerous awards in renowned international case competitions. Alvin also has an abundance of international work experience. Outside of school, he had done several international internships with companies such as Morgan Stanley as part of their Institutional Equity team in Hong Kong. After graduation, he worked in Morgan Stanley in Hong Kong, New York, and Singapore. After Morgan Stanley, he was the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Product & Strategy Officer at Snapcart.

He then added to his experience as the Vice President of the Enterprise Strategy department at GIC in Singapore and Shanghai. Currently, he is an Executive Director, Head of Asia Environmental Products with Morgan Stanley Singapore.

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INTERVIEW

As the Vice President in the Enterprise Strategy Department at GIC, Alvin's primary role involves supporting the firm's sustainable investment fund. This is what his typical 12-hour workday would look like: He gets in to work early at 8am and starts his day by reading the news for market updates. The rest of his morning is spent reading emails and researching and preparing models, such as:

Thematic research: How do sustainability-related issues affect investment opportunities? Research areas related to this topic include plastic, water scarcity, and the carbon market. For example, if carbon emissions increase, the world gets warmer, and the risk of floods and cyclones correspondingly increases. From an investor's point of view, if you own real estate assets along a coastline, you may have to consider these environmental risks associated with your investment. Similarly, if you own an oil and gas pipeline, you may consider shifting your investment as consumers shift their energy demands from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) integration: How does one select securities in the idea generation phase? How does one incorporate ESG considerations into the fundamental due diligence of security? How does one engage companies after investing in them with an ESG lens?

ESG analytics: Building an ESG analytic tool kit with technologists to identify ESG risks and opportunities.

After lunch, a few hours are spent replying to emails and taking calls. Between 4pm and 8pm when the London and New York markets open, Alvin will be on calls with his overseas counterparts to discuss market opportunities and engage with ESG market vendors. He also spends some time over the weekend reading work-relevant content such as market news and commentaries.

Reflecting back on how his education years in Ngee Ann Polytechnic laid the foundations for his current role, Alvin shared that he actively nurtured his interest in finance, doing a lot of trading and investing at a young age. In addition, he was passionate about climate change, and youth development, with a focus on youth education development. Alvin's interest in climate change made him realise that if the trajectory of global warming is left unchecked, more (intense) floods – and rising sea levels – will follow. Global warming also impacts nations differently, with the low(er)-lying ones experiencing a greater and more imminent risk. In addition to changing personal consumption behaviours, Alvin encourages young graduates to consider careers in industries that provide solutions to solve climate change, such as renewable energy, green mobility, hydrogen, and sustainable food.

Alvin realised that pursuing a career in finance would enable him to further support these causes. With this motivation and passion, he went on to obtain a Diploma in Banking and Financial Services and later a Bachelor of Business Administration (Finance) at NUS. A few internships in the finance industry cemented his decision to join this exciting sector.

In his effort to self-reflect, Alvin shares that he thinks deeply about What he wants to do now and in the future? He feels that the faster he has answers to these questions, the better it is because he will learn to say no to the things that are not aligned with his plans, thus reducing distractions. Knowing what he wants to do also means he can find the right people to guide him or open new doors. Thirdly, this certainty also makes him feel more content and grateful for what he has. To those who are still charting their paths, Alvin recommends taking the StrengthsFinder assessment, a personal development tool that helps individuals uncover their top strengths. Always seeking to learn new things, Alvin changes his role every two years – a confirmation of having consistently scored the "Learner" strength in the assessment!

Another advice he wishes to give to graduates is to have an open mindset and take risks. This is especially pertinent in the finance industry, where one is surrounded by talented people. Alvin warns that, "If you suppress your voice, you may become irrelevant. It is important to take career risks such as joining a new industry. When you are on the job, it is essential to take career risks, and you must have the conviction to demonstrate your idea works."

Please share how your journey in NUS led to your initial career in Supply Chain, and your subsequent move into the non-profit sector.

I lived in halls. Being among friends was a great experience. In addition, I was offered case competitions and international internships, which were all great experiences as well.

NUS has a rigorous curriculum and teaches you how to learn. However, we may struggle to express that through presentations. Internationally, NUS is well-recognised. When you apply for an MBA or Masters, you will get a lot of recognition if you do well at NUS.