BHARGAVI SANTOSH

LINKEDIN



INTERVIEW DONE BY THARAVIKA RAMESH BABU

Bhargavi, a recent graduate from the National University of Singapore in 2023, is a dynamic marketing specialist with a passion for strategy and innovation. Her practical experience, gained through internships at Baxter International and SimplyGood, honed her skills in market research and digital advertising. With a lifelong interest in healthcare, she brings a unique perspective to the field, adept at adapting marketing strategies to diverse industry needs.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO CHOOSE THE MARKETING SPECIALISATION?

As I did the core modules I realised that there is actually room to be creative and analytical in marketing. When you do the core modules, they take you through the breadth of marketing as I would say. You go through a lot of different topics before you choose the specialisation. For me, it was through the core modules that I realised that I liked strategy and marketing more which is why I chose my specialisation based on that.

WHAT ARE SOME SOFT SKILLS AND TECHNICAL SKILLS YOU GOT OUT OF THE MARKETING SPECIALISATION?

Hmm soft skills... I would definitely say presentation skills. There are a lot of presentations in marketing and a lot of writing as well. Many of the assignments are basically essays. I would say the difficult part of marketing is that there is a lot of research you need to do. You need to analyse a lot of different perspectives for different companies. Based on all that, you get to be involved in many real life projects. You are always trying to analyse some company's case. I guess for technical skills, when it comes to projects, there is a recommendations section. For most of our projects, we have to come with many different solutions. A lot of my projects ended up having an application as a recommendation. So my technical skill would be when I design the mockups and prototypes for the applications.

MARKETING IS SO BROAD AND I SEE THAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE IN MANY AREAS OF MARKETING THROUGH YOUR INTERNSHIPS, FROM DIGITAL MARKETING TO PUBLIC RELATIONS ETC. WHAT IS IT WHICH INTERESTS YOU THE MOST AND WHY?

I would say the one I loved the most was strategy. Coming up with new ideas or new concepts that the firm can apply. So I would say this is a combination of my experience in two different internships. My first one was at Baxter International and my role was in market research. I was interviewing surgeons and learning more about what they did not like about the firm's products. I liked that aspect of it because by knowing what they do not like,

I could come up with ways to make it better and more suitable for them.

So that was something I really enjoyed. Then, my second internship was at SimplyGood where I was just handling the Shopee page and I was in charge of all the advertisements, deciding when to promote a particular item or how much to promote it for. Thus, I would say having that sort of autonomy and being able to actually use my data to come up with new things was what I enjoyed the most.

MARKETING IS RELATABLE TO MANY INDUSTRIES AND IT MIGHT VARY ACCORDING TO THE INDUSTRY AS WELL. WHICH INDUSTRY DO YOU PREFER?

For me, I have preferred healthcare since I was young. I have always liked healthcare so I have wanted to know more about the industry itself. However, when it comes to marketing I would say you are right. It is not the same for every industry. Different industries focus on different parts I would say. Overall, it is still quite similar. I do not think it is at the different ends of a spectrum. It is just about the product whereby you have to adjust accordingly to how your audience is and how they approach the product.

DURING YOUR TIME AS A MARKETING STUDENT IN NUS BUSINESS SCHOOL, DID YOU DO ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM TO EQUIP YOURSELF WITH MORE MARKETING KNOWLEDGE?

Other than my internships, I was a publicity executive at SunNUS. It is an event that NUS Sports Club does. I guess that is not completely marketing. It is more towards publicity but by creating social media posts and monitoring social media engagement I was trying to use some of the marketing skills to get more people to join the event. I also signed up for SunNUS before I got my first internship. So I used SunNUS as an example so that I could get my first internship.

AS A FRESH GRADUATE YOURSELF, DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR CURRENT STUDENTS TO PREPARE THEMSELVES IN UNIVERSITY FOR A MARKETING CAREER?

For marketing, in school specifically, when it comes to projects or all the things that you are needed to do for your modules. I guess grouping up with people who are committed to the group project would help. When it comes to internships, I guess one thing is to know your company very well; whichever one you are going to be applying for. I would always do a bit of research before I go for an interview. I do not necessarily practice interview questions but I make sure that I know about the company's products, their mission and vision and everything. Then you try to answer the questions so that it suits what the company is looking for. More than that, as you are going through the modules in university, you will realise what you like, so go for the things you like and I think that would be the best.

FROM YOUR LINKEDIN, I SEE THAT YOU WERE A TEACHING ASSISTANT AT NUS TOO. TELL ME MORE ABOUT IT.

I was a teaching assistant for the MNO2K module. It was just for the semester itself. I took it because I realised it would be good to have experience working with a professor and to see how it is like working in the educational sector. I was basically involved in all the admin stuff, tracking class participation and helping out with whatever lesson activities.

DO YOU SEE YOURSELF GOING INTO THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

I would not mind but I still prefer healthcare. When I was younger, I always liked science and I always liked reading about different things. I was studying about different diseases and different medicines. I would say I was naturally inclined to have an interest in working in this particular industry.

WHAT WOULD YOU BE PURSUING IN THE FUTURE? DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS?

I have been applying for jobs as of the moment. Most of my roles would be towards strategy or towards digital marketing because my skills are built towards these areas. Those are also the parts where I am most interested in.

WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES YOU FACED AS A MARKETING STUDENT? HOW ABOUT NOW AS A MARKETING GRADUATE?

Honestly, in school, there is really not much of a problem. It is just about making sure you do your modules well. Outside school, it is about getting a job. The marketing sector is very competitive. It is quite tough to get a job right now and a lot of my friends who are fresh graduates like me have not been able to find a job. So, I think that is the challenge as it is a very competitive sector. Marketing is a popular specialisation and it is very saturated. At the same time, the job market is not doing so well either due to Covid-19 and recession.

HOW DO YOU THINK CURRENT STUDENTS OF NUS BUSINESS SCHOOL CAN REACH OUT TO MORE PEOPLE AND BUILD UP THEIR NETWORK?

One thing is to do so definitely through your modules. During group projects, try to build connections with them and keep in touch especially if they are from different specialisations. For a lot of specialisations, the jobs tend to overlap so in future if you need help with your career progression, you can reach out to them. Another way is through events or CCAs. There is NUS MINT and I think there are a few consulting clubs in NUS Business School as well. So just sign up for those and through that you will be able to build connections with both your CCA mates and with the external people you end up working with. The other way is through internships by keeping in touch with your past employers.

WHAT ARE SOME INDUSTRY TRENDS ASPIRING MARKETING STUDENTS CAN FOLLOW AS OF CURRENTLY?

Right now, I would say, there is huge emphasis on having soft skills. I realise a lot of companies out there do not want to teach their new staff soft skills. When it comes to presenting or working in a group setting, I think those are skills you need to work on on your own and through school as well. I would think that having soft skills is a prerequisite now. When it comes to hard skills, I think they are more willing to teach. So perhaps having a basic understanding of for example programming or whatever your job requires would be good as well.