CHERIE LIM

LINKEDIN



INTERVIEW DONE BY LEE JUN LIANG

Cherie is a dedicated Communications Associate at Google, where she specialises in internal communications for the APAC Marketing, Strategy, and Operations team. Her academic background in marketing strategy and content creation, coupled with her experiences in the NUS Overseas Colleges program, uniquely prepare her to craft effective communication strategies. Her global experiences have broadened her perspective, allowing her to navigate the dynamic communications landscape with innovation and fresh insights.

COULD YOU DO AN INTRODUCTION OF YOURSELF TO THE READERS?

Hi, I'm Cherie. I graduated in Jan 2022, majoring in BBA, with a specialisation in marketing. Since the beginning, I've always wanted to do marketing. Currently, I'm doing internal communications at Google's APAC marketing team and I sit in the strategy and operations team. I'm doing internal communication for my boss, who is the chief of staff to the CFO. At work, I organise town hall events and we try to make it as engaging as possible. In addition, I'm in charge of the weekly newsletter as well, where I'll look at the list of ongoing marketing projects and shortlist the main key learning from all the different projects. Occasionally, I'm also in charge of writing introductions, such as ghostwriting for my boss. I believe my role involves a mix of copywriting and designing skills, which is a role that was a good fit for me. I always thought that I was pretty good at marketing, thus I decided to study marketing at university. This was the first time I was doing a communications role and I realised that marketing is actually very heavily numbers-driven, because I also went shopback and shopee for my internship as well. Currently, my role in communications at Google is more focused on creativity and less on numbers.

For my internship, I was a B2B marketing intern with Saleswhale, where I was involved in creating blog posts, market research, videos and many more. I also did an internship with Shopback where I was extremely involved in setting up multiple campaigns. For example, I had to bring in 6 famous TikTokers for one of the campaigns and even had a chance to work with Puma on a music video.

On the side, I own a YouTube channel. It is a great way to learn how to edit videos and create better copywriting and eye-catching thumbnails. I think that it is a very good way to experiment, have fun, put yourself out there and experiment with what works well and what doesn't. I believe it started because I have a very strong marketer mindset, where I enjoy experimenting with new things and sharing my experience at the same time.

COULD YOU SHARE YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE AT SCHOOL, INCLUDING YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN CCAS, HALLS, AND COMPETITIONS YOU PARTICIPATED IN?

When I first started at NUS, I was extremely active, had 7 CCAs and signed up for almost everything, such as Sheares Camp and Sports Camp. I guess the main purpose was to get to know as many people as possible and make friends as well. When year 2 semester 1 came, my grades were not the best and I had many commitments in the hall, such as dance, acapella, netball, handball and soccer. Looking back, I'm amazed at how I was able to juggle all that and studying as well. During year 2 semester 2, I went on student exchange and it was the best experience of my university life. I met many good friends overseas, travelled to new places and started my YouTube channel. During my time overseas, my friends were very supportive of my YouTube journey and constantly encouraged me to do fun things. During year 3, I took a Leave of Absence (LOA) to do a marketing internship at Shopback and went for the NUS Overseas College (NOC) program in the next semester. In addition, I also joined the L'Oréal Brandstorm case competition, which was extremely enjoyable.

Regarding tips to maximise your school experience, I think you have to put yourself out there, join as many things as possible and also do more internships. Once you become a working adult, it will be very hard to learn those things on the job, because everyone in the team is extremely capable and functioning at a high level. In addition, spend more free time with your close friends, because it will be very difficult to meet up with your friends once everyone starts working. Also, consider starting your side hustle, because it will be difficult to find time once work starts. In general, maximise the time you have, experiment with new things, meet more people and don't procrastinate on your tasks.

COULD YOU SHARE WITH US SOME OF THE REASONS WHY YOU CHOSE MARKETING AS YOUR SPECIALISATION?

I believe that everything that has ever been invented, was probably invented some way or another before. Let's say you want to sell shampoo, but there are 10,000 different brands in the market, how would you sell it differently? I think that innovation and experimenting in creating products is extremely important. These includes bringing the product to market, which is extremely difficult as well. I chose marketing specialisation because it fits my personality which is more on the creative end. I also enjoy the idea of creating a campaign that creates conversations and is rooted in culture. Within marketing, I like how marketing teaches you to focus on the target audience. Personally, I think this applies not just to marketing but everything in life as well, such as writing emails and crafting presentations. At a higher level, there are many new marketing theories, which is extremely interesting as well. Another benefit of studying marketing is that I can know when I am being marketed to, therefore I am less susceptible to marketing messages. One of my favourite marketing modules is MKT4812 Marketing Analytics, where I had the opportunity to experiment with selling different products and even gained a better understanding of the FMCG industry.

COULD YOU SHARE MORE ABOUT YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES AND HOW YOU MANAGED YOUR FIRST INTERNSHIP?

My first internship was as a B2B marketing intern with Saleswhale. For the interview, I shared my past experience and came up with many different ideas beforehand. Ultimately, I think you have to connect with the interviewer and answer the question calmly. I think a lot of the people who go for interviews are way too nervous or not prepared enough. The thing that helps you to stand out is whether you have something about yourself to talk about and your confidence throughout the interview. My next internship was with AppGrooves.com, which was more focused on B2C marketing. As the marketing consultant, I helped out with blog posts, and videos, improving UI/UX for the app and many more. Lastly, I was the Marketing Campaigns Strategy Intern at Shopback for about 7 months, which was an amazing experience, because the people there were very supportive and I was given the room to experiment with my different ideas. For example, I was involved in a music video, where I had the opportunity to talk to different stakeholders, such as the production team, musicians, dancers and talent agencies. It was an extremely rewarding experience as an intern because I was able to see my vision on the drawing board turn into reality.

COULD YOU SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH NUS OVERSEAS COLLEGE (NOC) PROGRAM AND TIPS FOR STUDENTS LOOKING TO GET INTO THE PROGRAM?

Firstly, I think it is important to have an entrepreneurial and startup mindset, who is willing to try, fail and learn from their mistakes. In addition, you should be willing to take risks and adapt quickly. Ideally, you should be able to think quickly on your feet when faced with a challenge and find a way to make things work. Secondly, you would need to show a track record of things you've done, such as any side projects you have started or currently working on. Thirdly, I think it is extremely important to be prepared for the interview and answer the tough questions confidently. As long as you're confident and know the reasons for applying and not applying to certain countries, you will be able to do well in the interview. In addition, showing interviewers that you're able to carry yourself well overseas and have the mental strength to cope with challenges independently would be beneficial as well.

GIVEN THAT MARKETING INTERNSHIPS ARE EXTREMELY COMPETITIVE, WHAT ARE SOME TIPS THAT YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS LOOKING TO SECURE THEIR FIRST MARKETING INTERNSHIP AND THINGS THEY CAN DO TO INCREASE THEIR CHANCES?

Firstly, I would recommend everyone to go for the module that teaches resume writing. Secondly, I think the structure of the resume matters, such as putting the most important point above, bolded words to draw attention and ensuring only relevant points are presented in the resume. Thirdly, I would include side projects that I'm working on, to stand out among the competition. Lastly, it is important to ensure that your LinkedIn is well-maintained.

Nothing beats practice for interview preparation. Ideally, practice with your friends on basic questions such as "Tell me about yourself", "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" and "Why do you want this job?". Subsequently, do

spend time practising company-specific questions and hypothetical examples as well. These examples help you to learn how to verbalise your thought process and present your point coherently. After finishing the interview, I think it is also a good practice to send the interviewer an email to thank them for the time and wrap up some of the interesting points discussed during the interview.

FOR STUDENTS LOOKING TO ENTER THE MARKETING INDUSTRY, WHAT ARE SOME PLACES THAT THEY CAN START WITH?

I think a good place to gain marketing exposure is to work in a startup in I Cube because you'll be able to do the most and learn the most there. When you're in a startup, you'll be able to learn about the different functions. However, when working in a big company, you'll only focus on one specific thing but in greater depth. I think starting your own club is a great way to practice marketing as well because you will constantly be finding ways to get more members and signups, without spending money.

COULD YOU SHARE WHY YOU CHOSE TO START A YOUTUBE CHANNEL IN UNIVERSITY AND SOME TIPS THAT YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS LOOKING TO START THEIR SIDE HUSTLE?

Personally, I started my YouTube channel for fun and just to make travel vlogs. I find it extremely cute to document my life, the people I meet and the things I do as well. When I am creating content, I enjoy learning about how each change I make affects the audience and outreach as well. The best part about the channel is being able to learn about the different marketing skill sets, such as analysing data, SEO, market research, copywriting, scripting and even public speaking. If you're planning to start your YouTube channel, I think it is important to plan out your schedule in advance and integrate it into your lifestyle as much as possible.

GIVEN THE COMPETITIVENESS TO ENTER THE TOP TECH FIRMS, COULD YOU SHARE YOUR INTERVIEW EXPERIENCE WITH GOOGLE AND WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE WORKING AT GOOGLE?

I was contacted by a recruiter via LinkedIn and went through 4 rounds of interviews over 2 weeks. I think having a strong LinkedIn and YouTube presence helped. For Google, I think they are looking for people with a global mindset, willing to experiment and do work that inspires others.

Firstly, the people at Google are nice, encouraging, and confident and they are full of different interests. Secondly, the people at Google are very diverse and come from different backgrounds. Thirdly, working hours are very flexible and they put a lot of trust in the employees to get the work done on their own time. Lastly, there are a lot of bonding activities among the team members as well.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER FINAL ADVICE FOR FRESH GRADUATES OR CURRENT STUDENTS?

My first advice is for people to learn to be "Smooth like water". This is especially true in today's economy, where things are constantly changing, so it is important to be open to changes and willing to adapt. My second advice is for people to be themselves and you will naturally attract opportunities that fit you.