NGEW LI FANG

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INTERVIEW DONE BY SARAH ANNE CHUN

Li Fang is an Associate Consultant at EY, where she specialises in supply chain and operations management. Her distinctive background includes specialisations in marketing and supply chain management at NUS, offering her a comprehensive perspective on business operations and their interconnectedness. This background ultimately ignited her passion for the consulting field, where she excels today.

COULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR TIME AT NUS, INCLUDING YOUR ACADEMIC AND CAMPUS LIFE EXPERIENCES?

My time at NUS was overall positive, although there were some challenging moments. In terms of academics, I specialised in marketing and supply chain management. I found the professors in these areas to be very supportive, offering comprehensive lessons and guidance outside of class. Some professors even provided internship opportunities and advice which I greatly appreciate.

As for campus life, I was involved in a variety of activities. I served on the organising committee for the NUS sport camp as a Vice project director leading a team of 25 committee members. This was a good opportunity for me and it helped me make many friends and connections that I still keep in touch with today.

I was also a member of the NUS Social Impact Catalyst and the Mint Club within BIZAD. Through my involvement in these clubs, I met and worked with people from diverse backgrounds. In addition to clubs, I played floorball with the recreation and external clubs during my four years in NUS.

Finally, I had the opportunity to participate in a summer exchange program at Hanyang University in Korea, where I interacted with international students and explored the country with friends.

OUT OF ALL THE ACTIVITIES YOU WERE INVOLVED IN, IS THERE ANY PARTICULAR ACTIVITY THAT STOOD OUT TO YOU AND YOU WOULD RECOMMEND TO STUDENTS TO EXPERIENCE?

The most important thing for students is to enjoy their time as a university student. I would highly recommend students to participate in such activities and non-academic related CCA, as it not only helps them take a break from academic matters, but also provides opportunities to meet and work with people from different faculties and backgrounds.

HOW DID YOUR SPECIALISATIONS INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION TO PURSUE A CAREER IN CONSULTING?

When I chose to specialise in marketing and supply chain management at NUS, I saw it as a unique combination that provided me with valuable insights into both areas. It allowed me to gain a better

understanding of how businesses operate and how they interact with one another. This exposure led me to consider consulting as a career option. Consulting is a field that allows me to work with clients across various industries, such as shipping, technology and marketing, which aligns with my interest in learning about different business operations. My specialisation in marketing and supply chain management equipped me with the necessary skills to be creative and analytical in solving business problems.

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE AS AN ASSOCIATE CONSULTANT AT EY AND THE WORK YOU DO THERE?

At EY, I work as an associate consultant in the business consulting department, with a focus on supply chain and operations. Our team handles global clients with supply chain related issues or processes that they want us to solve or enhance. On a day-to-day basis, we engage with clients and create deliverables based on their needs and requests. These deliverables may include assessments of current processes and solution recommendations. We also undergo professional training to stay up-to-date with the various industries and to ensure that we are knowledgeable and skilled enough to assist our clients. As an associate consultant, I support the team by analysing data and processes to suggest best practices and software solutions to clients based on their project's scope and requirements.

HOW HAVE YOUR PAST INTERNSHIPS PREPARED YOU FOR YOUR CURRENT POSITION AT EY?

My past internships have provided me with a solid foundation of skills and experiences that have been useful in my current position at EY. Specifically, my internship at Accenture as a management consultant was most directly related to my current role, as it gave me insight into the job scope of a consultant and how they engage with clients. I learned that consulting requires hard work and long hours, but also offers exposure to different industries and business operations, which aligns with my interests.

While my other internships were not directly related to consulting, they still helped me to develop important soft skills such as time management and effective communication with stakeholders. They also allowed me to apply the knowledge I gained from school to real-life projects and work environments.

BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT QUALITIES OR TRAITS THAT YOU BELIEVE ARE NECESSARY FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN CONSULTING?

Based on my past work experience and internships, successful consultants should possess certain key qualities and traits. Firstly, there should be the eagerness and passion to learn, as there is a significant amount of industry knowledge required as a consultant. Consultants are continually learning about various companies and industries.

It's also important to be proactive about seeking advice and learning from colleagues, regardless of their position or experience level.

Another crucial trait would be adaptability. As a consultant, it is important to be able to adapt fast and be able to apply your knowledge and experience as you'll be working with a wide range of clients from different industries.

Additionally, clear and structured thinking is highly valued in consulting, as clients expect you to be able to provide concise and actionable recommendations. Finally, strong communication skills and confidence are essential, as you'll be required to present your ideas and findings to clients and stakeholders.

LASTLY, DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR STUDENTS WHO ASPIRE TO FOLLOW A SIMILAR CAREER PATH AS YOURS?

For students who aspire to pursue a career in consulting, I would suggest starting by researching the job scope, culture, pay, and working hours by connecting with seniors or professors who have worked in the industry. This will help determine if consulting is the right career path for you. Additionally, internships are a great way to gain firsthand experience and learn more about the industry. Several of my friends and I also did a final year project on consulting, which gave me a glimpse into the industry and I recommend this for students interested in consulting.