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REPORT: MBA AT LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL

Studying Physics at EPFL gave me an excellent start into my career. Even though I did not go into academia and joined a consulting firm instead, the rigorous logic and structure of mathematics and physics has been of great help. However after 5 years of consulting in rather IT-driven projects, I felt that I needed to get a sound foundation of business knowledge and a global network of contacts. So I decided to pursue an MBA at London Business School.

Right from the start it was clear that this was a great decision: an exciting city, a global crowd of students from more than 50 countries and great faculty with strong academic track record. My wife and I both moved to London and settled down in a nice flat not too far from the city center. The two years of my MBA have been some of the most enriching in my life - on both the professional and the private level.

On the professional level the school turned out to be even better than its fame and its international ranking. Set in the middle of the city just near Regent's Park it is the mirror of our globalized society and business world. The diversity of the student body makes sure that the lectures are very interesting and lively. The discussions in class showed me new ways of looking at business topics and every student brought her/his experience to the table. Topics like finance, micro economy, macro economy, strategy, marketing, branding and even financial accounting can be fascinating when, as at London Business School, both faculty and students really try to get the maximum out of the lectures.

Apart from the pure knowledge and learning, it is very much also a cultural experience. For example the system of study groups: in the first year at business school everybody is assigned to a study group of 6 students. The groups are put together such that the diversity of the group is maximized: diversity of nationalities, experience and industry knowledge. Students then have to collaborate and quite a big chunk of the first year's final grade depends on the group projects. In the beginning this was tough, but in the end what actually started out as a bunch of strangers turned into my best friends during this time. We learned a lot from each other such as a certain understanding of (although not always an agreement on) the Chinese point of view on many a topic in world politics or how to bridge cultural differences and do our best work for the group.

On the private level quite a lot has happened in London, too. Most importantly our first daughter was born in London - funnily enough in St. Mary's Hospital, the same hospital, although not in the same exclusive wing, as little prince George. And we lived and learned to live in a huge metropolis: at times we miss it for the huge offer of food, art and culture to experience and at times it helps us to be much more relaxed about the little issues of everyday life in a Swiss city.

After the MBA we came back to Switzerland. Since I had been lucky to work with some startup companies in London and took many courses about entrepreneurship, I definitely wanted to join a startup back in Switzerland. Through some networking I landed a job as Chief Marketing Officer at FashionFriends - the fashion e-commerce company. Without my newly acquired business knowledge I probably wouldn't have been considered for this role. However I had to find out that I am not the born marketer and then joined Tamedia (an investor in FashionFriends) in the corporate development team. During the last three years I was involved in many strategic projects all across the company. As of July 1st I took over the role of Head of Strategy in the digital business unit of Tamedia - a move that wouldn't have been possible without the deep business knowledge, my entrepreneurship courses and my experience in startup companies that I was able to build in London. And ultimately all of this wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of the EPFL A3-alumni and the prêt d'honneur that helped me finance my MBA.

Thank you very much! I hope many other alumni will be able to profit from this great opportunity and pursue postgraduate studies that were as stimulating and enriching as mine.