

Elke van Lamoen (31)

STUDY YEAR: 2009-2011

IS: Teacher Management @ Avans Hogeschool

HOME: Family house in Arnhem

HOUSEHOLD: Engaged, expecting first child

DREAM JOB AS KID: Ballet dancer

RIDE: VW Golf



While studying business administration and later on the master Strategy and Innovation I was convinced that I knew what I wanted to do: become a strategy consultant. After participating in the consultancy game and visiting other network events I got really enthusiastic about this job. The puzzles, the logic, the strategy: it all sounded great. I decided to apply for an internship in between the master courses and my thesis to try it out and maybe already get a job after my thesis. I worked at [Roland Berger](#) strategy consultants as an intern for three months and hated it. The company and people were really nice, but the actual work was not my cup of tea. I liked the brainstorm sessions as a team, but the reality was that most of the time I was doing research, on my computer, alone.

This meant that I did not know what to do after finishing my thesis. I decided to apply for a management traineeship. This would help me find out what really suits me, as I would be able to try different positions and receive a lot of training. In September 2011 I started as a management trainee at [Essent](#), a large energy supplier in the Netherlands. During those two years I had three jobs: social media manager, coordinator of the new Essent trainee programme, and team lead at the B2C call center. I've learnt a lot these two years: I acquired a lot of professional knowledge and skills and learned about my talents (and pitfalls) and likes (and dislikes). Most importantly, I learned that I get most energy when I work with other people, in the here and now. Operational jobs suit me better than strategic or tactical jobs. I also realized that my dream job was to become a trainer or coach.

I stayed for another year at Essent and started working as Coach Continuous Improvement: training, advising and coaching B2C teams and team leads in a different (Lean) way of working. The project ended abruptly after a year due to a reorganization that made all interesting jobs disappear (containing a big portion of either training or coaching).

I decided to take a leap and follow my heart. I didn't apply internally for another job and became unemployed. I decided to give myself some time to find my dream job: teacher at a Dutch HBO/college. I didn't want to become a teacher at a university as I'm not really fond of doing research. I like the strong connection with practice that exists at the HBO. Luckily I found the right job within a few months and I now teach management courses for the studies Bedrijfskunde/MER (business administration) at [Avans Hogeschool](#) in Den Bosch. As a teacher I can combine my passion for training and coaching. I teach courses for about 10-15 hours a week. Besides that, there are a lot of coaching activities; for instance, I counsel/supervise groups of students in the role of tutor. I supervise students who perform projects or internships for companies. I'm also a counsellor for an entire class of first year students. I like the dynamics of a school environment, which are completely different from the dynamics at an office. I love my job, which almost doesn't feel like a real job. I'm going back to school again, it's just that I've got a different role now.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me via my [LinkedIn page](#).

Gerben Nij Bijvank (32)

STUDY YEAR: 2006-2008

IS: Project Manager Sustainability @ Dutch

HOME: Apartment in Amsterdam

HOUSEHOLD: In a relationship

DREAM JOB AS KID: Business manager

RIDE: BMW i3



I started my career as a trainee of the CEO of Tele2. I got in via the Career Fair in the RAI, where I participated in a best graduate programme. At that time, [Tele2](#) was not really known in the Netherlands, and I was just looking for a challenging job in telecommunications. I was the first candidate to reach the stand and talk to the Swedish CEO, which benefited me greatly. Our talk supposed to last one hour, but took much longer, and I got the job. At Tele2 I learned how to communicate and how decisions are made at the corporate level (fast speed, focusing on urgent issues, direct communication). After not meeting my first deadline, I was anxious to meet the CEO and I immediately started to make excuses. The CEO raised his voice and replied: "I don't care. When is it ready?" I replied: "Tomorrow?". "Okay, that's fine" the CEO said with a smile on his face. He explained me later that he was not interested in knowing the process. "Provide the solution, not the problem."

One year later I became a sales manager within Tele2. I quickly realized that I was too limited in my creativity and stuck in technical processes and procedures. The Marketing & Sales department was renowned to be innovative, but finding an 'innovative' packaging around a new technical invention (e.g. dongle) wasn't really my thing. The job was fatiguing me. I decided to find a job that fulfills my intrinsic needs, and for which I am passionate about. As a kid I always wanted to become an entrepreneur to create positive change. It was around 2010 that I realized that I wanted to do something entrepreneurial, and contribute to society. The increased ecological awareness and demand for environmental products led me on my path to become an entrepreneur in sustainability. I wasn't sure which job to go for, but moving into this direction surely would provide me with a fertile foundation to pursue more interesting jobs. I send out some emails via LinkedIn to a dozen of high profile people active in sustainability, but could not immediately get a job in this area.

In 2011, I took a job at Groupon. Not really in sustainability, but a truly exciting experience. The company grew rapidly from 100 to 300 employees in 12 months. I was head of the Lead Generation department, where I had to manage a group of students that grew quickly from 6 to 34. Gaining this entrepreneurial knowledge was interesting, but I wanted to move into the direction of sustainability. Showing your interest upfront helps, one of the guys that I got to know via LinkedIn linked me to [TheNewMotion](#), a company focused on providing the infrastructure for electric cars. My first telephone call led to an invite the same day to the company. The talks went wonderful, the people loved that I quit a job at a corporate firm. I did not care about my lower salary, because I was compensated by the opportunity to further my skills in the field of sustainable entrepreneurship.

Now I work at [Dutch](#) as a project and business development manager. I help firms that have a problem to (a) develop new (circular) business models, (b) embed sustainability within the firm's processes, (c) develop propositions, and (d) arrange financing. Dutch is paid in company stocks or fees. We, among other things, organize investor decks to convince business angels, venture capitalists, and banks. They will only invest in the startup if they consider it to be interesting investment opportunity; therefore we analyze and adjust the expenditures, sharpen the business model, do market and competitor analyses, and write a convincing business case: we *provide the solution, not the problem*.

My tip for students: If you are entrepreneurial, don't be lured into standard traineeships offered by large corporations. Do something for which your passionate about. See each job as an opportunity and fertile ground on which future jobs can germinate from. Build in a reflection moment after two or three years to sharpen what you want to achieve. Once you are able to do so, it helps you to make you happier, better, and more successful because your story becomes more credible.

If you want to contact me, you can do so via my [LinkedIn page](#).