

Jan Jouke Melchers (27)

STUDY YEAR: 2012-2013

IS: Tech Field Advisor Steam Engines @ GE

HOME: Houston (+ second home Amsterdam)

HOUSEHOLD: In a relationship

DREAM JOB AS KID: Inventor (☺ still trying)

RIDE: Whatever Hertz car available @ Schiphol



Before choosing my Master SIM, I "was" a *mechanical engineer* (BSc.). After completing SIM, I felt like a *business man*. When I got hired by [Deloitte](#), I felt like a *fancy consultant*. Now I work for [GE](#) and I'm again a *mechanical engineer*, thereby completing the cycle. Strangely enough, it took me 4 years to realize once more that I just very much like working with technology.

For the past six months, GE allowed me to study the mechanicals of their steam turbines at the learning facility in Houston (Texas, USA). Now I'm preparing for my next assignment, which can literally take place on every spot of the world.

As Technical Field Advisor, I am responsible for the technical compliance of all mechanical work related to the turbines, including maintenance, upgrades, and repairs. I'll travel to the country of destination and work *uninterruptedly* until the job has been done, to just take the next flight home to prepare for my next job. Often the job is scheduled well in advance, so it is not like James Bond, who is on call, waiting to be sent out on a mission without knowing it in advance. If planned correctly, the whole process from start to finish should be one straight run without any surprises. Obviously, that is often not the case. Just like fixing a car, until you actually open "the hood" of a steam turbine, there is very little you can say about the inner parts and what needs to be fixed. Together with a team of technologists we have to come up with perfect solutions ASAP, because for these big energy units: time is money! What I very much like about my job is the creativity that I can put into the problem solving - searching for technical as well as organizational solutions. When confronted with undesired deviations, you are truly challenged to think fast but still rely on rock-solid procedures and protocols.

Looking back I'm happy that I took the chance to first work a couple of years at Deloitte. You meet a lot of great - and often motivated - people and if you stay long enough you will definitely learn good professional skills that make you more self-aware and confident.

The SIM Master has helped me to understand companies and their employees. Last year, I worked in a part of the company that got announced to be sold. In those uncertain times, I am very lucky to have the SIM background. It helps me to better understand the management decisions and makes you a legit guy-to-go-to for your peers' questions and discussions.

If you feel that I can help you or if you want more information about my career so far, do not hesitate to contact me via [LinkedIn](#).

Thijs Visscher (28)

STUDY YEAR: 2011-2012

IS: Strategy & Bus. Development @ Aegon

HOME: Apartment in Warsaw (Poland)

HOUSEHOLD: Single

DREAM JOB: Farmer

RIDE: Mercedes Benz A200



At secondary school, I defined two future goals for myself: I wanted to study in Groningen and my future career will be in a business environment. Moving to Groningen was not such a challenge but choosing an appropriate study towards my (broadly defined) ambition definitely was: eventually I started the bachelor business administration.

Studying was not the most significant part of my time in Groningen. My interests focused more on other activities like work, being active in study associations and social life. The main experience I got was the board-role I fulfilled at the [EBF](#).

After this year I started the master IBM. Mainly because of the international focus. During this year the business contacts I gained from my experience at the EBF contacted invited me to apply for available job positions. In the end, I chose to start at [Aegon](#) in the autumn of 2012.

Honestly, my ambition was not to work at a financial firm. But visiting Aegon and meeting the colleagues changed my view: I liked their passion for the company and certainly the atmosphere of creating and seizing opportunities by yourself.

During the first two years I completed four different assignments. For me the most important part was discovering the company and my own ambition, capabilities and limitations. To stress these factors even more I grasped the opportunity to work in Tokyo for five months. I was just curious to find out whether I would like it and whether I would be able to also make it a success for the company as well.

It turned out to be a great period in which both personally as business-wise, we had a lot of success. This experience convinced me that the new knowledge and experience you'll get by completing an assignment abroad, will enrich your life. Or maybe more broadly stated: leaving your comfort zone and going the extra mile are certainly worth trying and gave me a lot of fun! Something I did not know on beforehand.

The key things I like in work: high responsibility, intensity and impact, daily contact with customers and working with colleagues. Fixing challenging situations and building up new business for the company became my personal brand.

This was also the main reason why I moved to our division in Warsaw. At this moment I support the board in providing answers to strategic issues and help them to seize opportunities by being responsible for new business development in this region. I try to add value by offering a novel perspective and coming up with new ideas, different solutions and different ways of working together. Besides, I utilize both my internal and external network. At the same time, I have learned to adapt to the different customs and culture in Poland. The Dutch are quite famous for our directness, but that attitude simply doesn't work around the world. I already had to learn how (not) to engage and encourage people, and gained personal experience in communicating my ideas in a different way. If you have any comments, questions or like to keep in touch, please send me an invite on [LinkedIn](#).