

Karina Barrios (30)

STUDY YEAR: 2011–2013

IS: International Techn. Consultant @ Ctrl BV

HOME: Amsterdam

HOUSEHOLD: Engaged

DREAM JOB AS KID: Part-time world traveler

RIDE: Peugeot 308



After finishing my Bachelor's in Business Administration at the University of Groningen, I started my Master's in Strategy & Innovation right away. During my Master's, I was active as a student assistant by working at the FEB Research Lab and facilitating workshops for Bachelor students. After graduating, I noticed, along with a lot of friends that graduated that year, there was not much diversity in the offered vacancies at that time in the north of The Netherlands. My boyfriend, who also graduated that year, and I decided to move to the Randstad.

Very quickly I found an internship at [Accenture](#). Here I became familiar with the corporate world. With a large group of interns, we worked towards a big event. Great opportunities came along. For example, I learned Accenture's "Way of working", providing me with best practices to do my work. Also, we even did the official opening of the AEX one day!

The downside of internships is that you don't get paid a lot: it was time for a real job. I heard about an agency that is focused on getting jobs to highly educated young professionals. For the project I did, it required me to live in a hotel for a couple of months, meaning I was only able to go home during weekends. The project was a good experience for me, as I learned a lot by really needing to be independent.

Nowadays I work in the field of IT and accountancy at [Ctrl BV](#). This employer, which is a spinoff of [Deloitte](#), reflects the best of both worlds, as it means working at a corporate and a start-up in one. I work as an international IT project manager and onboarding consultant. A couple of months ago, I stayed two weeks in Canada, helping the client to onboard its clients and colleagues to our platform. In the last couple of years, I've learned a lot here on how to manage IT projects with subjects as User Acceptance Testing (UAT), Pilot, Proof of Concept (PoC), Agile Management, and the Scrum methodology.

Anno 2018, innovation is mostly IT related, which makes my job very interesting. What I love about our platform is that it's very versatile. It is used by accountancy firms not only in communication with their clients, but it also supports them to streamline and digitize their work processes, and it integrates well with other cloud software. This keeps my job versatile as well. What I find important from a strategic innovation perspective is that all changes to the platform need to add value to all clients using it. This requires a different way of thinking for the entire team.

Whatever you end up doing after your studies, make sure you always do what you love and keep on developing yourself. For me this means, for example, facilitating Pre-Manager Journey courses as it gives me great pleasure to assist colleagues in their learning process and it helps me to improve my skills as well. Mindfulness has also helped me in this manner, giving me focus in work and my personal life, whilst at the same time providing me a perspective of what is important in life.

If you would like to contact me, please feel free to do so via [LinkedIn](#).

Rik Thomas (35)

STUDY YEAR: 2007–2008

IS: Expert Comp. Intelligence @Robert Bosch

HOME: Stuttgart, Germany

HOUSEHOLD: Married with children

DREAM JOB: I wish I would remember...

RIDE: Rose Xenon race bike



What tempted me towards the (at that time) the newly formed Master Program Strategy and Innovation, was the possibility to combine these two very interesting topics while keeping a wide range of career possibilities for my future.

After completing my master including an internship at Philips in China, I decided to go for a sales traineeship at [Meltwater News](#) in Amsterdam, an online media monitoring startup. This offered me the chance to be promoted quickly in a sales environment as well as to relocate across including China (where I was eager to get back to). I liked the hands-on experience that I gained from being a sales consultant at an internet startup. Within 8 months I was promoted from Sales Consultant to Sales Manager, being responsible for two team members.

Rather than taking a journey back to China, I went much closer to home: My girlfriend (at that time ☺: now my wife), who worked at [Robert Bosch](#), got a job offer to move to Germany and they actually made me an offer as well. I switched from sales to aftersales, from a startup to a big multinational, from working in Amsterdam to the German countryside, and became responsible as a Country Manager for the Power Tools After Sales Business in Eastern Europe.

I learned a lot about project management, controlling and quality management, but after three and a half years in aftersales I wanted to be in a more proactive role closer to the customer, so I decided to switch to marketing. We moved to the Power Tools headquarters in Stuttgart, and I became a Marketing Country Manager in the Measuring Tools Business Unit for various European countries.

After another three years in marketing, I took some time to decide my next step. As Bosch was rapidly expanding its IoT portfolio, I knew my consultative software selling experience could be of use, but there were not many options in the Power Tools division. Also, I wanted to contribute to the connectivity trend and switch to a more strategic role. Luckily Bosch just started a new division called [connected mobility solutions](#), uniting all exciting connectivity related mobility topics under one roof (check our research on: [community-based parking](#)).

Since July, I am a Senior Expert Competitive Intelligence & Strategic Marketing, being responsible for the division's strategic marketing with a strong focus on competitive & market intelligence. Using my media monitoring experience skills from my previous job and the strategic perspective from my Master, I assess the effects of market developments and competitors' actions with the aim to suggest adjustments to our business models. What I especially like about my job is that I have the freedom to decide by myself how my role should develop and that I can determine how to conduct competitive intelligence.

To all current SIM students: I wish you all the best, and hope you'll find a great new challenge. One advice I would like to give is not just look for a fitting job within a company you like, but even more so whether you have a connection with your future manager and team. After all, they're the ones you'll be spending most time with. Want to know more about working in Germany or Bosch? Feel free to contact me via [LinkedIn](#).