

Pien Hulshof (26)

STUDY YEAR: 2012-2013

IS: Innovation Process Coordinator @ Rituals

HOME: Amsterdam

HOUSEHOLD: With roommates

DREAM JOB AS KID: Actress

RIDE: Bike



During my master SIM, one thing became very clear to me; innovation would be the leading topic for my future. Since I just turned 23 when I graduated, I found it a very good, idea to go travelling. I went on a solo roundtrip and visited beautiful New Zealand, sunny Australia and mysterious South East Asia for a few months. This was a great experience and I would recommend everyone to make such a trip, just because you can!

Unfortunately, the travelling couldn't last forever. I decided to apply for an internship to get some basic working experience, figure out what I liked, see what I am good at, and without having too much responsibility.

Via [Integrand](#), I found an internship at the Materials Innovation Institute in Delft. This public-private organization connects Universities to Industry partners in High Tech Materials. As assistant of the director of this small and creative office, I was lucky to get involved in all business development matters. But since the innovation output wasn't really noticeable and difficult to grasp, I looked for a different type of business for my first 'real' job. My search area was still rather broad, ranging from retailers to technical companies, hoping to be involved in the development of visible innovations.

Although I lacked a technical background, I applied for a traineeship at [Koning & Hartman](#), an ICT service oriented company. I wanted to give it a chance and figure out if a technical industry would fit me. Koning & Hartman offered an interesting two year program with loads of extra business-related and personal development courses. Normally a trainee is involved in three projects, but I only did two because I was assigned to a very large scaled ICT project that took longer than normal. I couldn't be bothered since this assignment gave me the opportunity to learn a lot. As junior project manager I was linked to a senior project manager for the management of a very technical complex and mission-critical project at Schiphol Airport. When I got assigned to this project, I was pretty scared and anxious to find out whether I would be able to do a good job. Controlling a project team of very experienced (and much older) men, communicating with the customer in a politically sensitive environment, managing all supplier contacts, and writing internal reports were all part of my responsibilities. A perfect learning school!

Even though I enjoyed the learning progress and responsibilities, I realized that my interests lie elsewhere. I wanted to work in industries where innovation becomes tangible: like in retail and FMCG. I looked for companies that sell products that really interest me. I found a job as Innovation Process Coordinator at Rituals, a very innovative and fast-growing company. Rituals differs radically from my previous employer. Since process improvement between the Innovation department and most other departments is an important part of my job, my fresh perspective on matters as an outsider will hopefully help. Although I first need to gain a better understanding of the industry, I'm really eager to get my hands dirty... figuratively speaking of course, because we've got the best soap here ☺.

I have only been working here for 1.5 months, but my experiences confirm that I made the right choice. I value the business atmosphere and the great contact with my colleagues. I am part of a group that is ambitious, helpful, and creative, and that is fun to work with. I look forward to my time here at Rituals! If you want to contact me, please use my [LinkedIn](#).

Lineke Botterhuis (33)

STUDY YEAR: 2006-2008

IS: Strategy Consultant

HOME: Apartment in Amsterdam

HOUSEHOLD: Alone

DREAM JOB: Architect

RIDE: Bike



After finalizing the theoretical part of the Master in 2007, I felt not ready to start working at an actual company. I found an internship at De Ruijter Strategy, a small consulting firm highly specialized in guiding companies with conveying strategic insights through scenario planning. For 6 months I combined projects (4 days) with writing my thesis (1 day). Moving to Amsterdam, starting a fulltime job and finalizing the thesis was quite ambitious, but I learned so much. I stayed at [De Ruijter Strategy](#) for 4 years and participated in a broad range of (inter)national projects in private and public sector, performing trend research, (co-)facilitating client workshops, writing strategic reports, creating visions and innovative concepts.

In 2011, I needed a change of environment and content, eager to learn more about how change and strategy activation work. I started at FCTB, a small consulting firm specialized in organization development with the strong believe that people drive performance. We were mainly hired by HR and OD professionals dealing with (strategic) change in the area of people, technology and process. Leading and supporting roles in projects around change in organizations, communication, and strategy activation at a broad range of projects at companies like Rabobank, Ahold and DSM. A fun period working with a great team of people of which some became close friends.

FCTB was acquired by [Deloitte Consulting](#) in 2015. I participated in interesting projects, but it turned out not to be my cup of tea working at such a large firm. I quit in December 2016 to explore my next steps. A tough decision, but the best. Next, I want to contribute to the development of innovative, creative and meaningful concepts. It could be an internal strategic position, or supporting companies to develop innovative concepts as a consultant.

So, I chose consulting life. It suits my skills and competences. And it offers me the opportunity to work on new challenges constantly, the ability to work where and whenever I want and meet interesting people. But also pressure of hours, travelling and high performance. My advise to myself in my own journey, and to you in your journey. Expand your view and experience through an internship or working abroad. Talk to interesting people to explore your preferences and options. Do not get distracted by what your environment thinks you should do, salary or cars, in the end you will have to go there every single day: choose an interesting position where you feel comfortable, have great colleagues and support, will be challenged to learn and have fun!

In case you want to know more, you can contact me via [LinkedIn](#).