

## Wendy Tempels (30)

STUDY YEAR: 2008-2009

IS: Corporate Property Advisor at Suncorp

HOME: Melbourne, Australia

HOUSEHOLD: Living with partner

SALARY: Standard

RIDE: Orange Vespa!



Throughout my student life I was always interested in travelling abroad to study and I finally made it happen by conducting my masters research in Melbourne, Australia. I arranged to do a research piece for a company called ARUP (whilst I was still in the Netherlands). I framed the topic around the added value of building design from an occupier perspective, combining my interest in architecture and innovation theory. Once in Melbourne, I setup about 40 interviews with different types of people in the industry (including builders, architects engineers, end-users and workplace consultants) and found 3 aspects that have a positive value-add influence: setting a vision, an integrated fit-out and a project team that works together from the start; knowledge that I now actually get to apply through the work that I do.

After returning to the Netherlands to present my thesis and graduate, I decided that I wanted to go back to Australia to start my career. So that is what I did (and I just made that sound a whole lot easier and simpler than it actually was). Through the connections I made during my research I found a job as a strategic workplace consultant at a small but internationally oriented company. I travelled a lot to conduct projects in Singapore, South Korea and most cities in Australia. The projects were mainly focused on setting strategic visions for workplaces, and advising on flexible working practices and office design. Through this, I got exposed to a lot of different companies and people, which enabled me to learn a lot in a short timeframe (a great way to start my career).

Currently I work for the Commercial Real Estate department at Suncorp (comparable to Interpolis in the Netherlands). I am the project leader of 2 projects; one of them is to select and design a new office space in New Zealand for one of our insurance brands. The whole CBD (Central Business District) in Christchurch is being rebuilt after an earthquake damaged most of it in 2011. I am working with management to set the vision and we will be co-creating the selected office space with employees and designers through workshops and briefings.

The purpose of the second project is to visually present quantitative data captured within our department to help create insights for better decision making. Since most businesses deal with a very fast moving environment, making a 'good enough' decision at the right time is usually more important than making a decision based on complete and perfect data, when it might be too late. This project aims to have good data at all times to reduce the amount of time we spend on collecting information.

In the meantime I completed a course in Entrepreneurship which taught me a lot about the practicalities of starting a business in Australia. I am now aiming to pursue my entrepreneurial aspirations in the near future. One of the things I wish I did when I was a student.

If you want to pursue a career abroad or if you have any other questions, please contact me via LinkedIn: click [here](#)

## Tom Bakker (34)

STUDY YEAR: 2004-2005 (graduated 2010)

IS: Director / Consultant@TBT Consultancy

HOME: House in Heemstede

HOUSEHOLD: Married

SALARY: € 50,000 gross revenue (2014)

RIDE: Volvo C30



"Life is like a box of chocolates..." If somebody told me my current career path several years ago, I would probably reply that the person is crazy. During the final year of my study I was approached by Gerda Gemser, back then the director of the Master Strategy & Innovation, for a PhD research project in the field of innovation. Although I hesitated, I quickly became enthusiastic about the prospect. I was one of the few students who actually liked to conduct research activities and write papers. Despite my enthusiasm and efforts though, I did not succeed to acquire a PhD position for some reason.

Then, out of the blue, I received an email from an old classmate that the organization where he worked was looking for an innovation specialist. It was LEI – the economic bureau of Wageningen UR in The Hague. This organization turned out to be the destination of my first fulltime job. During four years, I conducted over forty research projects on stimulating innovation in the food industry, and measuring the impact of policy. Later, another topic emerged that suited my interests: the transition towards a biobased economy; an economy no longer based on fossil resources, but on biomass (e.g. crops and waste streams).

At LEI, I developed myself from a junior innovation specialist to a business developer. I had the responsibility to lead teams and acquire new research projects. After four years, my position became redundant due to the economic crisis. A new position luckily arrived soon enough, partly thanks to my large network and reputation I developed at LEI. My next step was a position as an Innovation Consultant at Syntens – targeted at SME advice in agrifood and biobased industries. I had a great time helping entrepreneurs and organizations with their innovation efforts. Just like at LEI, at Syntens I also benefited from my study in Groningen.

In January 2014 I decided to start my own consulting company, as I received requests from contacts in my network: TBT Consultancy. The focus of my firm is to help entrepreneurs and organizations to develop profitable biobased business models. My first year went great: I acquired several interesting projects and earned a good income. In addition, I came back to where it all started: to Groningen. One day a week I teach workshops for the courses Strategic Management and Innovation Management. Great to share my practical experiences with current students and to interact with them!

My advice to current students? My lesson after 7 years of working experience is: it is good to be ambitious and to plan your career, but it always works out differently... I believe that flexibility, entrepreneurial spirit and lifelong learning are key to survival in the current and future job market.

If you want to contact me, please do so via LinkedIn: click [here](#)