



OMBS Graduation Speech

Wednesday 2 July 2014

Jo Donelan, Director & Co Founder of Hatty Blue Recruitment Ltd

Thank you Andrea and your team for the great honour of joining this special occasion. I'd like to congratulate all of your students on their graduation. It's a phenomenal achievement and for me it's a privilege to be here this afternoon.

I have had the pleasure of working in partnership with Andrea and her team for over 10 years. From giving talks to new students to running career workshops, from giving commercial advice about the London job market to coordinating work experience campaigns. It has been a pleasure to develop professional relationships with the students and watch them flourish and thrive, growing in confidence as their skillset grows. The students themselves may change year upon year but the caliber of students here never ceases to amaze me and as a result many of my Clients actively seek OMBS students again and again. Time and time again we watch these students rise meteorically through the ranks, outdoing their peers, soaking up new challenges and carving themselves out exciting career paths.

Six years ago I placed an OMBS student, straight out of Graduation in a two day temp booking doing admin at Walt Disney. She's now EA to the President! Ex students have become HR professionals, marketing experts, property developers, PR gurus, business managers, superstar executive assistant's and more! Past students go on to become Clients, Candidates and Friends as the years pass by they continue to have "the edge".

Last month we were so impressed with the fabulous attitude and impressive skillset of our own OMBS work experience student we couldn't let her leave without offering her a job! Eliza, we look forward to welcoming you to Hatty Blue next week.

Today is a day of great celebration for all you have achieved during your time here and all the hard work that has got you to this point. It's a day of mixed emotions - joy, relief, sadness at the end of an era and excited anticipation at the new chapter to come – it's a day of reflection. It is also a day of thanks – to all those who have raised, nurtured, educated you and made sacrifices for you along the way. I am enormously grateful to the people who have encouraged me and helped me to develop – nobody can succeed on their own. I would never have embarked upon setting up my own business had it not been for the unswerving support of my parents (despite the fact they thought I was mad!) – thank you Mum! But it is also a day of some trepidation as you prepare to embark upon the world of work.

You may or may not be surprised to know that today's young people are the most ambitious and career minded generation in 100 years! This rather scotches the myth that modern youngsters are work shy, disengaged and prefer to fritter their lives away on Facebook! The values of your generation are being shaped by tough economic times in the aftermath of the recent financial crisis. You are confident in your abilities. You are not afraid to ask for feedback – rather you proactively seek it. You are entrepreneurial in spirit and current statistics show that 1 in 8 of you will at some point own your own business. You are team spirited, strong communicators and with the inspirational training you have received here, at OMBS, you have such sophisticated technical skills you can walk into any organisation and instantly add value. You also like to give back to society – many of you will be drawn to volunteering in some guise alongside your careers. And for the first time in 100 years girls aspire to the same career heights as boys. We're lucky – we don't live in the world our mothers and grandmothers lived in where career choices were painfully limited and mainly focused around survival. Your choices today are almost limitless.



So what should you expect from the working world in 2014?

Having been in recruitment for 14 years and having set up my business just as the recession hit in 2008 (I've always had impeccable timing!), I'm sure I can speak for my fellow recruiter peers here today in that the economic climate was then very challenging for all of us and we felt great empathy for those students joining the work force at this time. Today confidence has most definitely returned to the UK job market and you'll be pleased to hear that my clients in the world of media, advertising, PR and luxury brands are recruiting with gusto.

The landscape for a wannabe Assistant, PA or EA has changed dramatically in the last 10 years, particularly since the explosion of the digital world.

Technology has sped up business immensely and has revolutionised the secretarial role. Mobile phones, email, blackberries and so forth allow greater flexibility which has made life easier but also more complicated because the pace of change has made working life more pressurised.

People are generally more self-sufficient in the work place so the traditional role of a secretary has diversified and the choices and opportunities for PA's are more exciting than ever before. PA's increasingly find themselves being true ambassadors for their bosses - deputising in their absence, negotiating on their behalf, running accounts and budgets, undertaking research, business planning and strategizing, managing junior staff, event organising as well as using their emotional intelligence and common sense to be thinking two or three steps ahead of their boss.

Expect competition. For every job advertisement I write and publish on our jobsites the reality is I can receive around 1000 CV's per job so to get ahead you'll need to have the hunger, flexibility and expertise to stand out.

So now you are ready to join the working world, armed with your new found skills and confidence, how do you go about maximising your opportunities?

I thought I would share a few tips I have picked up along the way:

Be bold, even if you feel afraid. Every day do something that widens your comfort zone. Take a risk each day – one small or bold stroke that will make you feel great once you've done it. Even if it doesn't work out the way you wanted it to at least you have tried. Don't worry if your first job doesn't work out – finding out what you don't like is as valuable as finding out what you do like. Although I knew I loved recruitment from the outset, it took me eight years and five false starts to find my niche. You're not a failure if it doesn't work out straight away – you are a success because you tried.

Take responsibility for your own success – there is no need to wait for anyone to give you anything – your time at OMBS will have given you all the confidence and knowledge you need. Empower yourself to go out there and get what you want. Candidates who are in control of their lives draw like a magnet. Positivity is contagious! If a Client of mine is agonising over which candidate to choose they will always pick the one who wants it most, over experience.

Set clear goals in all areas of your life – establish your priorities. Start to think about which pathway might be more in line with your overall goals and **never** let what anyone says distract you from your goals.

Do your homework when job hunting! Talk to as many people as possible who will listen, professionals and friends alike but make sure you talk to the "right" people – those who want the best for you. Be commercially aware and curious. Read. Listen.



Life is busy. If we are hurtling around we don't have a lot of time to take care of ourselves. Look after your physical and mental health so you don't burn out. As women generally we need to do a better job of putting ourselves higher on our own "to do" list. **Be your own best friend** – whatever you do, don't put yourself down. **And don't forget to look after each other.**

Choose friends and partners who lift you up, not deplete your energy. **Have the right people in your life** – those who will support you, not who put down the possibilities open to you.

Stay true to yourself. Listen to your body and trust your gut instinct. Choose a company which reflects your own values. Choosing a business for which you are a good cultural fit is essential - this way you are more likely to grow with the business and become part of its future.

Keep up your skills: Don't stop learning. Be disciplined with yourself and it will pay you dividends in time to come.

Commit wholeheartedly to your new job – give it all you've got. But if it doesn't work out – change it. Don't hang onto a path you've chosen if it doesn't feel right. Move on.

Laugh at yourself – You may have finished your student life as you know it, but you're now becoming a lifelong student in the world of work – each experience is a valuable lesson to be learned so don't worry or agonise too much about choosing this job offer or the other or if you don't feel you are progressing as quickly as you'd like. Life has a habit of throwing obstacles in the way. On the first day of setting up Hatty Blue in April 2008 the South East of England suffered a freak snow storm and on my way to work I promptly fell over and sprained my ankle. I turned up to our "Grand Opening" five hours late, on crutches, only to discover that due to various legal loopholes in our lease agreement we had actually been evicted from our brand new office. There was nothing else we could do but see the funny side and if anything it strengthened our conviction to succeed! So lighten up! Nothing is that important!

Oxford Media & Business School students are different. You are not only equipped with a most diverse array of skills but you have also been fortunate enough to have been tutored and nurtured by some of the most dedicated and talented professionals in this country. In a marketplace saturated with young people about to embark on the career ladder your graduation from OMBS sets **YOU** apart from your peers and will serve you well in the future – in short, it is your passport to success. I am excited about helping many of you along your way and I know I will take great pride in your achievements to come.

Our mantra at Hatty Blue has always been that if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life. Be passionate about your career and you will never look back.

Good luck and enjoy the ride!

Thank you!

Jo Donelan
Director and Co Founder
Hatty Blue Recruitment Ltd