

Anne-Kathrin Witt  
Harvard Business School  
MBA 2013 – Section I

With a dual career background in consulting with PricewaterhouseCoopers and life science research at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry, I applied to the MBA program at Harvard Business School with the motivation to broaden and deepen my business knowledge and to develop my leadership skills in an environment that would allow me to take the next steps in my career. To start my journey at HBS in late August 2011 was truly a long dream come true. Little did I know at that point in time that my initial expectations would soon even be exceeded by the experience on campus. The opening remarks by Dean Nohria and Youngme Moon outlined the first year as a highly nourishing and life changing experience. This has certainly been the case both inside and outside of the class room setting:

The RC curriculum provided me with the broad exposure to business knowledge I was striving for. However unlike in past university lectures, the case method allowed for a much deeper understanding and proved to be a powerful tool in constantly challenging existing boundaries. The fundamental skills to listen, to articulate and to make succinct and strong arguments in various business situations have helped me to grow as an individual. With this unique learning model, insights were not only gained by the professors but also by my fellow students all of which coming into HBS with unique backgrounds and experiences.

The introduction of the Field Immersion Experiences for Leadership Development (FIELD) marked a new cornerstone for the RC year and brought with it many changes to the traditional set of case based classes. It offered for the first time students the possibility to work within and across sections in small groups of 5-8 students on projects including leadership development, global immersion and entrepreneurship. The highlight for me represented the global immersion trip with a cohort of 80 students to Buenos Aires in January. Divided into smaller groups we were assigned to a variety of different projects working for global partner firms on the design of a new product or service in industries such as financial service, consumer products and service. In my case our group was working for AmBev, part of the global Anheuser-Busch InBev Corporation, on new beer development projects targeting young adults. The opportunity to travel to Argentina, to gain working experience in this emerging market and to work for this global company with strong local roots was truly a once in a life time experience. Although we were skeptical at the beginning of our journey how we could add value in any meaningful way to our global partner in this brief period of time, the final presentation and the reaction of the company proved us wrong. Through a joint team effort we were not only able to develop a new concept for the company but also have a broad exposure to the Argentinean market and the culture. Looking back the ten days in Buenos Aires were in many ways similar to the first few months at HBS - with a packed calendar of new adventures and a wealth of new experiences.

The time at HBS has in many ways been shaped by my fellow students and the strong section experience that developed throughout the year. From HBS traditions such as the Holiday and Newport ball, intramural sport events and section Olympics to the trips exploring historic sites in New England, provided time to make long lasting friendships. Looking back the memories of these events in addition to the countless activities of the student clubs including the Healthcare, Finance and VC club, allowed this first year at HBS to pass by much too fast to absorb everything.

It is now during my summer internship time that I realize how much I have gained through the first year at HBS. I decided for my summer internship to join the Corporate Development and Strategy department at

Life Technologies, a global biotechnology company in Carlsbad, California. Having advised Life Technologies in my previous role at PwC on a transaction in Germany, this internship provides me with the unique opportunity to complement my M&A experience in a corporate setting. With just a few weeks left, I am already looking forward to starting my second year at HBS soon. The excitement and anticipation level is as high as it was on the first day. To be part of such a dynamic and nourishing community with seemingly endless opportunities to embark on is a great privilege and honor. I would like to express with this letter my deepest gratitude to the Harvard Business School Association of Germany for providing me with this generous scholarship and making these two years at HBS possible. Thank you very much!

With the best personal wishes from Southern California,

Anne-Kathrin