



## STUDENT RESOURCE

# Career Story: Soft skills matter

**Degree:** Master's degree in International Business

**Completion year:** 2018

**Years since graduation:** 1

**Career story themes:** Build your CV through part-time and volunteer work, know your strengths, be strategic when applying for graduate roles

## Aarav's Story

As an international student from India, Aarav completed his Master's degree in International Business in 2018. Whilst at university, he was heavily involved in extracurricular activities including university committees, an international forum, and student associations. In addition to being part of the university community and contributing to various committees, Aarav completed a marketing internship with an international education specialist company. These experiences gave him an advantage in that they strengthened employability skills such as planning, problem solving and decision-making.

In addition to being an active member of the university community, Aarav increased his chances of entering the corporate job market by gaining work experience. During his Master's studies, he built a stronger résumé by working in multiple, part-time roles. These included work as a kitchen hand and in a car wash, a

cleaning company and a pizza restaurant. These experiences enhanced his employability skills and helped him to adapt to Australian culture. He believes that part-time work "adds spice to your CV".

### ***Getting graduate work: be informed and strategic***

Aarav's great skill is his quantitative ability: he can remember numbers such as the performance data for each of the 45 stores he is responsible for in his current company. He is also adept with multiple digital platforms and software programs including SAP, Tableau, Python, etc. As a graduate, Aarav did not spend much time applying directly for positions. Instead, he drew on his strengths and used his LinkedIn profile as a way to both network and seek employment. He adopted a fairly pragmatic approach to seeking employment, emphasising the need to and make the most of varied and interesting experiences. He emphasises also the need to plan carefully and to be informed: for example, knowing that "the best times to apply for graduate positions are January, March and August".

Aarav currently works as Territory Sales Manager for a multi-national food company. He emphasises the importance of learning "the practical side" of being an employee, using the

### ***Part-time work "adds spice to your CV"***

people skills (so-called soft skills) which assist in the development of positive relationships with supervisors and clients. It was not until he was in a management role that Aarav realised the value and importance of people skills, and he observes that many of these skills were developed through the voluntary and part-time positions he held whilst at university.

### ***Further resources***

[What are your employability strengths?](#)

[How much do you know already?](#)

[Volunteer challenge](#)

## Learning from biographies and career stories

### ***What do you see when you meet a professional?***

Most of the time, we see only the role someone holds now. It is likely, however, that the person has experienced a career with lots of twists and turns.

Get the most out of reading career stories or biographies by asking yourself some of the questions to the right.

1. What do you expect you will have to learn during your career?
2. What might you need to do in order to keep learning?
3. What differences, common issues, and links can you make to your own career journey?
4. Identify and reflect on key decision points in your personal and professional development, and then consider:
  - a. Who played a significant role at these times?
  - b. To whom did you go to for advice?
  - c. What can you put in place for the next time you face a major decision?
5. Biographical accounts raise a number of challenges and opportunities. These include innovative collaborations, work within other sectors, diverse locations, and different modes of work. Look for examples of these in your discipline and reflect on what might be of interest to you:
  - a. What interests you, and what can you do to make this a reality?
  - b. What challenges do you foresee, and how will you prepare for these?
6. Biographical accounts often tell us something about the interests, passions, and motivations of the people involved. Can you think of ways to combine your interests and your future work?
7. What would you like to achieve as a professional?

*This career story was developed through a grant funded by the [Australian Business Deans Council](#). The Business Student Toolkit can be found [here](#).*

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