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Delegate Diaries

MSc in Digital Marketing
Communications

MSc in Digital Marketing Communications

Delegate Diaries

Our MSc delegates hail from a variety of backgrounds and bring with them a wealth of industry experience. This year, we've asked a small number to keep us up to date with their progress as they tackle the programme head on!

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Delegate Diaries
MSc in Digital Marketing Communications

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Bijan White, Partner at iParticipate Social Media

September 2009



I decided to embark on this journey of further education to better understand the apparent chaos of the digital world. For 17 years I have worked in media – in both heritage and digital media – and have experienced at first hand the disruptive force of the digital ecosystem. For me, it now feels marginally less disruptive and definitely more of a constructive energy in marketing services and naturally, in general commerce & business. However, what was missing for me was a structure to all that is happening in the digital sphere.

To appreciate the present, to exploit the abundant opportunities for enterprise and to be able to predict / shape the near-term future, I need a framework to incorporate all that digital media offers. Thus, I am confident the [MSc in Digital Marketing Communications](#) will help me to bring some order into this exciting environment. Finally, I selected this particular course because it strikes a balance between academia and the commercial world. The partnership and collaboration between MMU & Econsultancy was the prime factor in my decision-making.

January 2010

The smart guys at Econsultancy have set a deadline for this diary entry prior to our results for the assignment being distributed. So, I have no idea what my result is and whether or not I hit all the right buttons (or at least the majority of them) with the challenging task that was set! Thinking bravely and constructively, it has been an action-packed first term and I feel I have learned plenty.

Back in October 2009 as the course kick-started into action the task of writing a comprehensive Digital marketing communications plan was challenging and seemed insurmountable. I certainly had not produced output along these lines in my work experience so it was a new conquest. However, by the turn of the year my response to the task was taking shape and I felt confident in the work I was creating. There are some good reasons for this. Firstly, the MMU tutors were instrumental in directing me/us to approach the assignment in the most appropriate way with excellent tuition in both face-to-face and Online situations. Their assistance has been overt and subtle and ultimately, practical and useful. Econsultancy have been fantastic with their teaching seminars (and behind the scenes support) using experts from the real world of business to share their contemporary experiences to inform & educate.

I have enjoyed the last few months and I am delighted that after one term I could produce a marketing strategy - irrespective of the grade I am given! Moving on to term two, I intend to contribute more to the online discussions and hope to encourage the same of others as it makes the learning experience more effective and fun.

April 2010

Since my last diary entry, plenty of high-speed digital water has passed under the bridge (I would love to expand the analogy by including 'torrent' but the creative side of my brain is still in hibernation). I received my grade for the first assignment where I missed a distinction by 3%. However, I fully understand that as in the 100m sprint race, a tiny fraction of a measuring unit can

and does differentiate the heroes from the also-rans! The second assignment was submitted two weeks ago and amazingly we have started the third and final term of the first academic year.

Being a part-timer on the MSc, it is incredible how your life picks up a gear or two and how 'time' becomes an extinct concept. Like-for-like and all things being equal, life prior to the MSc was a dial-up connection in comparison to the super fast broadband speeds you require just to stand still. That, after all, is my attraction to the course!

The second assignment was a fabulously practical and hands-on commitment which enormously helped with work away from the MSc. As such, it was an effective and efficient way of adding value by combining the studies with work (and vice versa). I contributed less than I had hoped for in the online group discussions but I aim to make-up for this moving forward. Term three / assignment three is Work Based Learning and from the outset, it appears to be more theoretic and in the sphere of general management – I guess my personal challenge is to skin it digitally and be commercially focused with the tasks.

February 2011

Significant lesson learnt from the last module; attending the university briefing day ensures a greater chance of producing a strong assignment (and it is a friendly/sociable/fun event)!

This was my fourth module and consequently my fourth assignment. However, it was the first briefing session I had the opportunity to attend. The day really added value to the unit and I thoroughly enjoyed it - I have promised myself not to miss another one. The subject of the module - eCRM - was well targeted and highly relevant for a specific project I was involved with at work. So, in real-world commercial, practical terms it resulted in my greater understanding of an existing client's strengths / weakness with their eCRM programme and gave me the confidence to pitch for new business in this area.

Mark McGee, Vice President of Communications, ICMIF

September 2009



As Vice-President of Communications for an international insurance trade association, I have been immersed in digital and traditional communications for several years. During a [training session](#) with Econsultancy, I was given the prospectus for the MSc and the wealth of learning opportunities, coupled with the academic support from the MMU, made such an impression on me that I immediately enquired and enrolled on the course.

As well as a professionally-recognised qualification, my hope is that I can gain a good grounding in all aspects of digital communications, especially going forward given the ever-changing landscape. I would recommend this course to anyone wishing to have a career in this exciting sector.

January 2010

The first module of the MSc has flown by!

When we received our assignments in late 2009 it looked like a long time until submission in January 2010, however the reality soon turned out to be different. The scope of the assignment seemed quite broad - especially as the development of a full strategy digital communications plan was something I had never tackled before and the fact that I had not participated in any formal education since college (so very long ago!). I was also daunted by the sheer amount of reading that was needed, but the structure of the course - in particular the weekly activities which broke the reading down into digestible chunks - went a long way to alleviate this.

The mix of the Econsultancy training days and breakfast briefings alongside the support from the university - both online using the Google Groups and offline with the discussion day proving especially invaluable, really helping to formulate the approach to the assignment - also made sure I didn't feel isolated and could gauge myself alongside my fellow students.

The worst part? Finding the time to study and getting the balance between family, work and study right. I'm not sure I managed this for the first assignment and did find myself writing and rewriting the first component several times. In fact, the first component - identifying the challenges to digital marketing communications - was the worst part of the whole thing for me. It had such a large scope that even now I'm not entirely sure I identified the right ones! In fact, I found myself working on the assignment over Christmas and into the new year, really right up to the deadline! Now I know what is involved, I am hoping that future assignments will be easier to accommodate.

The best part? Of course, all the new knowledge and ways to apply them in a work environment has been great. For me though, one of the best things about this assignment has been the opportunity to meet new people from many different walks of life, all with the common bond of completing the course. There are already a few I would call friends and hope that there will be many more to add to that list as the course progresses.

Now I'm just waiting for the results from the first assignment with my fingers crossed....

April 2010

I can't believe how quickly time has passed!

Having done well in my first assignment, I approached the second with a much better idea of what to expect. Once again, the mix of the professional training from Econsultancy and the academic support from the MMU proved invaluable in reinforcing the learning process.

However I would add that although I found putting the assignment together easier this time, the level of reading, research and weekly activities still pushed my brain to new heights! "You don't know what you don't know" as they say. And, quite honestly, without the access gained to Econsultancy's reports through the MSc I'm sure I wouldn't have been able to find as much relevant data to back up my arguments on the assignment.

I'm also certain that without the support, critiques and general banter from the other MSc students - both through the Google Groups, on Twitter and during the times we physically met - I would have found it much harder to do!

So, fingers crossed again and here's looking forward to the final module in the first year!

September 2010

The first year really has gone so quickly. Hard to believe what a difference the MSc training has made, both to me and the company I work for. On the back of the assignments that I have already completed (very successfully, thank goodness) we are now implementing a new digital marketing strategy and changing the way we engage with our member organisations. Just shows that the learning gained from this course can be applied very successfully in the workplace.

Having just completed the third module (which concentrated on interpersonal communications skills, business organisational culture and the consultancy process - a bit of a departure from digital marketing, but interesting and informative nonetheless) I really can't believe it has gone so fast!

So, fingers crossed yet again as I await the result of the first year and I am looking forward to the next one - just imagine what can be done by the end of this process!

March 2011

The first part of 2011 saw the launch of my company's new web site, based on the digital strategy from last year and implementing a lot of the training that was received through the first year of the MSc. So far, it has exceeded all expectations - matching or surpassing projected targets!

Now I'm in the second year of the qualification I can really start to see the effect of this combination of academic learning and professional training in my job and my personal life - I was obsessed with all things digital before, but now it's gone into overdrive! Also, the grades that I have been receiving for my recent assignments have given me much more confidence when talking to colleagues or other individuals about digital marketing.

I really can't believe how quickly the time has gone and how much I have changed as a person simply by undertaking this qualification - I don't actually want it to end!

Paul McManus, Production Manager at The Unsigned Guide

September 2009



The Unsigned Guide contains thousands of essential contacts for bands, musicians and anyone wanting to make it in the music industry, from record labels, publishing companies, management companies, venues and promoters, to the nitty gritty details, such as photographers, vehicle and equipment hire. It's a UK-wide research publication, updated annually. Over the last twelve months we've started making moved into the online subscription market, developing a searchable online services with more features being developed as we speak.

I feel the [MSc in Digital Marketing Communications](#) is the most relevant and well-taught digital course out there and combined with the fact that it's supported by Econsultancy and all of its materials, blogs and reports it was a pretty easy choice for me. In the past three years I have slowly moved my career in a more digital marketing direction, combing my personal interests in the internet as a whole, why and how people interact with it and how business can mould itself to a marketing, financial and social advantage.

January 2010

The first semester of the MSc has flown by. The daily courses and breakfast briefings are invaluable, one-by-one building up your knowledge in different areas, which I found very helpful with regards to the first assignment. The emphasis on a mixture of University based days in Manchester as well as the internet-based group learning and discussions I found very helpful, especially with regards to working through the course whilst in employment. As well as this, I've found both David and Jeff more than happy to discuss subjects personally via email and in person, something I found lacked in my undergraduate degree, and a massive bonus in cementing my direction for my assignment.

April 2010

The course naturally moves from overseeing and developing digital marketing strategies in module one to a more focused shift onto both acquisition and conversion, both from a B2B and B2C standpoint. Supplied core course books, as well as the ever-helpful student forums, offering opinion, discussion, links to relevant stories and reading material, help fill out the teaching and learning of the module successfully. Finally, as ever, the MMU staff have been excellent - combined with the new industry tutor (Andrew Gordon) they offer help and a pro-active critique on every level.

February 2011

The second year has proved more difficult than the first, as more in-depth discussion and insight is required to help make the jump closer to the level required for the dissertation. The 'Customer Retention' module revealed another facet to the process of marketing campaigns, focusing on the post-acquisition and conversion of customers, and the need to manage retention. Overall a very interesting module, helping lead into the next part of the course.

As always, the training days have been hugely relevant to the current assignment of the period, as well as very interesting subjects such as Mobile Marketing and Legal; both clearly more important as the world of digital takes a larger hold of marketing strategies and budgets.

Joanna Halton, Social Media Manager & Strategist, Gabba

February 2010



I started the MSc in Digital Marketing Communications whilst still an intern at Flame Digital. I had recently graduated from an Advertising and Brand Management degree and felt that I wanted to grow my learning about digital marketing both practically and academically. This course seemed like the perfect option as it is designed to fit around and complement employment.

As one of the younger delegates of the course I initially felt daunted by the prospect of being surrounded by more experienced professionals, however it soon came in to light that most of us were in the same boat. The first assignment was a challenge, but our tutors were supportive, as were my classmates. I was really pleased with my mark, which has bolstered my confidence even more.

Econsultancy's training, discussion days and breakfast briefings have been instrumental both in teaching syllabus content and bringing classmates together. The use of an online learning environment to support study between these face to face days means that you never feel like you're alone throughout your individual study.

The experience for me so far has been truly invaluable, I've met a variety of new friends, increased my knowledge, level of strategic thinking and confidence. I would credit a large part of where I am today to what I have gained from the course.

April 2010

I can't believe how fast the first term came and went! Google Groups has continued to be a source of support and discussion throughout the course. The university days give you a chance to put faces to names as well participate in a class environment. I've found that the elective training days and breakfast briefings have provided me with knowledge that is useful both in my assignments and my day-to-day employment.

I've loved doing the course, I think I've gained some real friends and have really developed my knowledge base, skill set and confidence. I feel that I've not only learnt new information but also grown my ability to critique and think through strategy.

It can be difficult to squeeze studying and coursework into my schedule, I've definitely struggled with time management at points, however, it was all worth it when I received my marks!

February 2011

I really struggled with the last assignment, I had some things going on in my personal and professional life which meant that I had very little spare time, (not that I usually have tons anyway!). So when my classmates began shouting about their great marks on Twitter, my heart sunk as I was sure I'd have done terribly in comparison. Imagine my relief when my marks dropped into my inbox and I realised that, not only had I passed, but I'd received one of my best marks so far!

The course remains very useful, providing me with lots of information and insights which I'm continuing to lap up eagerly. Although it's really difficult finding time to do assignments and it's hard work, it's *so* worth it when you receive the feedback and you've done well.

Roll on the next one I say!

Jason Brooks Digital Marketing Consultant, Brooks Digital Marketing

January 2010



I've been involved with digital marketing projects for many years and have recently set up my own business providing on line marketing services.

The raw experience I have gained working on digital projects over the years has served me and my clients well, however, I have little in the way of recognised digital marketing qualifications to validate my skills to potential customers or any high level, tried and tested structure to follow.

Having reviewed the syllabus and the profiles of the lecturing staff I totally see the Digital Marketing Communications MSc as the perfect course to remedy these issues.

The range of components covered is broad and allows students to gain an understanding of the techniques used across the entire digital marketing landscape and how these techniques can be combined successfully in the real world.

I believe that studying for an MSc in Digital Marketing Communications will add a professional structure to the knowledge I already have and both I and my clients businesses will definitely benefit from the high level of tuition I will be receiving.

I'm looking forward to the expert guidance from both the MMU and Econsultancy and have total faith that they will provide me with the advantage I need.

April 2010

Wow, what a crazy few months! The first assignment was a baptism of fire but thoroughly worthwhile. I've been into digital marketing for some years now so had a lot of knowledge stored up ready to throw at this one. The reality is though that this course takes digital marketing to another level completely and it was a bit of a Yoda moment for me... "unlearn what you have learned" comes to mind!

That isn't to say that what I know was useless to me by any stretch but a masters degree isn't just about answers (which I can come up with all day) but how you come to your answers and it is this process of critique, evaluation, prioritisation and justification that really taxes the brain.

I can honestly say that after just this first assignment I've improved my understanding of the subject and why I do the things I do by 100% and my clients are benefiting already from my new structured approach. Next up is the work based learning module which is focussing on reflective learning techniques and is supposed to be helping me to tune my consulting skills. Based on my experience so far I'm looking forward to another really useful few months and another quantum leap in my abilities!

February 2011

The Christmas assignment was tough for personal reasons and I think it could have been better if we had been forced to deliver it just before the holiday! The customer retention project was really taxing for me, perhaps it was the subject I chose to do it for but I feel that the module has definitely broadened my research skills.

What I like about the course is the structure and the way we are taught to produce pieces of work that could be used in real business contexts. I personally have used this to my advantage and provided 'free' consultancy which ultimately has raised my stock in the eyes of clients and brought me more business.

Just a note about the new online learning environment; for me is much more user friendly than the Google groups approach however, finding time to interact was difficult due to the arrival of my son, Jensen, into the family!

Angela Hsiao, Social Media Manager

January 2010



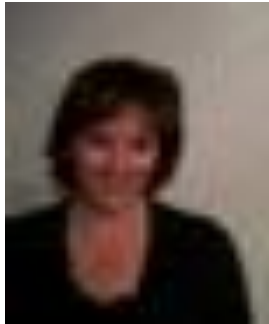
I come from a media agency background where my main roles have involved multi-channel media planning and buying and international account management, mostly in traditional media.

The media landscape has changed so significantly since I started working in the industry; digital used to be unknown territory that clients were tentative of addressing. Now it is full of exciting new developments and becoming crucial to most companies. With new territory comes the opportunity for innovative communication.

I've taken on the MSc in Digital Marketing Communications so I can better understand how I can integrate digital with other mediums to develop better strategies for clients. I believe that the advantage this course has above any others offered is the depth of resources available from Econsultancy, combined with up to date reporting and the organisation of industry events to discuss the latest developments which is key when the digital environment is constantly changing. I also like that it is practical to business planning, there is the opportunity to apply what you have learned in your current projects. This is important for progression, not only academically but also professionally.

Erleen Anderson, Small business owner, formerly with DHL and Oracle

February 2010



I've dipped in and out of digital since building yardconnect.com 10+ years ago after earning my MBA in Seattle, but mostly out the last few years, so I was looking for a marketing refresher of the digital kind, as well as for ways to grow my personal and professional network. The MSc is fitting the bill so far, with particular value on the Econsultancy training days. The first term provided good contextual frameworks to give a logical steer for any organisation (yes, B2B, B2C, non profit, big, small) to be more systematic and comprehensive in their approach and use of digital, and also to find new opportunities to exploit. I look forward to learning more about the detail in measuring, managing and monitoring next term...

Ian Pollard, Account Manager, Red Eye International Ltd.

September 2010



Due to my age, my hobbies & interests and my experiences, I've found that I've lived and worked 'online' for most of my life. During this time, through experimentation, on-the-job training and picking up skills & experiences from colleagues, I've amassed what I know of 'online' so far with no formal training. The formal training I have had has all been 'traditional' marketing, with little to no 'online' focus at all. Although some theory and practise is transferable, my formal qualifications did not match my knowledge and experience.

I came across the MSc in Digital Marketing Communications after feeling compelled to take the next step and formalise this knowledge and experience, hoping it would carry me through the course to a successful end. Allied to this I felt confident that the combination of academic learning from MMU and practical, industry-leading thinking from Econsultancy would be the perfect mix to achieve my aim.

January 2011

The first term has come and gone very quickly, I remember being handed the first assignment and thinking the due date was a long way away! Luckily, through half-decent planning and fantastic guidance from our tutors, I've created, handed in and received a good mark for my Digital Communications Plan.

Our university days were key to this success, giving us almost explicit guidance on what was required and how to achieve it. Combined with informative, relevant and hands-on Econsultancy days, preparing, researching and writing the assignment was made much easier. Much more time was spent reading and researching than I originally thought was required, so the amount of work should not be underestimated, however it was very realistic and achievable in my circumstances. Also, what can't be understated is the shared learning of my fellow students. We already have a great relationship and a real team ethic both when we meet up and on the online learning portal. Each person comes from a different background, industry, experience and skill level, so it's a fertile ground to develop and share ideas.

We've now been handed our second assignment and we're all gearing up for the challenge, ready with our experiences and learnings from the first assignment under our belts.

Carlton Jefferis, Self-employed Digital Marketer

Introduction



After 10+ years working at Dotcoms, online services and more recently in digital marketing, I thought it was about time I got some proper training ☺. Most of my learning thus far has been on-the-job with precious little formal training let alone any qualifications. Those simply hadn't existed in the past.

I had been aware of Econsultancy for quite some time but never actually been on any of their training days. When I discovered they were running an MSc in Digital Marketing I could hardly contain my excitement. For years I had considered an MBA but always thought this was too generalist. I studied the MSc prospectus and syllabus and read all the delegate diaries and testimonials (just like this one) and immediately felt this course was right. It wasn't long before I had applied and been accepted for the course. I'm in the first year now and I'm really motivated and excited about haven't looked back for a second – and I'm paying for the course out of my own pocket so I'm not just saying this.

February 2011

The first term-and-a-half has flown by and has been a real journey. You think you know it all before you come on a course like this and – BOOM – new stuff just leaps at you from every direction. The teaching, both by Econsultancy trainers and the MMU tutors has been of an exceptionally high standard. The learning is very commercially/professionally focused and has paid dividends in my day job from the moment I was back at my desk. They have pitched the course structure and content just right in my opinion.

The learning so far has been geared towards strategy and planning (term 1) and monitoring and measurement (term 2) with several days of formal training plus a fair amount of distance-learning and reading. I have absolutely loved the training days – the trainers themselves are experts in their fields and very engaging – and I've learned so much. I haven't taken so easily to the distance-learning due to a lack of self-discipline and the impossible task of juggling my numerous work commitments and my busy family life. It's certainly not due to lack of motivation though!

Each term concludes with a structured assignment delivered in business report-style. At first this was a slightly daunting task, but I worked my way through it and received a good result for the first assignment.

If I were to make any criticism it would be that I would like even more training days, and in some cases split the training over a couple of days. My other gripe is the Online Learning Environment (OLE) which feels clunky and outdated for such a slick operation. But really, I'm splitting hairs.

Roll on assignment 2 and the next term!