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Mr. Speice

Independent Study & Mentorship

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**Interview Assessment #6**

**Name of Professional:** Ms. Megan Stein

**Profession/ Title:** Supply Chain Management

**Business/ Company Name:** Yum Brands

**Date of Interview:** November 8, 2017

After exploring numerous sectors of international business, ranging from business management to expatriate services through informational interviews, I realized that my interest lie primarily in the marketing sector of the corporate world. As a result, eager to build up my exposure to this industry in order to ensure that I was truly passionate about marketing, I decided to interview more marketing professionals. By reaching out to a former ISM student, Ally Busker, I was given the contact information for her previous mentor, Ms. Megan Stein. Through my interview with Ms. Megan Stein, the former Director of Marketing, I was able to learn more about how variable and creative marketing can be.

Starting off the interview, Ms. Megan Stein gave me some background information about her primary vocation. Graduating from a small university with a degree in Engineering, Ms. Stein started off working in the Supply Chain Management industry for YUM Brands, where her keen sense of preciseness and accuracy helped her excel at her job. In order to learn more about another sector of International Business, I asked Ms. Stein to elaborate on what duties and responsibilities she had when she worked in Supply Chain Management. She willingly explained how supply chain management essentially deal with the idea of purchasing raw materials and transforming them into finished products. In the case of YUM Brands, more specifically Pizza Hut, finding a cheese producer, sauce manufacturer, and even a grainey are all tasks that were included in field. However, Ms. Stein noted that after a few year of working in supply chain management, she realized that she wanted something more exciting: an industry with constant room for improvement and creativity. Ms. Stein had always been interested in Marketing so she talked to her boss about getting a transfer. However, since she had no job experience, the Marketing team was wary of taking her on board. Nonetheless, Ms. Stein stayed persistent and she even convinced the marketing sector to give her a chance. Applying her knowledge from engineering, where precision and efficiency played a significant role, Ms. Stein created a website for Pizza Hut international franchises that detailed the brand requirements and included different templates for advertisements and leaflets.

The Pizza Hut Marketing team was so impressed with Ms. Stein’s work that they hired her and immediately sent her to Singapore to help the country’s Pizza Hut franchises excel in marketing. Ms. Stein's story of how she spontaneously changed her career reminded me of my state of perplexity in the beginning of the year. I was often confused with what career I wanted to go into, especially since my experience and passion seemed to clash with one another. However, drawing inspiration from how Ms. Stein was able to realize her passion and act on it, I am sure that I just need to continue exploring until I find a career that clicks with me. In addition, Ms. Stein's persistence in acquiring a job in Marketing was quite similar to how during the beginning of the year, I, along with many of my fellow ISM classmates, had struggled with attaining interviews with professionals, and we often had to call three or four times before a professional would pick up. Ms. Stein’s story in shaping a perfect career showed me that persistence can often result in unimaginable success.

Continuing on with the interview, I asked Ms. Stein to talk more about the roles she had in her new job role. As the head of the marketing, Ms. Stein was responsible for marketing the delivery and carry-out options to international locations. Since Ms. Stein had no true marketing experience other than the website she had designed, she went to Thailand to help the Pizza Hut franchise become more stable and popular. Staying in Thailand for about a month, she got the credibility that allowed her to start working on bigger projects.

Ms. Stein then talked about the YUM International Conference that happens every two years in which over 2,000 international franchises meet up and Pizza Hut Corporate shares new ideas and plans. During the planning of the YUM International Conference in Beijing, Ms. Stein, along with the President of Pizza Hut, were assigned to tell the franchises about the new developments. They decided to introduce the express method to the international franchises. The express method, in which stores had pre-made pizzas ready for pick up, was not very popular in the United States, but higher level executives thought it would be successful in other countries where Pizza Hut had a different brand perception. The idea was very popular with the franchises; however, there there was no actual plan. As a result, Ms. Stein was assigned the task of creating a plan as a side project.

While testing different models for the express store, Ms. Stein tested over a hundred different options ranging from having ready made “hot boxes” of pizza, to the Sbarro method, in which the pizza was made in front of the customer. Through countless testing, Ms. Stein perfected the model, just in time for the YUM International Conference in Las Vegas. Intrigued, I asked Ms. Stein to talk more about the model that she had created. She told me that the final model was based around the store in the box method in which consistency and efficiency was key. Costing only $60,000, the store in the box literally contained all the parts of a 10x10 store in a ready to assemble format, taking only about 4 hours to assemble. This model was also quite successful, because as Ms. Borda has also mentioned, Pizza Hut struggles with creating brand uniformity. Since the box contained all the signs and branding items in it, this problem was evaded.

After receiving ample success from this project, Ms. Stein then quit her job in Pizza Hut because she was often traveling a lot and she wanted to focus more on her family. Through my other interviews, I have come to realize that each professional has a quite different response to international business and the traveling that it requires. For some professionals, like Ms. Alison Taylor, the constant traveling really helped her family grow stronger, for they were the only constant entity. For others, like Ms. Stein, traveling put a strain of family life. In addition, after seeing the profitability of many of the Pizza Hut franchises, Ms Stein decided to open up her own franchise. She realized that owning a food franchise was a lot of risk and work, so she started looking into gyms, notably OrangeTheory Fitness.

In comparison to Pizza Hut, OrangeTheory had a much more strict approach to brand management, making it easier for business to be conducted. Ms. Stein was set on owning a franchise of OrangeTheory Fitness; however, there were no openings in Texas. Ms. Stein was about to move to New York so that she could take over a franchise, but just then, a franchise in Mesquite become open. The previous owner of the Mesquite franchise had no sense of direction, and therefore the store was doing very poorly. However, by applying good marketing strategies, Ms. Stein was able to double membership. As a result, Ms. Stein was able to open up a second location in Plano.

Although Ms. Stein was no longer involved in international business, I found her countless endeavors in business quite interesting. I found it quite inspiring that she was able to blindly follow her passion and achieve success. It reaffirmed my belief that if you believe in something and have a passion, then following it through, no matter how hard it gets, is the most important aspect.

Further continuing on with her fitness business, Ms. Stein and her husband created her own kids fitness group in Frisco, TX targeted to kids from 15 months to 13 years of age. The goal of the business was to provide rigorous fitness training for kids while also simultaneously encouraging social development. For younger kids, the business also helps with the development of fine and gross motor skills. Since this idea was unique, Ms. Stein’s business was quite successful and she was able to open up five locations. In fact, her business even got international attention.

Wrapping up our interview, I asked Ms. Stein to talk more about Brand Management and how it differs in different companies, thus leading to different results. Ms. Stein explained that Pizza Hut had quite a loose idea of brand management, particularly because the company was so old. In the beginning when Pizza Hut was just starting to grow, most of the deal made were based on handshakes and there were no contracts written up. As a result, many of the current owners aren’t under any type of contract so they are free to do as they please. Furthermore, the pricing of the different dishes determines based on the local culture of the country. For example, in India and Korea where people eat less, the portions are much smaller that they are in the United States.

Overall, my interview with Ms. Stein gave me more insight on global marketing and the importance of creativity. In addition, I was also able to learn more about franchises, a key concept of all global businesses. Throughout the rest of my ISM journey, I hope to be persistent and always remember my passion just like Ms. Stein.