

How was your experience at the CIMBA campus?

It started almost magically, with an unexpected letter inviting me to an interview with Dr. Ringleb. From there, a spectacular year began in a parallel world of study, continuous interaction with professors, classmates, and internship experiences - in my case, at Fashion Box's *Replay* brand. It was also a fun year, spent in Asolo, Ljubljana, and, at the time, Clemson University. We certainly weren't bored. I remember notable company visits: GE, Ferrari, BMW, a nuclear power plant.

What happened after graduation?

Immediately after graduation, a week of escape to Florida with my roommate, Anna, aboard a bright red Mitsubishi Eclipse with Megadeth's music blaring from the speakers. All joking aside, my CV, which already included a degree in Economics and Commerce from Ca 'Foscari University in Venice and a year as an exchange student at UCLA in California, led me to receive offers from multiple multinational companies. Et voilà.

Complete the phrase: CIMBA has allowed me to...

... find career opportunities beyond those I had managed to obtain, and with difficulty, after graduation. This was especially important in a world where CVs still traveled by physical mail, and company addresses were found in specialized publications or, more simply, by applying a little 'creativity in telephone directory research', going to SIP offices (the Italian national telephone company).

If you look at your career, what are you most proud of?

I have never stopped learning. I am proud of never allowing myself to believe: "There, I'm done. This is my corner. From now on I will do this." While this kind of thinking may be the basis for one's peace of mind, it is not what I believe would be good for me. In reality, this may be a form of ambition. I have always worked in consultancy: PwC, Arthur Andersen, Deloitte, Merkle. Places where variety is the only constant: clients change, work teams change, projects are never the same, logistics change. I have found myself sending important slides to a customer as I am leaning against a garbage bin in a random train station or being the one with a nose buried in Excel on a plane. In addition to having had the opportunity to work for very different industries, private and public customers, large consumer and luxury markets, I have accumulated experiences in different and at times opposite service lines: from strategy projects, through M&A, to organization, compliance, implementation and

major business and digital transformations. It is a bit like solving crosswords, in a way, acquiring different, complementary, or even opposite points of view.

Is there a key word/value/lesson learned during the CIMBA experience that you apply daily in your profession?

"It's all about people." It was what Dr. White wrote on the board right after his name on the first day of the *Organization of the Firm* course. Honestly, I didn't understand its meaning at that moment. It seemed to be a generic phrase to me, of which I had not grasped the deeper meaning since the world I knew was mostly the academic one: axioms, knowledge, understanding. It is an often-binary world, in which you are there or not, you either understand or you do don't. But that's not quite the case in the real world. Method, knowledge, intelligence are not enough to create the desired result. The real heart are the people, the organization, the relationships, and the dynamics that are created through choices of structure, and, thanks to the intrinsic quality of each individual, can really define the result.

From Dr. Ringleb's story I have learned a great deal subliminally. If you don't know it, ask him to tell it to you. It starts with something that has to cross the Atlantic. But there is no ease, or absence of difficulties. So many lessons learned, which I summarize here as: learn by failing, information is essential, never be afraid to get your hands dirty, never be afraid of an idea that no one else has yet had. And one more: never be fooled. Always check the legend of a chart first! (Those who have had Dr. Ringleb's Stat class will understand).

Looking at your CV, a great gift emerges: flexibility. Is it all a question of DNA or is it also the result of your education and experience?

I believe the basis is my curiosity and "allergy" to continuity or monotony. I was born as an Italian of Venetian origin in Bolzano. Therefore, I was different by design, and perhaps this immediately led my curiosity to look into understanding that which was not identical to me, to know that I am diverse first, that history determines contexts independently of the will of the individual, and that there is no pure belonging, but rather integration - which is a job, not a point of arrival. I would add that I am an only child and suffer of myopia, so I believe I am naturally inclined to analysis and discovery. Then, I believe as a natural consequence, my choices, deliberate or by faith, have often led me to take the less traveled path. And so, by default, you learn to travel comfortably down new trails. I also believe in the power of sport and recreational activities: the first thing I look at on a CV are the last lines, because they often suggest something more important than the grades and phrases everyone polishes and polishes in the first paragraphs.

You graduated from the CIMBA MBA in 1998 and started working immediately as a consultant. How have the professional dynamics changed, in terms of relationships with clients and objectives, since then?

During the interview with Coopers & Lybrand, a former member of PwC, they put in front of us an A4 sheet of paper with a large circle on it along with a list of possible activities that could occur during a typical workday. We had to create a pie chart allocating working hours, broken down according to those listed activities. They then showed us the actual break down, to demonstrate to us the expected perception vs the reality. One of the activities was "printing and photocopying", and it covered a measurable piece of that pie. At the time, there was still no copy (duplication) service, and we did everything by ourselves: from the due diligence analysis of the world market, to the preparation of the documents with the help of our precious secretaries, to the spiral bound reports, to the drafting of the "transparencies" (see Wikipedia) printed in color that we then put, along with a projector, into a very heavy bag that killed our shoulders at the airport, to melting the sealing wax - in some cases this is still done - for the delivery of offers for public tenders. Now that physical "photocopying" time has obviously decreased, but it has now been converted into slide time preparation, formatting, search for best graphic and enhanced visualization, which is now as much as a fundamental element of the consultancy as the content of the message to the customer.

And, of course, the customers and the market are increasingly demanding. Competition has certainly increased, the bar has risen on increasing levels of quality and speed, and the range of consulting services has expanded. Also, in some cases, companies are gradually developing internal resources to do what we would be providing as consulting services. Without question, the digital evolution has had a great influence, not to say that it has overturned much of the consultancy world, but it has created a world that is now indissolubly, or almost so, linked to the IT world, which is no longer just a support, but a strategic enabler.

Can you give some advice to those who aspire to undertake a path like yours?

Don't be afraid even to make copies or to do something that does not seem relevant to your path. Especially in the beginning, with a degree from a prestigious university and after the Master degree, it can be difficult to take a few steps back, or sideways, or in another direction, perhaps even taking a direction that's not established, and to grasp that not everything is the result of a strategy or great universal thoughts. But nothing that happens to you gets thrown away. On the contrary, it is really all about experience, and experimenting, understanding the details, banging your head on what seems more difficult, or sometimes less interesting, it all improves your "helicopter" view through greater understanding.

And even more so, as a mother of two teenagers, I say this to women. For many of you, sooner or later that doubt will arise: *how far should I go with my job?* I am of the opinion that if you want, you can find a way to balance work and family – but everyone has to find their own balance, everyone has their own time, and there is no single golden rule. But it is not necessarily true that if you really want to and do become a mother, you will face a binary long-term decision with respect to your job and career. With one thing taken at a time, almost everything gets done. It is certainly not easy, and you will need to organize yourself, and organize yourself well. And especially when you find yourself in situations like I did, being in Naples, at a table of 40 men who looked at me while answering a call telling me to pick up my child from the school in Milan. I see this as being a bit like in the Litfiba song: *In equilibrio sul rasoio io resisto fino in fondo* (meaning, “in balancing on a tight rope I resist till the end”) ...

Good luck to all!