A Day in the Life of a Brand Manager

Below are a few day-in-the-life descriptions provided by former students working in brand management.

1. Name: Jonathan
2. Job Title: Associate Brand Manager
3. Industry: Food
4. Organization: Nestle
5. Number of months that passed between graduating and taking the job: 1
6. Responsibilities: I grow a brand business and maximize profit
7. A typical day for me includes: Every day is different for me. As part of the brand management team, I don't just handle marketing aspects of the business. My tasks range from dealing with ad agencies that are hired to provide creative content for our campaigns, to dealing with our suppliers or demand planning team to make sure the logistics and distribution of our products are on track. I handle our website and all aspects of our online business. I deal with sales in terms of hiring reps, training them, creating demos for them to present during their pitches, creating new point of sale displays, and merchandising. And now that the year's coming to a close, I've been doing a lot of planning with the finance and purchasing department for the 2012-2013 budget. The only thing that remains constant day to day is the never ending amount of meetings!
8. What I like most about my job: I have a lot of responsibility, which allows me to learn a lot (it's only been my first year with the company and I already handle $2M of our yearly marketing budget). With that comes higher pressure to perform well, but if those expectations can be met then the opportunities are limitless. Also, the pay is quite good.
9. What I like least about my job: It's really demanding and has taken away from my social life. But I'm really happy with my job, so for now it's worth it.
10. Skills that are important for success in my job: Analysis (qualitative and quantitative), communication, strong marketing concepts (e.g. 4P's), people skills, good PR, etc. But really, as long as you are willing to learn, there is no skill that you can't pick up.
11. What we look for when hiring: Passion and personality.
12. What I wish I knew back in school that I know now: Brand management is more than just marketing, it really encompasses every aspect of business management. I wish I had paid better attention to what was being taught in non-marketing subjects like accounting and finance, because that really opens the mind to broader analytical skills. If you want to be good at your job, even if it is just a marketing job, you have to learn things outside of marketing.
13. My advice for new graduates is: If you don't have any marketing work experience, spend at least a year acquiring some either through internships before applying for a bigger position. I interned at McCann Erickson and I personally think that ad agencies offer the best experience to marketers because the experience is transferable and can help land other job opportunities. If you can't find the right marketing opportunity in Vancouver, don't settle. Be prepared to pack up and leave even if you have to do it on your own.
1. **Name:** Kellie
2. **Job Title:** Assistant Brand Manager, MOTRIN
3. **Industry:** CPG
4. **Organization:** Johnson & Johnson
5. **Number of months or years that passed between graduating and taking the job:**
   4 months (but I had another CPG Internship with Novartis Consumer Health Canada for those 4 months)
6. **Responsibilities:**
   I act as a “CEO” for my brand, making decisions that affect the entire business and running it as if it were my own.
7. **A typical day for me includes:**
   There is no typical day—every day is different (I know a lot of people say that about their job, but it is really true for CPG). I work on many different projects in tandem, these projects can include anything from building the innovation pipeline (and its business cases), to defining and executing communication strategies, to making pricing decisions, keeping track of business performance and leveraging data to build compelling sell stories to get our products or initiatives in market. I interact with everybody in our cross-functional team (Finance, Project Management, Regulatory, Sales/Sales Strategy, Supply and Demand Planning, IT Development) as well as with our creative agencies (Ad agency, experiential, digital agency and media planning agency).
8. **What I like most about my job:**
   Managing my own business without the risk of putting up my own money coupled with having a huge support system that you can only really get from a large multi-national corporation.
9. **What I like least about my job:**
   It’s hard work but you get a lot of responsibility, so it’s worth it!
10. **Skills that are important for success in my job include:**
   Strategic thinking, analytical ability, communication, teamwork, strategic influencing, leadership/initiative, and above all efficiency and accuracy in everything you do.
11. **What we look for when hiring:**
   People with the potential to become future leaders of the company—brand managers
12. **What I wish I knew back in school that I know now:**
   Chill out and enjoy your time off, because you don't get it while you're working
1. **Name:** Sarah  
2. **Job Title:** Research Analyst  
3. **Organization:** The Nielsen Company Japan (BASES division)  
4. **Industry:** Marketing research, mostly for Consumer Packaged Goods Companies  
5. **Responsibilities:**  
   The job is pretty varied, so it’s kind of hard to answer. Overall, my job is to analyze data received from our internet surveys and produce a report that answers my client’s key business questions. I have a number of proprietary tools at my disposal to create charts and analyze the data, as well as forecast the Year 1 (sometimes Year 2 as well) sales for the client’s new product ideas. Every project is different so it’s hard to get more specific than that.  
6. **A typical day for me includes:**  
   I usually come in at 9:30 am since we have a flexible working hour system. After replying to all the emails, I start working on my report and do analytical work such as forecasting the Year 1 and/or Year 2 sales, checking the variety splits if it’s a line of products, and figuring out the optimal pricing strategy if a BASES Price Advisor is required by our client.  
   I have meetings and training almost everyday. If it’s the beginning of a study, we have a team questionnaire review meeting. After about a week, we have analytical kick off meeting, and then forecast alignment meeting, report story meeting, team forecast review and on and on and on… If there is a new service or a better way of using our current models or anything that needs to be shared globally, we have a training session for that. I usually finish up what I need to do by the end of the day and can go home at 7 pm. If there’s some urgent matters to take care of (answering the follow-up questions from our client, the data delivery was delayed and have to write the report in less time than usual), I might stay longer, but I try not to work overtime by planning ahead and working hard during the daytime. I usually interact with my co-workers, team members (project developers, senior analyst, manager, vice president), and BASES people in India and US.  
7. **What I like most about my job:**  
   The job itself! It’s exciting to get to see the concepts and products 1 or 2 years before they are launched in the market! Also, I love doing client service. Being part of the Client Consulting team means that I get to be both the brand manager and the consultant at the same time. I also like the fact that analytical skills and creatively are equally important, so my learning curve is steep and I’m learning a lot every day. Furthermore, I get to work in a global setting and constantly interact with people all over the world. My co-workers are really nice to me, and I am proud to be part of a group of people who are smart, professional, and friendly.  
8. **What I like least about my job:**  
   I have to sit in front of my laptop all day long, so my eyes hurt 😊  
9. **Skills that are important for success in my job include:**  
   Passion for marketing, analytical skills, knowledge in statistics (you have to be comfortable with numbers), interpersonal skills, multi-tasking (ability to prioritize), quick thinking, quick learning, language skills (all BASES employees here in Tokyo are at least bilingual, as we need both Japanese and English to do our job).  
10. **What we look for when hiring:**  
    I’ll be part of the hiring process and we are looking for people who have good analytical skills and people skills. People who can fit well with our BASES culture (it’s actually a little different from the Nielsen culture). Basically, people with the above skills are welcomed.  
11. **What I wish I knew back in school that I know now:**
Everyone told me that the marketing research class was useful looking back, and I have to agree with them! Maybe it’s because I’m working at a marketing research agency. Anyway, I realized that just because I’m not an accountant doesn’t mean I don’t need to do number crunching. And that marketing isn’t all creativity either. Also, when I was in school, I remember someone complaining about a mark deduction just because his report had a misspelling or he forgot to capitalize a letter. Most students agreed and said the prof was too meticulous. I can now say, with confidence, that there are bosses (and clients) who are a hundred time more meticulous, almost to the point of being panicky. Each report has to be super organized, and is reviewed over and over by many people within the organization before it is sent to the client. I knew that what I learn in school was important, but I didn’t realize just how IMPORTANT it was!

12. My advice for new graduates is:

Pay attention in class since it is, and will be soon, immensely useful to you. Also, knowing your top 3 key strengths and weaknesses is really important during the interviewing process.
1. **Name:** Lauren

2. **Job Title:** Brand Assistant - Molson Canadian

3. **Industry:** Beer

4. **Organization:** Molson Coors

5. **Responsibilities:**

   Plans for activation of our core platforms - hockey, music, Olympics & summer.

6. **A typical day for me includes:**

   - Presentation from our design agency.
   - De-brief on the above with ~4-5 people related to the project including a manager from Customer Marketing, and a Brand Manager from the innovation side of Molson Canadian.
   - Preparation for a project update meeting with my manager.
   - Olympics brainstorm with other members of the Canadian team, a Relationship Marketing manager, a Consumer Insights manager, a PR manager, and our ad agency.
   - Phone sales managers to determine # of old assets ("I AM" banners) they have in their markets.
   - Brief ad agency.

7. **What I like most about my job:**

   Relative to other companies, we do a lot internally (events & promotions, market research, graphic design teams), so there are many opportunities to get a greater understanding of these functions.

8. **What I like least about my job:**

   Although working on one of the biggest beer brands provides resources to do projects I wouldn't have the opportunity to do otherwise, it also limits the area of the brand I can touch on. Since there are 7 of us working on the brand, I have not worked on the launch of 67 (our new beer that just launched).

9. **Skills that are important for success in my job include:**

   Attention to detail, and communication skills.

10. **What we look for when hiring:**

    FIT, FIT, FIT. Despite having great work experience, we have not even considered candidates if they were not a fit both personality & interest wise. If you work on Canadian, you don't have to know a lot about hockey, but need to be interested in it. If you work on Coors Light, you also don't have to know a lot about snowboarding, but better be interested in it.

    Sales experience is also a very valuable attribute to have for us. For example, there are a handful of people (e.g. our VP of Marketing included) in the company that took a step back in their careers to work in sales for a few years because they realized they needed these skills to progress in their careers.

11. **What I wish I knew back in school that I know now:**

    The value of relationship marketing.

12. **My advice for new graduates is:**

    Don't underestimate the value of sales experience.
1. Name: Philippe
2. Job Title: Global Management Trainee
3. Industry: Beer
4. Organization: Labatt
5. Time that passed between graduating and taking the job: 1 month.
6. Responsibilities: Receiving a 10 month training in managing a global beer company
7. A typical day for me includes: 2-3 presentations by top executives on their area of expertise, followed by some job shadowing and a wrap up session at the end of the day.
8. What I like most about my job: Down the road, ability to manage teams and problem solve.
9. What I like least about my job: Having to sit through countless presentations.
10. Skills that are important for success in my job include: Analytical and strategic skills as well as people skills.
11. What we look for when hiring: A fit with the company culture: very driven, competitive individuals.
12. What I wish I knew back in school that I know now: Nothing yet.. Still waiting on that one.
13. My advice for new graduates is: Try and work in an industry that interests you, it makes work so much more enjoyable.