

INTERVIEW: MBM FORMER STUDENT MARCELLO BELLANI

*Marcello Bellani, Supply Chain Director at **Chromavis Fareva**, shares with us the development of his professional career and his experience as student and speaker of the MBM program*



1) How did you get to know about the Master's program?

It was 12 years ago, after finishing my Engineering course I was looking for a master with a specialization and I discovered the MBM program basically searching on the Internet; it was quite new – on its fourth edition - and I got interested by the fact it was completely held in English, due to the international partnership, and by the different method, compared to most of the other programs. If I have to be honest, at first I was not so interested in the fragrance and cosmetics industry but I liked the basic modules and I thought I could learn something different. Twelve years after, I have built a whole career in the cosmetics industry!

2) What do you remember most about your experience in the MBM program?

I have very nice memories of that time, first of all because there was a very international environment which I liked a lot. We were a very good group and today after many years, I'm still in touch with at least 5-6 former students, which is great! I remember that, outside class, we used to go out and spend time together in Padova and we enjoyed a lot the city. From an academic point of view, the knowledge I got from the Master was very interesting. What I appreciated the most was the teaching method of professors, especially of the American ones, which were bringing a very practical way of working. I remember I really felt the gap between a very theoretical University and a very practical approach to the Master's courses: making presentations, having deadlines to respect was something that really prepared me for what I found later to be the job world.

3) How did your professional career in cosmetics come about?

I started with an internship in logistics at L'Oréal. It was not my first choice but it was L'Oréal, so I said "why not try", and in the end it turned out to be the beginning of my career in the cosmetics industry. After the internship, I got confirmed and I was lucky enough to follow a project through different divisions of L'Oréal, working to unify the purchasing office. I had the possibility to create networks with a lot of different people, which turned out to be very positive for my career.

After a five-year experience in L'Oréal, which gave me a wide knowledge of different aspects, I took the unpopular choice to leave the big firm for a smaller one. I started working for KIKO-Percassi and I had the chance to enter a company which was just about to explode. When I joined, KIKO had more or less 150 stores and the former CEO asked me to build up the sourcing department, which didn't exist at the time. After 6 years, the company had 900 stores, worldwide suppliers and a turnover which was 10 times what it was when I entered. It was an amazing experience, I started by myself and I ended up with a team of 16 people. I got lots of white hair but I experienced a progress you can hardly find in your career, I was very lucky to be there at the right time.

4) What about your current position in Chromavis, which are your main tasks and responsibilities?

After 6 years in Kiko I wanted to make an experience in the production side and I took the opportunity to join Chromavis, which is a make-up manufacturer. I started working for them as a supply chain director, a quite complex role considering that the company is the second largest TPM in the world for this type of category. Chromavis is part of the Fareva group, which is the holding company and has 35 plants around the world so the target is to be able to exploit all the potential synergies within such productive network.

In more specific terms, I manage the procurement team, which has to buy all necessary components and raw materials, the planning team which schedules all the productions through our different sites and in the outsourced plants and a team in logistics which deals with all the movements of goods and the warehouses. I'm also responsible of the customer service which takes care of all the relations with the clients and the delivery of the products in time.

5) Which topics covered in the Master's program have been the most useful for your career?

Besides the Operation management course – which was the area I was the strongest because of my engineering background - the modules that I found more useful were the ones I didn't know before. I appreciated the module held by professor Kumar and I really loved the Business Plan activity with professor Boesso because it was very practical I also tried to launch the business plan that I made with my group because I strongly believed in what we built! Unfortunately, it didn't work and I'm very disappointed because ten years later I'm sure that it would have been successful! In any case, it's very interesting to learn how to bring to reality your own ideas. I also found very useful the intercultural topics, in my experience at KIKO I had to deal and negotiate with people from all over the world - China, USA, North and South Europe, Middle East - and the Master just allowed me to understand the different kinds of approaches. I also developed a personal interest for this subject and later on, I tried to further deepen my knowledge on it.



6) Besides being a former student, you are also a current speaker of the program. How do you consider this experience?

It's something I really care about, I've been doing it for many years, since 2006, and it's really fascinating. First of all, I believe it's very positive to share my experience with other students because I remember my feelings at that time, not knowing what to wait for the future. On the other side, I'm also enriched from this experience because most of the times students raise questions I didn't think about and they make me consider a new perspective. The first year I didn't notice it so much because I was closer in terms of age but now, unfortunately for me, there is a bigger gap and I feel I'm keeping in touch with people that are going to make a difference tomorrow. The world, the industry, the environment is changing together with the technologies and the way of thinking. For instance, if we think about social media or e-commerce, younger people really master this knowledge and can teach new things about it. So, every time I came back I learn a lot from students and I try to give them the experience, which is what I have stronger compared to them. It's always a really positive exchange.

7) What are the main advices or tips for students or junior?

First, I would say that for me it's not important to know exactly where someone wants to go. I remember that, while I was a student, every professor used to say we should have very clear ideas about the future. Ten years after, I don't believe it. I've never had a clear idea about what I wanted to do but I've always put a lot of passion and efforts in everything I was doing. The path comes out naturally. Today there are so many possibilities that it would be restrictive to select what we want and don't want to do. I suggest to take new opportunities, work hard, be curious and get involved with them, like we say in Italian "get your hands dirty with what you are doing!". I'd also recommend to take care of relationships and create a network because you can work for companies but you basically work with people. Some years after, you realize the connections you create during your path are the most crucial and can make the difference in terms of new job opportunities but also in getting to know things. To sum up, I'd say build a network, keep relationships and be curious, this is the biggest advice I can give to everyone!