



As our students are getting ready for graduation I had the opportunity to spend some time with Ashwin Kalsekar '04. Ashwin is headed to NYC and will be working for UBS, a global investment banking firm. Was landing this job luck or strategy? Did he do it alone or was it a community effort? Let's find out.

CC: Who did you see as your coaches or advisors over the past two years?

AK: Many people have reached out to support me over the past two years. In reflecting on all these people, I would classify them in three levels. At the base were my parents, they taught me not to fear failure, have shown complete faith in my judgment and have encouraged me to take risks. The second level would be the CSLC office; between the resources and coaching, they provided the tool kit for career success. The third level would be our alumni. They are dedicated to helping our students. With their industry experience and contacts, they make a difference between running the race and emerging a winner. There is no way I could have succeeded without their support.

CC: With all the career options available, how did you decide on Investment Banking?

AK: I came to Weatherhead with an interest in consulting, which was my background. I realized through grad school that my interest and skill was in finance. I chose Investment Banking for three reasons. One, I loved the constant diversity of challenges that pushed me physically and mentally. Two, I had an opportunity to work with and learn from some of the brightest brains in business. Three, Investment Banking a great place to be to grow as finance professional.

CC: What was the thought process you went through with your coaches or as you reflected on your future career?

AK: First, I looked at my background and found a fit between what I did in consulting and Investment Banking. Second, I realized that in order to succeed I needed to be laser focused. So I decided on one clear goal - I will go into Investment Banking in New York and work with a bulge bracket firm. Third, I decided to invest significant time and monetary resources in order to achieve this goal.

CC: What is the key to success in your opinion?

AK: First, you have to know who you are. Then you have to know what you want. Once that is accomplished you need to become laser focused. This focus will allow you to make trade offs and take the risks that will help you achieve your future rewards.

CC: How do you get to know yourself?

AK: Reflection. Know you're your self...be completely honest about your strength and weakness. , understand your lifestyle choices...know what does and does not excite you. Don't make your choice based on the current "hot" trend or other people's choice. Choose what's best for you.

CC: Networking seems to play a critical role in your career success. Can you explain your networking style/process?

AK: I saw my networking in two distinct levels. The WSOM contacts and the web based contacts. At both levels, consistent follow through is the key to success. At the WSOM level, I focused on building relationships with the alumni in Investment Banking focusing on the major banks. I would use a combination of phone/email interviews as well as taking advantage of personal visits when appropriate. **I never missed the opportunity to meet with an alumnus.**

Second, my strategy was to identify the top investment banks and look for contacts on different websites. I would usually email and then follow up with a phone call. I found out that Friday's between 3-6pm was a great time to make connections.

Deborah Bibb at Career and Student Life Center was an amazing resource. She had a list of 3 people that I could speak with every time I met her. She was very supportive and encouraging and I owe a lot of her.

Professors are critical. I got a lot of help from most all of my Professors. I am especially thankful to Prof Gries. She was the one who gave me the contact to Bill Nook at UBS and Bill eventually championed my cause at UBS.

CC: Did you ever give up on your network? If not, what kept you motivated?

AK: NEVER! The Alumni are busy people whose time is valuable. I can think of one contact that I was trying to reach at Key Bank. I worked for 2 months phoning and I sent four emails without any kind of response because I really wanted to learn more about the industry he was working on. Finally he contacted me and told me that he was impressed with my persistence. He said that if I had not kept reaching out he would have not found time to call.

Regarding what kept me motivated. I would have to say it was the people I met along the way, those who coached me and supported me. Bill Nook has been like a mentor for me. He was always positive and took time out to talk with me about breaking into the industry. It was Bill's initiative that helped



me land this opportunity with UBS. Will Lewis provided very motivational and specific advice about making it in investment banking. Joe Sabatini is truly amazing. His belief and faith in Weatherhead student is inspirational. He is a beacon for every student who wants to make it on Wall Street. . Bob Ashmun walked me through the interview process and made it sound easy. I can go on because I've been helped by so many of our alumni....

I would also say that the people in the career office were great support. Especially Marsha, Dawn and Lamont.; the counselors, Jill, Jessica, Eric, Mindy, Al, Peggy and Amanda and of course Deb, I really felt everyone was there for me.

CC: What would you do differently?

AK: I would definitely be more prepared. I messed up on an opportunity with J.P. Morgan. It was in the third interview when I was not well prepared with the technical data. The interviewer saw right through this and I was cancelled out of the interview process. I vowed to myself to always be 200% prepared for all future interviews.

CC: Can you briefly tell us how you got the job at UBS?

AK: Sure, My friend Tanya identified the opportunity and thought I would be a good fit. I followed up with Bill Nook and told him of my interest. Within a week I had my interviews and the rest is history!

CC: If you were a coach what advice would you give to the alumni of Weatherhead around a job search?

AK: I said it already, but it is worth repeating. 1. Know your self. 2. Know what you want. 3. Become laser focused. 4. Make trade-offs to leverage the risks along the way to reaching your rewards.

Coaches Corner would like to extend this special thanks to Ashwin for conducting this interview with us. On a personal note, I wish him all the best in his new job and know that he will succeed. Ashwin is a man that sees the glass as half full. This is a unique trait in our world and we need to acknowledge those who have it. He is going to join a distinguished class of alumni on Wall Street. A group of alumni we can all be proud of for their outstanding accomplishments.

If you have an idea for future Coaches Corner articles please feel free to contact Eric at coachescorner.case.edu.

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