



TOP OF MINDS

CAREER ADVICE FOR STARTERS



Tijn Schoorlemmer & Sophie Jansen

A conversation with: Master's student Tijn Schoorlemmer and Associate Sophie Jansen

The first step toward into the professional world can be exciting and overwhelming. There are so many paths you can take, but the choices you make now will determine the rest of your career. What can you do to get started on the career path that's right for you? That was the topic of this conversation between Tijn Schoorlemmer and Sophie Jansen. Tijn works part-time at Top of Minds alongside studying for his master's degree. Sophie is a full-time Associate.



Tip 1: Try out internships and part-time jobs to explore the job market.

“Already having a part-time job in the field is excellent prep for life after school,” Sophie tells Tijn. Like Tijn, Sophie started out as a Research Assistant at Top of Minds back in her college days. “At Top of Minds, my perspective on recruitment changed. What I previously saw as a deals-driven world felt personal and entrepreneurial here. There’s space for ideas and creative input, even when you’re young or still working as a student. By gaining experience with my part-time job, I realized this was a good fit for me.”

Tip 2: Get to know the other side of job application and interview processes.

Tijn nods thoughtfully and says, “I’m studying Supply Chain Management, and I know I want to continue somewhere in that vein. So how relevant is my part-time job, really?” Sophie answers, “I definitely think it’s relevant. A part-time job in executive search can be a valuable resource for students who may want to choose a different career path. That kind of hands-on experience with the job application processes is informative and valuable for the rest of your career. In addition to the social and professional insights, you’ll learn do’s and don’ts that you can take into future interviews.”



Tip 3: Don't be afraid of responsibilities.

Tijn also notes that there are plenty of flexible opportunities for students at Top of Minds. "There are so many different things I can try outside my standard work and point out things I see that could be done differently." That was why Sophie decided to join Top of Minds full-time. After previous internships in the corporate world, she was really eager to take on responsibilities as an entry-level employee. "Executive search is more than just finding and placing candidates. You need to gain knowledge about the different industries and speak to clients and candidates. Actually, I'm constantly doing stakeholder and project management for all different companies, each with their own wants and needs. I've felt like I've made a meaningful contribution from the beginning here, and my confidence as a professional is still growing."



Tip 4: Talk to multiple people about your future.

As an executive search firm, Top of Minds naturally has a wealth of information and expertise around career planning. Sophie always advises interns to take advantage of that. Tijn agrees, "It's easy to quickly pick an associate or consultant's brain at lunch or over drinks. But there's also plenty of feedback, hand-offs, and recognition the other way around. That means you get to experience the wide range of processes and pathways within the company in a very short time."

Tip 5: Stay curious.

It's a big misconception that you're done learning after college. Sophie continues, "As an Associate, I work with all kinds of different companies and industries, from the fashion industry to fiber optic cable installation. That means I can talk to anyone at parties, whether it's about carve-outs and the diverse aspects of M&A or sustainability and implementation of management systems. How fun is that?!" "Oh yeah," asks Tijn, "what's the best thing you've learned so far at Top of Minds?" Sophie explains, "Everyone makes mistakes. The beauty of this profession is that you can solve problems yourself, and you have to. Top of Minds has a very deep support network. You can go to anyone for questions, but it's the freedom and open corporate culture that helps you master things quickly. It's why I truly believe that Top of Minds is a great learning opportunity for both students and people just starting out in their careers."



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