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# Update Magazine

For alumni of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration



Universiteit Maastricht

30 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL QUALITY

## preface

# Dear alumnus,

**In November 2005, I visited mainland China and was impressed by the dynamics of the economic development that is taking place. I travelled to different areas and I was amazed by the enormous differences in life style and workplace environment within a 10 km range.**



The contrasts are often extreme. An example is the infrastructure. In Beijing, there is a contrast between the hutongs (narrow roads) and the high speed connections to the international airport. There are also noticeable differences in their lifestyle. For example, the open food market in the city centre compared to the upscale restaurants.

Cultural differences exist between – obvious – cultures, but in China it seems to me that each individual is a living example of a “multiple cultures” person. Studying and understanding cultural diversity is a must in business. In honour of Geert Hofstede, the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration has initiated the Geert Hofstede Chair especially to stimulate education and experiences in multi-cultural contexts. At the moment approximately 45% of our Bachelor enrolment is non-Dutch. Annually, more than 500 students from abroad spend a semester in Maastricht. This creates an interesting mix in the Problem Based Learning environment where small groups of students learn and discuss. An ideal place to bring cultural diversity theory into practice!

We “go places”! Associate Dean Prof. Wim Gijsselaers recently signed the contract for a double degree programme with EDHEC Business School in Lille/Nice. Students now have the opportunity to study for two certificates at the same time (16 months) by studying in France and The Netherlands.

Our alumni also “go places”! This issue of the Update features stories from our alumni all over the world.

On June 10th, the place “to go” or “the place to be” was Maastricht for the UM Alumni Day. You can read about it in the ContinuUM and the Update!

Enjoy the information and I hope to see you at one of the alumni events in the future.

***Yours sincerely,***

*Prof. Dr. Jos Lemmink, Dean*

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### Colofon

Update Magazine is a publication especially for the alumni of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the Universiteit Maastricht.

### Editors

Leann Poeth

### Coordination and final editing

Leann Poeth

### Photographs

Maurice Bastings  
Patrick Belgareh

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Universiteit Maastricht  
Faculty of Economics  
and Business Administration  
P.O. Box 616  
6200 MD Maastricht  
mev@efb.unimaas.nl

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## UM Alumni Day

On June 10th, “the place to be” was Maastricht! The programme for the Faculty of Business Administration was all about “Challenges of the Future”. The morning kicked-off with a fantastic presentation by Henk de Velde, the famous Dutch solo sailor who shared his experiences and discussed the challenges that he faced during his trips to the North pole and the South pole.

In the afternoon, our alumni joined various workshops (intercultural communication, artificial intelligence, career planning, charity economy, innovation, entrepreneurship, and India in the spotlight) to discuss trends and reflect on what the future might bring. There was also a speed networking session! It was a great opportunity to reunite with alumni, share experiences, network and have fun!

The UM Alumni Day was held as part of the 30 year anniversary celebration of the Universiteit Maastricht. You can read more about the UM Alumni Day activities in the ContinuUM!

Maastricht, 10 June 2006

The place to be

## Geert Hofstede Chair on Cultural Diversity

As graduates of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, we are all familiar with Prof. Geert Hofstede. He is well-known for providing a theoretical framework that analyses the relationships between organisational actions and cultural beliefs. His most noted work is Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Workrelated Values which contains the analysis of the results of a survey of more than 100,000 IBM employees around the world. He noticed differences between cultures and developed theories to explain cultural variability. These are commonly referred to as “Hofstede's Dimensions.”

On June 1st the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration celebrated the inauguration of the Geert Hofstede Chair on Cultural Diversity together with a symposium on Clashing or Crossing Cultures. Prof. Geert Hofstede inspired the audience with an introduction lecture followed by the inaugural address of Prof. Mark F. Peterson. The programme, hosted in the Theater aan het Vrijthof in Maastricht, also consisted of six presentations on cultural diversity from various UM faculties (arts and culture, law, health sciences, psychology, governance and economics and business administration).

The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration is pleased to welcome Prof. Mark F. Peterson to be the first Chair holder of the Geert Hofstede Chair on Cultural Diversity. Prof. Peterson is the Internet Coast Adams Professor of Management and International Business at Florida Atlantic University. His principal interests are in questions of how culture and international relations affect the way organisations should be managed.



# UM Alumni: We go places!



## Alumnus: Evert de Boer

**Study:** International Business

**Period:** 1995 - 2000

**Current position:**  
Loyalty Director Asia,  
Carlson Marketing

Recently we came back to Singapore, bought a house, and the preparations for the wedding with my Singaporean fiancée are in full swing: we're here to stay. (And of course we met at work, both working for the same client; she for the advertising agency and me for the CRM company.)

The Cultural differences I encounter in my job are plentiful, but at the same time the global village effect is amazing: high speed internet, teleconferences, and recently the company even endorsed Skype as a supported tool. The most useful skill from my studies? Definitely presentation skills! And occasionally, QM 2.2 helps me understand and sell the concept of predictive modelling based on regression analysis.

*Living abroad has been rewarding in myriad ways.*

**The vast majority of the five years after I graduated in Maastricht with a degree in international business studies, I spent living and working abroad. In my first job for KLM, there were the many business trips, as well as 95% discounted air tickets (the airport taxes really add up though ...) Next, I went to Qatar, again working for an airline. Doha is nice but rather boring so I only spent 6 months there (moving is easy when all your belongings fit in 2 suitcases).**

The last four years, I have been working for a US multinational in Singapore. As Loyalty Director Asia, I look after a portfolio of clients across Asia and the Middle East for which we provide CRM and marketing solutions.

Life became more complicated when this company posted me in Dubai in 2004 for 18 months to set up offices in the UAE and Kuwait. Now moving involves shipping containers, getting new jobs for partners and deciding where to go for Christmas: Amsterdam or Singapore?

**I enrolled in the International Economics Programme in 2000, under the dual degree programme between the Universiteit Maastricht and the University of Zaragoza (Spain), my hometown. Upon my graduation in May 2003, and after having spent the exchange semester in Germany, I decided to follow my international career, by applying for the 2-year International Finance Traineeship of Spain's Exporters Institute (ICEX) .**

After passing four selection rounds, I was chosen by BBVA (the second largest Spanish bank). I got a two week-long trainings in Madrid, and then was sent to their branch in Hong Kong in October 2003. First, I worked as a Business Development analyst in Global Trade Finance. My main role was to develop transactional business between Latin American and Chinese banks and exporters-importers. This is one of the key business

goals of BBVA due to its leading position in the Hispanic market. In the second term of my programme (2005) I was transferred to Shanghai, to help start up the new Representative office as well as to build corporate relationships with Spanish companies in the influential area of Shanghai. Upon completion of the programme, I finally joined the bank as permanent staff, accepting the job of Relationship Manager for International companies in East China. The banking is expected to fully open to foreign players by the end of the year. This should mean very good news not only for foreign banks and multinationals but also to (western) graduates and young professionals willing to work in China. Enough about work! I have to say that living in Shanghai is really exciting, and once you are fluent in Chinese and understand how guanxi (connections) work, doors start opening pretty quickly. Now, thinking back about Maastricht, I recognise that it puts you on the right track for an international career, and for that I am very grateful.

## Alumnus: José Carlos Gaspar

**Study:** International Economics

**Period:** 2000 - 2003

**Current position:**  
International Relationship  
Manager, BBVA Shanghai





## Alumna: Karin Groneveld

**Study:** Economics and Business Administration

**Period:** 1990 - 1996

**Current position:**

Entrepreneur, Owner/Manager  
Bed & Breakfast Il Tulipano

**I studied Economics and Business Administration in Maastricht from 1990 - 1996 and I spent one year (1993 - 1994) on the Erasmus programme in Trento, North Italy. I really liked Italy and decided to go back after my studies.**

I ended up in Padova and worked for several companies in the export department. My last job as an export manager of natural cosmetics was very interesting because I was working with a new product and had the chance to travel extensively.

One major cultural difference related to work is that Dutch people are very direct and Italians

very indirect. You really have to work in Italy for some years to understand all the nuances. A lot of patience is needed when you work for small Italian companies. In general the organisational structure is very flat and the owner of the company communicates directly with all the employees (from warehouse workers to product managers and sales directors) and is not good at managing the company (although he thinks he is ...). Flexible working-hours, part-time work and wage-increases are very difficult to obtain.

So after having worked in Italian companies for a long time, I decided together with my Italian husband to set up our own little business: a Bed & Breakfast near Venice

([www.il-tulipano.it](http://www.il-tulipano.it)). We welcome guests from all over the world! It is great to be your own boss and to make your own decisions. Anyway, I look back positively on my career as an employee because I learnt a lot. At the moment I am also working on a project together with an Italian friend, which involves internet and Italian tourism, and we hope that our business will start officially in September 2006.

I believe that the Universiteit Maastricht helped me to be an independent person capable of working in a team together with people who have different habits and backgrounds. Thanks to the Universiteit Maastricht, I went to Italy for one year and that changed my life!



## Alumna: Vivian Veldstra

**Study:** International Business

**Period:** 1998 - 2004

**Current position:**

PR and Communications Officer,  
Van Oord

**Dubai, a city that has grown in 40 years from a small trading post on the Persian Gulf to a tourist paradise with 1,5 million inhabitants. That is the city where I wake up every morning and lose my way to work once again, because a new bridge, building or road has popped up while I was sleeping.**

Where the summer it is so hot and humid that only the numerous construction workers in their blue overalls have to be outside. The rest of the expats, about 80% of the population, transport themselves by car from air-conditioned home to office.

It is also the city where the ruler, Sheikh Mohammed, has decided to expand its coastline, in the shape of palm trees and a map of The World. Van Oord is the Dutch Dredging and Marine Contractor shaping these projects and I am working as their PR and Communication Officer.

After I graduated in February 2004 with a Masters Degree in International Business, I guided tours in Kenya and worked some time in Ghana for Ahold. In August 2005 Dubai became my new home.

It is the perfect place to learn about the Islamic culture and still be able to enjoy the freedom we are used to in the Western world, especially as a woman. Although everybody works very hard here, I find it a nice and easy life. We have a swimming pool and gym at our apartment. In the weekends we can go to the beach or make trips to other parts of the UAE, with cruising through the desert being the favourite past time if you have a 4x4. We often have BBQ's and otherwise there are the countless restaurants and clubs to go to and at the pace Dubai is building, there will be many more to come in the future.

## Alumnus: Robbert Kessels

**Study:** International Business

**Period:** 1994 - 1999

**Current position:**

Tropical Oil Trader, Cargill,  
Tropical Oils



After graduation in 1999, I initially hopped on a sailing vessel to cross the oceans for eight months before I started my professional career at Cargill just after the millennium change. Cargill is a privately owned American company trading, shipping and manufacturing all kinds of commodities. As commercial trainee I moved my way up the trading desk for tropical oils (palm and coconut oil) to become a senior trader. In 2005 I moved to the former Dutch Indies together with my girlfriend (for at least 3 years).

As commercial manager I am responsible for the export of palm and coconut oil, as well as our crushing plants in Indonesia. This involves building long lasting relations with trustworthy suppliers (this can sometimes be a very difficult and frustrating issue in a country that is ranked 2nd on the corruption list worldwide!!), forecasting the crops and improving the supply chain. Another very challenging subject is sustainability. A very hot topic in the western world, but working in Indonesia makes you realise that you cannot only judge this from a western perspective. Indonesia wants to boost its economy and has gigantic natural resources; this may not always go in a sustainable manner. Nevertheless we should strive to a workable and

economical solution without endangering the environment (too much).

Living as an expat in Indonesia, and Jakarta specifically has great advantages. A massive villa, a big household staff, your own driver, more than 40 golf courses in the vicinity, a beautiful polo club and in general a very inexpensive living. Although, it is not always easy to live in a city that has stopped thinking about infrastructure since the Dutch left in the 1940s, i.e. massive traffic jams, no effective public transport system and a lot of air pollution. Therefore spending long weekends at Bali or similar islands is a great (and necessary) relief. All in all, Indonesia is a beautiful country, but you will be challenged ...

**Six fantastic months of studying in Uppsala, Sweden as part of the Erasmus programme greatly changed my life (the decision to study there was made over a beer one day in 1998!). Now eight years later I'm back and live in the capital city of Stockholm.**

After completing my study (IB), I returned to Sweden to life with my Swedish girlfriend (whom I met in Uppsala) and started working for the Canadian telecommunications company Nortel. Currently, I'm the operations leader for Nortel's Nordic region responsible for building telecommunications networks in five countries.

I enjoy living in Stockholm very much. It is a fantastic city, very trendy, has a great nightlife, nice parks and very close to the sea and lakes. I do however fly back to Holland quite regularly to meet up with family and friends (a lot of them still from my study period in Maastricht); fortunately it's only a two hour flight.

The cultural differences compared to Holland are few and sometimes even hard to notice.

Swedes might be less outgoing and flexible than the Dutch but are still very easy to get to know and become friends with. The working culture isn't very different either. Compared to Holland you can say that it's all just a bit more informal and less hierarchical. The cultural differences that I experience with the other Nordic countries are much more obvious. That's where my study still provides great benefits. I learned to deal with and find a way to understand the differences and often even turn them into a benefit.

Although I'm very interested to work in other countries in the coming years, I wouldn't mind staying in Sweden either. Sweden really became my second home country!



## Alumnus: Paul van Lennep

**Study:** International Business

**Period:** 1994 - 2000

**Current position:**

Operations Leader,  
Nortel's Nordic region



## Alumnus: Coos Groot

**Study:** Economics

**Period:** 1991 - 1995

**Current position:**

Entrepreneur, QRP-Management Methods International and QRP International (business consultancy & legal assistance)

**Ever since I started studying International Management I have wanted to live and work abroad. Two years after my graduation I signed a contract with a Norwegian consultancy and lived and worked in Vienna, Zurich, Limassol (Cyprus) working in various telecom projects. It was a great time in the late 1990s where telecom was booming.**

After these somewhat roaring years with many places to live I came to Bergamo (40 KM east of Milan), Italy where I have been living since 2000 with great pleasure. After a first telecoms free lance job as a Country Manager for a British fibre optic network company I started my own company. I have two business activities now : project management training ([www.qrpmmi.com](http://www.qrpmmi.com)) and consultancy for Dutch companies entering the Italian market ([www.qrpi.net](http://www.qrpi.net)). Both businesses have been blooming since the start and I enjoy the international factor in my work very much. In fact, I started the training business initially for Italy however my training business is developing internationally very rapidly now with offices in Barcelona, Stockholm, Cologne and Pune (India).

Setting up a business is never easy and even more difficult abroad; you can't rely on a great network. On the other hand, foreign countries may bring opportunities which do not exist

in your own country. First of all, consulting Dutch companies in Italy is a unique business and it really brings a lot of what I learned at Universiteit Maastricht into practice. Secondly, my project management training business is a rapidly growing business whereas this market in Holland is completely saturated.

Foremost I believe Italy is an ideal spot to live: a good climate, good local sense of life and not too far from Holland in a way that you maintain relations in Holland. We live an hours' drive from the ski resorts and in the summer we enjoy weekend trips to the mountains, the lakes, Tuscany or the sea side. I really appreciate this variety here.

In 2004 I married my Dutch girlfriend (who joined me in 2001 here in Bergamo), we organised a great wedding in the old town of Bergamo. Six months ago our daughter Florine was born and she will soon speak better Italian than her daddy!

**I started my studies in Maastricht in 1990 at the Economic Faculty. After my propaedeuse, I decided to focus on International Management with a specialisation in Finance. In 1993/1994 I took part in the Erasmus exchange programme and studied in Ireland for one year.**

During my last year I was lucky to get two international internships; one with Akzo Nobel in Sweden, the other one with ABN Amro in the Philippines. After eight months abroad, I returned to Maastricht to graduate in August 1996. Immediately after graduation I joined Rabobank International where I started my career as a Management Trainee. In 2000, I was relocated to Hong Kong to take up the position of regional head Telecom Finance and set up the Asian Telecom hub. In September 2004, the bank offered me a new challenge as Deputy General Manager of Rabobank's

## Alumna: Marjon Wind

**Study:** International Management - Finance

**Period:** 1990 - 1996

**Current position:** Deputy General Manager, Rabobank Nederland Shanghai Branch

Shanghai Branch. Together with the General Manager of the Branch (who is a local Chinese) I am responsible for the overall management and strategic development of Rabobank International in China.

Studying in Maastricht gave me a real taste for the international business environment and, with many courses taught in English, it prepared me well for my international career that ensued. Living abroad for the last six years has broadened my horizon. It makes you realise that there is not one right way of doing

things and teaches you to be more flexible. Asia is a very dynamic and fun environment. Things move at a much faster pace than in Europe. Particularly the speed of development in China is breathtaking. Asia is also a beautiful place with a rich cultural history and not to forget the beautiful beaches. At the same time as a straight talking and direct Dutch woman, the cultural sensitivities such as 'saving face' can sometimes be frustrating. Diplomacy is a must!





## UMBS news

### In-company

Sabic and Vodafone have concluded their in-company programmes at UMBS. Both graduation ceremonies showed excellent presentations of very talented and ambitious participants. On 8 and 15 May we welcomed group 3 and 4 for the Leadership in Services Programme of Philips Medical Systems.

### The MBA programmes of UMBS, be inspired!

This Fall UMBS will start a series of MBA programmes.

26 August: start Maastricht Düsseldorf Part-time MBA

1 September: start Executive MBA in Dutch

8 September: start Executive MBA

Visit the website [www.umbs.nl](http://www.umbs.nl) for more information.

### UMBS developed own admission test

Until now the English GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) was the only admission test available for candidates interested in the MBA programmes of UMBS. This has changed as of May 2006. UMBS is now able to provide an alternative to the GMAT with the so-called UMBS Intake Test. The UMBS Intake Test has been developed by UMBS in cooperation with the Project Webspijkeren of the Universiteit Maastricht and YER Assessment & Development. The UMBS Intake Test will – as opposed to the GMAT – also be available in the Dutch language. The ideal alternative for candidates of the Dutch Executive MBA!

Candidates for the MBA programmes of UMBS are free to choose to take the GMAT or the UMBS Intake Test as the admission test.

### Open Executive Programmes

For those who want to learn more about a specific subject UMBS offers short courses. This Fall a series of courses will start again:

5 September: Financieel Management voor niet financiële managers

13 September: Management control in de praktijk

5 October: Verandermanagement

6 October: Strategisch Innoveren

10 October: Services Management Campus

25 October: Projectmanagement & Projectcontrol

25 October: Supply Chain Management

2 November: Financieel Management voor HRM

3 November: Corporate Governance

## Update:

## The Corporate World Project

In the last two issues of the Update magazine, we informed you about the Corporate World Project, an initiative of the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration to improve the relationship with the “corporate world”.

### Some interesting initiatives for alumni:

**Survey among employers of our graduates:** In the last issue we informed you of the results of the survey that was conducted among the employers where you work. These results were sent to 120 companies via post or email. Interested in the results? Please visit the website: [www.roa.unimaas.nl](http://www.roa.unimaas.nl) (click reports for the pdf file)

**Recruitment:** Interested in recruiting UM alumni? Alumni can often act as intermediary between your company and the UM in recruitment activities. Career fairs, workshops and recruitment dinners are regularly organised via our study associations. An ideal way to present your company to our student population!

**UM alumni network in your workplace.** Are you interested in setting up a UM alumni network in your firm? Or perhaps you already have a group of UM alumni in your firm? Contact us for more details.

**Guest lectures:** We are keen to invite experts in specific fields who can give guest lectures to our students based on practical and real life cases and we welcome any suggestions from your end in this context.

**Executive education:** Do you have specific learning needs? We can help you via in-house training and/or executive education. This could also entail joint projects or joint research.

**An International Advisory Board** is being established to advise our Faculty and to provide an international flavour and input into our activities.

If you have questions or comments regarding the Corporate World Project, please contact either Leann Poeth-Chervenik ([L.Poeth@efb.unimaas.nl](mailto:L.Poeth@efb.unimaas.nl)) or Peter Otten ([P.Otten@efb.unimaas.nl](mailto:P.Otten@efb.unimaas.nl))

We hope to increase and improve the accuracy of our alumni data. We encourage our alumni to keep their records with us up-to-date. You can do this online: [www.alumni.unimaas.nl](http://www.alumni.unimaas.nl) or by email: [mev@EFB.unimaas.nl](mailto:mev@EFB.unimaas.nl)