

Ashwin Ravichandran's Senior Analyst Experience at J.P. Morgan Chase

By Margaret Kuleshova



Ashwin taps his pen against his notepad as the two-hour meeting with one of the credit card teams from the consumer division of J.P. Morgan Chase comes to a close. With another long meeting scheduled in the afternoon, he better make the best use of his time. The team is concerned about the response rate on the recent credit card mailings, and it's up to Ashwin to figure out the root cause. Which means he has to pool the data, run the analysis in Excel, and prepare his presentation. That's a lot of work in very little time. Good thing he's got his finance skills from MEMP under his belt to help him speed it up.

Despite his tight schedule, he's made time to talk about his work with a student at Duke.

Rushing into his office, he's just in time as the phone rings. Ashwin falls into his desk chair, twirls around, and picks up the phone. "This is Ashwin."

"Hi, Ashwin! It's Margaret from Informational Interviewing. Thanks for giving us some of your valuable time."

"Absolutely. What would you like to know?"

"Let's start with you. How did you get into banking?"

"I have an electrical engineering background and majored in operations at Duke's MEMP. I got lucky with the job interview through a Fuqua alumni connection. Now I do analytics and investment analysis on consumer credit cards for Chase."

"You've made some big leaps."

"Yeah, definitely. You never know where you'll end up. You just have to go for it."

"Thanks for that. What is your work like?"

"Say there are 60 million customers in the U. S. eligible for a credit card. We separate them into ten segments and decide what kind of offer each segment should get. Based on the offer, we create a budget. I have to come up with assumptions based on certain models and see how much money these people will make at the end of five to seven years. Our finance team gives us more assumptions based on the type of analysis we plan to do. I combine those assumptions with mine and put together a scenario. We've also got a target we need to meet every day. If we're off target, we've got to find out why and what we can do to fix it."

"Sounds intense."



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“Oh, yeah. We’ve got a pretty serious culture, but the people are very friendly. You’re looking at 8 to 10 hours of work per day, in good company. I learn so much from my managers in terms of bringing teams together, it’s great.”

I didn’t know anything about my job before I came here. I had a skill set, but I didn’t know how it was going to be used. There’s a learning curve.

“Awesome. Got any tips for Duke students who want to be where you’re at?”

“Fuqua courses are great. You need to know how to use Excel and use it well for analysis. But every job is different. I didn’t know anything about my job before I came here. I had a skill set, but I didn’t know how it was going to be used. There’s a learning curve. Presentation and communication skills are big for me since I have to present my scenario to high management. I took Decision Models in MEMP, which was probably the most helpful course for me. I definitely need to create decision models at a certain point at my job. I’d also recommend Operations Management and Supply Chain for that.”

“What about networking?”

“Talk to as many alumni as you can. Get feedback on your resume and what you should be doing to get where you want to be. The Career Fair is also pretty good, just remember to do your research and have a pitch prepared, not just your resume.”

“Those are great points, Ashwin. I think students who are interested in banking will definitely benefit from what you’ve said. Thank you for your insight!”

“No problem. Wish them luck for me.”

“Will do!”

Ashwin hung up the phone and pulled up Excel on his computer. He wasn’t kidding about those decision models, because that’s exactly what he was about to work on. ■
