

# MBA ETH SCM Success Story

From Scientist to Business Process Analyst and Group Manager



## Dr. Georg Singewald

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MBA ETH SCM Course 2011-2013

When Dr. Georg Singewald started his MBA studies, he had already earned a PhD. in Pharmacology and started his career working as a Trainee in Technical Operations at a large drug company. This role of a subject matter expert was not an unusual entry point to the industry. It had allowed him to gather early experience in managing smaller projects and people within a matrix organization.

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The early exposure to the tasks in a commercial environment however led the scientist to look outside pure laboratory and technical work. This logically meant more education, particularly in management. «While working on technical projects in teams I could see more senior colleagues managing both experts and technical subjects. To take on this kind of authority myself, I realized that I needed more theoretical knowledge and insights into industry to

be successful.» Georg's ambitious nature was looking for a means to accelerate his career, a path which would lead to more responsibility for both business results and people.

The main driver for choosing the MBA ETH SCM was its hands-on approach, in which students were exposed to both the technical aspects, as well as how the ideas were applied in reality. «In this program, you get the maximum exposure to implemented ideas, and not just what is in the books or lectures. We talked to the people who actually wrote and implemented the business cases we were studying, then got to see the idea working on the shop floor, in China, the US, and Russia, all within a few months. This was a very intense experience.»

In addition to the study trips, the class visited a wide variety of industries, which opened his horizon beyond the scientific world of Pharmaceuticals. The regular sessions on campus in Zurich also helped him to discover «how many different ways there are to do things», which paid off when Georg adapted a supply chain methodology (normally used to optimize manufacturing), to the pharmaceutical quality process. It was the first time that this model from manufacturing has been applied to Quality Control and Quality Assurance processes in a continuous flow, dependent

on output from manufacturing. By globally considering all end-to-end processes and substeps of a selected supply chain, it became more transparent, which allowed decisions to be made based on data, reducing the overall throughput time.

«Because the MBA study program was so hands-on, I wanted my Master Thesis to be applied, but something with numbers and facts. As we learned the Funnel Methodology, I looked for an application in my world. I found it not within my local function, but in the end-to-end process, which broke out of the typical focus on lean manufacturing. The group work had helped me to think through all the details. And if the professor had not explained it in technical and practical detail, I would not have been able to make the leap, which later made it all happen on the job.»

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«I learned how different business is all over the world, and yet how interconnected everything is. One manufacturing step is dependent on another, countries are interdependent, and so are companies. If you get this all orchestrated, together with critical factors like people and culture, you will be more successful.»

The company recognized Georg growing in his function and applying methodologies and knowledge from the MBA class in his daily work. During the MBA course he got promoted to a Group-leader, bringing him a step closer fulfilling his ambition to enter the ranks of management. Today, he belongs to the site leadership team at a plant in Austria,

within a matrix organization with a broad range of scientists, commercial and technical workers.

Summing up, Georg feels that «no matter how small a part any of us play in a whole Pharma supply chain, it's knowing that the things we manufacture make a difference to people's lives, and to public health, which makes my job so exciting.»