

Career Profile

Jessica Pearlman, Co-ordinator Global Partnerships Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment



Jessica Pearlman is a 2013 Communication Studies graduate. Approximately four years after graduating, Jessica was able to secure a full time position in global partnerships for Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE). Jessica had not always thought about working in the sports industry, as she was initially enrolled in economics in hopes to become an accountant. After completion of her first year at Laurier, Jessica realized accounting was not for her and instead discovered an interest in communications and felt it could be a stepping stone to many possible career paths.

During her academic studies, Jessica was an orientation week leader solidifying her preference for working with people. She obtained other jobs such as bartending and working at golf tournaments like the Canadian Open in order to get an understanding of what was out there. During the summer months, Jessica volunteered with a youth and development program in her hometown where she coordinated a volleyball program with youth. Jessica knew she liked working in sports, with kids, and with people, which is outlined through her various roles and volunteer commitments. Jessica encourages students to volunteer and see what opportunities are out there and to not be afraid to branch out!

During her university years, Jessica worked for the Toronto Blue Jays Activation Team where she fostered memorable experiences for fans at games. This position with the Blue Jays kick started Jessica's interest in the sports industry. Jessica was always a huge sports fan (a girl who watched hockey since day one), but it was not until after this experience with the Blue Jays that she realized she could translate her love of sports into a possible career.

After university Jessica bartended in order to save up money with hopes to travel. But the opportunity to work in a full time capacity at MLSE became available and she was fortunate enough to get the position. She worked about a year and a half in a part time position for global partnerships, resulting in a full time role within the same department.

Jessica's work week as a Global Partnerships Coordinator is anything but typical; she works on average 12 hours a day. The sports and entertainment industry is very fast paced and things are constantly changing. On a daily basis, Jessica has a roster of accounts that she manages (e.g., Adidas, BMO and Funnel Cakes Express to name a few). Jessica deals with the marketing and partnership teams to make sure all of the client's contractual assets are fulfilled throughout the season. She works internally with various departments to make sure everyone

is on the same page and providing the best experience and opportunities to fans and partners.

Jessica is also involved with coordinating larger events related to the teams or sponsorship partners. The coordination goes beyond the sports game. For instance she coordinated the Toronto FC jersey launch to kick-off the season where she hosted about 50 partners and media and about 400 fans to come hear the Toronto Football Club president and general manager talk about the upcoming season.

Jessica's favorite part of her job is the networking and relationship building opportunities. Jessica loves getting to be a part of the growth of the teams and the company as a whole. The biggest challenge is product—if the team does not have a good product on the ice, or on the pitch, then it directly impacts her team's work (a domino effect). However, the people Jessica works alongside are extremely supportive and the culture is very focused on growing employees and building confidence to show you can get to the next level. Jessica feels like she has a good foundation of people at work that she can count on for advice.

Jessica stated that her father was a big advocate for her upon her graduation, especially for work mentality. Jessica recognized her father's work attitudes and his strong relationship building with clients and individuals, which influenced and mentored her regarding how to be successful in the business world. Aside from her father, Jessica developed a range of mentors working with MLSE. At first it was very intimidating, but as she continued her work she realized that everyone is a close-knit group of people that become your family. "You cannot really get anywhere unless you build connections and relationships with people and build walls of respect to make partnerships and events happen."

Jessica explained that at MLSE they do not hire an individual based on their skill set alone, but base hiring decisions largely on personality. For their interview process, human resources wants to see if the individual is personable and fits the dynamic MLSE culture. Jessica explained that MLSE values individuals who are optimistic and can adapt to unpredictable situations. An ideal candidate should be outgoing, energetic and determined. It is all about being resourceful and making those proper connections to get something done.

Jessica explained that most people in her industry take on postgraduate programs in sport management/sport marketing in order to get internship opportunities. To work for a company like MLSE it does require some form of undergraduate degree or college diploma, but although additional credentials are not mandated, they can certainly be of benefit when coming into the sports industry.