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HE DARED TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Romain Fournials is Vice President - Laboratory Diagnostics Middle East and South East Africa for Siemens Healthcare. He graduated from UTC in 2001 and in parallel from Université Laval, city of Quebec in their biomedical specialty electives. He is now a specialist of health technologies who progressed career-wise by daring to accept international challenges at every stage.

18 Dec 2017

HE DARED TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Ever since he was a teenager, health issues were always a theme that he found interesting. When he was 15-16 years old, he hesitated between a future in medicine and engineering. And when he was admitted to the UTC biomedical major this allowed him to combine his sensitivity to 'human beings and their welfare' and his passion for technology. *"At the time I enrolled at UTC, it was one of the very few engineering schools in France offering a biomedical cursus and was likewise pathfinding in terms of international exchange possibilities"*, he recalls. His student years at Compiegne also allowed him to combine sports and academic studies. He was registered under the UTC Sport Elite section in athletics; he trained for the 110m hurdles at national level all the time he was at UTC. *"Marc Monetti, who was in charge of the cursus, helped me get organized to pursue both my studies and to continue high level athletics."* This flexible, tailor-made organization plan is one of the key added values of going to UTC, providing Romain the opportunity to go abroad early on. *"I was lucky in that I was able to complete my core programme training in Canada after 2 ½ years in residence UTC-Compiegne"*. This first trans-Atlantic experience was highly rewarding and decisive for his early professional career steps. With a double degree (UTC engineering and Université Laval, City of Quebec, he decided to stay on in the 'Belle Province' (viz., Quebec) an extra year to gain a Master's degree in Science and Technology. So, after only 5 years' studies in France and Quebec, Romain now had his three university degrees.

Knowing how to set up and seize opportunities

With his formal academic training behind him, Romain Fournials went on to the job market in 2003, and was recruited by the German-American company Dade Behring, as a consultant to identify potential laboratory solutions for the company's customers. *"From an intellectual standpoint, those were very enriching years that led on to my starting a research career – however, I had not inclination to spend too much time in a laboratory environment"*, adds our ever curious graduate. Over these two years 'in the field', Romain had built up a solid hands-on professional experience that now enabled him to seek managerial positions. He was appointed head of the area France, Belgium and French-speaking West Africa. This managerial function was an eye-opener for human resource aspects, which was something he appreciated a lot. Three years and one month later, late afternoon, he recalls that his boss proposed that he take on Business Development Middle East and South East Africa. He knew nothing about these places and his family was settled in France, but Romain decided to accept immediately. For this seasoned manager, knowing how to seize opportunity rapidly is an important asset if you want to succeed. *"Never hesitate to plunge into new experiences when you are 24-25 years old"* adds Romain, quoting the self-made English business magnate Richard Branson, *"If you are*

offered a superb opportunity and you are not quite sure you can manage it, go ahead and accept and learn how to do the job later". Romain Fournials has been working in this region of the world for 9 years. At has been a choice that opened his vista and horizons. The economic dynamics of the Persian Gulf countries offer an ideal setting to quench his thirst for new challenges and business deals. *"Here, thing move faster and bear no comparison with the slow procedures underpinning calls to tender that we see in Europe – opportunities abound here and are realistic"*. Romain also observes how important human relationships are when working with foreign partners. Even though his professional work is focused on cutting-edge imaging and laboratory diagnosis, quality contacts with others is primordial: *"Often the deal is settled over a cup of tea"*. For those students attracted by this sort of experience, Romain Fournials advises that they first do a 6 month internship abroad, to get acclimatized.

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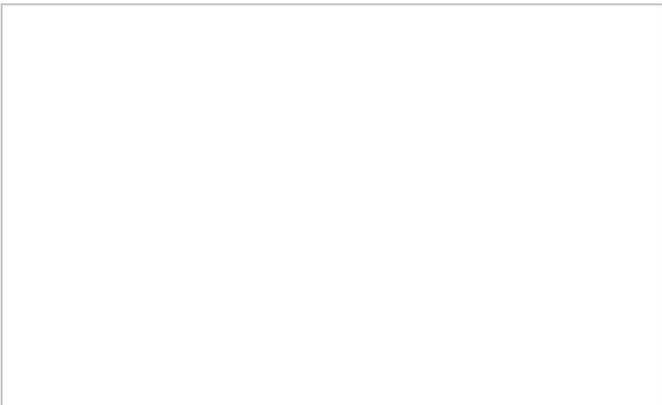
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