I first came to Abu Dhabi in 2002 for a two-month internship and started my career with the same company in 2009 after graduating from Grenoble Ecole de Management. Today I am Chief Financial Officer for a marine group which builds and operates the Jack up barge in the Arabian Gulf.

Thanks to my first internship, I got my first job too! Do not underestimate your internship experience. It enables you to learn on the job, start networking and building contacts, and in my case, it resulted in a job opportunity a few years later.

Why UAE?

• Possibilities. Abu Dhabi is full of business opportunities that you cannot find in Europe.
• Cross-functional experiences. What I really appreciate about my job is the size of the company. I am able to explore and tackle so many different aspects of the business. Even though I am CFO, I have had the opportunity to spend time on our construction yard in China and Indonesia to better understand the processes.

• Get used to the weather. I arrived in July 2002, in the middle of the summer with temperatures hitting 45 degrees and 100 per cent humidity. I was homesick till I settled into a good routine with my job and started making friends and understanding how the country and the culture work.

• Keep your mind open. The onus is on you to make your experience worthwhile.
• UAE is an amazing opportunity to experience a multicultural environment. With over 150 different nationalities working together, every day brought its own surprise.
• Keep your mind open. The onus is on you to make your experience worthwhile.
• Every day, adaptation is key and being a good listener will take you a long way.
• Start learning Arabic.
• Others are not always responsible for mistakes. Be critical of your own behaviour before complaining about others. As an expatriate, it’s your job to adapt to your new environment not the other way around.

Living in Abu Dhabi

• Possibilities. Abu Dhabi is full of business opportunities that you cannot find in Europe.
• Cross-functional experiences. What I really appreciate about my job is the size of the company. I am able to explore and tackle so many different subjects and aspects of the business. Even though I am CFO, I have had the opportunity to spend time on our construction yard in China and Indonesia to better understand the processes.

The job search

• Give it time. I enjoy a strong rapport with my Western co-workers but it took time to build trust with other colleagues from Asia. Today, we share a great working relationship. They are now half French and I, half Filipino.
• Networking. You can never go wrong with building an international network across the globe—useful to have in the maritime industry.
• When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Strictly follow the local rules and laws.

Working in Abu Dhabi

• Networking. You can never go wrong with building an international network across the globe—useful to have in the maritime industry.
• When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Strictly follow the local rules and laws.

Most sought-after characteristics in the workplace

• Flexibility. Open-mindedness. Good negotiation skills.