

PrimeTime Member Spotlight

July 2009

Each month *Connections* talks to a PrimeTime member to find out more about who they are, what they do, and their association with PrimeTime.



This month we spotlight

Sandra Schroder
Manager & Team Lead, Customer
Service - Saxo Capital Markets.

Personal talk ...

Connections: Where are you from originally, and how long have you been in Singapore?

Sandra: I'm from Germany and I have been in Singapore for 3 years now.

Connections: Have you lived in other foreign countries? If so where?

Sandra: I'm originally from Berlin and I have also lived in Frankfurt - as well as living in France for a year and Denmark for 7 years.

Connections: What brought you to Singapore?

Sandra: My Company undertook a rapid expansion into Asia.

Connections: What do you enjoy most about living here?

Sandra: Safety is the main plus. I'm really not looking forward to going back to Europe – it's so sad that you can't walk the streets anywhere else in the world like you can in Singapore. I also like Singapore's cleanliness - and of course the weather!

Connections: What are your interests and hobbies?

Sandra: I like dancing – I'm not particularly good at it but I do enjoy it! I did ballet with Singapore dance theatre, but unfortunately I hurt my foot doing a pirouette and it took 8 months to recover. Since then I have tried out other forms of dance and I recently took part in a Bollywood performance.

Connections: Have you had any particularly interesting experiences you would like to share with us?

Sandra: Well the Bollywood performance was certainly interesting. The teacher told me it was going to be a small show; in fact it was in Raffles hotel with an audience of 300 people!

Connections: Which are your favourite restaurants/shops/places to go?

Sandra: I love Gucci and I go there frequently for window shopping. I like club 21 as they have several small boutiques, and I'm a fan of the Paragon shopping centre. Favourite restaurants include The Cliff on Sentosa and Indochine at the waterfront. Naturally I love the German restaurants Magma and Brotzeit. And one of my favourite places to eat out is Dempsey Hill - especially PS Café and La Forketta. For something a bit different at Dempsey I can recommend the Tippling Club. It's not cheap but it's an experience.

Connections: What one thing would you like to accomplish in your lifetime?

Sandra: My main aim is to be happy with what I have and be passionate about what I do.

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Professional talk ...

Connections: Could you tell us a little about the company you work for and your current role?

Sandra: Saxo Capital Markets is a Danish investment bank specialising in self-service online. Our customers can download a trading platform enabling them to buy and sell with no hidden costs. Our clients are mainly institutional investors and brokers plus some private clients. I was sent to Singapore to build up the Customer Service team for private clients. The company is 15 years old and over the last 4 years it has expanded dramatically (from something like 75 to over 2000 staff), opening a lot of sales offices around the world.

Connections: How long have you been working for in your present role?

Sandra: I have been with the company for 8 years overall, including 3 years in my role in Singapore.

Connections: Have you always worked in the same industry? If not, what else have you done/where else have you worked in the past?

Sandra: I have always worked in the finance industry. I toyed with the idea of going into diplomacy but since half of my family were in banking and I did a classical banking apprenticeship, I guess finance was a natural career progression for me.

Connections: What do you enjoy most about your job?

Sandra: I relish the opportunity to do something new and to have a real impact building the team here.

Connections: What do you enjoy most about the company you work for?

Sandra: The great thing about this company is that I have the independence to do what I want.

Connections: Do you have any advice for job hunters trying to move into your industry?

Sandra: Well with the current financial climate, patience is a virtue! If you want to go into finance there's a lot of diversity so you need to figure out which sector you want to be in – whether investment, face-to face or trading. So first of all, figure out your area of interest. As always, the rest of your success lies in application and self-belief. In Singapore it's good to have a network and I have seen a few people get jobs through PrimeTime, so do bear that in mind.

PrimeTime talk ...

Connections: When did you join PrimeTime and how did you find out about it?

Sandra: I joined in 2006. I was at a networking event where I met another member. I came along to a 2nd Thursday where I met my best friends!

Connections: Which PrimeTime subgroups do you belong to?

Sandra: I subscribe to Book Review and The Arts Group. I'm also in WineTime, although I usually drool over the events online as I don't always have the time to attend. Book Review is great because I read books which I would never otherwise read, which really widens my horizons.

Connections: Do you volunteer at PrimeTime? If so, in what areas have you become involved?

Sandra: No, I haven't done any volunteering at PrimeTime.

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Connections: What do you personally feel are the benefits of being a PrimeTime member?

Sandra: The main advantage is getting to meet new people. In Singapore there are so many great women who are intelligent, funny, likeable and good at their jobs. Unlike in Europe, where life seems more like a competition, here the focus is on building links through networking and social activities. I always have a good feeling when I go to a PrimeTime event and I'm lucky that I met my best friend through PrimeTime.

Connections: Which was the most interesting or inspiring PrimeTime event you've attended?

Sandra: The Casino Royale themed Village Bank Fundraiser was great. I loved the James Bond theme!

Thank you Sandra!