

Adrian Wood

Inaugural Cranfield NZ Alumni Scholar 2007

It's been the hardest year of my life

I'm writing this less than 24 hours before returning to New Zealand for a flying visit prior to starting work in the UK later in mid-November. It is therefore the perfect opportunity to reflect on the year at Cranfield and to consider how I have changed through the experience of the MBA.

Before I left NZ, all the Cranfield Alumni I met assured me that the year would be, at the same time, one of the hardest working, and most enjoyable of my life. Looking back they were correct on both counts.

The course was incredible, building my technical understanding, and enabling me to learn and practice a wide range of skills and behaviours, which built on my strengths and help me address the weaknesses that previously would have discounted my performance.

Equally though, the value of the year is seen in the relationships I've developed and the UK/global perspective studying in an international environment provided.

The intensity of the courses means you very rapidly learn the value of trustworthy teammates, and I leave Cranfield having built a significant level of relationship with a group of very talented people. As we re-enter the 'real' world, this network will help us all consolidate the year's learning. Longer term it will provide a peer group to spur each other on.

Being in the UK for the year helped bring to life the many different ways our two countries are related. The global perspective provided by being in a cohort comprising nearly 40 countries was also very useful -especially given New Zealand's relative population size and our need to prove competitive in a global economy.

Shortly after I return to the UK I enter a two-year risk leadership programme with The Royal Bank of Scotland, based in the city. This represents a change in industry and country, and I begin work at a time of significant upheaval. I have met my new manager, and been briefed on a role that will be both interesting and challenging, and I'm looking forward, after a short break, to proving the value of the year at Cranfield in my new working environment.

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20 October 2008



