

»I WAS VERY FORTUNATE TO GAIN EXPERIENCE IN VARIOUS SECTORS. IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN BROAD EXPERIENCE WHEREAS IN CORPORATE YOU FOCUS TOWARDS BECOMING A SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT.« **REYN FFOULKES, YMP 2022, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AT COCA-COLA SWITZERLAND & FREELANCE PERFORMER**

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Interviewed by Vera Pasyukova, photos provided by Reyn ffoulkes

Let's start with a silly question first. We wonder if you get that a lot, but why there is a double "ff" in the beginning of your surname – why is that?

This is definitely a question I get often. It's not often that you see a double ff at the beginning of a surname, and even less common that the first f is not in capitals. There is a lot of speculation around this, ranging from the theory

that in middle English there was no capital F in the alphabet to the double ff being used to differentiate between the phonetical pronunciation of "v" and "f". Either way, it's quite entertaining to see some of the reactions to my name and more entertaining to hear some of the interesting pronunciations.

What do you do currently and how long have you been with Coca-Cola?

I joined the Coca-Cola Company in 2014 as a Graphics Manager, managing all package change processes. In 2016 I joined the Public Affairs, Communication and Sustainability team as a Brand PR Specialist and since 2021



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I am the Communications Manager for Coca-Cola Switzerland and more recently I took on the role as Communications Manager for Coca-Cola Austria and Switzerland.

As a person who worked both in private and corporate sectors, what would you say are the biggest pluses and minuses of both worlds for someone's career path?

I was very fortunate to gain experience in various sectors. I think it comes down to your own personality and career objectives. In the private sector you have the opportunity to gain broad experience whereas in corporate you focus towards becoming a subject matter expert. I really enjoy both, and often find myself drawing on experiences from the private sector and applying it to my current role.

How did it happen that you joined the Young Managers Program at IEDC last summer? Did you know about the IEDC before coming?

The Coca-Cola Company has a strong bond with the IEDC and have offered associates the opportunity to participate in courses for a number of

years. I was lucky enough to be nominated to participate in the Young Managers Program following a job promotion. To be honest, I hadn't heard of the IEDC before being offered this opportunity, but I did my homework and spoke to a number of colleagues who had already attended courses at the school, and it didn't take long to get a very positive picture of the IEDC and Slovenia.

How did you like the YMP program and what was the best takeaway for you? Do you approach any work situations differently now and why?

I really enjoyed the two weeks in Bled and I could take away a number of learnings. I particularly enjoyed the level of expertise provided by the lecturers and guest lecturers. The organisation was excellent and the content inspiring and based on real life experience. This combination makes it easy to grasp and identify with situations. The way the course is structured means that you as a participant play an interactive role in the learning experience. Case studies and group sessions allowed for an information transfer between the participants. I particularly enjoyed the cultural exchange and understanding how markets make decisions based on geographical and interpersonal sensitivities.

Have you ever been to Slovenia before? If not, what were your first impressions? If yes, how did you find it this time?

It was my first visit to

Slovenia and I was extremely impressed by the landscape and the people. Slovenians are passionate about their country, their surroundings and their rowing! Bled offers everything you could wish for when visiting as a student and I will definitely be back for a long weekend.

Before Coca-Cola you worked in a number of companies, and not in Switzerland. Tell us a bit about that experience and how much did it shape you?

I was born and raised in South Africa and started my career there. Initially I pursued a career in arts. I studied Graphic Design and moved to London when I was 21. I fell in love with performing arts in the West End and decided to study Performing Arts. I returned to South Africa and worked as a performer for



several years while building up my profile as a designer and communicator. I always knew that I would end up living in Europe and when the chance presented itself in 2012 I grabbed it with both hands!

You've got a strong artistic side in you, haven't you?:) You are



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our man definitely. Jokes aside, great performance, congratulations! It was not the first time you participated in the Voice of Switzerland, was it? What role does music play in your life? Do you have your own band or you perform solo, do you write your own music? Is it just a hobby or maybe you thought of it at some point to become your career? How do you find time for work in Coca-Cola and hobbies?

Music is definitely a passion of mine, and I have been singing from a young age. It was only after I participated in the Voice of Switzerland in 2019 that I decided to take my hobby more seriously. Since then I started a cover band with the intention of writing our own music. Music and Coca-Cola go hand in hand. I am involved in our music grassroots program, called CokeSTUDIO Soundcheck where we find and

develop young music talents in Switzerland. It is incredibly rewarding to work with some of the best musicians in Switzerland to develop the next generation of artists.

Last but not least, travelling is among your hobbies. Which country did fascinate you most and why? How many did you visit so far? What's your next destination and why?

I've lost count of the places I have been to, and fortunately with my work I often have the opportunity to travel. There are a hundred or more destinations I hope to see, but for some reason my heart always takes me back to South Africa. I am fascinated by its history and rich culture and seeing the country from a different perspective has given me great respect for the people who make the country what it is.

Finishing with a silly

question too. How fast can you say, as someone who is living in Switzerland, the following and what's the correct answer to the riddle: »If six Swiss witches were watching six Swiss swatch watches, which Swiss swatch watch would the sixth Swiss witch watch?«

Hahahaha, I have a slight advantage here, because as part of my training as an actor, I learnt how to deal with tongue twisters like this. The answer however will need to, in true Swiss style, remain a secret.



MEET REYN IN EVERYDAY LIFE



YMP 2022

Reyn ffoulkes

Communications Manager at Coca-Cola Switzerland & Freelance Performer, South Africa/Switzerland

My usual morning looks like this... I get up and feed my cats, followed by coffee and catching up on the news before I get my day started.

The last TV series I watched were... Mad Men. I love seeing how the advertising business developed in New York in the 50s & 60s. Some of the topics are still relevant today.

The last book I've read was... «Think Like a Monk» by Jay Shetty. We live in crazy times and the only way to maintain sanity is to take time to reflect. This book was a great inspiration.

If I had a chance to do something differently, I'd... Nothing, I think I am where I am because of a series of events and I wouldn't change that in any way.

The best piece of advice I've been given is... I am very fortunate to have several mentors in my life. The best advice I have ever been given is to critically assess where to invest your energy. Few of us have the ability to change the world, but everyone has the ability to change how we live in it.