

Thomas Lichtenberg | DVV International

What is the title of your job?

I am working for DVV International. My title of the job is Senior Manager for monitoring & evaluation and funding. So, both components are round about fifty percent. It doesn't look like adult education but it is also part of it.

Which number of job is your current job?

Then I worked as a selector at the University of Applied Sciences. I changed my position and worked for the German Development Cooperation in South Africa. After three years I came back, and I worked for a consulting company for five years and then four years for an accreditation institution accrediting higher education programmes all over the world. Then I joined DVV International a little more than three years ago. So, this is all in all my fifth job after leaving the university.

What were the most important training choices?

My professional background is geography. I think the most important training choices that I learned in geography is that I was provided with a broad overview with different topics. I think this is how I learned to be open to all kind of professional challenges and to find my way quickly in strange fields. I think training at a university or wherever will never be able to prepare us one hundred percent for the real job that we are taking on later. The training can set the frame, can provide us with key competencies, but I think we must be open-minded and adapt flexibility to the challenges in the real working environment.

What is the most relevant knowledge for your job?

We must have a profound knowledge of our professional field. If we see that we are lacking certain competencies and I think this will always be the case, I think we must have the ambition to obtain the missing knowledge ourselves. You need to have self-motivation to obtain whatever knowledge is required to be able to perform. I think the professional knowledge is only half of what is needed. So, I think soft skills, how to get along with other people, is from my point of view fifty percent of a good job qualification. My recommendation with regard to the soft skills would be: Always remain friendly but make your point if necessary.

What are the main soft skills for your job?

Communication, so how to talk to people. I also think it is very important to be open to recommendations and ideas. We must always maintain the good communication atmosphere, but we must be also kind of persistent when it comes to our own position. Otherwise, I think the other side is not able or not willing to understand your point. So, from my point of view communication and openness are the most important soft skills.

Which advices would you give to a graduate?

I come from a profession where no clear career path is obvious, so I needed to be open, and this is what I would recommend to graduates: Be open. In our modern world there are a lot of jobs out there that we are not even aware of. Once we have a job, I think we also must look at ourselves: Are we happy with it? Because I think we spend so much time at our work and if it doesn't fulfill us, then I think we should once again be open enough to think of alternatives.

