



PHOTO: NUS-ISS

Ms Jolene Sheam kick-started her tech career with a hands-on programme at the Institute of Systems Science at NUS

From fashion to technology

JOSHUA WONG

ONCE a marketing executive in the fashion industry, she is now a consultant at NCS, the principal information technology (IT) solutions provider for the government, education, healthcare and banking sectors in Singapore.

Ms Jolene Sheam holds a Graduate Diploma in Systems Analysis (GDipSA) from the National University of Singapore's Institute of Systems Science (NUS-ISS). The year-long programme, from which she graduated in May this year, transformed her into an IT

professional by equipping her with the necessary skills and hands-on exposure to succeed in the industry.

"The NUS-ISS GDipSA programme gave me a good foundation to jump-start my IT career within just one year," says the 29-year-old.

The lure of tech

Ms Sheam's journey began when she started work and had to familiarise herself with new technology in her marketing role. At the same time, she observed the positive impact that technology, like robotics and artificial intelligence, was having on people's lives.

Having very little prior background in tech, she explored further, taking online courses and speaking to people in the industry to learn more. She ultimately decided to take the plunge into a tech career.

When researching various programmes, the NUS-ISS GDipSA attracted her as it was only a year long and comprised a five-month-long internship with one of NUS-ISS' industry partners, giving her industry exposure.

Hands-on experience

While she appreciates the patience and support of her lecturers at NUS-ISS, Ms Sheam thinks that the distinguishing feature of the GDipSA programme is the hands-on experience it gives students.

"NUS-ISS works closely with companies who need IT interns. Throughout their internship, students gain real-life experience and the companies are able to prototype advanced technologies," says Dr Esther Tan, chief of the GDipSA Programme, NUS-ISS.

Ms Sheam did her internship with French company Bolloré Logistics, during which she created a Web application to help its human resources team process job applications. She handled this project solo from start to finish.

While challenging, the experience taught her valuable technical skills that she uses in her current role as an application consultant.

"Tackling challenges independently helped me to develop a methodical problem-solving approach, which is a useful skill for both work and life," she says.