

#Mondaymotivation: Goli Khonsari (Class of 2009)



Alumna Goli Khonsari didn't pursue the political career she thought she wanted, instead she discovered a passion and is now working in the world of media. In her current role at Channel 4, Goli plays a key part in developing new commercial partnerships with leading digital platforms.

What have you done since leaving Putney?

I left Putney in 2009, and studied Politics at Edinburgh University. I was lucky enough to take part in their study abroad programme and spent one year living in Los Angeles, studying at UCLA.

What did you decide to do after graduating?

Once I left university, I decided to pursue my love of music and entertainment and applied for a role with Universal Music. The role also had opportunities to return to LA, which was really appealing to me!
After spending four years at Universal Music in London, I embarked on a new challenge and am now working at Channel 4.

What does a working day look like for you?

It's very varied. One of my key responsibilities is managing the relationship with our digital partners, which includes leading platforms such as Google, Facebook and Amazon. In order to best serve our digital partners, I need to know exactly how their business works, how my company works and what's going on in the broader industry/tech news. This means my day, and often my week, is jam-packed with meetings and phone calls to learn and share as much information as possible, both to relevant internal and external people. The overall goal is to determine if there are any new commercial opportunities that we should be exploring.

Did you always know you would go into the music and entertainment industry?

Not at all, in my final year at Putney I was positive that my future career would be something related to Politics – that's what I was studying at Edinburgh after all. Whilst at Edinburgh I realised this was not the career for me, and it wasn't until applying for jobs that I really thought about it properly.

What did you do to break into this industry?

I had worked during summer holidays to earn money, but had never taken the time to do work experience. When it came to applying for jobs and looking for experience, I focussed on the industry and less on the actual role. As I didn't know what I wanted to do, I thought that I would focus on getting into a company that I knew I would be passionate about. A short work experience in Film PR at Freuds soon turned into an internship. This provided me with enough work experience to apply to Universal Music.

What have you found most challenging?

I think the biggest challenges I have faced have always been in securing a job or promotion. When job hunting, I was so determined to work for a desirable company, that I limited myself to an incredibly competitive job market - with little relevant work experience. However, my time at Putney made me confident that I can achieve whatever I put my mind to, no matter the challenges ahead. I was prepared to do anything for the job or promotion I wanted. I believe this determination and self-belief came from my time (14 years) at Putney and the skills I learnt there. The sky is the limit and sometimes the only thing that can hold you back from achieving your goals is you.

What advice would you give to other Putney pupils and alumnae looking at a career in the entertainment industry?

The world of music, TV and media is, in general, a highly competitive industry. It can be extremely difficult to stand out in a list of applications. My advice is to get as much work experience as you can, and get involved in extra-curricular activities that can help demonstrate your passion for entertainment. It will help in interviews when they ask why you want to work at the company or in the industry, as well as highlighting your proactive approach. Additionally, the experience can help you gauge if you are going to like an industry or a role and work experience gives you good exposure to all the different jobs that exist.



My final piece of advice is to stay abreast of the industry and current/future trends- that could be the extra edge to get you the job!