Management Information Systems (MIS) Alumni Career Paths and Value Added from our Programs

Department of MIS
College of Business
www.sdsu.edu/mis
MIS Featured Alumni

• Provide examples of the types of career opportunities our recent alumni pursue

• MIS Programs
  • BS in Bus. Adm., Major in Information Systems
  • MSBA, Information Systems
  • MBA, Information Systems
  • MBA, Supply Chain Management
  • MBA, Project Management
MIS Featured Alumni

Alumni were asked two questions:

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?

Q2: How did the MIS program at SDSU help prepare you for your career?
Andrew Westfall

Education: BS Business Administration, 2007
Masters (MSBA), 2009
Major: Information Systems
Company: Qualcomm Inc.
Job Title: Staff Program Analyst

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: As a Program Analyst, I assist the Software Program Management team with the coordination of software development projects across the organization. My direct responsibilities include the development, generation, analysis, and maintenance of periodic software quality reports; program requirements analysis and management; and general communication and follow-up with engineers, project managers, and executives at all levels of the company.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: In my personal experience, a degree in Information Systems does more to prepare you for a career in business than any other business degree or certification. Specifically, the IS program gave me the skills and knowledge to break down business problems into a set of requirements, and subsequently address each of those requirements with methodical and researched solutions. IDS prepared me for a career that is not constrained by a job description. I am confident that wherever I go I will always be able to depend on the skills I developed during my studies at SDSU.
Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: As a Senior Data analyst my responsibilities include defining methodological and analytical approaches for data analysis, developing and maintaining databases, and creating analytical tools for data analysis. I also work with product management and research and development (R & D) teams in new product development.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: The Information Systems program at SDSU provided me with a solid foundation in Information Systems (IS) and business areas. The IS classes exposed me to systems analysis and design, database design and management and information systems management, all proven very useful in my day-to-day work. The technical skills from IS classes coupled with business skills from business courses provided me with tools to succeed in today’s dynamic business environment.
Bryan Helwig

Education: Masters (MSBA), 2006  
Major: Information Systems  
Company: Metro Information Intelligence  
Job Title: Owner

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?  
A: As a technology consultant, I analyze, design, implement, and maintain various types of information systems for small and medium size businesses. These information systems include everything from custom built applications to corporate computer networks. Above all, it is my responsibility to ensure that our clients receive the highest levels of service and information systems that are reliable and always available.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: The education I received from the IS program at SDSU provided me with knowledge and theories that I apply to real world work experiences on a daily basis, and, since I was working in IT during my enrollment at SDSU, I was able to take what I learned each day and put it to immediate use. This helped me rise through the ranks of my previous organization, and it provided me with the technical and business skills I needed to start my own business.
Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: I am responsible for supporting the sales organization from a technology perspective regarding management of vendors. This includes designing and implementing systems at hospital sites. In addition, I am responsible for managing all phases of the software development life cycle, system implementation, change management with the client, vendors, and internal customers, training, and post-implementation support. I am also responsible for evaluating 3rd party applications and determining if they should be included in our sales offering.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: The IS program gave me a solid background on database design, system architecture, object oriented programming, software development life cycle, hardware, and project management. This was critical knowledge I needed to bridge the gap from the business world to information technology. It gave me the right tools to not only develop systems from beginning to end, but to also make educated assessment on 3rd party system capabilities when determining if we should make or buy a specific application.
Keith Petersen

Education: BS Business Administration, 2007
Major: Information Systems
Company: Kisco Senior Living
Job Title: Systems Analyst/Computer Systems Software Engineer

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: I am currently developing a new corporate intranet that will strengthen associate communication by creating an interactive, dynamic virtual work community that provides associates with the tools and information they need. This includes custom web applications to gather information and manage unique business processes, instant access to custom reports from our sales and financial systems, and interactive training videos and wikis for better knowledge management.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: The IS program prepared me to develop information systems by coaching me on all aspects of the Systems Development Life Cycle. Each course gave a unique opportunity to enhance our skills pertaining to each of the Life-Cycle Phases. Conceptual courses gave us the ability to understand the purpose of business systems while the more technical courses provided a better understanding of the skills needed to design and implement. We were also given opportunities to work in teams to test our skills and gain valuable real world experience.
Jessica Vreeland

Education: BS Business Administration, 2008
Major: Information Systems
Company: CDC Small Business Finance
Job Title: Network Engineer

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: My responsibilities include a broad range of tasks involving designing, implementing, and maintaining the corporate network infrastructure. I support critical business operations including LAN/WAN connectivity, monitoring network security, and providing help desk support. I also work on system administrative duties such as server and workstation maintenance. Additionally, I recommend new software to achieve the company’s goals.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: The Information Systems curriculum at SDSU provided the foundation for my career. The courses exposed me to essential concepts used by IT professionals such as networking and information systems management. By integrating business with technology, I learned how to successfully translate technical issues at a macro level, allowing me to bridge the gap between technology and business. As a result, I can effectively explain how technology can be used to solve problems and gain a strategic advantage.
Pallavi Sinha

Education: Masters (MBA), 2008
Major: Supply Chain Management
Company: Qualcomm Inc.
Job Title: Program Manager, Associate

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: I am responsible for managing solution programs from initiation through completion, which includes the generation of program plans as well as management of the contents. I also facilitate the Gate Review Process for all the projects under my programs. In addition, I am responsible for managing our release partners in work product delivery and payment, while ensuring that work products meet quality expectations. I routinely engage in cross-functional team initiatives to improve delivery effectiveness, cost, and quality.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: The MBA/Supply Chain Management program has equipped me with a dual skill set that will prove beneficial to my career. It has provided me not only with the managerial competencies essential to my job function, but also with the necessary tools to apply the taught concepts in my day to day work. In particular, courses such as Project Management, Quality Management, and Supply Chain Management turned out to be very helpful as they provided fundamental subject knowledge as well as interesting insights on industry-wide best practices through the application of case studies. The IDS program contributed significantly to my personal and professional development, because it successfully integrated the conveyance of knowledge into a cross-cultural, team-based environment, which made for a very enriching experience.
Shannon Connell

Education: BS Business Administration, 2007
Major: Information Systems
Company: BAE Systems
Job Title: Systems Engineer

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: My position as Systems Engineer consists of a wide range of responsibilities. I have had the opportunity to work on tasks such as developing scripts to leverage database capabilities, analyzing requirements, producing test cases, and providing demonstrations of project capabilities to customers. In my current role, I am responsible for analyzing test path coverage and work as the liaison between software engineers and management.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: Participating in the Information Systems program at SDSU provided me with a technical foundation as well as a background in business. Throughout my studies, I gained technical knowledge about systems development and analysis, programming concepts and databases. The business curriculum enhanced my understanding of the various functional areas within organizations and how IT affects them. As a result, I am able to communicate effectively with both technical and non-technical personnel. This ability is essential for interacting with customers. The managerial, technical, and communication skills I developed have allowed me to take on dynamic roles within the workplace and are the basis for achieving my professional goals.
Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: As a Variable Imaging Coordinator I aid in the creation of Direct Mail pieces by setting up layout files used for variable laser imaging. This includes creating variables and writing code that automates variable data switchout. I am also responsible for web rendering which requires the use of html.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: The IS program helped me prepare for my career by introducing me to all aspects of the IT world. The concepts I learned in computer programming, database structures, hardware and software architecture as well as IT management gave me the skills needed to compete in the IT industry and the knowledge to successfully complete the various tasks I perform daily.
Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: I provide technical direction, consultation, and support for computer systems, operations, procedures, training and implementation throughout Sempra utilities, which includes SDG&E and SoCalGas. Through interviews and questionnaires with key internal clients, I help determine the computer system requirements (functional and non-functional), cost-benefit analysis, expectations, and translate the requirements to system definitions for IT. Additional responsibilities include Quality Assurance testing, User Acceptance testing, training development, training delivery to end users, and the pilot approach implementations of the new computer systems.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: The IS program at San Diego State played a big role in establishing a foundation of knowledge to be successful in my career. San Diego Gas & Electric follows a lifecycle they call the IT Product Lifecycle. This life cycle directly mimics the System Development Lifecycle that students learn in the IS Program. Everything that is involved in the IT Product Lifecycle: Requirements Gathering, Design, Construction/Build, Testing, Implementation, and Post Production Support can directly tie into the steps involved in the Systems Development Lifecycle. While assisting with the development of an enterprise-wide Geographical Information System (GIS), I was involved with the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP). Learning how a system is developed from the ground up using an RFP in IDS 406, gave me an understanding that was beneficial in my job.
Jeffrey G. Boyle

Education: Masters (MBA), 2008
Major: Supply Chain Management
Company: Gen-Probe Inc.
Job Title: Program Manager I

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: As an entry-level program manager, I manage a sub-team as well as the master schedule for the project. This includes establishing the schedule and work plan for portions of projects as well as communicating the project status to team members and key stakeholders. As a program manager, I actively identify and mitigate risks associated with the project. Lastly, I assist with Design Control procedures and documentation as well as establish budgets & schedules as needed.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: Prior to my new position in program management, my background was in engineering. The IDS program allowed me to bridge the gap between technical and business aspects associated with the project. It gave me the tools to effectively manage a project. The project management path I chose was logical for my background within my company and my company's core-competence; however, from the education received through SDSU's operations management curriculum, I am also prepared to effectively manage a manufacturing/supply chain team if the opportunity were to arise.
Kevin Whalley

Education: BS Business Administration, 2007
Major: Information Systems
Company: SIATech, INC
Job Title: Programmer/Analyst

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: Developing web applications using ASP.NET / Sharepoint
Integrating Learning Management Systems
Project management
Supporting e-learning initiatives
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: The IS program at SDSU helped me prepare for my career by giving me the broadest possible skill set I could use in the workplace. What I learned in the classroom and who I met through networking with people helped to secure an excellent job straight out of college.
Jaime Nacach

Education: BS Business Administration, 2007
Major: Information Systems
Company: MK Digital Direct
Job Title: Marketing Director

Q1: What are your professional work responsibilities?
A: MK Digital Direct, is a small business with a small staff. For this reason I'm in charge of various areas of the business, which include sales, technical support, IT, graphic design, web design. Some of my responsibilities include managing our company's customers and prospects database, managing our shared documents server, the implementation, integration and maintenance of our new CRM software, the development of new ideas for working more efficiently and effectively with our data, the e-mail marketing campaigns, the creation of various graphic design marketing materials, and the creation of the company's website and e-store.
Q2: How did the MIS program(s) at SDSU help prepare you for your career?

A: I learned the various aspects of managing a business and the key elements of making a business successful. I also learned how to tackle the problems that businesses face with technology and how to use technology to make a business more successful. I had already been working at MK Digital Direct, but only after completing my classes, did I understand how I could help solve some key problems in database maintenance, CRM and the general flow of data between departments that was impeding the company from working as efficiently as possible. IDS 306 and IDS 406 taught me how to go about analyzing an information system, how to understand the relationship between data flows and how to actually implement a new data flow process to real people working in the company, who were already accustomed to working in a certain way.
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