

“This university gave me my first career opportunities”

Israel Ruiz, vice-president for finance at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

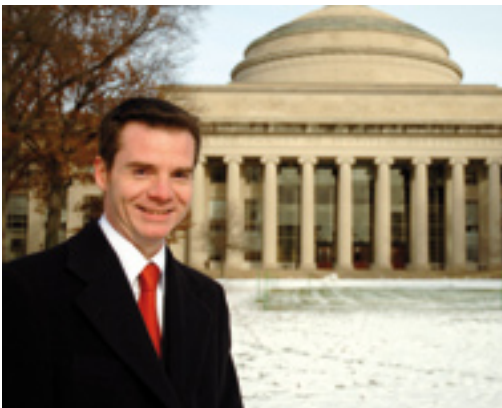
WAS YOUR CAREER A VOCATIONAL CHOICE? Indeed. When I was a child, I loved coming up with problems and finding solutions to them, particularly if the solution wasn't obvious. At university I learnt how to solve even more complex problems and how to build on my capacity for analysis, abstraction and synthesis.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR TIME AT THE UPC? My eagerness when I first started there. The UPC gave me my first career opportunities. In hindsight, I can see that the rigorous training and professional experiences gave me a solid grounding.

ANY ANECDOTES? It makes me laugh to remember our morning lectures. To get a good seat in the first year lectures, which were sometimes on the sixth floor, a classmate and I proved that it took less time to run up the stairs than to wait for the elevators. I still don't know whether we were very quick or the elevators very slow.

ANY PARTICULAR LECTURER? Carles Riba, my thesis supervisor. I remember him for his passion and the quality of his teaching, for his discipline and his pragmatism, which was based on his excellent theoretical knowledge. I also have fond memories of the lecturers in the departments of management and engineering design.

YOU WERE QUICK TO CAPITALIZE ON YOUR STUDIES TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE. In my fifth year, I combined my studies with a work placement at Nissan. I had a great mentor who gave me exceptional opportunities as a newcomer to take risks and make contributions. He offered me the chance to go to Britain with him as part of an international project, which made me aware of and above all appreciate the im-



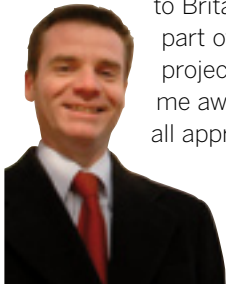
portance of effective communication between cultures.

AND SUBSEQUENTLY, WHEN YOU'D COMPLETED YOUR COURSE? My luck continued at Hewlett Packard, where I was able to travel to many parts of Europe, the United States and Singapore. At that time, it became clear to me that it was a small world and that the opportunities to solve problems were global.

WHAT WOULD YOU HIGHLIGHT ABOUT YOUR CURRENT JOB, WHAT INSPIRES YOU? I see it as a gift with enormous responsibilities. It is a gift to be able to work in an environment that prizes merit and diversity, two of my own values, and I have the luxury of being able to continue learning every day from highly talented people. My references have always been people.

HOW DOES THE UPC FARE AS THE STARTING POINT OF YOUR EXPERIENCES? I believe that the rigorous training you get at the UPC-BARCELONA TECH makes almost anything possible. If to that you add having ambitions, knowing how to take difficult decisions and never resigning oneself to following conventional routes, there are bound to be rewards in the long run.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR CAREER OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS? I hope to be promoted to executive vice-president of MIT and to help to continue establishing even stronger collaboration links between institutions from which the UPC-BARCELONA TECH will benefit.



SUCCESS STORY: THE MIT EXPERIENCE

ISRAEL RUIZ holds a degree in engineering from the UPC-BARCELONA TECH, Barcelona (Spain), and a master's degree from MIT's Sloan School of Management. He is now the vice-president for finance at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In this post, he advises MIT's senior officers on financial matters. He manages a group of sixty people and is responsible for budget control, purchases, and the financial and strategic planning for an institution with an annual budget of USD 2,300 million (USD 1,200 million for research) and assets of over USD 12,000 million.

Telefónica: An ICT think tank

The Telefónica-UPC-BARCELONA TECH Chair makes proposals on how to promote the information society.

In recent years, the UPC-BARCELONA TECH has entered into various collaboration agreements with major companies to create enterprise chairs that are dedicated to maintaining relations and transferring knowledge of interest between companies and the University.

The Telefónica-UPC-BARCELONA TECH Chair, whose full name is as the Telefónica Chair in Technological Specialization and the Knowledge Society, was created under an agreement signed by the two institutions in 2003. Now, in 2009, this agreement is being updated according to the Chair's current area of focus: exploring the emerging model of the information society, in which ICTs drive knowledge-intensive economic activity.

NEW TYPES OF PROFESSIONALS

The Chair conducts research aimed at developing new communication technologies and identifying the new types of professionals that will be needed in the knowledge society. These types of professionals are characterized not only in terms of technical competencies, but also other generic and specific skills that are necessary in today's new business settings.

In addition to analyzing and promoting the application of ICTs in Spain's major economic and industrial sectors—both consolidated and emerging—the Chair promotes the UPC-BARCELONA TECH's role as a think tank, in which a team of experts makes proposals on how to promote the development of the information society, with particular emphasis on the areas of public administration, education, competitiveness and healthcare. The Chair is currently working on the project CATALUNYA 4.0, which aims to identify Catalonia's main ICT-related challenges in four strategic areas—healthcare, e-administration, education and business—and publish plans for stimulus projects in these areas in fall 2009.

Its other projects include the Connected City initiative and the European Regional Observatory for Advanced Initiatives in Information Technologies, Competitiveness, and Information and Communication Technologies in Small and Medium-Sized Companies.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM

The Chair is made up of a group of international experts in various fields, led by Professor Lluís Jofre of the Department of Signal Theory and Communications at the School of Telecommunications Engineering of Barcelona.



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