



Interview with Mr. Phedias Papanicolaou, 2012 graduate, Executive Insurance Consultant, holder of MBA

- **What have you studied, when did you graduate and how did you decide to study this subject?**

"I had the luck and honor to be a student at the University of our city during its first academic year, specifically, I graduated in 2012 from the MBA program, and at the current stage, I have just completed my studies at the Law Department of our University.

Regarding the Master of Business Administration (MBA), it was something that I had long been thinking that I should have as an asset for my professional career. However, due to my busy daily schedule and consequently lack of time, the option of taking it in another city or abroad would not be feasible as a matter of fact. However, with the establishment of Neapolis University Pafos, I seized this opportunity that was given to me and managed to gain a valuable source of knowledge which I immediately applied in a professional field. But you know, knowledge alone, in most cases, is not beneficial in terms of business. We must, through our mentality, attitude, and goals that we have already set, necessarily manage to turn them into skills in the professional or business field and subsequently, these skills become our way of life and action, what many people call a habit. This sequence of actions and events, of course, cannot be completed without the first requirement, which is the knowledge that Neapolis University Pafos offered me."

- **What is your best memory of your studies?**

Just reading that particular question caused me to recall a flood of memories. All of them, without exception, are pleasant today, and I emphasise the word "today" because, of course, there were difficulties during my studies. You realise that when you are working, you are a family man and at the same time you have the demands of studies, pressure is inevitable. However, what remains at the end is the sweet memory of the satisfaction of having made it.

- **In what way has the acquisition of the Bachelor's degree helped you?**

"Knowledge always creates strength, broadens spiritual horizons, sharpens the mind, establishes humbleness, but at the same time, enhances self-confidence. Therefore, personally, to me, it was beneficial, not so much the formal part of obtaining another academic degree but mainly the essential part, the part of knowledge whose benefits I mentioned earlier."

- **What is your opinion about Neapolis University Pafos?**

"Plato once said that in order to have an opinion you have to have knowledge, I was lucky enough to study at universities abroad and therefore I can have an opinion about Neapolis University Pafos. I assure you that it has nothing to lose from them. On the contrary, for us the citizens in Paphos at least, it has the great advantage of proximity as well as the small number of students in classrooms."

- **What is your current status and how would you describe it?**

"I understand that you are referring to the occupational area. I am active in the insurance sector, I am an insurance consultant and I provide consulting services to legal and natural entities. In our sector, there are measurable and well-defined criteria for whether someone is successful or not. For the last ten years, I have always been one of the leading insurance consultants in Cyprus. I have been honoured by the companies I have worked with, I have received international awards, I have been a speaker at several conferences, but above all I have been and continue to be honoured by the trust of the people who have chosen to work with me and continue to work with me. The environment in which I operate is extremely competitive and demanding, so apart from the love for the profession and for my fellow human beings, apart from the need to acquire professional knowledge and skills, I believe that the most necessary prerequisite of success is the existence of a strong academic background that allows you to achieve higher quality outcomes and consequently greater development of your work. So in answer to your question, I would describe my current situation as good, but I believe that there are no limits and continuous education and self-improvement is one of the key factors in professional development."

- **What is the best part of the job you have chosen to do and how much has the degree helped you?**

"In my job I would say the best part is the one that has to do with identifying, quantifying, prioritizing the insurance needs of clients and then presenting solutions to meet those needs. Particularly in the case of corporate insurance, the adviser must, in principle, be able to read and understand financial statements such as the balance sheet, profit and loss statements, and cash flow statements so that he or she can present solutions based on real data, which will, of course, meet the current needs of customers. In this specialised part of my job, I could not respond in the way required by both my traditional and moral obligation to these clients for a quality consultancy service if I did not obtain the knowledge required from my Master's degree in business administration.

Apart from that it has helped me immensely in managing my office staff. The knowledge I gained has forced me to largely change the way I manage my employees - my colleagues with obvious results. In addition, in my professional field, the legal element is strongly interfered with, so the knowledge of Law that I acquired from the School of Law of Neapolis University Pafos continues to be catalytic in providing the highest quality advice to my clients."

- **What are your plans for the future?**

"My plans for the future are, on the one hand, the expansion of my professional activities and on the other hand, the strengthening and enrichment of my knowledge whether it is related to my profession or not. For us, at least for the citizens of Paphos, Neapolis University Pafos is a golden opportunity that we cannot let it go unused."

- **What advice would you give yourself when you were a student or what advice would you give to a student?**

"In general, I have had and still tend to give others the advice I try to give to myself. The advice I would give to a student is based on four words: time, vision, goal, and knowledge. Starting with time, I would say the most precious thing we have and the only thing that is actually ours. Consequently, the proper and beneficial use of time is a catalyst for success, no matter how each of us perceives it.

The next thing I would always tell them is to have a vision in life and goals that are clear and definitive. Without a goal, we are lost since we don't know where we want to go. A goal gives you motivation and strength to focus on it and it is the only way to achieve something and get results. Also, setting goals always helps you to achieve more, to improve your performance, to increase and strengthen your motivation, and to feel more satisfied with your achievements, since they are now clear in your sight. Finally, I will reiterate that knowledge is power. I would advise them to invest a lifetime in knowledge but also to go a few steps further. Once they have entered into this perpetual process of acquiring knowledge through attitude, thinking and behaviour, they should turn this knowledge into a skill, whether it be in their profession or in their social behaviour.

Subsequently, this sequence of acquiring knowledge and transforming it into competences and skills becomes a habit and a way of life."



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