

Interview with Edge Hotel School alumnus Minyi Hu



Minyi graduated from EHS last year during the Covid-19 crisis. After a difficult start, Edge was delighted to catch up with her and hear how her hospitality career is getting back on track.

You graduated last year just when the industry was suffering the huge impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. That must have been hard but looking back, what would you say were the main benefits of studying at EHS and how has it helped you cope with finding a job?

"The main benefit of studying at the Edge Hotel School was being able to gain practical experience at the same time as studying for my degree. The unique make up of EHS gave me such an insight into what it is like to work in hospitality and what to expect when I entered the industry. Thanks to the EHS experience, nothing will come as a surprise to me now."



"Employers in the industry want and expect people to have previous experience of hospitality so studying at EHS definitely increased my employability."

What opportunities did you have during your studies to meet people in the industry? And how did that help you?

"I was fortunate enough to secure work experience at The Chesterfield Hotel in Mayfair. Being there meant I met and learned from professionals working in a 5 star hotel in the heart of London. Seeing the level of professionalism the staff here demonstrate, especially when dealing with complaints was eye-opening.

"I also met Danny Pecorelli, Managing Director of the Exclusive Collection, and he gave me really valuable advice about the industry."

What do you think are the most important skills you need to succeed in the hospitality industry and how did EHS help you develop them?

"The hospitality industry is absolutely people focused and a vital skill is customer service. The guest experience is at the heart of everything and my experience at EHS demonstrated the importance of this. I also think you need to be organised with excellent time management skills. The industry is fast paced so you have to be on top of everything. And with something fast paced and people facing – you need to be adaptable. No two days are the same so you need to be able to think on your feet!"

What's the best piece of advice you've received since starting out in the industry?

"Thanks to the Edge Hotel School, I have met with and spoken to a lot of people working in the industry and they have all been very generous with their time and advice. But I think the best advice I've received is that to be a successful leader, you don't need to be an expert in everything but you do need to know enough about everything."

We've mentioned before how the hospitality industry has been particularly affected by Covid-19. How has it affected you? And what would you say to a young person thinking about a career in hospitality now?

"When I graduated it was the start of the lockdown due to the pandemic and it was very hard to look for work in the industry. I took the opportunity to study a level 5 human resource administrator course to expand my knowledge. I also went back to work for my previous employer at a pharmacy, where I had been before starting my studies at EHS. This kept me going until circumstances improved and I'm now working as a Breakfast Supervisor at New Hall Hotel and Spa.

"My advice to anyone considering working in the hospitality industry is that although the industry was badly impacted by the pandemic, it is now recovering. In some ways, this is a great time to be applying to the industry as there are many vacancies to fill. I'd say apply for any role that appeals – the worst that can happen is that they say no!"

You've obviously developed your own resilience so thinking about your own career, where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?

"I'd hope that in 5 years I will have built up enough experience to be a Supervisor in a small to medium hotel chain. Hopefully I'll be working overseas – my ambition when I joined the Edge Hotel School was to be able to work around the world and I'm sure my EHS experience and my degree will help me achieve that."

Well I hope you will keep Edge in mind during your globe trotting and let us know how you're getting on and where in the world you are!



To find out more about studying at the Edge Hotel School visit:
<https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/edge-hotel-school>