Bora Manellari
Title: Manager, Multi-Channel Finance
Education: University of Texas - Austin, Finance, 2010, Graduate of 2 yr. Accounting/Finance Rotational Program

Growing up, Annie was always interested in applying her technical skills in the Silicon Valley. As an intern with Walmart eCommerce’s innovation engine, @WalmartLabs, Annie develops innovative solutions to real challenges in the heart of the Silicon Valley.

What drew you to Walmart eCommerce in particular?
I've always had a strong interest in tackling real-world problems, and that’s what stood out to me most about Walmart eCommerce. I learned more about the internship and realized I'd be working on very relevant projects that make a global impact. I was also very attracted to the Silicon Valley – it’s the hub of technology life and I wanted to see what life was like here.

What surprised you about Walmart eCommerce when you first started?
Since Walmart is such a big company, I had always pictured it as formal and rigid, but that hasn’t been my experience at all. @WalmartLabs has many elements of a young tech company: flat management, small and agile teams, ownership of projects, flexibility, and a cooperative culture.

What demand generation projects are you currently working on?
I'm working on a large-scale optimal bidding project for our online advertising operations. We need to develop complex algorithms that can handle the millions of transactions that happen each day. It’s really challenging work and I enjoy it. I’ve read many papers about large-scale computing, but this hands-on experience has given me a fresh perspective.

How does @WalmartLabs define innovation, and how does your work contribute?
To me, innovation means finding effective ways to do things that have never been done before. I started at a great time: @WalmartLabs is pretty young and e-commerce is a fast-paced, growing industry. It's rewarding to know that I can make a lot of tangible contributions and apply my skills in new ways. I'm building solutions that have rarely been created at this scale or in this context, and that's exciting.

What support did Walmart offer as you progressed in your career?
Walmart has offered me the opportunity to thrive in a fast-paced environment. I believe that management here does a great job of allowing associates to develop and showcase their talents. Other forms of support include having a mentorship program, access to continuous education, and informational-speaker series.

What advice would you offer to graduates entering the workforce?
Don’t be afraid to take chances! It was a little nerve-racking to move away from family to a new state to work for Walmart, but taking that risk turned out to be one of the best decisions I have made so far.

Walmart eCommerce
Walmart Global eCommerce is the e-commerce business of Wal-Mart Stores Inc, both in the U.S. and globally. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc helps people save money and live better in retail stores, online, and through their mobile devices. Each week, more than 24.5 million customers and members visit our more than 10,800 stores under 69 banners in 27 countries and e-commerce websites in 10 countries.

Bora and Annie share how their experiences at Walmart have set them up for success.

Bora has been interested in finance since she was young, helping her dad count money, so there was no better way to start her professional career than at Walmart, a global industry leader in retail with over 24 different areas in finance. Bora completed the two-year Accounting/Finance Rotational Program and has been promoted twice since graduating the program.

Discuss your experience in the Accounting/Finance Rotational Program.
The Accounting/Finance Rotational Program was such a valuable experience because it exposed me to four different areas of finance: Merchandise Finance, Corporate Finance, International Strategy, and eCommerce. Each rotation offered a unique learning environment: In International Strategy, I worked with business units across the globe, while in Corporate Finance, I had great exposure to executives and even presented to our CFO! In addition, the Accounting/Finance Rotational Program was packed with formal training, many lectures from business leaders, and provided networking opportunities. I look at the Accounting/Finance Rotational Program to be similar to an MBA program with real hands-on experience.

What was your favorite project?
Last year, we partnered with a nonprofit to create a unique educational tablet for children that helped them explore their dreams for the future – the XO Learning Tablet. It was rewarding to watch it roll out in a year and have such an impact on lives.

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Walmart
Walmart is dedicated to making a difference: for example, Walmart’s initiative to buy $20 billion worth of product from women-owned businesses, as well as their commitment to hire 100,000 veterans over the next five years.

Annie Chen
Title: PhD Intern, Demand Generation
Education: National Taiwan University, Electrical Engineering, 2010; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, S.M., Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, 2012; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ph.D. candidate, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, expected: 2016