

Hi there - I'm Stuart Machin, the Director of Operations for Coles.

Now if you're a recent university graduate, I know what you'll be thinking. Now that I've got my degree, what can I do to kick start my career? What sort of company do I want to work for? And how can I get my foot in the door and really use my skills?

I know, because I was in your shoes not so long ago.

I want to explain a bit about the most exciting graduate program in Australian retail – the Coles Graduate Program.

Coles has a turnover of over \$28 billion, serving customers throughout our 740 supermarket stores, 780 liquor stores and over 620 Coles Express convenience stores. We also have 100,000 team members right across the country working in our stores, in our distribution centres and in our store support centres – all of whom do a fantastic job!

Our Graduate Program has been tailor made to give our graduates the skills and experience they need to become a leader in one of our businesses.

For example, if you are on the Retail Leaders Graduate Program in our stores, you could be a Store Manager in two to three years time, running a store like this, leading our customers, leading a team of 500 team members and being accountable for the stores commercial performance, running a multi-million dollar business.

As a Graduate of a similar program in the UK, I'm a huge supporter of developing our future leaders.

I actually started as a trolley boy when I was 16 years of age in my local supermarket and joined afterwards a similar program to the one we offer at Coles. I just love the retail buzz, the fast pace, serving customers and working with great people. I was really fortunate enough to be a store manager at 26 years old, running a store taking over 100 million dollars per annum with a team of over 900 team members. My experience on the Graduate Program set me up for a fantastic career in retail, including working in Operations, Merchandising and Marketing.

In 2008, I joined Coles as one of the Board of Directors and I'm delighted to be part of the biggest turnaround in global retail history – and you can be part of this too.

There's not a better time to be joining Coles. We have a fantastic team throughout the business who are focused on customers and I know will support you in your development. Be prepared for some hard work, get stuck in and be part of our team from Day 1.

I believe we have the best Graduate Program in Australia, if not, the world, and of course I believe we have the best supermarket business in Australia, if not the world.

If you're up for the challenge, find out more from our Coles Career website and if this appeals to you and your successful in joining Coles, then I look forward to meeting you in your first few weeks.

But don't just take my word for it, over the past 18 months, we've recruited over 120 Graduates and 60 have already been appointed into leadership roles.

Today, two of our new Graduates are going to tell us about their experience in the Retail Graduate Program.

Stuart: Hi Deanne.

Deanne: How are you going Stuart?

Stuart: Right, so how long have you worked at Coles?

Deanne: I've been with Coles for two and a half months. I only started on the first of February in the Retail Graduate Program.

Stuart : Good stuff. Now what have you been doing in your first two and a half months?

Deanne; I've been learning all about the Supermarket and how it operates, so I've been throughout all the departments including Meat, Fresh Produce, Bakery, Deli and Dairy.

Stuart: And have you enjoyed it?

Deanne: I've absolutely loved it, especially Bakery.

Stuart: Ok, why Bakery?

Deanne; Oh it's great fun, you get to get your hands dirty and make some bread and its great fun.

Stuart: Now, what did you study?

Deanne: I studied Human Resource Management at University.

Stuart: Ok, and has that helped you in your program?

Deanne: It really has helped. All that theory that I learnt at Uni about working in teams and motivation and all that, I've been able to put into practice with managing my own team.

Stuart: So Asher, how long have you been working for Coles?

Asher: I've been working at Coles for the past four years while I was conducting my University degree, but for the last two months, I've commenced the Retail Graduate Program.

Stuart: Good, and what have you enjoyed about the Program so far?

Asher: Well the Program, even though I've only been undertaking it for two months, I've had a lot of exposure to the business and ability to make decisions. I've had

the opportunities presented to me, where if I'm prepared to work, the sky is the limit.

Stuart: What did you study at university, and how has that helped you?

Asher: I studied a business degree at University and the Retail Leaders Graduate Program has really given me the opportunity to use the theory that I have learnt and apply it. You can make pragmatic decisions every day and every day is different and you learn a lot.

Stuart: So, Asher, what skills would you need to be successful in this program?

Asher: Well, one of the main skills you would want to have is passion - passion for the customer. You want to keep the customers satisfied; essentially they are what keep our business running. You need to be a real team player. You have to be able to manage a team but also at the same time, be a member with the team. You have to be able to prioritise. You have to work pragmatically and spontaneously, different things can occur on the moment. And you have to push yourself and work hard, where you end up, depends on how much you contribute.

Stuart: Good - thank you Asher.

Asher: Thanks Stuart.

So there you have it.

If you're interested, contact us through the Careers website, but of course if you don't join Coles, please continue to shop with Coles as we love our customers.