



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

College of Letters & Science

UCSB

Alumni Spotlight

This month's Spotlight features Kelly, a former Communication and Film Studies major who now sells Pandora advertising, fearlessly winning over clients and keeping your music playing.



Kelly Bottarini:
Account Executive
Pandora

What are you up to now, post-graduation?

I'm in sales. I work on all aspects of selling Pandora advertisements. All sorts of companies advertise with us—auto dealers, big national brands, small regional hospitals. Their commercials or ads will run on Pandora targeting age, gender, location, and more. My role is to not only hunt down new clients—for example, I'm trying to get Sansum Clinic on board—but to take existing accounts and grow them over the years, allowing our clients to try new products and services all with the goal of bringing in more revenue for both Pandora and the company that's advertising.

To do what I do, you have to be very good at staying on top of things and being organized, but most importantly, you have to be friendly and unafraid. Maybe a little

competitive too. You need to pick up the phone and be comfortable not only pitching something, but have a customer-service focus. The way I see it, I problem-solve for people and I approach things from that point of view rather than, "Hey, come buy my product."

You hear "no" a lot. You might lose ten battles and win one and you need to be the kind of person who can have the attitude of, "Aw yeah! I won one and it was a good one." It can be a really fun challenge. I love starting with a prospective client who is super reluctant, then working and working until they see our value and we build them an account. That's something that's always driven me—starting with nothing and creating something awesome. I don't

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need anyone to pat me on the back and say, “Good job, Kelly.” I know I did a good job. I can see what I built.

How did you get to where you are?

I came into UCSB as a Film Studies major. Like I said, I had a drive to create things and I thought film would be my medium for it. But I realized I didn’t want the lifestyle that went along with that industry and my idea of what I wanted to do started to change. I got an internship at the Santa Barbara Film Festival, which I found through the Film Department listserv, and it felt closer to what I was interested in. The job focused a lot on communication. So, I added on the Comm major. At the time, I was worried if my Film major would be enough for employers. Of course, now I know that major is all about how you sell it, if an employer even cares at all. You think about what your major taught you and what the job is, and you say,

“My major prepared me for this role because X, Y, and Z.” I could have been any major and I would have ended up here. In my experience, it’s the degree that’s important, because having a B.S or a B.A. tells employers that you’re competent, smart, and responsible. All that said, my Comm major helped me as a human being. My husband was a Comm major at UCSB too and our arguments are so funny. “You said this and I perceived it like this and it made me feel this way.” I can now take myself out of a situation and think, “How can I make this person understand what I’m thinking.” That, of course, makes me good at my job.

The film festival liked my work and hired me on as staff while I finished up at UCSB. After graduating, I worked there as a receptionist and a catch-all. I worked with sponsors—writing up contracts and sending them out—and helped with event planning—making sure logos were in certain places and people were

sitting in the right spots. It was grunt work, but I was helping create something, so that part felt right. The film festival is seasonal and I’d be laid off for the low season. The first time, I did temp work in between, but the second time, I realized this wasn’t a career path. I moved on and tried some other jobs that weren’t good fits. During that time, I learned a really important lesson about leaving unhealthy work environments. There are so many better things out there.

I came across a sales position at ZAD, a fashion jewelry company, and applied because I was applying to everything—this was 2008 and jobs were scarce. At the interview, they asked why I wanted to do sales and I said, “Honestly, I hate salespeople. But it sounds like a challenge and I like challenges.” They liked my gusto. They said that was the kind of honesty that works really well with salespeople, so they brought me on board. I found out I actually really enjoy

“...major is all about how you sell it...”



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sales. Looking back, I was kind of made to go into it. In college, I saw salespeople as shady, but that’s not really the case. There are people who need something and I supply it for them and make sure it helps them.

At ZAD, I was working with buyers from stores. There were small boutiques and bookshops where everything bought came straight out of the owners’ pockets—from their vacation money, their kid’s college fund, their grocery budget—and they needed to have items that were going to return that investment. I consulted and helped them make the right decisions so they could grow their businesses. Then there were the big stores like Nordstrom, Forever 21, and Francesca’s that wanted to find new trends they could push at a low cost. It was interesting seeing it from both sides.

When I moved to the Bay Area, I had a friend who worked at Pandora in sales and she submitted my resume. I was so, so unqualified. They wanted media sales experience or software or tech. Here I was having sold fashion jewelry. But I went into that interview with confidence and said, “I may not know media or how to sell it, but I can do it. I didn’t know how to sell jewel-

ry, I didn’t know how to plan events, but I did those things.” I had an offer from Yelp and at the end of the interview, I said, “I have to tell somebody tomorrow if I’m taking their job, so I need to know before I leave this room whether I’m working here or not.” And it worked! To move up in your career, you have to be good and you have to the bravery to ask for things.

What was the best thing you did as an undergrad to help you get to where you are?

The actual answer...I worked at In-N-Out. That experience is one of the reasons I got my first sales job. My old sales manager, in my interview, said, “Tell me more about In-n-out. That’s the greatest company. Everyone who’s worked there is so good.” It’s true! At In-N-Out, you have to be friendly, you have to be customer-oriented, you have to work hard and work efficiently. So honestly, the fact that I worked at In-N-Out is why I got to where I am now. I have a one-year-old now and I keep thinking, “One day, he’s going to work at In-N-Out and learn all those valuable skills.”

What do you wish you had known while you were in undergrad?

I wish I had gone after relationships with more mentors. I’m a very competitive, self-driven person, so my tendency is to want to do everything on my own without any help. But I realize now that wherever you’re going, you’re going to get there a lot faster with help than without. When you have mentors like professors or advisors, they not only can connect



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www.facebook.com/AskJoeGaucho

If an alum's story is meaningful to you, consider reaching out with questions using the contact information provided.

you with other people and opportunities, but you also don't have to figure everything out on your own. Getting support doesn't make you less competent or capable. It's a smart decision. Who knows how much easier my career path could have been if I'd have just gone and talked to professors more or done all the networking events at UCSB from the very beginning.

What was the best thing about being a Gaucho?

I always tell people you're not going to find a community anywhere like the one at UCSB—aw, now I'm getting emotional! You walk around and everybody's waving at each other. You could be in IV and a random person will walk into your house and you don't scream, "Who the hell are you?" You invite them to come hang out because you know they're someone's friend. Everyone so wants to be a part of each other. I

talk to people from other schools and it's clear UCSB is a special place. And all those social skills formed by that open community are really valued in careers, especially when you work with clients or teams.

Any final words of wisdom for the current Gaucho generation?

There's this saying, "Work hard and be nice to people." Don't turn your nose up at grunt work, especially in and right out of college—always put in the extra effort and ask what more you can do because people who are the decision-makers are going to notice that. And be nice. Yes, you can get places by being a jerk, but that stuff comes back at you. If you are nice to other people, if you're looking out for what's best for other people, ultimately, those positive relationships are always going to help you too.

Go Gauchos! Olé, olé!



Kelly welcomes Gauchos to contact her via LinkedIn for mentorship and with questions about sales. Requests to review resumes will not receive responses.

[linkedin.com/in/kellybottarini](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kellybottarini)

Interested in a career with Pandora? Check out:

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