

Cordon Bleu Paris  
13-15 Quai André Citroën  
75015 Paris

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To whom it may concern,

Most people take a gap-year after high school, mine is after 28 years as an executive. I will leave the boardroom to do more of what I love to do. Starting this gap-year in January at Cordon Bleu is my biggest wish.

During my university (MBA) years I jobbed part-time in a restaurant. Starting as a waitress, they trained me as a sous-chef in 'grand-café' Cambrinus in Rotterdam (Belgian foodrecipes based on artisanal beers). After a year I replaced the chef on his days-off. I loved the logistics, the planning, the tension of working in an open kitchen. And the endless bantering and discussions about food and ingredients.

When I left University, I held various international marketing and innovation roles in the Netherlands, Germany and France. During those years I still managed to stay in touch with food and culinary management:

- In Beagle I worked for Sara Lee (coffee) and Tivall (soja based meat-analogues) creating new products and flavours. (1999-2004)
- I was twice a 'cook' for a summer-camp. Feeding 40 hungry girls and teachers in Ireland ('03 and '04)
- In Philips I was also responsible for coffee / tea / kitchen appliances, helping busy mums in India and China make healthy meals for their family. (2004-2010)
- I served on the advisory board for KHN (Royal Hospitality Federation Netherlands), to discuss opportunities and threats for the industry and companies, visited talented restaurateurs and went on a study-trip in Sao Paulo visiting 30+ restaurants and cafes. (2014)

Every weekend I pull out my recipe books to make delicious healthy meals. I believe it is better for the planet to eat less animals (and when eaten they should have led a happy life and nothing gets wasted). I love Ottelenghi, Ruth Rogers and Hugh Fearnly-Whittingstall and visited their restaurants to pay 'homage'.

The professional cuisine is still pulling my heartstrings. I joined this year a 4 day training at River Cottage. I loved every second, still was fast enough and made not too many mistakes. Then in summer I joined THT a large restaurant in Amsterdam for a test-service.

Why Cordon Bleu? I have a belief: we can all cook great meals with less meat and poultry. I would like to write about this and teach people how to do it. So I need to learn the real way to make a cut instead of the ways I taught myself. Cordon Bleu is the most admired school in culinary arts and will provide me with a 'gold standard'. If I pass the first level, I hope to be accepted for the intermediate intensive in London.

I bring the experience of a seasoned leader and influencer and the passion of a young heart. I hope to change eating habits and sincerely hope you will take a chance on me.

Kind regards,

Sheila Struyck