



Meet Jillian Hill!

Business Analyst,
20/20 Experience Design

A native Haligonian, Jillian Hill has always had an interest in the economic growth of Halifax. After graduating from Dalhousie University and working in Government, Jillian is now able to be an active part of that economic growth as she steps into Halifax's tech sector. Last year, Jillian was hired as the Business Analyst for 20/20 Experience Design, and is loving every moment of it.

If I'm being honest with you, working in the tech sector is something I never even considered doing before I actually started working in it. In high school, I didn't take computer sciences or a tech-based course of any kind – I was a high school student whose main concern was playing sports and having a social life. Saying that, I was also a high-achiever who cared a lot about my grades. My favourite courses were global history, math, and yoga (which was an actual class offered at my high school). My time in university was a bit all over the place, and again, tech didn't cross my path – I started at King's University in journalism, then switched to Dalhousie University to become an arts student, and then finally, I graduated with

a degree in Political Science. During my last year of university, I realized that I wanted to work with the government, so I began to learn French. I took some courses, and actually did one of my final semesters abroad in France, which was a great experience that helped me grasp the language.

I've always been interested in the economic growth of Halifax and Nova Scotia as a whole, so shortly after I graduated from Dalhousie I got a job with the Global Affairs Canada office. Government is a good spot to start your career because it allows you to have a bird's eye view of everything going on throughout the city. It was actually how I became aware of the tech sector in Halifax. I would read documents or articles about tech companies and tech initiatives going on throughout the city, and the local innovation fascinated me.

As my interest in tech began to grow, a friend of mine from a partner organization mentioned that his friend, Jamie Gerrard, was looking to hire someone for his company 20/20 Experience Design. I was interested and eager, so our mutual friend set up a meeting and we talked about my

potential fit with his company. I was nervous because as I've mentioned, I don't have any real experience in tech other than getting music on my phone and using social media, but Jamie wanted me for the business side of things – which was the perfect fit. So, I took on the role of Business Analyst for 20/20 Experience Design.

20/20 Experience Design is a boutique agency that helps to design, or redesign, digital products. We help our clients to make sure their companies are designing products with their user in mind, and that the product fits the user's specific needs and wants.

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I've been with 20/20 for a relatively short time now, but I love it. I love working for a start-up because it gives me the opportunity to wear many different hats. I'm involved in a lot of different projects, events, or initiatives and even if the hat sometimes feels too big, or too small, I'm still wearing it because that's what the company needs from me at that time. I also enjoy the flexibility my work provides for me, and how I am able to work closely with the owner of the company, Jamie. He has become a mentor for me and he includes me in whatever he's working on, so I am able to learn more about user experience design, building a business, and the tech industry as a whole - which is amazing!

Even though I've only been in the tech sector for

a short time, I can already see that the industry is booming here in Halifax. I keep discovering more companies throughout the city, and learning more about how successful and global some of these tech companies are becoming.

I feel as though the biggest misconception about the tech industry is that everyone believes that you need to have a tech background in order to work in it. As you've read my story, this is obviously not the case – tech companies still need marketers, creatives, communications specialists, and many other positions that are not tech-based. And, as long as you have an interest in the industry, anyone can learn more about it as they work alongside it.

For anyone that is wanting to work in the tech sector, or has an interest in it, my best piece of advice would be simply to try and volunteer with a tech company that interests you. Just google tech companies in your area, find one that does work that you find cool, and just email them and ask if you can come to the office for a day or two every month to help out. Everyone is going to be appreciative of someone wanting to help out, especially for free, and will respect your ambition.

Other than that, I would suggest seeing if there are any tech-based workshops going on in your area, Digital Nova Scotia hosts many throughout the province, and I would definitely recommend checking them out. Discovering what you like and dislike is honestly one of the hardest aspects in determining a career, so if you can start to narrow it down at a young age, you'll be in a good position in the future.