

Mariana Amadio Rodriguez

INTERVIEWED BY GINEBRA RUBIO, EHL BACHELOR STUDENT, CLASS OF 2028

GRADUATED
IN 2024

From Brazil,
Living in

FOUNDER OF
QUARTZ AGENCY GMBH

QUARTZ



FROM EHL TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**“If we don’t start now,
we are never going to do it.”**

This is what Mariana and her co-founders, Giovana and Caroline, told each other before taking the leap and launching their own marketing agency. Moving from students to entrepreneurs was anything but easy. Without years of experience or a safety net, what set them apart was their courage. Their story is especially compelling because it was so unplanned at first. As Mariana explains, the idea of starting an

agency didn’t come from a long-term business plan but from a moment of realization. After graduation, she found herself in a role that did not feel fulfilling, and she quickly realized that a traditional career path was not what she wanted. When the opportunity to create something of her own appeared, she chose to embrace it with little to no hesitation.

“EHL taught me that you don’t need to have everything figured out to start.” Mariana says. “The Bachelor in International Hospitality Management gave me the confidence to take initiative and build something on my own.”



EHL played a key role in shaping this mindset.

Coming from a Swiss school in São Paulo, moving away from home wasn't in Mariana's plans until an EHL Student Advisor came to visit her school. "It was very funny," she recalls, "I didn't attend the presentation, but my best friend did." Yet a simple conversation with an EHL recruiter sparked her curiosity. After doing her own research, she decided to apply, setting in motion a path she had not initially imagined.

Arriving in Switzerland was full of mixed feelings. "Coming here was very overwhelming, but I was also excited to meet new people", she shares. Over time, that unfamiliar environment turned into something

more meaningful. *"It ends up becoming your home, and your friends become like family."*

Beyond the personal experience, EHL also had a lasting impact on her professional development. "EHL gave me more than confidence, it gave me the tools and mindset to actually build a business from scratch" she explains. Through hands-on projects and a wide range of projects, she gained the confidence to take ownership of projects and make her own decisions, skills that would later become essential when starting her own business.

"EHL taught me that everyone starts from somewhere, It shows you that you can do it yourself."

From Classroom to Reality:

Experiences such as the Student Business Project (SBP) played a particularly important role. *"We had to build everything from scratch. Finance, strategy, the whole project. Nothing was given to us."* This exposure to real-world problem-solving helped her understand not only how businesses operate but also how to create something of her own.

At the same time, the diversity of courses, from marketing to finance, allowed her to explore her interests while building a versatile skill set. More importantly, it shifted her perspective on what was possible after graduation.

A Leap of Faith

"We didn't really have everything figured out," she admits. "But we knew that if we didn't start then, we probably never would."

Starting their agency came with challenges. After relocating to Zurich, the business began to gain momentum. *"In just two months, we grew much more than in the first three,"* she explains. *"That's when things started to feel real."*

Even the process of officially registering the company reflected the strength of the EHL network. A message in the alumni group chat helped them connect with a lawyer who guided them through the process.

The administrative side was one of the biggest hurdles. For a young company, raising the CHF 20,000 required for registration felt significant. *"Seeing that*

we were able to make this money on our own was a big achievement," Mariana says.

Looking back, Mariana sees how her time at EHL helped her navigate these moments. Being used to working on projects, managing different responsibilities, and adapting quickly made the transition into entrepreneurship feel more manageable.

Today, Quartz Agency continues to grow, with the goal of expanding internationally in the future. What started as a spontaneous decision has grown into a long-term ambition. For Mariana, the biggest lesson is simple: starting before you feel ready can be the most powerful step of all.