

10. Learning to be professional: the story of my placement experience

School of Management

Marketing assistant in a global electronics company

With the desire and preference to pursue a career in the marketing industry after graduation, it was seen as an opportunity to acquire invaluable work experience and a chance to develop existing skills, by applying for the position of marketing assistant in the Lighting Division offered by a major global electronics company. It was also recognised that further opportunities could arise due to a placement with a globally recognised company.

The main expectation of the placement year was that it would have been an extensive learning experience, answering any questions in relation to working in a marketing department. Hence, enabling an in-depth learning of marketing skills practised in this particular industry.

The core aspects of the role were managing any public relations and Marcoms – marketing communication - activities within the Lighting division. I was also appointed Project Manager for the Product Launch event in April 2008. This was assigned to me as an additional project in order to help on improving my weaknesses and prove my abilities/skills.

Training for the job was supplied by the previous student in a two week intensive handover. The student then provided general support in the following two weeks. By attending the company

I would advise any students undertaking placement to set monthly meetings with the line manager but also with the general manager/director; it is important to make sure that a major project will be given in order to have the opportunity to show abilities and skills and have something to talk about when reviewing the experience. Networking is also another thing the student should try to do while at placement, not only with the team but with all the other departments, businesses.

To conclude, the placement year was an enjoyable and challenging experience. It has been helpful in determining the future career path in which to follow. The placement also provided the opportunity to conduct an evaluative process through determining various strengths and weaknesses. This was extremely useful as areas of self development could be established leading to efficiency in the workplace. I do strongly recommend any second level students to undertake the placement as it is definitely an experience that will enrich personally but also professionally.

The benefit that stands out most from doing the placement is the knowledge of how highly the placement experience is valued by employers. The experience gained from the professional training year will prove to be invaluable in future roles. Having completed the placement and gained the necessary experience, my wish to enrol on a graduate scheme or apply for a specific role will be now more achievable.

Working at my company offered a great opportunity to allow the theoretical knowledge gained at university to be integrated into the workplace. To complement this, the practical knowledge learnt from exercising a professional training year can now be implemented into the final year at university.