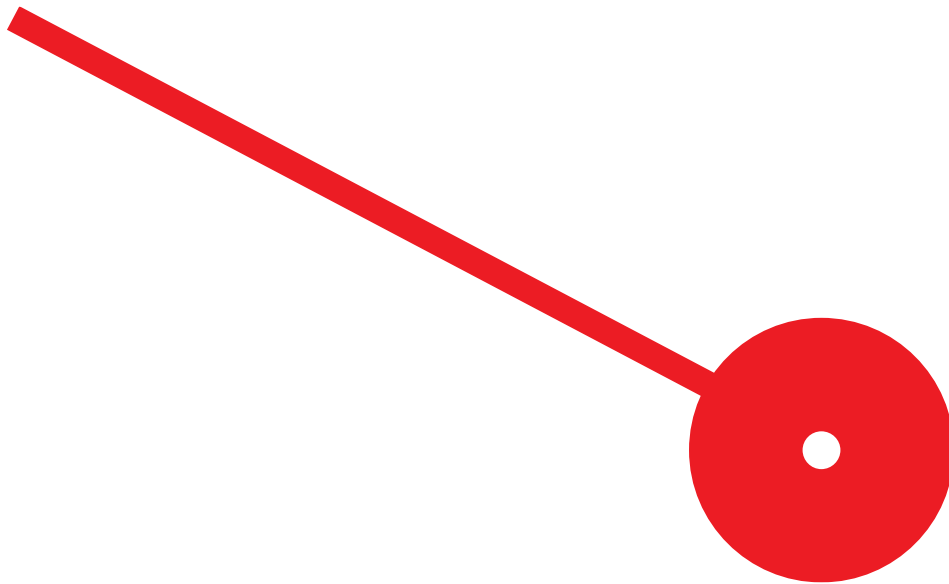


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Rita Lopes

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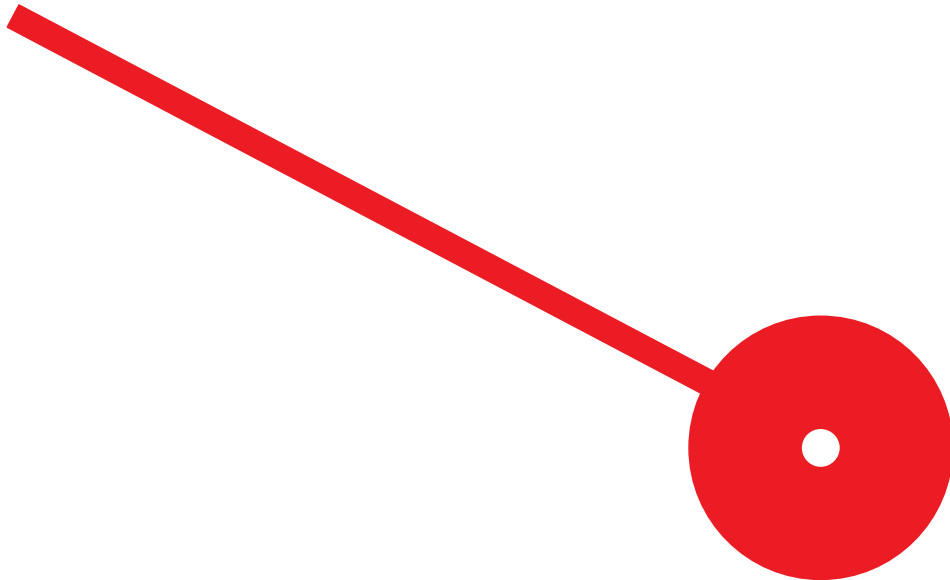




Dpointgroup: The international experience in the B2B market

Rita Lopes

**Internship report presented to Porto's Accounting and
Business School, to obtain the degree of Master in
Intercultural Studies for Business, under the guidance of
Professor Marco Lamas**



Acknowledgments

First of all, I want to thank my parents for always supporting me during all my student years and make all this possible. Without them, I wouldn't have the same opportunities and success.

After that, I would like to thank Prof. Clara Sarmento for always believe in me and give me motivation and encouragement during all my Erasmus+ experience, in Barcelona.

To Prof. Marco Lamas, for guiding me and helping me so much, during this final process.

To all my friends that stand by my side.

Abstract:

The internship report aims to be the final part of the Master's degree within the Intercultural Studies for Business course taught at ISCAP. This is the report of an internship which took place from 2nd march until 31st july in the Spanish company Dpointgroup in the Marketing and International Relations department, during my Erasmus in Barcelona.

This way, it will be presented the work developed during these months and as well as its analysis and reflection.

This report will also demonstrate the history and characterization of the company and its strategies implemented using B2B marketing. To understand these strategies, this concept will be studied and related with the ones referred previously.

With the development of this work, I could analyze my work and experience in Dpointgroup. Also, with this research I could conclude how culture, intercultural communication and interculturalism/multiculturalism play such a fundamental role in the international corporate environment.

Key words: marketing, intercultural communication, culture, international

Resumo:

O presente trabalho tem como objetivo integrar a parte final do Mestrado em Estudo Interculturais para Negócios, ensinado no ISCAP. Este é um relatório do estágio realizado de 2 de março a 31 de julho na empresa espanhola Dpointgroup, no departamento de Marketing e Relações Internacionais, durante o meu Erasmus em Barcelona.

Deste modo, irá ser apresentado o trabalho desenvolvido durante estes meses, a sua análise e, posterior, reflexão.

Este relatório irá também demonstrar a história e caracterização da empresa, bem como as estratégias utilizadas, usando B2B marketing. Com o objetivo de compreender as técnicas implementadas, este conceito será estudado e relacionado com os conceitos referidos anteriormente.

Assim, com o desenvolvimento deste relatório, foi possível realizar uma análise do meu trabalho e experiência na Dpointgroup. Com esta pesquisa, eu fui capaz de compreender como a cultura, a comunicação intercultural, o interculturalismo e o multiculturalismo desempenham um papel fundamental no ambiente empresarial internacional.

Palavras-chave: marketing, comunicação intercultural, cultura, internacional

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INTRODUCTION

The programme Erasmus+ offers to students the opportunity to study or work in another country. This plays a huge role in an individual education, since it provides a lot of advantages to the student: the experience of living in a foreign country, the development of language skills and the knowledge acquire during all the time abroad.

Regarding the participants of the Erasmus+ Programme, the main targets are individuals related to the key areas of the Programme: education, training, and youth. According to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, this means that “(...) students, trainees, apprentices, pupils, adult learners, young people, volunteers, professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, professionals of organizations (...)” are the ones who can participate in the Programme. Besides belonging to the fields of education, training and youth, the participants should be established in a Programme Country. Regarding the Participating Organizations, it is the responsibility of the organizations to represent the participants by submitting and managing their projects.

An internship done attending the Erasmus+ programme is a significant experience. Self-development and professional grown are the main concepts when we talk about this activity. By working in another country, students gain experience and important knowledge for their future life and career.

According to this, despite of being hard to find an internship during the COVID-19 pandemic, my experience at the Spanish company Dpointgroup, in Barcelona, between 2nd March and 31st of July, could have not been better. Of course, it was a totally different experience to do this type of process during a pandemic. However, it was not a barrier to learning and I am very grateful for this opportunity, where I consider that I had grown so much as a person and professional.

During these six months, my work was divided in different main missions as: writing blog entries to promote the company’s services, participating in different online marketing activities, getting familiar and practices with Search Engine Optimization (SEO), understanding the effect of social media to marketing strategy, searching for new clients and build relationships with them, collaborating with foreign counterparts and create content to promote the company.

The following report is divided into five sections: introducing the concepts of culture, intercultural communication, interculturalism and multiculturalism, business, and

marketing b2b and relating them with the internship in Dpointgroup. Present the outcomes, the difficulties faced during this experience and the achievements made.

In this report I will relate the knowledge acquire in the Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business with working in a international company and in a cultural cross environment, using bibliography to contextualize the work presented with concepts like: intercultural communication, culture, interculturalism and multiculturalism.

Definition of culture

Culture is, undeniable, a way of living. We can see it in every step of people's lives. According to this, it is necessary to give some notions about this concept so heard in a global way. Sarmento alludes that the concept of Culture has been evolving throughout times and it can be considered as a key-concept in the study and understanding of societies. (Sarmento, 2015)

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) define culture as “the collective programming of the mind [...]” which distinguishes one group from another, or the “unwritten rules of the social game”, indicating the unspoken norms of behavior. Also, UNESCO defends that the concept of Culture is presented as being “at the core of individual and social identity and is a major component in the reconciliation of group identities within a framework of social cohesion.” (UNESCO, 2006)

By the end of the 20th century the concept of Culture could be perceived in the following three different forms: (Sarmento, 2015)

1. As a process that could be used to intellectual and spiritual development;
2. The products resulting from the artistic and intellectual activities;
3. The way of life of a nation or group. During its evolution, it was possible to adopt a more contemporary definition of Culture as being a process that creates meanings. Such meanings, and their respective interpretations, are attributed by the agents of each culture/group to specific objects, people or events. Accordingly, members of a group or society interpret the world in a similar way. (Clara Sarmento, 2015) Also, according to Sarmento (2015), during the 18th century, the notion of Culture corresponded to a process, a final product allied to humanity's moral and spiritual progress.

Geertz (1973) defines culture as a system of meanings and symbols, in which social interaction happens: [Culture is] an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.

Barnett and Lee (2002) as well approach culture from the perspective of meanings and symbols. Culture is a “group's shared collective meaning system through which the group's collective values, attitudes, beliefs, customs, and thoughts are understood”. Meanings are ascribed to verbal and nonverbal symbols.

Culture is the consensus about the meanings of symbols which are owned by the members of a society. The consensus is important for understanding, encoding, and decoding messages. Thereby, the study of this concept is fundamental to understand how societies and people behave. Of course, culture can change all the time during life and assume different shapes. Having a look around it goes without explaining that our cultural value trends, such as individualistic or collectivistic, shape and result in our beliefs, desires, and actions. (Universal Class, 2019)

1.1 Culture as an important factor in international business

In Ashworth's words: A company's culture is the only truly unique identifier. It is like a fingerprint, it may be similar to others, but is uniquely distinct to your business. Everything else (products, strategies, marketing, even innovations) can be replicated, but the only truly unique identifiers are the values and norms of the organization –its culture, or personality. (Ashworth, 2015)

A positive culture in business today is unfortunately the exception rather than the norm, but a strong organizational culture can clearly differentiate a business from its competitors in the mind of its stakeholders. (Ashworth, 2015) Organizational culture is perceived as a group of shared values, behaviors and beliefs that encourage an understanding of a company's operating principles and rules that determines the performance of its employees. (Griffith, 2002)

Culture is the secondary component of international negotiations, which is only taken into consideration when it meets face to face with our foreign partner and the first misunderstanding arises due to the unavoidable cultural contrast between both sides. (Maldonado, 2006)

According to Schein (2009), culture assumes a different relevance according to organizational maturity. Having the ability to create a solid and strong business culture adds value to the organization although it is not a simple task. Also, for Tarver, we can define it as the group of beliefs and behaviors that determine how a company's employees and management interact and handle outside business transactions. (Tarver, 2021)

Companies with a strong culture are defined by forward-looking and charismatic leaders who create and establish norms, beliefs and values, as well as a dispassionate and lasting engagement and interest in the accomplishment of business objectives, leadership consistency, workforce stability, and a sense of community and fellowship among company members. (Missaglia, 2019)

In this context, the true priority becomes being familiar with those features at the basis of culture such as traditions, symbols, communication patterns and body language on which depend the outcome of an effective intercultural communication in the business world. (Adamczyk, 2017)

Companies with a variety of cultures tend to be more successful and better results. This happens due to the variety of different ideas, knowledge and solutions provided.

1.2 Interculturalism and Multiculturalism

According to UNESCO, Interculturalism is “the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect.” (UNESCO, 2006)

“Intercultural communication” is becoming one of the many buzzwords of our day. The key terms ‘inter’ and ‘cultural’ denote a multidisciplinary field comprising individuals with differing ways of thinking and acting who may come from diverse geographical areas and speak several languages. (Ibad, 2020)

Nowadays, new identities are being reconstructed at an accelerated pace because of Interculturalism (Clara Sarmiento, 2015). On the other hand, according to UNESCO the concept can be perceived as “(...)the culturally diverse nature present in human society.” (UNESCO, 2006)

According to Atamaniuk, author of the essay “The terms “multicultural”, “cross-cultural”, “intercultural”. Intercultural Studies’ focus is on the “interaction of two or more cultures and answer the main question of what happens when two or more cultures interact (at the interpersonal level, group-level or international level).” (Atamaniuk, 2014) Multiculturalism can be explained as a community “(...) where all people with different cultures live alongside one another and value tolerance, cuisine, festivals, dress and related things to culture. But all culture’s values are not deep learning by society.” (Atamaniuk, 2014)

Multiculturalism, can be considered as an utopy due to being a concept that considers the ideal circumstances for a multicultural society happen when different people from different countries and cultures “(...) mutually recognize the right to live in common.” (Sarmiento, 2014)

One of the fields where Interculturalism and Multiculturalism are being promoted is Education. To avoid hate crimes in schools and colleges, teachers and educators have an important role by introducing multicultural and intercultural perspectives in their classes. By doing that, teachers make it possible for their students to be more aware of cultural diversity and to be better able to listen and communicate with other students from different cultural backgrounds.

Being two important concepts inside a classroom, teachers have a crucial role in developing, along with their students, a multicultural perspective in which cultural diversity and different perspectives are considered. (Atamaniuk, 2014)

Multiculturalism has been subjected to a political-ideological study, focusing both on the dominant or host society, and on the migrant or (alleged) minority groups. In other hand, interculturalism is considered a movement with an underlying stream of consciousness, as manifested in critically aware journeys, in mutual knowledge, understanding, and communication.

Interculturalism is, this way, assumed as an epistemological approach. Only intercultural analysis can give it this character, through a paradigm of hybrid, segmentary, and heterogeneous thinking. There are four ways in which conceptions of interculturalism are being discussed as different as multiculturalism. These are, first, as something greater than coexistence, interculturalism is geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism. Second, that interculturalism is conceived as something more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism. Third, that interculturalism is something more committed to a stronger sense of the whole, in terms of such things as societal cohesion and national citizenship. Finally, that where multiculturalism may be illiberal and relativistic, interculturalism is more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices, as part of the process of intercultural dialogue.

As the authors defend, multiculturalism has been founded on the belief in tolerance between cultures, but it is not always the case that multicultural places are open places. Interculturalism, on the other hand, entails openness – as a spatial logic of contact and dynamism – and, while openness is or the guarantee of interculturalism, it provides the setting for its development. (Wood et al. 2006)

Indeed, communication is the defining characteristic and the central means through which “an intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds” (Wood et al. 2006). As the authors maintain, multiculturalism has been founded on the belief in tolerance between cultures, but it is not always the case that multicultural places are open places. Interculturalism, on the other hand, entails openness – as a spatial logic of contact and dynamism – and, while openness, is not the guarantee of interculturalism, it provides the setting for a its development. (Wood et al. 2006) However, what the present formulation

of interculturalism emphasizes is, beyond question, communication. Indeed, communication is the defining characteristic and the central means through which “an intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds.” (Wood et al. 2006)

CHAPTER III– INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Intercultural Communication

According to Lustig and Koester (2006) intercultural communication is “a symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process in which people from different cultures create shared meanings.”. Indeed, communication is the defining characteristic and the central means through which “an intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds.” (Wood et al. 2006)

“Intercultural communication” is becoming one of the most relevant words of our day. The key terms ‘inter’ and ‘culture l’ denote a multidisciplinary field comprising individuals with differing ways of thinking and acting who may come from diverse geographical areas and speak several languages. (Ibad, 2020)

This happens when people with different cultural backgrounds interact and communicate among themselves. According to J. Allwood (1985) culture is as an important component of intercultural communication. The author’s definition of the concept focuses on communication, a process of sharing information and knowledge, as well as the level of awareness in interactions between people representing different cultures.

Each person wants to be respected and recognized by others and society in order to find his or her self-esteem. Employees are an important resource of any company, small or large, that wants to earn the respect of others as well as social recognition. Because employee commitment and business success are closely interconnected, healthy relationships must be built in the workplace to build good business sense. (Hynes, 2012)

A lot of people are only capable of recognizing their own culture when travelling abroad or when meeting someone with different cultural aspects. Our way of thinking, what we believe to be right or wrong or how to act in certain situations are affected by the culture in which we are born and raised (Jandt, 2004). Further analysis of the multidisciplinary function reveals that behind the various research and studies about this type of communication, the main scope is to better understand how people from various countries and cultures interact, connect, and interpret their surroundings by fostering cultural synergy, without which intercultural communication would not occur.

In fact, the concept of synergy is closely related to that of interculturality since it involves a sort of cooperation that may arise when diverse groups of individuals, each with their own perspectives, collaborate to enhance effectiveness through the sharing of different viewpoints, perceptions, and knowledge (Schmidt et al., 2007). For this reason, employing a non-judgmental and, more specifically, a cultural relativism perspective, which is not only the attitude of rejection of ethnocentrism but also the acceptance of the plurality of cultures, is crucial to manage intercultural misunderstanding and conflicts, especially in the corporate world. Consequently, the blending of cultural identities and professional perspectives has become a fact. Globalization is no longer a simple concept, rather a reality where competent communicators capable of bridging culture differences and attaining international objectives can make the difference. (Schmidt et al, 2007)

Elements of intercultural communication

Intercultural communication competence can be divided into four fields: personality strength, communication skills, psychological adjustment and cultural factors (Jandt, 2013). National culture includes values, beliefs and principles which determine the life style of social groups and populations by relying on fundamental concepts that had been transmitted of individuals in the early stages of development. (Griffith & Harvey, 2001)

Communication is believed to be on the keys to business between partners happens. National culture is not only embedded in everyday life, but also determines the way a social group perceives reality, explains mutual relationships, the roles individuals play, their mutual commitments and duties towards an organization. In order to be successful, business relations are driven by every partner's disposition to invest in the progress of effective communication. It is necessary to be able to learn and respect each other's cultures. The cultural framework must be studied from the point of view of a nation as well as an organization. National culture includes values, beliefs and principles which determine the life style of social groups and populations by relying on fundamental concepts that had been transmitted to individuals in the early stages of development. (Griffith & Harvey, 2001)

Factors such as social customs, space, friendship, cohesion, time, class systems, religion, gender, ethical standards, individualism and society's attitude to these values, which differ widely across national cultures, play a key role in shaping effective intercultural communication National culture is not only rooted in daily life, but it also shapes the way reality is perceived by a social group, it describes reciprocal relationships, the roles played by persons, their mutual commitments and duties to an organization. Aspects such as social customs, space, friendship, cohesion, time, social class systems, religion, gender, ethical norms, individualism and society's attitude towards those values, which vary extensively across national cultures, play a central role in building effective intercultural communication. (Wells & Spinks, 1994)

Even though national culture has a direct relationship to an organization, an organization's culture is shaped by the cultural standards of its members, its principles, operational processes and procedures. National culture has an inevitable influence on organizational culture. Members of an organization transmit their own cultural standards

to the corporate level, thereby participating in the process of cultural change. Organizational culture is perceived as a group of shared values, behaviors and beliefs that encourage an understanding of a company's operating principles and rules that determines the performance of its employees. (Griffith, 2002)

It merges the culture of a nation with that of the communities present in the organizational environment. Interactions between the two cultures can enhance or restrict the effectiveness of communication and should consequently be considered fundamental elements in international business relations. When talking about the intercultural experience, it is extremely important to talk about the barriers that we should tackle with the other. However, the true intercultural experience occurs when we are able to see ourselves and our work as if we were those so-called others, whose otherness originates from their nationality, gender, orientation, academic background, or field of research.

Barriers to intercultural communication

LaRay M. Barna (1997) identified a list of six barriers to intercultural communication: anxiety, assumption of similarities instead of difference, language differences, nonverbal misinterpretations, stereotypes and prejudice, and ethnocentrism. One of the most evident barriers to intercultural communication may be language. If there is no common language between people to understand each other, it can be very difficult to communicate verbally. Even when there is a common language, there exist elements that can hinder with communication, as accents or slang, different vocabulary. Stereotypes “exist because they offer the individual a shorthand way of engaging with and understanding the world around them.” (Locke & Johnston, 2001) As discussed previously, nonverbal communication can also represent a barrier to effective intercultural communication.

In an intercultural environment, there is a high risk of misunderstanding because of the difference between cultures. We can observe that the higher the difference, the more difficult will be an effective intercultural communication. Lack of communication can cause conflict or even worse none already existing. Indeed, it is too easy to fall into the traps caused by the obstacles to intercultural communication. They are very difficult to perceive and the only way to prevent them is to learn to recognize those obstacles and avoid making the mistakes associated to them.

Intercultural Communication for Business

In a world where geographical barriers are being removed through digitalization, and thus, big interconnections, companies need to regard internationalization as one of the most critical factors in their growth. For a company expand and develop its activities in an international way, is a balance between the potential for growth and the challenge of investing in new markets. (Ibad, 2020)

As I. Torres claims “to do so, in a space that makes room for exchange, communication must serve as a tool to promote both integration and innovation.” (Torres, 2021, p.2), and therefore, “people with a well-developed sensitivity in communicating with foreigners definitely have a big advantage and will probably succeed in business life” (Young, 2005, as cited in Ibad, 2020) .We could say that the key for an international success in the business world is the respect and recognizing for another cultures, but on another hand, the most common factor of failure is the communication between them and non-adaptation to foreign ways of thinking and behaviors or attitudes. (Washington et al, 2012)

Achieving the international market, it is extremely important for employees to do more in order to deal with different cultures to prevent misunderstandings and become an interculturally effective person, i.e., “someone who is able to “live contentedly and work successfully in another culture” (Vulpe et al., 2001). Actually, with the immense importance that interculturality is achieving, the ability of building successful cross-cultural relations means gaining a comparative advantage that allows companies to dedicate more time and motivation to conduct business rather than dealing with internal and external communication issues. (Matthews & Thakkar, 2012)

CHAPTER IV - BUSINESS TO BUSINESS MARKETING

What is B2B marketing?

Working in this company make me understood that B2b marketing is a super important tool for businesses in order to promote services and products to the other companies and businesses. So, it is relevant to present the definition of B2B marketing. It is based in all activities that are involved in the marketing of products and services to organizations. These can be commercial, profit or nonprofit institutions or government agencies.

According to Hadjikhani and LaPlaca (2013), the study of Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing can be traced back to the 1890s, but key contributions have been developed only during the last three decades, mainly in specialized journals such as *Industrial Marketing Management (IMM)*, *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing (JBiM)* and *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing (JBBM)*. Also Hadjikhani and LaPlaca (2013), agree that the pioneer of B2B thinking is John Wanamaker, since the first registered attempt to understand customer relationships in a business context was proposed by him in 1899. This successful businessman in retailing introduced an integrative perspective of the roles played by suppliers, retailers and customers. He advocated for a proper balance between buyers and sellers (Tadajewski, 2008), rejecting the idea of maximum profit regardless of customer satisfaction. (Hadjikhani & LaPlaca, 2013)

Peter J. LaPlaca (2013) in his paper on “Research priorities for B2B marketing researchers” assumes that “The field of B2B marketing is rapidly growing as a research focus and academic researchers have ample opportunity to conduct research with a high likelihood of publication if they focus on research topics of importance and interest and they follow accepted research methodologies. They classified research needs into “selling and sales management, global marketing, branding, B2B use of social media, innovation, sustainability, business networks, B2B services, Marketing organizations, distribution and channel management, B2B marketing theory. Also, Uzialko says that business-to-business marketing is directed to the marketing of products or services to other businesses and organizations. (Uzialko, 2020).

These marketing silos often miss out on opportunities for synergies that would drive value for the organization. IMC (integrated marketing communications) could be the solution by the providing a new organizational model for synergistic brand

management media relations and campaign messaging _thus optimizing all market opportunities across business models.” In broad terms, B2B marketing content is told to be more informational than B2C. This happens because business purchase decisions, in comparison to those of consumers, are based more on bottom-line income impact.

Return on investment (ROI) is a fundamental focus for corporate decision makers (Lessard, 2018). In the modern world, B2B marketers often sell to buying committees with several key stakeholders. This originates for a complex and sometimes challenging landscape, the opportunity to map out committees and get buyers with important, personalized information. This is highly improving (Lake, 2019). Another important aspect to take into consideration is that there are B2B companies in every industry, from manufacturing to retail. Wherever it exists business, you can be assured of the activity of many B2B suppliers and consulting firms. Every B2C company demands specific products, services, and professional advice, so every B2C company generates B2B activity. (Uzialko, 2020)

How to develop a marketing plan for a B2B company?

In B2B marketing target audience is not a consumer, but another company.

According to Uzialko (2020), driving sales signifies understanding another company's business methods, create and build trustful relationships between both your organizations, and developing a business strategy with your sales team to turn potential clients into buyers. To develop a marketing plan for a B2B company is necessary to understand the value of some subjects:

The product: There is an emotional element affected when marketing to customers. People can be attached to products because of emotions and feelings they stimulate. With B2B customers, the customers are trained professionals who care about the quality of products, their cost-saving and revenue-producing advantages as also the service provided by the host company. (Almquist, Cleghorn and Shere, 2018)

Pricing: It is common that companies are more concerned with the cost, the value and revenue potential than customers. However, they can also be more easily convinced to pay a lot of money, provided that the B2B marketing specialists do an excellent job of convincing them that the product, quality and customer service will be worth it. (Fill & McKee, 2012)

The target: Many B2B marketers can focus on niche industries which represent specialized requirements. While this can make marketing straighter forward, it also demands a high level of knowledge outside of marketing specialists. (Almquist, Cleghorn and Shere, 2018)

Promotion. Talking about promotion, B2B marketers should normally be specialist not only in marketing or advertising as also in their own fields to understand the best way to catch the consumer's eye.

Who is B2B Marketing For?

It is necessary to understand that marketing can have a lot of definitions however, all of them have one aspect in common: the customer. Every business uses B2B marketing to sell to other businesses. This happens they need to promote its products or services. They can work in many ways to do that: security solutions, office supplies, subscriptions, software-as-a-service (SaaS), tools... (Lessard, 2018). The kind of campaigns (B2B marketing) are directed to people with control or influence over buying decisions.

Some common B2B companies incorporate:

Software Companies: Concerning software, it contributes to businesses satisfy by assuring a more effectively their customers and work relationship. Whether it is enhancing productivity by blocking social media, promoting collaboration with project management tools, or keeping track of work hours and costs, there is a solution to almost every business need through software.

Marketing Agencies: Marketing is used to attract companies by offering to help them make more money. Recently, they are concentrating on digital marketing as more brands and customers bring their business online. Demand is very high for agencies that create websites, improving search ranking results and simplifying e-commerce payment processes

Office Suppliers: Even though there are more people doing work electronically than ever before, it is still important to keep workplaces well supplied. Companies need to have furniture, telephone systems, security cameras, paper and printer ink, ID cards and much more, so employees can develop their daily tasks.

Strategies of B2B Digital Marketing

During this internship, I have learnt about the strategies and techniques companies use to reach the target. A B2B marketing strategy can demonstrate how an organization is capable of attracting customers and closing sales. It is known, that a good marketing strategy will provide the determination of crucial points: vision, mission and business objectives of the company. Of course, this strategy should be well planned and developed, since it will have a huge impact in the business plan. The main role of advertising in the B2B context is to inform, while highlighting distinctively, conviction is achieved through other tools of the advertising mix, specifically direct marketing and public relations. (Mandal & Joshi, 2017)

B2B marketing depends, essentially, on content. As I have learnt during my internship, the most common B2B digital marketing types and channels are corporate Identity. This reveals to be a super important strategy as it includes logo, branding, business cards and promotion. It is really important to distinguish the own product from other businesses proposing similar products and services. This implies that the brand demonstrates the distinctive selling offer within each marketing really message.

Another strategy used and element that can catch costumers' eye is illustration. The right picture can attract the reader's attention and make them buy. Emotional reactions are important as well. Other strategy implemented when using in B2B digital marketing are web sites. These platforms are, nowadays, the place where costumers go directly when having interest in a product or service.

It is really important, then, that the website of the company is catching and clear. A lot of tools can be used to help the costumer finding what he is looking for as: explaining images, videos resuming the principal products offered.

Also, according to Mandal & Joshi, a video introduction from the business owner is also important for building mutual understanding (Mandal & Joshi, 2017). Normally, advertising, does not attract potential customers, but attracts people to the website. In consumer markets, advertising is used because of its capacity to get a mass audience and its flexibility in dealing with a specialized section.

Adding to this, the use of online advertising is primarily aimed at driving website traffic and providing corporate and product information. The use of banner ads interstitial

advertising and, pop-ups and has a supportive instead of a leadership communication function.

B2B users prefer to focus on the informational aspect in place of the emotional, especially when buying decisions induce high engagement. At the moment, the main objective of the clients of organizations seems to be to search information and, until this changes in the B2B context, the emotional and entertainment aspect of advertising messages will continue to have a low importance and online advertising a low profile in the communication mix (Fill & McKee, 2012). The importance of B2B direct marketing is that it can be used to complement individual sales activities and, thereby, lower costs and develop general performance.

Adding to this, for a lot of B2B companies, direct marketing is considered the second most essential tool in the communication mix. It has as main objective to reach personal costumers with personalized messages and establishing a relationship with them. The most common type of direct marketing is direct mail. Concerning to public relations (PR), it is used to manage a company's image with its stakeholders and to close the gap between the image needed by companies and the way it is in fact understood by its various publics.

The main objectives of public relations are: to attract and keep good employees, deal with problems and cope with misunderstandings in relation to an organization, to build benevolence amongst publics such as governments, local communities, suppliers, distributors and customers, build an organization's prestige and promote products. (Brennan, Canning, & McDowell, 2017)

The major types of public relations involve press releases, press conferences, interviews, events, lobbying, corporate advertising, sponsorship, crisis management, investor relations. A comparatively new grow this the use of blogs and social media. These provide the opportunity of community engagement and feedback, although a code-of-conduct needs to be defined for employees who participate in these PR activities.

Also, important to notice exhibitions or trade shows. Trade shows lead buyers and sellers together in one physical location. Sellers show and demonstrate their product to a relatively well-qualified worldwide audience. The company where I did my internship used to do this a lot before COVID-19.

The primary objectives, accordingly, are to develop partnerships with customers, to build upon or develop the corporate identity and to collect up-to-date market intelligence. This indicates that trade shows should not be used as separated events, but that they should be integrated into a number of promotional activities. (Brennan, Canning, & McDowell, 2017)

Advertising before, during and after a trade show can be combined with public relations, sponsorship and personal selling. Sales promotions can also be integrated through competitions among customers before to the show to increase awareness, enhance interest and to imply customer involvement. As a way of promoting marketing communications, exhibitions facilitate products promotion, and brands built. Digital marketing has no limits. Companies can use a series of devices such as smart phones, tablets, laptops, digital billboards, and media such as social media, SEO (search engine optimization), videos, content, e-mail with the aim to promote company itself and its products and services. A marketing strategy establishes the general direction and goals for marketing, and is consequently different from a marketing plan, which defines the specific actions it will take to implement specific marketing strategy.

CHAPTER V - THE WORLD OF DPOINTGROUP

Contextualization and general overview

My internship took place in the Spanish company Dpointgroup, located in Barcelona.

At that time, I was attending the Erasmus+ programme. When I was finishing the first semester of the second year of the Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business, in Barcelona, I decided that I wanted to stay a little bit more time and have the opportunity of working in an international environment.

So, I started to apply for internships in this city. After looking for some weeks, I saw an announcement from this company looking for an intern for the Marketing department and according to the company's requirements they were looking for a Marketing, International Business or Communication student who had advance knowledge of English. Since I studied Communication in bachelor's degree and doing masters in Intercultural Studies for Business, I thought my profile was matching the vacancy and I decided to apply.

After some days, they contacted me and I stayed with the position. It was mainly to do the following tasks: writing blog entries to promote the company's services, participating in different online marketing activities, looking for potential clients, getting familiar and practices with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and create content to promote the company.

History of the company

Dpointgroup is a company launched by Daniel Bukin, entrepreneur originated in Argentina. It was created in 2002. At first, the company focused mainly on events, proposing and organizing events to different b2b companies. Later on, Dpointgroup began to grow. Therefore, they developed new activities such as the online selling of inflatable products. With Mr. Bukin's experience in search engine optimization (SEO), web design and web creation along with photo and video editing, he became an expert in those fields which help the company sell different inflatable products via web marketing. It was a big business opportunity to the company due to the large demand of events and inflatable products in Spain.

After two years, the success of the company was imperative that they organized and arranged remarkable events for companies like Honda, Axe and Mida. After four years of creation, Dpointgroup began to improve the business by producing inflatables. They offer different inflatable products like toboggans, castles, giant cinema screens and the like. The company was based in Barcelona.

Dpointgroup is selling customized and standard product to different customer base as well as renting inflatable products only in Spain. Online Marketing is how the company sell their products and it is the way to promote their products and services. They have various website with different languages to offer to different countries.

Important events since the creation of Dpointgroup

2002: Creation of the company by Daniel Bukin. The first activity was the event marketing

2003: Development of the original website Dpointgroup.com.

2004: Events production in Dubai, Argentina. More than a thousand clients, mainly in Spain and especially Cataluña.

2005: Development of the activity with the inflatable advertising product market. Creation of dpinflables.com

2007: Recession in the event and inflatable product markets in Spain due to the financial crisis. Development of new selling segment in France.

2008: Recruitment and formation of the first trainee among the company to sustain the development.

2009: Recruitment of various trainee from different countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Holland) with the goal to expend the company in Europe.

2010: Development of new services related to the use of internet such as online recruitment, Web creation, Search Engine Optimisation, Video and Photo Edition, courses about the use of different tools (E.g.: Google ® Ad words, Adobe pack, Blogging.

2011: More than 50 trainees. Along with the intensification of internet use for companies, Dpointgroup intend to develop its services to company (Web creation, SEO, Design creation, Domain name management) along with its long commercial expertise and skilled trainee in these different fields. Development of the website “Coursesonline.me”.

2014: Extending its activities with mobile application software development. 6
Dpointgroup

2015 to 2020: Along with the intensification of internet use for companies, Dpointgroup intend to develop its services to company (Web creation, SEO, Design creation, Domain name management) along with its long commercial expertise and skilled trainee in these different fields.

Annual participation in the Mobile Word Congress MWC-Barcelona.

Investment in Real Estate business with a great profitability through successfully closed deals per year. (New partnerships with properties owners and multiple sales).

Real Estate Development and Investment (Purchase and Construction of 3 properties in Barcelona.

Work structure

Figure 1: Structure of the company

Source: own elaboration



Dpointgroup's departments division:

Event department: The event promotion is the initial activity of the company. With this activity, Dpointgroup rapidly developed until 2004 and the Dpointgroup web site is mainly dedicated to this service. This activity is currently one of the principal sources of profit for the company and cannot be done for clients out of the Barcelona region, as the service provider we are putting in contact with companies are located here.

Rental of rooms department: Along with Dpointgroup's rental expertise, they propose the rent of rooms for events film, exhibitions, indoor teambuilding, etc. Inflatable advertising and entertaining products. The third activity of Dpointgroup, launched in 2005.

Manufactory: Dpointgroup's manufactory, located within 1 hour from Barcelona, is producing various inflatable products. Customers can customize the product to their needs.

Dpointgroup's objectives

Dpointgroup's core business is providing b2b services and solutions. They supply different business solutions: Online marketing/SEO, advertising giant products and services for events, recruitment and training, website and multimedia creation. Their slogan is: "we aim to the highest point". Dpointgroup's mission is to give their customers a one stop shop experience in online marketing and communication solutions, resourcing and education in order to satisfy all needs. Their vision is to become the leaders in service packages of advertising, marketing, business solutions and related products.

Dpointgroup products and services

Dpointgroup has a large range of inflatable products from the advertising items to the inflatable attractions for events and shows. **Merchandising** is associated to marketing that aims to **increase the profitability of the business, through point of purchase**. It is the commercial application that presents or displays the product or service in the best possible way to the end user. Many products are available: arches, tents, cans, bottles, inflatable screens, static cold air balloons, sky dancers, advertising mascots, helium zeppelins, etc.)

Besides, aerial advertising is an innovative trend that is more and more used. Actually, this kind of communication is very eye-catching and efficient by using giant inflatable structures with the logos or brands printed on so that many people can see it.

Figure 2: Example of inflatable helium

Source: Dpointgroup



Figure 3: Advertising helium Samsung

Source: Dpoingroup



The inflatable castles, toboggans and attractions are very trendy and there is a large market share for them in Spain and above all in France (most of the buyers of these attractions are in France and mainly they are carnival organizers or fun fair owners).

Figure 4: Inflatable castle

Source: Dpoingroup



Also, the inflatable screens are dedicated to companies that want to promote their products or services during inaugurations, sport events, carnival, forums, or concerts.

The Dpointgroup products are easy to assemble, to transport and the company has a large stock and all their products have a two-years-guarantee. The after sales services are also included in the prices.

Web development

This activity concerns the creation of specific website for companies.

The web creation also includes the creation and incrustation of webpage in facebook, and can come with a package of other services.

Domaining

Domaining is the act of developing different domain names and trade with them after. One of the strategies Dpointgroup intend to follow is the creation of website with this domain name, then the promotion of its name and a google add word campaign to increase its position in search engines (SEO).

Dpointgroup owns, currently, 31 websites, 48 domain names, around 20 blogs, and around 10,000 clients contact detail in its database (includes marketing agencies, communication, advertising, events, travel agencies, individuals, corporations, clubs, hotels, restaurants, town halls, schools, TV producers, companies, artists).

Non-exhaustive list of our current domain names:

Social media

As Dpointgroup is working with a team of 20 people, we are able to propose products and services promotion via websites, blogs, Facebook, twitter and more social media ads on websites, mailing, physical meetings and promotion in public signs.

Dpointgroup also provides different services in many fields of communication such as websites, blogs, professionals facebook pages and accounts creation; video and photo edition and publishing; visual designing (flyers, posters, web pages); search engine optimisation; professional translation, and so on.

Market studies

Thus, Dpointgroup developed a great capacity for evaluating unknown markets and thanks to the young and multicultural workforce, they offer the service of market analysis for companies in several countries and several languages.

Figure 5: Some brands which Dpointgroup collaborates

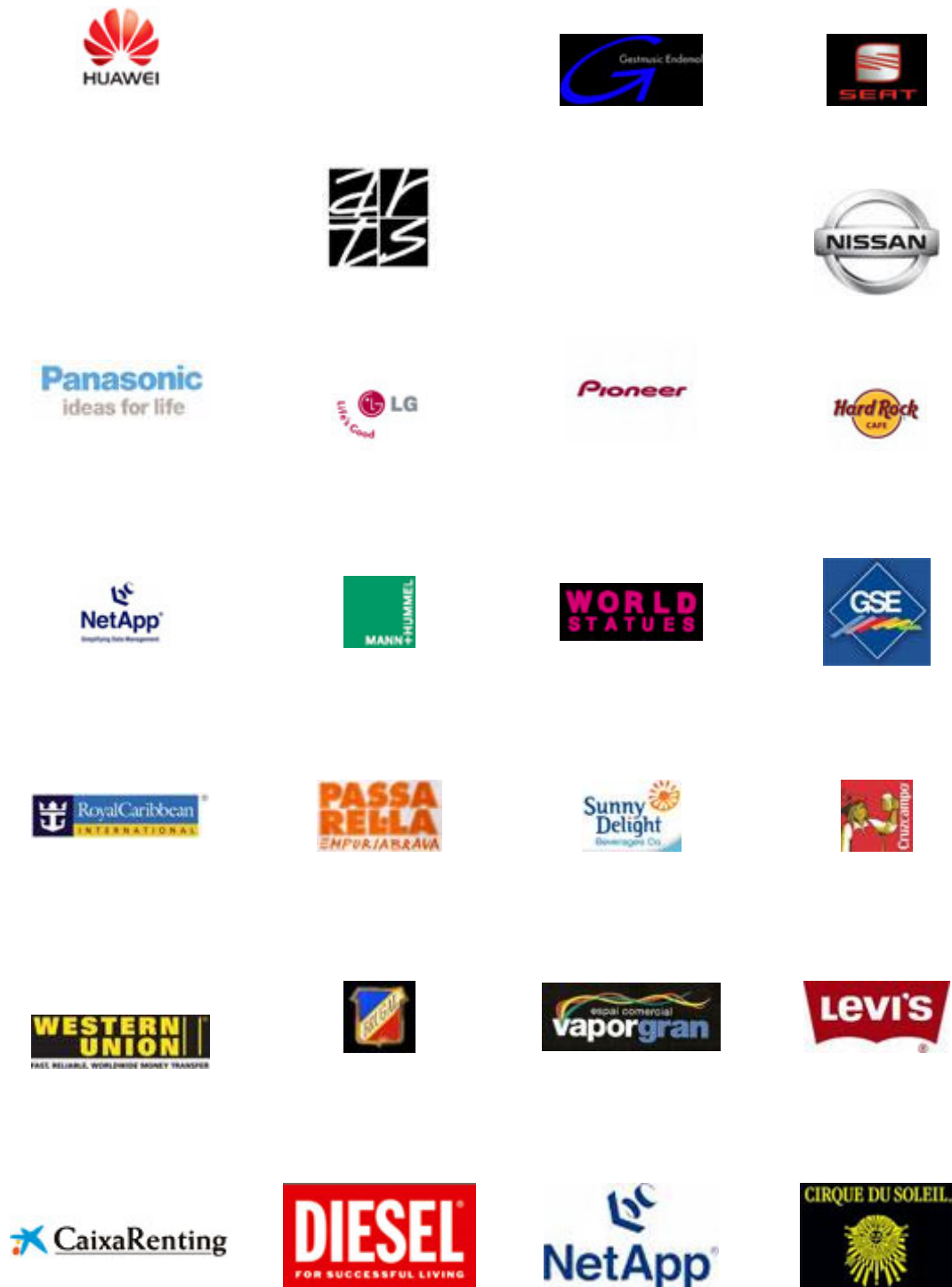
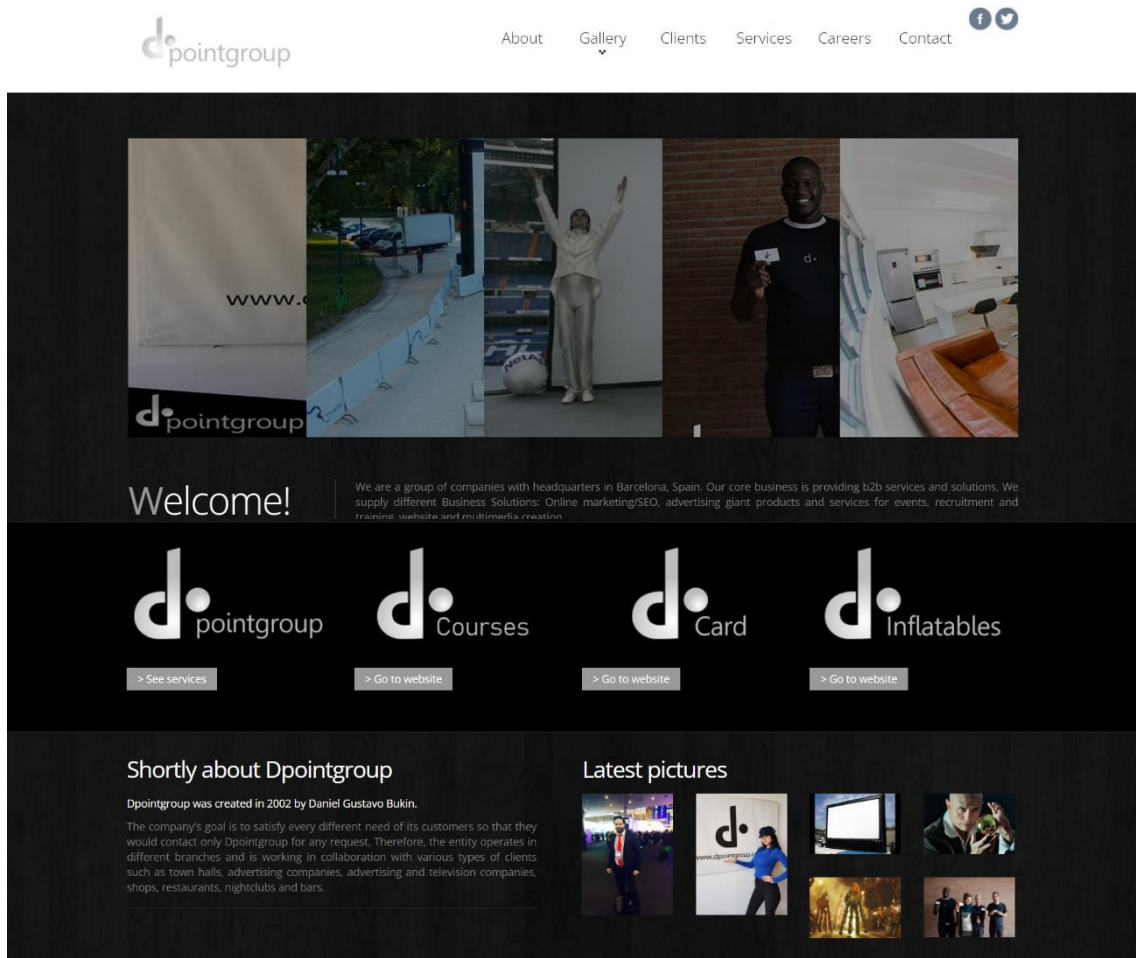


Figure 6: Dpointgroup Website



Source: <http://www.dpointgroup.com/>

CHAPTER VI—THE INTERNSHIP

Attending the second year of the Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business, I have decided to attend Erasmus+ Programme, in Barcelona, where I did studies in Universitat Àutoma de Barcelona, in the first semester and an internship in a Spanish company in the second one. This way, I think it is important to give some notions about this so famous concept, to introduce this chapter.

According to Sarmiento, the Erasmus Programme is introduced as being one strong example of Interculturalism in the 21st century for inciting and making numerous students and school staff visit other countries and experience other cultures during a given time, every year. (Clara Sarmiento, 2015)

As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, access to education is proving, more than ever, to be essential to ensuring a swift recovery, while promoting equal opportunities for all. As part of this recovery process, the Erasmus+ programme takes its inclusive dimension to a new horizon by supporting opportunities for personal, socio-educational and professional development of people in Europe and beyond, with the aim of leaving no-one behind.

As an intern in Dpointgroup, the main tasks developed were creating blogs in wordpress to promote the company, doing marketing campaigns for events, advertising in social networks, working with SEO (Search Engine Optimization), editing videos in Adobe Premiere with information about the company and logotypes/flyers to send to clients and publish in Dpointgroup's social media, using Adobe Photoshop. Also, I had to try to build client relationship. The internship was made of many tasks that were given and explained to me step by step. My position was one of a web-marketing assistants. First of all, I was following the workers in this department to learn from them and being able to reproduce their tasks. It was explained to everything about what the company wanted with marketing online, its strategies and objectives. Our main tools used were google adwords, wordpress and social media in order to increase the promotion of the services. In the end, advertising and publicity is the main key to attract possible clients and connections.

After that, my work was focused on built traffic and look for potential sales and clients and collaborating with foreign counterparts. I have learnt the office pratices and the standard operating procedures. During this time, I also took part on finding marketing agencies, events agencies, advertising companies that could possibly work with us and be

potential clients. Of course, during a pandemic, this kind of tasks were not always easy or successful and I had to send a lot of emails, make a lot of calls that were not answered...and so on. The task I enjoyed the most was creating content to promote the company about all the services provided.

The reception from the company was incredible. I must confess, that I was a bit scared because of starting to work in a completely different environment from what I was used to and, in a place, where I didn't know anyone from a lot of different countries. However, since the moment I entered in the office that all these feelings disappeared. The masters in Intercultural Studies for Business was a massive key for the success of my internship. All the tools, I had been learning, as: the importance of the concentration of different cultures in the same workplace, the basis we need to create and to rule a business, the economical side of a company...

The CEO was always very attentive and kind. I really felt very welcome for everyone. The other interns and workers were always helping me and clarifying my doubts when I needed so.

Facing an internship in an international company in a pandemic moment, was not an easy task. There were a lot of obstacles and "rocks" in the way. Of course, the office environment was fundamental to not make me forget what really matters: learn and develop my skills.

In this company, is experienced a real team spirit which is, in my opinion, a crucial point. If the workers are happy, they will do a better job.

Objectives:

The internship that took place in the Spanish company Dpointgroup between 1st march and 31st July had as main objective to be the final part of the Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business. Besides that, as an intern in this company in the Marketing department, I wanted to develop my skills in this area, grow as a professional, and as well be able to work in a foreign country and in another language that is not my mother tongue.

Personal overview

Professional outcomes

Concluding the internship, it was possible to make a reflection about how this experience made me learn and develop my skills.

I could understand how this type of company works and how it is to work in an international environment since everyone there is from different places.

About the skills developed, I learned how to promote services, how marketing works and how it connects with social media tools. Also, understand how to work with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) in order to optimize our content and to create good content for social media of the company. As websites are an order qualifier nowadays, ranking on search engine is the new aspect to optimize in order to have a productive website. The methods to help a website being on the top of Google are summarized in the acronym SEO.

Also, I acquired awareness on the importance and beneficial role of cross-cultural connections.

Social outcomes

The teamwork was incredible. Everyone was able to help each other which made me feel comfortable, since I was working in another country and in another language. Clearly, my English and Spanish improved way more as well as my communication and culture exchange, which was, for me, gratefully. Indeed, I specially developed my communication skills by distance, using different ways of changing files and working on a project.

Critics and recommendations

Despite of attending, this internship during a pandemic, I could have not learnt more and feel more realized about my choice. I feel like I have grown, I have been autonomous and facing difficulties easily.

CONCLUSION

The present report regards to the internship done in the Spanish company, Dpointgroup, in Barcelona. This work has as main purpose to be the final part of the Masters in Intercultural Studies for Business.

However, other objectives were taken into consideration as: the development of personal and professional skills, acquisition of language competences and interact and work in an international environment.

Doing this internship and report made me realize that companies need to establish their position in the market (national and international) using a lot of techniques.

Along this project, I present the relationship between the time spent in Dpointgroup with the concepts of culture and intercultural communication and how these are important for a workplace.

Culture is present in many ways in our lives. Since our beliefs, actions, and behaviors. It is also related to a lot of areas and subjects. It is necessary to learn how to be able to work and grow in an international environment, dealing with people from over the world.

By having different cultures and nationalities in the same workplace, companies only have advantages. This provides several different solutions and great ideas that can revolutionize and contribute for the growth of the company. This way, by embracing cultural diversity in the workplace, organization can create and enhance trust with specific target markets. They can demonstrate an understanding of the cultural world and instill loyalty. This can make product, service, or office rollouts in new regions or countries run smoother and be more successful. However, this only can happen if respect for every culture and different nationality exists. Product and service development also benefits from multicultural input.

The key to a successful intercultural workplace is: inclusivity. All workers need to feel like they belong in the work environment and that they are valued.

This was, without thought, the first experience that really make me adapt, grow, and learn as never before. Getting out of my comfort zone, dealing with different tasks, different nationalities and working in this office, really made me to grow.

All the people in the office were amazing and thought me so much. Everyone was helping each other, what makes me feel like at home. The tasks I developed in the marketing department really made me improving my skills and apply the knowledge I have learnt before.

With this research, I could conclude, that culture and intercultural communication are a major part of a good international environment. Learning from each other cultures, learning how to respect people from other countries and develop language skills are some of the gifts of working in a place like this. Also, I have learnt more how marketing is such a complex concept. In my opinion, is when you practice, that you really learn and this is how I feel about this research.

In the end, I am really proud of what I could achieved in this company and in this country.

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