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**5115 - INTERVIEW 111019**

**So just for the tape, could you confirm that you're happy for me to record this interview?**

Yes, I am.

**Great, thank you. So why don’t we go back almost to a couple of years ago, to your second year, and tell me a bit about your placement search, who you applied for and the process that took you to your placement company please?**

Sure, so I started relatively early, around October and started really getting into it in November, and I was looking at the top of Rate My Placement, trying to look at the best companies, the biggest companies, the most interesting roles, and I applied for Warner Bros, which is one of my top ones, if not my top one, and that was the first one I properly applied for. I applied for Business Continuity which is something that I knew nothing about, but something that sounded really interesting and wanted to have a really interesting role for a really big company in the middle of London, because that's what was advised for me, to work in a big company in London. So yeah, I really wanted Warner Bros, that was my number one, and I sent my CV off, tried to put as much effort and detail into my CV as possible and was invited for assessment centre in January.

**Excellent.**

It was the first one that I got accepted for – I got accepted for a few others afterwards; I was in the process of other companies like Microsoft and IBM, but after the assessment centre in January they offered it to me. I was really surprised and really happy and I was just so happy to accept, and that was it. Yeah.

**Wonderful. So what happened at the assessment centre? What did you have to do? Did you meet your Line Manager?**

Yeah, so it was a team of three, so it would be an intern, a Manager and a Director and the Managing Director were there watching and the previous intern. Did some prioritising email tasks, we did a task on that, because that’s really important – multi-tasking and prioritisation, different risks that come into our mailbox each day. There was an excel task where we had to … we were in groups of two to see how we could work together as a team and who would take over. How to manipulate raw data in a word document and convert it into excel, in a really clean way, that could be imported into a database. So that was the morning. The ice breaker – prioritising emails and excel manipulation with formulas and that sort of thing. And then everyone had lunch and then the team went away to discuss who to bring back for the afternoon and so it was cut down from 12 to four. At 1 o’clock my name was called out to stay and I was really surprised because it’s really difficult to stand out in that sort of environment, and to be the top four out of 12 in those sort of tasks. Yeah, I was really excited and quite surprised but I just tried to be as calm as possible and have a conversation with them in my interview. I think I was the last one to be interviewed, I had to wait a couple of hours because they had like 45mins to an hour interviews for the four of us, and so I was just kind of preparing myself, trying to calm down. Spoke to my dad – he's always got a lot to say! [Laughter] And so yeah, I went in there and just had a really good conversation with them; I just tried to be as personable as possible and they were asking me about my personal life, about football, and that sort of thing, and why I wanted to work for Warner Bros, and work in London, particularly. I just had a really good conversation with them for 45 minutes and I positioned myself differently to the other people – I knew the other three people that had taken interviews, and I knew what they were like – I wanted to try and be different from them and there was like a guy that thought he was amazing and I knew he’d come across as quite arrogant in the interview, so I tried to avoid that. There was a girl that knew a lot about the subject area, but was quite shy and didn’t really talk much and there was a girl that was really in your face, really bright and bubbly and I knew that I could try and position myself as someone that will work hard, that will get on with lots of people and work will as a team with them, so I just tried to get on with them as well as possible in the interview and just tried to have a discussion/conversation with them.

**Excellent. It obviously worked! So how long did you have to wait until you found out you'd got the role?**

It was the next day.

**Wonderful.**

So I went back to Bournemouth that night and had a few drinks and they called me back in the morning, I think the next day, around 11 o’clock. And I thought I didn’t get it because they called me up and said, can we have some feedback for the day! And I said, yeah, it’s a really good experience, I really enjoyed it and it was good for the future, and then they offered it to me. That was great.

**Yay! Exciting moment! So you then, I guess, stopped applying – did you go to any other assessment centres?**

No, I just stopped all the other ones.

**Okay.**

They sort of requested that. They requested that this is a sort of formal, although verbal, agreement and they would send the contract off soon to get it formalised.

**Wonderful. So fast forward to your first week on placement… Sorry, did you have any contact with them in-between coming up to your first week, and also what happened on your first week?**

So I was talking to the intern in the job… as soon as I got the role, I was talking to them on Facebook, just asking them questions and that sort of thing – where to live, what was the role about, and I did that for my intern who took over from me. Yeah, that was the only – I didn’t have any contact with the other two members of the team. First week, if I can remember, I think it was a bit of a blur. Oh, I went in for a day in May, and just met the team and the previous intern showed me around and showed me what he was doing every day, so that was good to get my context. First week was a bit of a blur, meeting so many people, I didn’t do much work, just meeting lots of people, having lots of meetings and that sort of thing.

**And did you have a sort of structured induction with other interns or was it just within the team?**

So my previous intern had me for the week and just showed me everything that he did day to day, all the different tasks and so I was just with him for that week. And they’ve got a good intern program at Warner Bros, and there was lots of training – first week I think there was a bit of training – and every month there was gatherings and meetings and workshops with the interns, to see how we were getting on. Training and learning and development – there's a good learning and development program where they would offer sessions.

**Excellent, that’s good. How was the current intern at the time, when they did their handover – how do you think they felt about the company and the job role?**

He was quite enthusiastic about the job, but he definitely downplayed the amount of work that I had to do. He said you don’t always work until the end – if you get your stuff done you can go by 4, but that certainly wasn’t the case. He was a very happy-go-lucky Scottish, enthusiastic, man. He was very nice. He showed me everything that I had to do, so not really any complaints from that side.

**Did you meet any … so I guess you met your Manager, did you meet any other people within the department or any more senior people?**

So there's a Manager and a Director in England and then the rest of the team are in California. There's another Director and another Manager and then an SVP and a VP in America. So really we don’t have too much scope to do our thing, sort of decided in weekly meetings, so in that sense there's not too much flexibility there. Didn’t meet anyone in … no, sorry, that's not true. The SVP from America was there in my first week. So we went out for dinner, **[00:10:12]** is very nice, very knowledgeable, very IT-centred. Yeah, she was very nice.

**So at the end of your first week, how were you feeling about the organisation and the job role?**

Very enthusiastic. A bit apprehensive about my jobs because some of it is completely foreign – working with a new database and a new system; we had an emergency notification system, which I was worried I was going to mess up and send a notification to everyone in the company. There was a risk management system which I thought I was going to delete all the vendors for. So I just didn’t want to do anything wrong, but I was excited to … it was still fresh, living in London was exciting, I was living with other interns and so I was feeling quite optimistic about it.

**Excellent. So tell me a little bit about your job roles? What were you doing on a day to day basis?**

So I was in charge of the shared mailbox for Business Continuity. So everything that comes through there went to me and there was no-one else that looked at it; so it was all on me. Issues to do with the notification system, any sort of issues that come into there you have to upload to the system and databases – queries, questions, that sort of thing. So I'd check that in the morning and try and reply as soon as I can. And then like editing, maintaining and creating new plans for all of the different locations throughout the world and Warner Bros acquired new companies all the time, so I had to make new plans, for example, there were two new companies in Brighton and it was my job personally to make new disaster management plans for those two companies. So yeah, working on a system that makes plans, updating and maintaining the notification system, making sure that people **[00:12:32]** and all the data is correct. We receive cast and crew lists from **[00:12:37]** California and I have to do what I did in the assessment centre and turn this raw data into an excel spreadsheet and upload it into the system. Meetings with health and safety, data protection, that sort of thing, making sure everyone is working on the same side, trying to make everything as prepared as possible.

**That sounds like quite a lot!**

Yeah, we had something called **[Rag bags? 00:13:07]** which are evacuation bags that I had to maintain and order things for and order merchandise to give out to people. Things like that. Organise first aid sessions. Lots of things. It was so varied and that's why I found it interesting. Some people do the same thing every day, but there was so many different aspects of the role…

**And I was going to ask you what you enjoyed most about it, because I guess the varied nature is one thing, is there anything else?**

About the job role?

**Yeah.**

Lots of independence I think because most of my job roles no one else knew how to do, like the Director and Manager knew how to do it. So it was all on how my previous intern trained me and how I could learn my role because lots of the technical things, my team couldn't do. Like for example, the cast and crew lists from America, the Manager and Director didn’t know how to do that at all, so that was all on me, making sure that everyone was in the system. Working with other departments, other interns, I think that’s the best thing about being an intern at Warner Bros is all of the interns there, so that made it easier as well.

**Do you feel that you had the opportunity – it sounds as if you had control over your work tasks, so you could decide daily what you did, is that fair?**

Yeah, that's fair. I kept on top of it all. I made to do lists every day to try and get things done. It was always a bit difficult because my Manager had already preconceived ideas about what needed to be done and when, but wouldn’t tell me what it was and when it was to be done for. So that was kind of difficult.

**Ah, so what sort of – can you give an example?**

Sure. She set me a task to do – create a orb chart for the Brighton team but then, she already had an idea of the perfect orb chart and would just say, you know how to do it, go and do it. I'd go and do it and she’d say, no this isn't right, this isn't what I had in mind, but wouldn’t tell me what was in her mind, and she’d let me do it again and then come back to me – and it was just like that all the time. She always wanted me to work it out on my own but then I couldn't work it out on my own because it was in her head exactly what she wanted and so that was a constant battle throughout the year with documents and the way things needed to be done. And my intern warned me about that – the previous intern said that she might come back five or ten times and say this isn't right, do it again, but wouldn’t tell me how to do it right.

**So how did that make you feel?**

Well, it just meant that I couldn't be creative because anything I did, she would say, no, this isn't how I wanted it, go and do it again. It made me feel quite scared to put my own stamp on things, things had to be done a certain way, and a feeling that I was never right, if that makes sense.

**Yeah, that absolutely makes sense. I was going to ask you if you had the opportunity to put your own stamp on things – was there anything that you could do that to or was it quite closely monitored?**

Yeah, I tried to be creative throughout the year as much as I could because that’s one of my strengths. I made posters to organise first aid sessions and that sort of thing. I tried hard, I tried hard, but there is a certain sort of branding within the team that you have to be very … you have to strictly abide to and obviously certain ideas that the Manager had kind of limits that.

**Yeah, I can understand that. Did the job change very much over time?**

Not particularly in the job roles, it changed because the Manager of the team, the man, not my Manager – that was the Director which is a weird dynamic – but the Manager left, the man left in February, and wasn’t replaced until May, and so it really did change. I had a lot more work when it was just me and the Director. That was quite intense and also the Director was always in America or across Europe, and so it was me on my own quite a lot of the time, and also in the film studios, up there once or twice a week in Watford, and so it was a very independent in the New Year, I was on my own a lot with no one really to go to if I had any questions or if I didn’t know how to do things. And so, that's the way it changed.

**Sometimes in those positions, that can make you feel more confident, more independent, but other times it can also be more challenging – how was it for you?**

Yeah, it was more challenging, particularly when I'm on my own and my Director’s in a different place asks me to do things; she wasn’t always clear how to do things on email but sometimes the emails don’t make sense, typing really quickly and I've just got no idea what to do because I can't make sense of the email and that sort of thing. I was always quite time-pressured because she’d want things now, now, now. So yeah, just always felt a bit on edge, if I'm honest.

**Yeah, I think I can understand that. Did that impact on how you felt about the company at all?**

Not on the company, because lots of people in my area were very nice and all the other interns around me and their managers, they seemed to get on really well. All the other people at Warner Bros, I got on with really well, and so it didn’t affect Warner Bros at all. I knew lots of other interns that were having a really fantastic time and were doing really great work, so no, not on Warner Bros as a whole. My team was unique because it’s only three people – whereas most other interns had teams of 10, teams of 20, that sort of thing.

**Makes it a different experience. It sounds as though, from that experience, you will have developed lots, or improved lots of skills and competencies, is there anything in particular you think you’ve developed?**

For sure, definitely a fantastic learning experience throughout the year. Really time management and organisation – I had to come in at nine and I'd have to prioritise my tasks today and really work my way through systematically throughout the day, so that really has improved. I think my ability to converse with senior managers and people above the intern rank has improved greatly as well – I had to go and talk to Head of Health and Safety, Security – security is a good example, we had to talk to security quite a lot and it’s a different way of communicating with them. for example, data protection, you'd talk to them in a different way and that sort of, the different ways of communicating is something that I've developed as well.

**Excellent. What about your confidence – do you think that has developed or has it been challenged by the experience?**

I think it was challenged. I think I went into it really confidently; I was certainly confident in the assessment centre, I was confident at the beginning, but then the confidence sort of dipped, I guess. I felt as though I didn’t have any say, I was on my own with the Director and felt like I lacked a bit of independence even though I was mostly on my own most of the time. So yeah, I would say it did, my confidence did take a bit of a hit throughout the year. Yeah, if I'm being honest.

**Yeah, I can understand that. I think that makes sense. So you got to work with your Director and you got to work with some other quite senior people, what was their attitude towards the company?**

I think there were so many different personalities and vibrant personalities as well. My Director was very rulebook focused, everything had to abide by the rules, very strict, you came in at nine and you left at six and there was no exceptions really. Whereas other Managers for example, Head of Procurement sat behind me, and he was so enthusiastic, so nice, and the interns love him, it was a completely different environment even though he was only sat two desks away. Yeah, I think most of the time, the sort of Managers and Directors, they were really approachable and really enthusiastic, really nice and really helpful, bar a few. There were a couple in finance that you couldn't talk to.

**And do you think as a company, Warner Bros values interns?**

Yes. That’s definitely something I could say.

**How did they show how they valued you? did they have any, I don’t know, ‘intern of the month’, or ‘employer of the month’ type things?**

No, they didn’t do intern of the month or anything like that but there was a learning and development program throughout the year, something called ‘Lunch and Learns’ where they would buy you lunch and you'd sit in a room and Managers would come and talk to you about their life experience and job experience, that sort of thing. There were sessions on like, Myers Briggs, all these sort of sessions that helped us develop as in terms of people, and it was led by Head of Recruitment who was lovely, so enthusiastic, lovely interns and yeah, really enjoyed that sort as aspect of it. I think other interns really felt value in their roles, they were given a lot of responsibility. Some of my housemates had so much responsibility we were walking round Asda and my friend said, ‘oh I designed the DVD cover’. My other housemate, we were on the tube and there was an advert on the tube, and he was like, that's my quote up there, wasn’t quite happy with that one, didn’t like that one, for a brand new game, and it was his slogan and his advert. So in that sense they really do give, to some areas, quite a lot of responsibility.

**Excellent. Do you think the environment encouraged excellence? Do you think it had that sort of culture?**

Yes, I think so. The building was in a bit of a transition and so the first seven months we were up on the top floor in the old style, it hadn’t been refurbished for 20 years or something, and the rest of the floors were brand new and a couple of floors in development, and then in April, we moved down into this incredible space, great meeting areas, lovely kitchens and that really improved the sort of environment – it was a lot more productive moving our desks and really nice seats. I think that really did make a difference – the new floors make a huge difference to the learning environment and the working environment. Incredible meeting rooms all through the building. The meeting rooms were incredible. Yeah, I think the culture is quite creative, quite laid back, I'd say. Apart from IT it was quite laid back, which I think they tried to be as creative as possible. So I think as a corporate experience, it’s quite laid back, it’s quite relaxed overall. I think very creative and meditating.

**So what do you feel you made as a contribution? Is there a piece of work or something that you think, ‘I did that’?**

Erm, ooh… Nothing major. I organised first aid sessions which were quite difficult to organise. You have to organise the vendor to come in, pay for them using SAP, advertise it, send out all staff emails, organise them into sessions and book the room and that sort of thing. I designed and ordered merchandise. We bought – how many did we buy? 1000 travel bags and I designed the bags with our logo and everything on them…

**Fantastic!**

…that was a big task. Everyone we meet, we give them a travel bag to organise your cables and that sort of thing, it’s a bit like a washbag but with different compartments for cables. So that was a big job and something I was really stressed about, because again, my Manager was in America and I had to order and ship these bags over and spent a lot of money on the card!

*[Laughter]*

**Yes, it can always be concerning…**

So stressful! What else did I do?

[Pause]

**That's it, you’ve probably written about these things…**

Yeah, nothing… Oh, so I completely revamped the health and safety pages on the intranet. The health and safety page before – this isn't our area, this is something that my manger told me to do, completely out of my remit, different team, but it was terrible, it was horrible, on the intranet, the health and safety pages, and so I designed and re-wrote all of the documents and created the new web page and it’s much better now.

**Excellent. Good. If you could change one thing about your placement, what would it be?**

Erm… Other than the Director?! I think team size. I think it was difficult working in a three and one left halfway through and difficult in that team of three to have our management working in America. Yeah, so that dynamic of being in a completely different time zone eight hours apart was really, really difficult, because they'd ask you to do things in their daytime, which was our night time, and we’d wake up to it and they'd say, do it by the end of the day, and we’d got no contact with them. That sort of thing. But yeah, I also think that our team size, it would have helped if I'd have had another intern. Other teams had two interns and they could work together. In that sense you sort of feel a bit isolated asking questions at the start because you have to ask the Manager or the Director silly questions. It would have helped to have had another intern to bounce off each other and to help with the workload. They had two interns behind me that just worked together all of the time and had a really good yar because they could work together. So maybe have another intern would be good. Being able to make decisions in this country.

**I can understand that, thank you. So as you know my study is about psychological ownership and I wondered what does ownership in the workplace mean to you?**

Ownership of your own work, having independence to really create your best work and something that’s individual to you, I think. Is that, sort of, your sense of ownership as in your own work?

**Yeah, I think so, but I'm quite … I deliberately left that question broad so…**

Well, immediately I think of the dynamic between the Line Manager and the direct report and the ownership of the direct report, as in the intern, and what the intern can do for the Manager. So yes, I sort of see it as two things – the ownership of your own work and ownership of the intern.

**Okay, that's interesting. Do you think you have any ownership over your Line Manager or the team?**

No. I didn’t – I think that my Director had a very clear idea of everything rightly or wrongly – she didn’t change her mind at all, ever. I found that quite difficult. What I struggled with is that you really had to be careful asking a question of how to do something or putting forward an idea, because she decided straight away what her answer would be and so you had to be careful how you worded something. So if you asked if you could do something but asked in the wrong way, she would just say no. So I really had to think how I framed things. She formed ideas very quickly and never changed her mind. So that was very difficult.

**Do you think you could have ownership over your ideas for example, or was it very much her ideas?**

It was very much her ideas, I'd say, and that’s what I found difficult. It was just stubbornness. I think she was very stubborn and didn’t like other people’s ideas, and if something was suggested, she’d say, no, not doing that. So yeah, it was difficult.

**Have you worked anywhere else or seen other people in the company maybe have ownership in their job roles or maybe for the organisation or the team?**

Yeah, so my best friend was sat behind me, he was in procurement and he was very much left alone and had ownership over everything he did and that was as a result of the team culture. It was very much a cohesive environment where everyone was independent and could do what they wanted to do.

**So you think ownership is about independence a little bit?**

Yeah. Ownership of your own job role and your own day to day working. Yeah, owning your job, doing it to the best of your ability and not having someone overpower you.

**Do you think you were able to demonstrate ownership at all? Have you got any examples?**

I think I was given ownership over the health and safety pages…

**That’s what I was thinking…**

Yeah. So yeah, I had to completely… It was honestly terrible. There was just a page on the intranet and it had all of the different health and safety aspects on one page in just big text, and so I had to go through that and make individual documents for first aid, evacuation, other emergencies, forms and legal side of it. I had to do that for all of the offices in London, and I had to investigate each building to make sure that the information was correct, the numbers were correct, the information was correct for evacuation and first aiders and evacuation points and that sort of thing. So yeah, that was very much me.

**And did you enjoy having that opportunity?**

Yes. I enjoyed working with Publisher and creating a really succinct, clear sort of document that was really helpful, in clear sections and making sure that the word page looked as good as possible, but it was difficult because it was WordPress and so you're very limited in what you can do with it, because it was a bit outdated, the intranet. But I tried my best to make it look as clear as possible.

**Excellent. Did you feel ownership for the organisation at all? Did you feel part of something?**

A bit. But not as much as I would like to. I did get on with a lot of people, I'd walk around and have conversations with people but I don’t think I had ownership as much as other interns did or felt. I guess it comes down to the size of team and people didn’t know what we did, and we don’t have a lot of connections with other teams, risk management doesn’t really connect to any other teams apart from data collection, health and safety and security, whereas other departments are really interconnected with each other, and so not as much as I would have liked to.

**How do you think people can develop ownership in the workplace?**

I think you can develop ownership by taking increased responsibility for their own work and try and make it as good as it could possibly be. Working with lots of different departments and building up those relationships. Making it worth something to them and the other people. I'm not too sure.

**Okay. Don’t worry. What do you think are the positives and negatives of feeling ownership?**

Oh, so you can feel a part of something. You can feel like what you are doing is worthwhile, you feel like you're part of a team, gives you increased job satisfaction, makes you want to come to work. Negatives, maybe you don’t see other perspectives, you don’t see other people’s points of view. Yeah.

**Do you think you’ve felt ownership before – so in a part time job, for your uni work, for any hobbies or anything?**

So I worked at Waitrose for three years, didn’t feel any ownership there, felt like we were really restricted what we could do, couldn’t have any drinks during the shift really – if you got caught, you'd be fired! I really didn’t enjoy that. I've had a few projects that I've been working on for a client in Europe, so I've had a few projects where they'd come to me and ask me to locate… [coughing] …they'd ask me to locate bases around Europe and create spreadsheets and create a google map of bases and so I felt ownership of that. That was good, I did that about two years ago. So I felt ownership of that. I worked for Bristol Cats and Dogs Home, sorry, Bristol Animal Rescue Centre now, it’s re-branded, yeah, I felt ownership in that role as well. I felt part of the team, there was only five people and so that was really good.

**So what do you think is the difference in how you felt ownership in some things but not others? What do you think it’s due to?**

I do think it comes down to independence and working on something on your own and taking responsibility for it, having free range to do what you feel is best; to make the best quality of work. I think it’s just different dynamics – Waitrose, the Managers were just watching you all the time, you couldn't do anything; Bristol Animal Rescue Centre, there was a much more cohesive environment, really friendly environment, really friendly, there were dogs running about the place, that was really good; and with Excel projects, felt ownership of that because I felt like I was the only person that could do it and that's why they’ve come to me and so, I felt ownership of that. the only person that would do it for the price, more to the point! [Laughter] Warner Bros, I did feel some ownership but I guess it’s the fact that I couldn't be as creative as I wanted to be. Other interns had different experiences and did fell ownership.

**So what are you hoping to apply for after graduating?**

Erm, this is something I really need to think about. I'm not 100% sure, Warner Bros would be a really good company to work for, not on that team, but that would be a really good place to go back to in procurement and marketing and project management there, that would be a really good place to go. Although I would really like to go back to Bristol, which is where I'm from, and work into a more creative company in project management or marketing in Bristol. That sort of area.

**Okay, wonderful. That’s the end of the questions. Thank you very much.**

*[End of Transcription 00:45:20]*