

**This is an interview with Participant number 16. Just for the tape, could you confirm you’re happy for me to record this please?**

**Participant 16**

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Yes, I’m happy for you to record this.

**Thank you. Can I take you back to about 18 months ago and your placement search, so could you just tell me a little bit about the search and how you ended up at your placement company?**

Yeah, so, I started searching in about October; we had a couple of people coming into lectures, I think, and I was doing the Global Talent program, and IBM came to talk as well, so I'd been through quite a few stages with them. I had got to the final stage with them, had a couple of interviews and done the assessment centres with them. And I had a couple of other final stage interviews. I'd done loads of video interviews and then I found the job that I've got now in about March. My role isn't really a set placement for a placement year, it’s just an internship that just so happened to start in June, so it could be for graduates or it could be for people on placement year. And yeah, they didn’t have an assessment centre, they just had a telephone interview and a face to face interview and a task on the day.

**Okay, and so how did you find out that you'd got the job? Was it on the day or a few weeks later?**

So I think I went there … so on the Tuesday of that week, I had an interview up in London for IBM, and they rang me on that day and told me I hadn’t got it, and then the next morning I came up to Cardiff here, to interview for my job, and they rang me back on the Friday to tell me I'd got it.

**Great, so quite quickly?**

Yeah, really quickly.

**So then moving on to your first week at work, did you have a standard induction or anything like that?**

I've got a team of three, and then my Manager as well on top of that, and all of them are quite senior in their roles, so they were all kind of training me on different aspects; one of them was recruitment, one of them is HR, business partner, and the other one is an advisor, so she is doing **[00:03:11]**. She was on holiday that week that I joined so I kind of hand a bit of an induction with each of them, sort of two or three days, and then gradually over the few months I'd been learning more and more.

**Okay. And so what were your feelings about the company and the job role after the first week or so?**

Good. We were in quite a small office. It’s a massive open plan building and we are in a little office at the side, and I quite like the fact that all of the HR team are in that office, so I hear everything that goes on. So **[00:03:52]** completely shocked about the type of stuff that I was hearing just because I was having exposure to so much stuff, even if I wasn’t involved. I think on my third day, I was taking notes at a grievance investigation, so that was quite daunting, but exciting. So I was doing exciting stuff from the beginning.

**Yeah, talk about throwing you in at the deep end.**

Yeah.

**Interesting. Did you meet any of the senior people in the company?**

Yeah, so where I sit in the office is right next to where the directors all sit, so I think five or six directors, they all sit basically next to me, so I was listening to what they were talking about. And also, because our office is completely open plan, the senior plan are basically in the middle of it anyway, so there's not much segregation.

**Interesting. And so can you tell me a little bit about your job role please?**

Yeah, so I'm an HR intern at XXX Finance. There are quite a few different aspects to it, so I do recruitment, so at the moment I have managed two job roles successfully, so it’s writing the adverts, getting approvals to do that from senior directors, people like that. Writing the adverts, telephone screening interviewing, and then interviewing with the managers, meetings with managers, so that’s the recruitment side. And then using lots of different job boards and stuff, end systems. And then the HR general side, doing things like probation meetings, inductions, taking minutes at grievances, things like that and then reporting, doing like gender pay reporting for the company. Last week one of the directors was on holiday when they were doing compensation planning, so I had to do all of that for probably, about 60 of his staff.

**Wow!**

So putting that in the system. There's lots of different parts to it.

**Sounds really interesting, but quite varied.**

Yeah, definitely.

**And has the role changed over time?**

Yes. They’ve definitely given me more responsibility. so when I started, I was doing … so for instance I would be sourcing for a candidate in the recruitment process, but I wouldn’t necessarily be doing the screening telephone calls, and now I'm doing that end to end. They are kind of letting me do stuff by myself so I had a new starter last week with a problem, and I took control of that and was in a meeting by myself with this lady, which they probably wouldn’t have trusted me to do. So yeah, the more trust and the longer I have been there, the more I understand what's going on.

**Yeah.**

But they did try to throw me in the deep end at the beginning as well; yeah.

**You sound quite lucky to have that amount of work, yeah, which his good. Have you had the opportunity to adapt the job role, improve processes or anything like that?**

Yes, so, we have meetings every two weeks to discuss things that might like to change; I can't think of a specific example… something that’s quite basic, so I send out reference requests and I was getting loads of emails back from university lecturers who had been put as a reference, and we only have one standard employment reference; they were kind of saying we hadn’t really employed this person, can't relate it to…

**Yeah, absolutely.**

…so made a new reference thing for lecturers. Its only something really small, I can't think of anything else off the top of my head right now.

**Don’t worry, that's absolutely brilliant. And I can emphasize with that one to be honest. How much control do you feel like you have over you job role on a day to day basis?**

I think as much as I can have. So, in HR it’s quite … things happen unexpectedly anyway, so, in that respect you can't have much control over people’s actions and how they're going to react to things that you’ve said or letters they’ve sent etc, but workload, my team will happily take on stuff or I can take on more. We have quite a good relationship with one of the directors, and the senior people, there's often things coming in where you have to do it within an hour, very last-minute stuff, but otherwise I think I've got control over…

**Yeah, so you can decide what you do, when, generally?**

Yeah, exactly. I prioritise my own stuff really.

**Excellent. And now you’ve been at the company for a while, has your view of the company changed at all?**

Yeah, so I hadn’t really heard of XXX Finance, didn’t really realise that car companies would have a finance arm, didn’t necessarily like XXX cars but now I see all the work that goes in behind the scenes, I'm a bit more open to it. Yeah, definitely changed. I like the people who I work with, I respect all of the people who are higher up in the business as well, so, yeah, definitely.

**Good, excellent. And this might be a question that your PDAs ask when they come and visit you, but do you feel that you’ve managed to develop or improve on any skills and competencies at all?**

Yeah, definitely. So, definitely a lot more confident talking to people. I've been kind of left to run meetings, something that I was really scared about doing at the beginning. Even just little things like writing emails – on my first few weeks, I was like, oh, can you send me what you’ve sent to them before, so I can have a template, but now I just fire it off, no problem. So communication definitely. **[00:12:02]** so like systems, so for instance, like SAP, I raise purchase orders and stuff for the business, and learning to … one of my main things I wanted to do for my last meeting, was to push back to senior people, I like to agree with people that I think I need to go to push back, so that’s one of my big things that I'm doing at the moment.

**That's quite a tough skill, so learn, that one. That's sort of managing upwards…**

Yeah, exactly.

**And have you had much success so far?**

Yeah, so one of the roles that I've been recruiting for is for quite a difficult Manager. He's quite sexist and patronising, because in my job title, in an intern, but no one else seems to treat me like an intern apart from him, so I've been … so for instance, I have to ring the candidates and tell them that they're not successful, and I like to be able to have feedback and for them to take something positive out of the experience, but he … so yesterday I was trying to get feedback off him for a candidate that I was getting feedback for and he said, no one has ever given me feedback after a job, so, I'm not willing to give any feedback.

**Oh no!**

And I'm kind of pushing him, so that's kind of ongoing at the moment, I've got a difficult Manager to work with, yeah, so…

**Yeah, that’s always a bit challenging when you want to sort of do good practice and someone wants to do it the way they’ve always done it. You mentioned that he's really the only difficult person towards you as an intern, are the other staff happy to treat you as one of the employees?**

Yeah, so I've never felt like an intern, and since then, since that Manager, all of my colleagues have said it’s probably because I'm a girl, and they said it’s nothing personal but everyone else has made me feel so welcome. There's never once been anything to make me feel like that apart from this last week, with him, but otherwise I feel completely settled in.

**Well, that's good, excellent. Do you feel valued by the people you work for?**

Yeah, definitely. I have quite regular one to ones with my Manager, with people I work with, because they are all quiet senior anyway, and yeah, I feel like a valued team member, **[00:15:21]** for a little bit, which made me feel more valued.

**Absolutely, that's always a good sign.**

So yeah, I feel valued.

**Good. What do you think when you leave you'll look back and think, that's what I made a difference with? That was my contribution?**

Erm, I've … so the previous … so they’ve only had one intern before, and he was actually, it wasn’t a very successful internship, so I think I've brought a different perspective. I've given them a student’s perspective on recruitment especially and how to do it differently. I'm trying to set up a mentoring scheme because I did the IBM one and I thought that was really useful, although I didn’t get a job there, I found it really useful. so things like that, just from a different perspective. And also, I'm a lot younger than my team, which shouldn’t make a difference, but it does sometimes with the views, so hopefully, if I can, I'm going to do my dissertation working with this business on flexible working.

**Oh excellent.**

And hopefully I’ll be able to give them some feedback as well, because I know a lot of people in the business.

**That sounds fantastic, really good. Have they given you any projects to work on or anything?**

So we've got projects as a team that we all contribute to. They're all quite confidential…

**Yeah, don’t worry…**

…so I couldn't really say but they're all projects, because we were taken over in 2017 by two different companies who are our parent companies now, we are all implementing their practices, so we've got projects to do with that. So yeah, we are working on projects now, I've got a part to play in all of them. And then I have lots of little projects like I've re-designed the recruitment brochure and stuff like that, re-designed the induction slides, small things like that.

**Oh they're quite big things!**

Yeah, I don’t know.

**You're maybe underestimating what you’re doing.**

Yeah.

**Does the company have any methods to show recognition? You know, sort of Employee of the Month type schemes, anything like that?**

Yeah, we've got Employee of the Month and Team of the Quarter. Sometimes they do spot awards, like of monetary value. That's kind of it, that’s probably one of the things that we are looking at to do a bit more.

**And if you could change anything about your placement, what would that be? If anything?**

I don’t think there's much to be honest. I've really enjoyed it but there's one system that I probably would have like to have been trained a bit more on. I like the fact that I didn’t have an intern before to kind of hand it over, I was thrown in a bit more at the deep end, whereas the person who is after me, probably will have me to hand over so, I don’t think I would have changed anything.

**Brilliant, that’s fantastic. As you know my study is about psychological ownership, and so I just wondered what does ownership in the workplace mean to you?**

Erm… So I'm not sure how to interpret it, but taking responsibility for your work, what you're doing, and then you could also say, feeling like you belong somewhere, whether you feel responsible for your company’s actions, stuff like that.

**Yeah, I think so. Yeah. I deliberately left that question vague to see what people say. [Laughter] So have you got any examples of colleagues or yourself showing ownership in the workplace?**

Err… It depends which way I'm interpreting it. I’ll do it for both. I feel like I'm part of the business, when I first joined, they organised a meal out for me when I arrived…

**That was nice.**

…as a sort of welcome to the team. And then taking responsibility for like company actions or something that I've done, I'm always having to take ownership of my work, my workload, take responsibility for any mistakes that I made, so for example, I gave out an incorrect probation form to someone, it was one that we've replaced a couple of months ago, and it didn’t have an option to extend someone’s probation and so the Manager came back and said, yeah, this person has passed, but they have lots of inconsistent skills, so I went back and said, well, why don’t you extend the person, and he said well, it wasn’t on the form, and I realised I'd given the old form, and he got quite angry. He said, I wasn’t given the option, this person has now been told; I said, look, it’s an honest mistake but we've both got responsibility, so I kind of had to take ownership of my actions.

**Yeah, absolutely. And we do good things in the workplace and occasionally we all make mistakes, it’s human nature, isn't it?**

Exactly.

**At what point during your placement do you think you started to show ownership?**

I think for different processes, different times. So, the more I do, the more… So for instance, for recruitment, now I'm managing something end to end, I need to take ownership of all of that. Whereas, some things that I share with my Manager to do, it’s kind of half and half, so, yeah, I think it depends how much you're kind of in charge of that. But we also, as a team, we all take responsibility for stuff that our department does.

**Absolutely. Somebody mentioned they also take, as well as taking ownership for the job and the for company, they are also taking ownership of their career – would you say that’s true as well for you, or is that not something that’s ever occurred to you?**

Taking ownership of my career? Erm… It’s my responsibility to get where I want to be, so, I had to find this job, I went through a long process with lots of different companies to find it, so, I'm going to have to do that again, and yeah, I don’t think it’s anyone else’s responsibility. I will take that responsibility to find my own career and if I don’t want a career, I won't have one, and I think it’s completely in my hands.

**Yeah, absolutely. What do you think are the positives and negatives of feeling ownership?**

Erm… positives, you feel more in control. The people trust you if you show that ownership, I guess. More proud about what you do. Negatives – what are the negatives? A lot more stress, potentially. Feeling like you can't get there, it’s all your responsibility. Yeah, I think that's kind of it, all I can think of.

**Yeah. I think that's fair enough, absolutely. Do you think you have shown ownership in other places before this job role, so maybe university, hobbies, or a part time job?**

Yeah, I used to be captain of a sports team, I used to play hockey so, took ownership of that, looking after the team, things like getting them the bibs or whatever from somewhere, and then getting into university, definitely working for ma A-Levels, projects at uni, you get involved in however much you want to get involved in or can. You can kind of get as little or as much out of it, out of everything, as you want.

**Absolutely. Yeah, that's very true. So what do you want to do after you graduate?**

Hopefully stay in HR. I don’t think I will be coming back to this business just because it’s quite a small department and I think they are going to continue with interns, which I think is fair enough, because I've had such a good opportunity out of it. Hopefully move to London, and who knows, I don’t particularly want to go on a grad scheme, just because I feel like I've got so much exposure this year that I might be repeating something that I've been doing. And I want to stay as broad as I can in HR, if that’s possible, rather than specialise. That's my plans at the moment.

**Sounds like you’ve thought about it, and yeah, absolutely. So that's all of my questions, so let me just turn off this recording…**

*[End of Transcription 00:27:26]*