

**Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed today. Just for the tape, could you confirm you’re happy for me to record this please?**

**Participant 18**

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Yes, no problem.

**Wonderful. Thank you. So I want to take you back about 18 months to when you were in your second year, and I wondered if you could talk me through the process you went through in finding a placement and ending up at your company?**

Okay. **[00:00:34]** found it particularly difficult to find a placement, because I was originally thinking about doing a placement abroad, particularly in France, but I was told that we can only … there is a law in France that means you can only do a six month placement so that would mean that I would have to find two. But also, I was told that it is highly difficult to find a placement without knowing anyone in the business. So at the end I started applying to ones in London as well, close to my home, because all of my friends were kind of getting assessment days and interviews, and I started to stress out a bit. I applied to one that is probably about 20 minutes away from my house, from where my dad lives, so I just went for it. I said, you know, why not? Didn’t know anything about the company – I think I found it on Indeed, I think it was. I just applied, I sent my CV through, they replied within, I don’t know, probably about a couple of weeks offering me an interview. I went to the interview and they offered me the job a couple of weeks later, so it was very straightforward, no telephone interviews, no assessment days. Which I liked as well, because it was very straightforward, you know, just the interview and that was it.

**And when you had the interview, what did you … can you remember what you found out about the company? How did you feel about the company afterwards?**

I realised how big of a company it actually was when I started to do my research for the interview. I tried to figure out what they actually did as a company, and it was that complex, I couldn’t find a straightforward, yeah, we sell this, we sell that, it was such a big company that I couldn't figure out exactly what they did. So, I kind of got help from my parents to you know, how to prepare for the interviews, because they do interviews as well, so they helped quite a lot. I was just trying to find out what it is exactly they do because Gatwick office do something different to the Heathrow office. So I kind of had to explain what XXX does as a company and without kind of knowing that Gatwick did something different to Madrid or to nice, or to all other offices basically.

**Interesting. Let's move a little bit forward to your first week at work – can you remember that? Did you have a formal induction or was it informal?**

It was **[00:03:40]** – what I would say is that I didn’t meet my Manager for two months.

**Oh, wow!**

She doesn’t come into the office that often because she lives away, I never got a message to say, welcome or anything, so it’s one of her team members that kind of took me under his wing and said, I’ll help with your induction. The first week was very much, you know, we went through all the processes and he was explaining what XXX do, what we do at the Gatwick office, which was really helpful to have that ground knowledge. I didn’t understand anything for the first couple of weeks – I think it was just so much information to take in. And my colleagues did say recently, they said, for the first week you looked absolutely petrified. [Laughter]

**I think that’s quite common with a lot of students actually. It is quite overwhelming…**

I did … on the first day that I came back, I did cry because it was just so overwhelming – not because I had a bad time or anything, because everyone was really friendly, but there was so much stress just the first day going in and not knowing anyone and… I'm fine now, but…

**But yeah, quite a terrifying experience?**

Yeah. And they had such complex systems as well, within the first couple of weeks, they had to show us all the systems, but it’s so much information to take on, that it was just impossible for us to know really what was going on.

**Were there other interns or were you the only one?**

So there's a marketing intern, **[00:05:34]** different team, and I did originally start with another intern so there's normally supposed to be two of us, but he left after about a month, because his placement wasn’t compulsory, so he decided it wasn’t really for him. It wasn’t relevant to what he wanted to do so he left and then they never replaced him.

**Okay.**

So it’s just been me in our team **[00:05:57]** company basically.

**So tell me a little bit about your job role?**

I do loads of different things for the company. My job role is commercial support, so I basically … I'm the support role for all of our account managers. So we have within our company, we have the retail team, business travel, online travel and the consolidators and I'm part of the retail team. So all the requests that come through for the retail team, come through me and I basically am in charge of … I was in charge of raising contracts but I'm not anymore, that's changed. I do all the ordering for our customers, all of the user creations that we have, all of our purchase order that we send out, so basically your customer will sign a contract and they will have a little incentive and that's normally an **[00:07:06]** they get depending on how many bookings they make with us. So all of those POs get sent out for the account managers. I also do a lot of reports – I think there's probably about seven different reports that I run on a monthly basis. I don’t know, what else? I think that's more on a day to day basis but there's always an odd kind of job that gets thrown at me…

**Yes.**

…we have been put on a big project; so we as a company offer web services which is just an application that our customers can use, and we have certified third parties that are with us and we don’t have an exact list of who we are certified with, and who we offer the application to, and so my Manager said it would be a good idea if **[00:08:11]** the project and tried to find out exactly who we offer the services to and who the certified parties are, which is quite a long process, because there's hundreds of them and **[00:08:32]** but this week, I think **[00:08:34]** get the project this week and that’s pretty much on a day to day kind of thing.

**That’s quite a lot. I can imagine that you are quite busy. Do you have the opportunity to structure your day or is it very much dependent on what comes in? Is it a reactive role?**

Yeah, it’s definitely dependent on what comes in and because I use this thing called **[00:09:11]**, which is where the customers contact XXX when they have any kind of issue with their systems basically, and so I'm in charge of that, so I use that on a day to day basis and going through that, depends what comes through there, if there's anything urgent, I have to pick that up obviously.

**And do you like the fact that it’s quite a reactive role? Is that something … because some people love the sort of, unknown and the fact that you don’t know what's going to happen throughout the day, whereas other people would prefer a bit more control over the role?**

I quite like not knowing what I'm going to be doing today. I do also have my jobs, like the reporting, and the audit that I've got to do, so those things I know I have to do throughout the week, but it just depends when I do it, depending on the day, depending on how many requests come through. I do prefer it that way. I know what I'm supposed to do, and you know, I've got to be able to manage my own time.

**Yes, of course. So has the job changed very much over the time that you’ve been there?**

Not really, but we are going through a restructuring of our team, which has happened recently actually, a couple of weeks. So I have a new Manager, I'm going to have a new role and not necessarily have the same jobs as I had before, but that's still uncertain, I still don’t know what they are going to offer, what the job description is going to be.

**So how are you feeling about that?**

I think it will be a lot easier to have a different Manager, because obviously my Manager is obviously really busy, and she has her own team to organise and the interns, whereas I think the next Manager will only have three people in their team and so there will be a lot more structure to it. That’s what my Manager has said that you know, there is going to be more structure to your role, that you are going to know what you are supposed to be doing on a day to day basis. It is quite hard not knowing what is going to happen. **[00:11:43]** obviously everyone likes to know everything, but there's no way of knowing that.

**No and it’s such a factor of working life now that there is change and yeah, it’s something that we all have to get used to. You know, it is that not knowing which is always the hardest.**

Yeah.

**So how have you managed to work with your existing Manager given that you haven’t met her that often, because that sounds quite tricky for somebody who's new to the workforce as well?**

Yeah, it’s quite hard not knowing what it is to have an actual Manager and to be managed, basically. So Matt, who did our induction, he's been my unofficial Manager, so he would be the one who would tell me what I would need to do, he would answer my questions. Amanda would always, so she's my actual Manager, she would always be there if I needed her, but she's not very helpful when it comes to, you know, normal requests, kind of thing. Just as an example, I sent her something – it must have been when Matt was away – I sent her a request and said, how should I deal with this, what would you like me to do, and she just sent a message back saying, wait until Matt comes back from annual leave. So she didn’t really action it, she just said wait. Which isn't helpful when I want to get stuff done. I think a lot of people in our team feel that way about our Manager, that she's not very present, and that she's so far away, but you know, she's still got a team to manage, so she should be more hands on. That is how she does it, I guess.

**Yeah, but with technology these days it’s so easy to keep in touch isn't it, so easy to skype people and things.**

Yeah.

**So have you had the opportunity to change any systems or anything, to put your own stamp on some of the processes?**

Not really. We have a certain way of doing things. I've changed **[00:14:27]** to make it easier for me, but whether that applies to other people, you know, that depends just … like the reports that I have to send out every month, the old interns had a list of the customers that we have to send them to, there was about a hundred of them, and it was just a list, but you also need their identification number to run the report, we need to know who to send it to, so all of that information that they have to go and find every single month, I've kind of added it to an Excel spreadsheet so that it’s a lot easier for me to run.

**That sounds like a really logical thing to do, to make it far easier for you. Excellent.**

I'm quite an organised person as well, so I like to organise things and make sure that the process is easy.

**And talking about organisational skills, do you think there’s any skills that you have improved or developed during your time at the company?**

I did have a list of them, just on the top of my head; I do think my confidence skills have improved a lot. I’ve had to do a few presentations in front of the whole office basically, because we had to do an end of year presentation about our team – basically what we'd achieved and make it all a bit of fun, and nobody wanted to take on that role, so I got delegated that role, which was as good thing, you know, it pushed me out of my comfort zone and really improved that, because that’s like speaking in front of a lot of people, you know? It’s what you really need when you work for a business at times. I think also just being able to speak to someone and ask questions as well, because I don’t like to bother people quite a lot, I think I should just get on with it, but obviously within this role, I've had to ask so many questions at the beginning, just to understand everything. I didn’t really have a choice – I just had to ask questions. That definitely has an impact. I'm trying to think what else… Also, I think I've become a fast learner, whether that’s a skill that I've developed or not, I'm not sure, but it’s something that I've learnt about myself.

**And that's really good for confidence isn't it?**

Yeah, definitely. I've been told by numerous people in the office that, you know, I've managed to pick things up so quickly compared to the other interns that were there in previous years, which is really nice to hear obviously.

**Yes, really nice to hear.**

I still think I need to develop my independence, know my ability to make my own decisions kind of thing. Make decisions for the company, which is quite hard to do sometimes because you know, **[00:18:34]** the power to do that, but, **[00:18:37]** ask my Manager, they’ll say, well, you make that decision, that’s, you know, you don’t need help on that one.

**Yeah, so it’s being able to take that extra responsibility on?**

Yeah.

**Do you feel as an intern, do you feel valued by the company?**

Yeah, definitely. I just think that there's so much work that I get given, that some people have no idea how to do, that it just makes me feel like I'm really important to the company. Which is a really good thing, obviously.

**Yeah, absolutely.**

People coming to me with questions about processes and how to order things, and I think I actually know the answer to this, but people who have been here for years don’t, so that’s really, that I really realise how important I am to the company, or to our team.

**Yeah. That’s a real affirmation isn't it? Does the company have any schemes in place for showing they value employees, so is there a sort of Employer of the Month type scheme – do they do anything like that?**

We have a team huddle that we have every month, where we present various different things, our general Manager presents, and at the end of that, we have an Employee Recognition Award, so **[00:20:30]** in our team that would nominate someone in the company and you know, there's a strict criteria of why they should win this, and have they been respecting **[00:20:44]** and things like that. Yeah, there is… The other intern won it a couple of months ago, so it just proves that they do value the interns.

**Which is really good isn't it?**

Yeah, definitely.

**So as you know my study is about psychological ownership – I just wondered what ownership in the workplace means to you?**

I think it would be very much, instead of saying ‘them’ as a company, saying ‘we’. So we as XXX and the way I would speak and say, this is how we do it. I think that's quite important.

**So feeling part of something?**

Yeah, feeling like I'm part of the company, feeling like I am an employee and not an intern. **[00:21:49]** because I know I'm only going to be here for a year, they still want me to feel like an employee and you know, so that I'm just not kind of, only here for a year so we’re really not that bothered…

**And would you say that you feel ownership towards your job role or the company, or both?**

Yeah, I think so. I definitely feel like this is my job role, you know this is my job, basically. And yeah, I would say that I do feel part of XXX. Sometimes I can feel well, I am leaving soon as well, so it’s not that great, and I'm not going to be here forever when people are talking about things that go beyond July, I'm not going to be here to live it through, but I still feel like I'm going to be here for a while. And they have actually made me want to come back and maybe work for them later on as well.

**Oh fabulous!**

To make me feel like I actually want to come back and work for them.

**When you have to put together your report portfolio at the end of your placement, what do you think you'll feel your main contribution has been?**

I'm not sure. **[00:23:37]** project and that would be my main contribution I think because it’s such a big project and I'd have to see, because they're also checking whether they’ll be billed for our services, so hopefully there will be quite a lot of revenue that I’ll bring from this audit and… which will probably be my biggest contribution, I think.

**Yes, in many ways, to think that they're not sure exactly who they should be chasing for revenue – slightly worrying!**

It is … billing is a very messy part of the business. I was just doing that before, whether we were billing them for something else, another one of our projects. It’s just quite weird to see that they have access and that we are … we give them the system and the services but they're not being billed for it, it just seems… It doesn’t seem right.

**If there was anything you could change about your placement year, what would that be? Or I suppose about the company, in your placement year?**

I definitely think a better Manager who's there more, because it’s our first year in the industry, I feel like I would have needed a bit more structure to begin with. Because obviously I do work from 9-5.30 but I could arrive at 10 o’clock and leave at 5 and she wouldn’t know because she's not here. So you know, I think there is the possibly to abuse that role, and the fact that she's not here, that would definitely need to change. And obviously with the restructuring I'm going to get a new Manager anyway, so hopefully that will change.

**Yes, and that sounds like it will be a better experience for you then?**

Yeah.

**Do you think your colleagues show ownership in the workplace as well?**

Yeah. Yeah. There's a few odd ones that say they don’t like the company and they hate working here, which to me is, like, why are you still here, but a lot of them still say, they love working for XXX and they’ve got great perks and they do feel part of the company as well.

**Do you think that you can feel ownership for other things? So a couple of other students have mentioned feeling ownership for your career, and I wondered if that's something you’ve thought about?**

I have actually, I have discussed it with our new Director, you know, possibly coming back to XXX, and so that's me kind of structuring my future career, possibly coming back to XXX would be a big thing, it would be a great experience. He was discussing what role I could fit into judging from what I've done basically as an intern, so it definitely does shape your career.

**Cool! And do you know what sort of role you'd like to come back to do?**

We do have **[Delivery 00:27:44]** Managers which they're the kind of, they're in the background, so they're not customer facing, and I basically communicate everything that we want to implement with them, so any products that we have, I communicate with them which customer needs it, and they’ll do all the implementation, so the technical things, so I think that that maybe could be a role for me.

**Yeah, sounds interesting. Do you think … what do you think are the positives and negatives of someone feeling ownership?**

I think the positive would be the feeling of belonging to something, and being able to have that sort of, power as well, I think that's probably a big thing as well.

**What do you mean by power?**

I'm not sure – just kind of … being able to control what you do would definitely be a big thing. Controlling what you do and being able to manage yourself as well, so manage your role and what you do in the company and deciding what you think is best for the company.

**Yeah, that makes sense. Any negative implications?**

I think probably abusing that power I guess, I mean, a bit too far, so there's what XXX should be doing, making those big decisions when you obviously shouldn’t be, I mean, that could be a negative, that could go badly.

**Yeah, that's a good point actually. Do you think you’ve felt ownership before this job – so maybe at university, a party time job, a hobby?**

My part time job, I wouldn’t say I felt ownership over that. probably because I've got … my main goal was studying, getting the degree, that I should be concentrating on that and not the job, so I think its whatever my priority is… I would say that would be … That’s what I would feel ownership over.

**Yeah, that makes sense. Cool! Last question which is really around what you might do in the future, so obviously hopefully fingers crossed you may come back to XXX, will you look at other organisations as well? Or will you wait to see what happens with XXX first?**

I think I would probably wait and see if they offered me anything. If they offered me a job, I probably wouldn’t look elsewhere, because its such a good job, such a good company to work for. Obviously if they don’t offer me anything then I will look elsewhere.

**Yeah, but fingers crossed…**

Yeah, definitely,

**Right, let me just turn the tape off now…**

*[End of Transcription 00:31:40]*