Participant 6 – 10 July 2019 Skype Interview

DT: So, thank you for your time today. And can I just confirm that you're happy for me to record this?

P8: Yes, yes. That’s okay.

DT: Great. Thank you very much. So just to let you know, that if you do use company names or people's names, I won't use them when I transcribe this or just put apes execs. So feel free to talk naturally. And then as I say, I'll take out those details for anonymity purposes. And you can check the transcripts and see that you're happy with it. Okay. Umm so just to start off with, can we go back to your second year at university? Can you tell me a little bit about your placement search and the process that took you to your placement company?

P8: Yeah. Umm so to be honest I started the search, quite late, umm started to get my CV started in in September, but it took me quite a while to actually start applying for the, so I had quite a few sessions with with XXX with my CV, to get it the best I could get it, so make your best. And then yeah, I just started using the job search portal on on Mahara and choosing various other websites like, Rate my Placement. The actual placement I got came because my, my mates mum works at the company and so she said, if you have any trouble finding a placement, to contact her. So once I got offered another placement, I contacted her and said do you potentially have anything that I could do there.

DT: fantastic to have contacts (laughs)

P8: Yes, yes. Umm my friend did his placement their last year. So it was it was kind of good.

DT: Good Um, so did you have to go through interviews with them?

P8: I did. Yeah. So my first interview was it's kind of strange, because it was with the operations manager, and then the HR manager, who is my friend's mom. So I know quite well, but we kind of, they didn’t know that. So it was kind of odd having an interview with and trying to be kind like professional. Not kind of professional that’s the wrong way to put it, but they didn't want to make it seem like she was just giving me a job. So to get it off my own back basically.

DT: Yeah, I can understand that. (P8:Yeah) and so was it just the one interview?

P8: Umm it was just one interview? Yeah.

DT: Good. And so how did you feel after the interview? Were you umm quite excited? Did it feel like the job you were interested in?

P8: Umm it was a job in operations and (pause) the operations unit I did last year wasn't my favourite unit to be honest, so I was a bit sceptical but I thought it would be good to see what it would actually be like in an actual job role, umm but yeah, after the interview, I wasn't really wasn't really sure where to be honest. Because I've been given she kind of hinted at some things that would come up, so I could prepare for and none of that came up. So I was quite completely caught off guard with a lot of questions. So its kind of good in a way but made me quite nervous.

DT: Yes, I can imagine. So then what happened on your first week, umm yeah, tell me a little bit about your first week there?

P8: so I went through the induction process. So I spent a lot of time with various different people getting to know them and getting to know what their job role was (pause) umm and spent a lot of time with one of the quality apprentices and so when I didn't have meetings with various other departments, I would spend time shadowing him, so I was learning skills that were not really anything to do with business, but learning new skill sets quite, it was quite interesting, like the first few days, so (stops talking)

DT: wonderful and so it sounds as though it was quite a structured induction process. Was this a lot of the same things that all employees go for? And then a little tailored towards you or was it totally tailored towards you?

P8: No, I think it was pretty similar to what every other employee goes through, umm I don't know if it's changed a bit for me, because I was only the second placement student that they've had. So I don't know how much they changed the process, but for what I saw from other new starters, they went through the same process.

DT: Good and was the last year's intern still there? Did you have a hand over with them?

P8: No, I didn’t umm because they were changing the role slightly. So they wanted to give it a couple of months for me to then start so although I spoke, because I'm like really good mates he’d told me a lot about job anyway. Umm, but no we didn't have a handover or anything.

DT: No, and so at the end of that first week, how did you then feel about the job role and the company?

P8: Umm (pause) I think I hate saying I hated it. I first few days, I remember coming home and saying to my mom, I didn't think I’d be able to do this for the next nine months. Umm but I think that was just the shock of starting the job and nerves. But once I started getting into, I decided to get to know people. So I’m quite a shy person, so once I got comfortable (pause), it was, I was i'd feel a lot better about it.

DT: Oh, that's good. Yeah. So it was a case of not sure about the job role. But also, (P8:Yeah), a little bit of being nervous because it was something new and different.

P8: Yeah.

DT: And do you think the organization did anything to make you feel comfortable and at home?

P8: Umm (pause)Yeah, I did. It's quite it was, it was quite casual, like, kind of laid back office. So there wasn't, everyone was like very welcoming and it helped that I had, like, like a friend in common. So I could speak about that. And everyone was really welcoming.

DT: Oh, that's good. So tell me a little bit about the job role.

P8: And so my official title was operations administrator. Umm and it was, a job role was supporting the ops manager with day to day admin tasks and getting involved with continuous improvement projects, and then various other things that came up throughout the year, I was getting involved in.

DT: Good and so what would you say, Was there a project that you particularly enjoyed?

P8: Umm, yeah, I did. It was the very last one I did, umm it was that it's analysing the productivity data for the XX Department cause their productivity had dropped in the last few years. So all the data, from this data software that they use, they gave me all the data and I had to produce some Excel spreadsheets and then get, give a presentation to my manager about what I find, what direction they could be heading to (pause) to help improve it.

DT: Oh, that sounds interesting, umm, and what about the company? What, did your feelings about the company change over time?

P8: Umm, that’s a good question, umm yeah it did as I never heard of the company before basically, what they did, umm well, or how prolific their products are, because they make parts for cars, and planes and trains and things like that. So they say like, you're never more than, like 10 meters away from one of their products. Umm which I was quite shocked that because I'd never heard of the company and overtime as I was getting involved in more projects, and because obviously, not knowing anything about the industry, there's only so much I could do, but once I started getting involved properly, it was it was definitely good. Yeah.

DT: Good and did the job change over time?

P8: Umm (pause, yeah it did, there was there was times when there wasn't much work for me to do, umm so it was a case of going around to different departments and saying ahh do you need, is there anything I can help with? So that meant I got to do some tasks, which I probably would not have got to do. And so it did change and I was getting involved with I worked with every department there. So it was, it definitely did change a bit

DT: Good and do you think for the better? Were you more comfortable, happier?

P8: Umm yes and no (pause). It was a bit frustrating at times with some of the tasks, because it was like ahh, why are they were getting me to do this. So they’d plan something for me to do. But then it did give me a chance to (pause) see how every department works and not just be stuck in the office. So I was on the factory floor for quite a lot and just having to go around to speak to people. So was, that that was good in itself.

DT: And did you feel that you had control over what you did to sort of daily, weekly? 10.48

P8: Umm, yeah, I was left to my own devices quite quite often. So it was (pause) I was really the old time my manager would come in saying y'all were you up to, but it wasn't constantly saying, are you doing this, what you're doing now and things like that. So in a sense I had I had the work to do in my own time and to get the work done. So yeah, I would yeah,

DT: yeah. So you had that autonomy to manage your own workload?

P8: Yeah, yeah.

DT: Good. Did you adapt any, any processes, make changes, improvements at all?

P8: Umm, yeah, I did. So one, they do their own packing specifications for the parts, umm so when they say, if they have temp come in and or the part is then moved too a different department for different process, and they have a packing specification, which is this basically just instructions on how to, how to pack it safely and promptly so that the part doesn't get umm broken and I umm completely changed the way that they, how its all laid out, a lot more a lot more simpler to read, some of the other ones they had were quite confusing and if you if anyone ever comes in, they don't really know what's going, the the industry thing it could be quite confusing. So,….

DT: hmm. Oh, that sounds good. Hmm. Excellent. so, what are your feelings now for the job role and the organization?

P8: Umm (pause) I don’t know if operations I want to go, the manufacturing side, I don't, I don't really know, because a lot of the people that worked there, had worked there for quite a while and they’d come from that background. So going in without any of that knowledge and thing, definitely struggled at the start and obviously, knowledge comes over time, but I don’t know if that’s something I would like to go into.

DT: Mm and how did other people you work with feel about the company, was the sort of positive atmosphere there?

P8: There was actually, yeah, because it was it was quite a laid, it was quite a laid back work environment, obviously. But when work needed to be done, it was (pause), it could get quite strict. But everyone was friends with everyone and I was surprised that usually, I would have thought that would have been a divide between the office and the factory and the workers, but there's but it really wasn't and everyone got on with everyone else (DT: good). Yeah and a lot of people have been there for so long and kind of work their way up, like they just really enjoyed it there.

DT: Good and were you the only intern?

P8: Umm I was yes, they haven't a few apprentices, but I was the only intern, yeah.

DT: So were there other people you’re sort of about your age, who you felt you could sort of mix with?

P8: yeah, that was two people in the office, one a year younger than me and the other one was couple of years older. So straight away, I've got on really well with them, so, so quite quite a lot in common.

DT: that's good. So this next question will probably be quite easy because you've just completed your Mahara portfolio, haven't you? (p8: Yeah). So what skills and competencies Do you think you've improved and develop during your placement?

P8: Umm my time management, and especially improved,umm I’ve not always been the best at managing my time, umm, especially at uni, that's definitely improved. I think my decision making and confidence has improved. Umm I’ve always been quite asking people if I am doing this right, umm and it's more of just like trusting my work. And then again, (pause) that comes with time and experience.

DT: Hmm, yeah and actually, I was going to ask you about self-confidence. Because it, it is common, that people don't always start their placement with confidence. So what point do you think you felt more confident?

P8: Umm (pause) a couple of months in, when I started getting get comfortable with everyone, umm and I think being able to chat, umm, things like that. Yes. Tough question. I feel I had to do around November time, I had to do that every morning, they have a stand up meeting with all the supervisors and managers, umm so they will, the manager will go around to everyone, and they will say, umm like what’s going on in their department, and if there's any issues going on, and my, line manager was, was in America for a work trip and I had to take the meeting. Umm and I was really nervous about that, after that, I was like ahh, its kinda like I’ve done that now, it was quite a big thing to do. So i was like, ahh, I can relax a bit So.

DT: yeah, almost sort of rite of passage, you've got through it fine and so yeah. Good. Excellent. So did you have many opportunities to work with senior managers in the organization or the sort of key decision makers?

P8: Umm, I did yeah, umm I had to create a sign for downtime for the acronym and so that's the eight ways of eliminating waste in the factory, umm and because they're changing up one of their systems, and they needed to educate the employees basically, on what this is and what it's stands for. So I had to work with the, with my ops manager, and the quality manager and then the continuous improvement manager who umm gives the continuous improvement projects, umm pretty much around Europe. So I was in constant contact with him about it and so yeah, that's a good projects to work on, and to get to know them better as well as I worked quite closely with them.

DT: Yeah, and did you feel valued by sort of senior managers?

P8: Umm (pause) at times I did. Umm (pause, because I think, with my job role, it wasn't, some of the jobs that I was doing quite, you know, why like, it seems like a waste of time and I, I don’t think at times people took it seriously. But then other times when I like with that productivity data, umm you know, people were actually towards the end, people were taking more, let's say, seriously and it was good to kind of get that side across.

DT: Mmm, yeah, absolutely and umm was there anybody at the organization who thought I want to be like them in the future?

P8: (pause), umm, so traits, yes. So the ops manager, umm he is a real, he's, he's very confident he knows his stuff, umm he has a presence, like people, you wouldn't (pause)mess with him if that makes sense. Like you. You’re kind of cautious like to what jokes you can do, but he was quite, (pause) umm I don’t know if immature is the way to say it , he was very, at the times I thought as at as a senior manager for the site, at times where he shouldn't act the way he does. Umm because he's quite a jokey new person, like, he has like personal, like jokes and things like that. But (pause) there are times I didn't think I should you really be acting like that being like a senior manager saying certain, certain aspects of people yes

DT: But other aspects not so much

P8: No, no, there’s a time and place for certain jokes and conversations.

DT: Absolutely and do you think they were the sort of organization that encourages excellence? Do they have things like employee of the month?

P8: Yeah, yeah. So they do a JDI of the month which is, which is a just do it improvement. So basically, if you see something around the facility that (pause) is wrong or broken, and you come up and you're, you can quickly come up with a solution to make it better, or fix it. You then get permission from your manager and then once it's done, you fill i this form and it's like, the five Y’s. So why was it wrong and what should have been done and what you did and then if you if you win umm you get a 50 pound voucher, and a XXX hat, so that was that that worked really well because people got really ­onboard) with things like that. So

DT: yeah. Did you ever submit anything?

P8: Umm I did, I submitted 3. I didn't I didn't win any unfortunately.

DT: But at least you submitted some.

P8: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

DT: And that shows, what sort of things did you submit?

P8: Umm so one of them was umm the material handler for forklifts umm and he was using a to fill up you have to top up the battery fluid with ionized water and he was using this really big, like bucket, and just a funnel. Umm and it's quite a heavy bucket when it's full and wasn't really the best thing to use, so I got in a new, actual complete system, filling it up umm and the other one was, there was, electrical wires showing, they should have been taped down to the floor and covered in this mesh. Umm but it was a trip hazard and an electrical hazard, which I spotted. So they've got that got the maintenance team to fix that. So that was that was quite a spot.

DT: Yeah, absolutely. No, that's good. And an interesting concept. So was there anything about your placement that you would change if you could? What are the key things?

P8: change, umm, (long pause) I think having someone else there to manage me, because from what I know from last year, the ops manager, he got a promotion midway through my friend Sam’s placement and they didn’t replace him, so took out a level of management and because he was only managing Sam, really, he had a lot more time to spend with him. Whereas because he was now effectively taking on two roles and everyone would have to come to him with their problems, there wasn't always time for him to spend with me and he, and he said that to me said like, I do want to apologise to you in a way, because I'm not really at the time I would have liked to spend with you. Umm so I think definitely could have like delegated to other managers or even the apprentices doing their work they should have that they could have done stuff with me just to improve them.

DT: Yeah, yeah, that can happen sometimes unfortunately, which is a shame. So I'm, as you know, my studies about psychological ownership. So umm quite a broad question, but what does ownership in the workplace mean to you?

P8: Umm (pause) that’s a good question, I guess feeling happy with your role and feeling like you're adding value to the company or actually making a difference? And this is quite a tough question.

DT: Yes, sorry (laughs)

P8: That’s alright, (pause) yeah, I don’t know how to say it, just feeling, just feel like you actually played a role.

DT: Yeah, absolutely. Sure. Hmm. I think you've what you're saying is the same as some other people. So, absolutely. It is about perhaps feeling valued, feeling that you're participating. Can you think of any examples from your placement where either yourself or somebody else showed ownership?

P8: Umm, (pause) yeah (pause), go back to the productivity data because when I was first sat down, speak with the stamping supervisor, he wasn’t happy about it.(Umm (pause) because I understand that, you know, someone has been there for so long, is been told by a placement student that, you know, that he is saying is things effectively wrong and I had to kind of say that. So I think that was a good way, because I then had to kind of I had to stand up for myself really, because, you know, the data that I collected proved that he was (pause) still things, that he wasn't really sure what he was, what he was saying was right and I kind of proved that it was, it was a complete opposite to what he was saying. Umm. so to stand up for myself and say, XXX, no, like that you have this wrong, you have to see this, this side of it as well. Umm

DT: How did he take that?

P8: It helped that I had the ops manager who was happy with my research and he agreed with it. Umm so kind of anything, he says, my manager was there to kind of back me up as well. So it was quite an interesting discussion, discussion, because it was getting bigger, bit heated at times. But it was a conversation that had to be had that issue had to be sorted out. So (pause)

DT: And did he come around in the end?

P8: He did yeah, I won't see the effects of it because there's something that'll take quite quite a long time. But it okay, I gave them a starting point, basically. And something to think about

DT: Excellent, that's really good. And I suppose you're “just do it”, umm applications were also, instances of you taking ownership for something?

P8: Yeah, thet were as I had to go out and speak for the maintenance guys, because this is really something that they should have spotted really. It could it be quite dangerous. Yes. I was happy with that.

DT: And did you see any a few managers or colleagues demonstrate ownership?

P8: (pause) Yes, they do, they hold a lot of Kaizen events, Umm and I did get to take part in and itss interesting because you get other people that aren't really managers, who then take ownership for their event, umm quite quite a case of why I helped out upon the apprentices Kaizers, umm

DT: What’s a Kaizen event?

P8: So it's, you get a project team together, umm to basically come up with a solution to fix a problem. So the ones we were doing were the name of the now they were Kaizens, but they were, but they were in a quick time. Kaizen usually takes a long process, but the ones we were doing, were taking maybe like three days, and we're working solidly, solidly on it for those three days to get it done and get it actually sorted quickly. So it was good to see some of the apprentices and you know, not not managers, or supervisors taking ownership of these events.

DT: So you could just come up with an idea and then work on, bring together a project team.

P8: Yeah, you have to get it approved by the ops manager. But yes, this is something that you believe could be improved, then you could

DT: Fantastic. And you worked on a few of those?

P8: Yeah, I worked on a few of then, so one of them was the gauges that they used to test parts to see if they're in line if they've got like the right sizing and they were all over the place like there was no (pause) no like organization with them, so they couldn’t tell you where what was 0 maybe there, maybe over there. So we basically utilized an old filing cabinet, umm marked them all, collected them all up, got all the numbers and then had the specific space in the cabinet for them, umm so it meant they didn't have to walk off and go to find them, so it saves time.

DT: That sounds very like McLaren Formula One type, you know everything in its place (laughs) So um, do you think there might be any negative implications to feeling ownership in the workplace?

P9: Umm (pause) I guess in terms of, you can maybe get too arrogant with your job role, umm if you, you know you may not be able to take criticism from someone if they say, Oh, no, you should be doing it like this. I guess if you have too much ownership then you may, why are they saying that, you may feel that way. They say that like this is my my job. Like, let me get on with it.

DT: So becoming territorial?

P8: Possibly. Yeah.

DT: Yeah. So I can understand the criticism. Yes. I think I've seen that myself actually, with people. Umm do you think you've ever felt ownership before? So in your part time you're in college work uni work, or I don't know, hobbies?

P8: Umm yeah, so at my part time job, I work in a garden centre. So at the minute I kind of running the click and collect, so I'm on there on the weekend. But I have I can have like supervisor capabilities on the till, so I can do refunds and open it up basically, and sort out any issues. So I'm kind of there if the other guys have an issue, I’m kinda like the one that they go to. So in a way, I'm not officially their supervisor, but I am in a way, so I take ownership can shoot with that.

DT: Yeah. Excellent. So what are you hoping to do when you graduate?

P8: Umm, I'm not sure. Yeah, I'd like to go traveling, because I think now's the time to do it. I want to, but I need to work to save money. I'm sorry. I don't really know what to do. Yeah. I will apply for some grad jobs and something that comes up, I think I've actually really enjoyed this and I definitely consider taking it but not too sure yet.

DT: No, you're not thinking about going back to the company?

P8: No, I don't think there any, possibly if another job came up, but they kind of created that role and it wasn’t there before, so I don't think there's any opportunities there at the minute.

DT: Is another placement student going to take that role or has taken that role?

P8: Umm no, he said to me, because they haven't really got, he didn’t really have the time they wanted to spend with me, yeah and they just weren't sure about taking on another student.

DT: Yeah, no, I can understand. Do you think you go into operations again?

P8: Urr No, I don't, I don't know. Never say never say, I may look for jobs in that sector.

DT: Okay, cool. Well, that's all of our questions. So let me just turn that off.