

< International Internship Programme >

Behind every number

Les a rationale to uncover

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The process of securing an internship may be nerve-racking to some of you, having the need to siphon out projects of your liking from the huge list of companies, spending countless of night thinking about your career path, drafting your CV, preparing for interviews and trying to make yourself stand out from the crowd, all of which has to be anticipated in a short period of time. Today, I am sharing my internship experience in Singapore Oxygen Air Liquide (SOXAL) and I hope it will serve well in guiding you to decide the kind of experience that you want to get off your internship.

Introduction to Air Liquide

Air Liquide, a leading entity in today's industrial and medical gas industry, was founded by Mr Georges Claude and Mr Paul Delorme in France in 1902. Air Liquide strategized its World Business Line (WBL) into 6 domains, namely Large Industries (LI), Industrial Merchant (IM), Electronics (EL), Healthcare (HC), Engineering and Construction (E&C) and Related Activities to supports the various manufacturing industries.

Air Liquide established Far East Oxygen in Singapore in 1911 to meet the needs of industrial gases in Far East economy. As demand for industrial gases grew, SOXAL was formed in 1975 as a joint venture between Far East Oxygen and Singapore Oxygen to develop a wider supply chain. Today, SOXAL is the largest and leading industrial gas company in Southeast Asia, operates in 22 locations around Singapore with over 750 employees recognized for their high level of expertise to provide gases, equipment, services and packaged solutions to support Singapore's manufacturing industry. Recognizing the need for highly competent workforce, SOXAL offers internship opportunities and organize programs for students. In August to October 2014, I was sent to Taiwan for 2 months for International Internship Programme at Air Liquide Far Eastern.

In a world where numbers are no longer just numbers

Economy in Taiwan is dominated by Electronics manufacturing sector hence ALFE blooms rapidly in its support to huge semiconductor industries like TSMC or UMC, offering high purity Specialty Gas or Advanced Precursors. I was fortunate to experience the internship in Electronics division mentored by Senior Business Analyst. To an Engineer from Operations, numbers may simply be just numbers, but to my mentor, her role as an analyst requires her to make logical assessments to profits and/or costs that would eventually be reflected in the financial report. My perspective of the organization broadens as I match the commercial aspect of ALFE to the technical knowledge acquired in school, enabling me to have a wider view on the organization.

Highlights of International Internship Programme (IIP)

The visiting of Electronics Materials Center Taiwan left the most memorable impression with its impressive logistics management. In spite of having to handle large quantities of cylinders, layout of the filling center remains orderly and neat. In my opinion, this has provided the strategic advantages in operating efficiencies and workplace safety. By knowing the location of filled and empty cylinders, time spent on logistics is optimized and the risk of safety breaches in particular on over-pressurizing cylinders can be minimized.

I was also given the golden opportunity to participate in the annual Semicon exhibition. It is truly an eye-opener for me to participate in such professional event, I get to interact with colleagues and managers from other parts of Taiwan and gained invaluable advice from their experience.

Achievements in ALFE

A great sense of achievement occurred to me when the project to revamp the existing databank template that I was working on gets approved. With the completion of this project, benefits reaped include better accuracy and working efficiency. However, the great sense of achievement does not come from looking at the benefits but rather how I manage the complex working process. The most challenging aspect of this project is to run the simulations for the present year (2014), where I had to work closely with my mentor to get the costing from different sources synchronized. The working process had not been a smooth sail like what many of you may have in mind, there were moments of disappointment when I couldn't get the simplest thing right, which is what many of us may experience as we step into the working world. Nonetheless, my advice would be to maintain a positive attitude when anticipating challenges or difficulties at work, so that when you finally overcome them, you wouldn't have traces of regret.

Personal Opinion of Taiwan

I think Taiwan possess two greatest things: People and Food. I feel that Taiwanese are generally more warmhearted, energetic and friendly group of people. It was a hot day when I touchdown in Taiwan, while I was traveling in a cab to my hostel, the driver offered me mineral water in worrying that I am not acclimatized to the weather. Food in Taiwan focuses greatly on flavoring particularly on sweet flavorings which is to my liking. I really enjoyed the steam dumplings and coffee in Taiwan, the sweet juice from the steam dumpling and the coffee aroma is irresistible and what's more, the price is reasonable and the portion is huge. Taiwan is definitely the place to visit for food lovers, but you got to be mentally prepared to gain some weight.

