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The first day of my internship was very welcoming and positive. I was introduced to most of the professionals and given an opportunity to meet individuals from the sales and operations team. One highlight of my day was sitting in on two interviews. As Compass Group is a catering company, the human resources department is constantly receiving CVs (the European name for résumé) and interviewing potential employees. The interview was held in one of the fifth floor suites of the stadium and had a beautiful view of the field. Following each consultation I helped grade each of the candidates and discussed with my supervisor Carolyn about the importance of each question/answer.

Another aspect of my first day was a guided tour of the Aviva Stadium. The group was taken into areas such as the locker room and press room where we watched a short video on the reconstruction of the building. Our tour guide, Berry, was very informative, took our picture, gave us plenty of time to browse, and left me wanting to know more!

Back to the office – while most of the work in the HR department was tedious and fairly simple, it gave me a chance to really gain an understanding of their processes. To begin, I had to fold approximately 500 pieces of mail known as “job cards”, which is the initial step for staffing events. Following this, I was to call any remaining staff members such as team leaders or chefs whom are top priority to ensure they are available to work. Once these individuals are assigned, I enter each of the work numbers into the SMART system to confirm their attendance.

Another happening that I was able to help out with was the “Induction” of new employees to Compass Group under Levy guidelines. This was a chance for my boss, Magda, to meet new personnel and set a principal for the working rules and regulations. I helped by preparing the brochures and photocopying all passports and visas. At the end of the event I chauffeured all of the guests back to reception and tried my best to answer any remaining questions they had.

In addition to this being my first week, this weekend was also my first event, the January Jumps weekend. Although I was not obligated to work over the weekend, I was eager to be at the Leopardstown Racecourse. I attended on Sunday and assisted my supervisor Caroline with checking in staff, assigning staff positions, and checking out staff. Throughout the day we monitored each of the pavilions and bars, ensuring that everything was going smoothly. Even though it was a long, cold day, I learned a lot and really valued the first-hand experience it gave me. Within one week I saw the process from start to finish of how to put together and conduct such a large event.
Looking back to Monday, I cannot believe it has only been one week. I truly feel like I am already a trusted part of the Compass Group team at Aviva Stadium, and am extremely excited for whatever the future weeks have to bring!

WEEKLY JOURNAL

Week Two

A typical day in the office is spent updating the event software and sorting staff details. In addition to this, two new jobs I have been given are answering the phones and running errands. For Compass Group, it is a busy time of the year, and now that I have my bearings they have asked me to manage most of the incoming calls and periodically run to the post office or the shop to get sodas and coffee.

Fortunately, after all the paperwork and phone calls, the weekend events are well worth the labor. This past Sunday the 6 Nations’ Rugby tournament was held at the Aviva Stadium, showcasing Ireland vs. Scotland. I had a manageable start time of 9:30am, and my job was to check in and assign the chefs to their appropriate kiosk. In addition, I had to give them a scale, a probe, probe wipes, and a safety handbook that they signed out. Once again, with this being my first time, there were definitely some kinks I had to work through but in the end I felt very accomplished. The head chef James was pleased with my work and thanked me several times.

On my way back to the HR office, I ran into my boss Magda and my supervisor Carolan. Expecting them to have another assignment for me, I was pleasantly surprised when they told me to grab lunch and find a spot to watch some of the game. So awesome! Unconcerned about eating lunch, I quickly found a spot to view the game from inside one of the hospitality suites. I was able to listen to Ireland’s National Anthem “A Soldier’s Song” and even watch kickoff. I made friends with a few of the lads standing around me and thoroughly enjoyed this chance.

In spite of the long workdays during the week, it only leads to a smooth sailing weekend. On Sunday, my productive morning and exciting afternoon once again reassured the fact that sport management is the field for me.

WEEKLY JOURNAL

Week Three

When I first arrived in Dublin I didn’t think communicating with others was much of a challenge. I could understand my advisor and boss so I figured I was off to a good start. As the week progressed, I was required to speak with bus drivers, food servers, and occasionally the elderly. Due to the fact that the lingo here is not something I am familiar with, it didn’t take long for me to begin relying on context clues.

As far as my internship, one difficulty I came across was making phone calls. In addition to my voice sticking out from others in the office, when I call the part-time staff to confirm their booking, it took a while to get accustomed to the accents over the phone. Often times they have additional questions for me, and in the beginning I had an extremely hard time understanding their
queries. Not only did I have no clue of how to answer their questions, but relaying the message was also a challenge.

Another aspect that made phone calls problematic was the pronunciation of names. For example, the name Patrick has several different spellings and some even require a Gaelic articulation. Once in a while the ladies sitting around me would giggle at my attempts and relieve my frustration with this seemingly novice task.

Although I am still not too fond of making phone calls, I am adapting to this by learning names and being more conversational. Now that people are familiar with my calls, it is easier to get my point across and I have a better understanding of how to respond to their questions.

In general, I really enjoy the Irish use of language. Words such as “grand” or “brilliant” are used in various ways. Typically “thanks” is accompanied by “cheers” and in many cases people will go as far as “thanks a mill.” In my opinion, it’s fun being the one with the pretty accent, and have people stop you mid-sentence in awe of how a word was just pronounced.

WEEKLY JOURNAL

Week Four

Many cultural trends are apparent within the workplace. In comparison to when I am working in an office in the states, two major differences I have noticed are the lunch breaks and frequent cups of tea. In addition to this, everyone is very considerate of their coworker’s social lives. In my office there are generally 10 females and 5 males, and the level of respect for each other’s “holiday” time is extremely welcoming.

I believe the charisma within the workplace has a lot to do with lunch time being at 12:30 every day; lunch is served in the staff lounge and almost all the employees eat at the same time. On the days that the food seems unappetizing, there is never hesitation to write down the order and send someone to the shop! Even when we do eat in the canteen, it isn’t long after that someone is craving chocolate and jellies or needs a cappuccino.

Before I came to Ireland, I had an idea about their love for tea – but this is truly a staple in their culture. In the kitchenette there is a huge box of tea bags, sugar packets, and coffee grinds. Another popular utility they have are kettles to quickly boil water. Whenever someone decides they to make a cup of tea they offer to make a second, and 99% of the time they come back with two.

As far as relationships within the workplace, generally people are very open and conversational. Even though everyone is constantly working, whenever there is down time the topic of conversation is always thoughtful and selfless.

With that being said, the structure of hierarchy is pretty clear. Although figuratively there isn’t really a difference, the way the office is organized one would never know who the boss was. From my experience in the states, it is obvious which office is the boss’. In contrast to here, my desk is the same as my supervisor’s, which is the same as the HR director’s. I think this is very beneficial because it keeps everyone on the same page, and it certainly decreases the chance of error.
WEEKLY JOURNAL

Week Five

Before I came to Ireland I had many different ideas of what the culture here was going to be like. Impressions from my friends and family led me to believe it was a sunny, beautiful island with hills of green grass and pubs at every corner. I imagined the men strong and handsome and the women just the same. I was prepared for a fairly laid-back lifestyle, fresh markets, and cups of tea right at my fingertips.

From this description, Ireland as a whole does a good job at fulfilling its glorious reputation; though honestly, Dublin could use some work. My daily commute into work is generally a 40-minute bus ride from Santry Dublin 9, through the City Centre, and into Sandymount Dublin 4. On the bus it is common to hear languages other than English, and the variety of ethnicities is quite unexpected. Children get on and off in the morning on their way to school, wearing matching uniforms, chitchatting and giggling as they maneuver their way through the moving vehicle.

When I arrive at work I go in through the main entrance and make my way through “the tunnel” to the office. Although the environment is bright and modern, in the office there are absolutely no windows – and this has become somewhat of a shortcoming to my experience in Dublin. Given this chance to work in Ireland, I perceived my desk as overlooking valleys and meadows of lush landscape, or at least having the ability to notice the weather before I step outside.

Another unforeseen aspect of the culture here in Dublin, is the forward sense of fashion. While I understand that Europe in general is very trendy, for some reason I never expected it in Dublin. Primarily referring to females, they wear a lot of makeup and usually tights with a skirt or dress. This coming from a fairly “girlie-girl” I am impressed by their tolerance for the chilly weather and adore all of the different styles of coats. From an outsider’s perspective, I feel as if I stand out because I have tall boots and wear jeans, when in America this is standard Thursday night apparel.

Thus far, my experience in Ireland has been full of revelations. I am having a much easier time following the accent, and I have even built up the courage to use some lingo!

WEEKLY JOURNAL

Week Six

In comparison to my work experience in the United States, I wouldn’t say many of the businesses practices are different, though I feel the business style is different here in Ireland. A primary example of what I mean by this is the technology – both the ancient devices and laidback procedures.

One of the first things I noticed when entering the office was the out-of-date equipment used by everyone in the office. A majority of the staff has either a blackberry or flip phone, and it is constantly being used throughout the day. Mass texts are sent from phones that require multi-tap typing, and employees are always taking advantage of this to request off or ask personal questions. Even though we have a database of contact information, cellphones are often used to find someone’s number.

With that being said, in addition to ancient phones, the staff laptops are very out of date and are constantly breaking. The batteries have a terribly short lifespan and currently three laptops are not working. The software used on the laptops is very, very slow and looks like it is from the Stone Age, but it is still used even though it constantly wastes time loading and restarting.

This example contrasts what I am used to in the states in many ways. As far as cell phones are concerned, I would probably never text my boss. Usually I write him/her a semi-formal email or
call if it was urgent. Second, crappy laptops would never last in the businesses settings I have worked in.

While I realize companies are on a budget, and not everyone has jumped on the smartphone bandwagon, I feel that an update in technology would greatly benefit The Compass Group.

WEEKLY JOURNAL
Week Seven

With a catering company, such as the Compass Group, it is hard to determine the main customer. As a whole, the Compass Group hosts a variety of events and has headquarters all around the world. Due to the fact my office is located in the Aviva Stadium, I would say the primary demographic of customers are sports fans. During my experience here, the Aviva stadium hosts rugby matches, for which the Compass Group is responsible to staff workers. With this being said, although these customers are attending to watch the athletes, many of them are also there to drink and eat.

Within each level of the Stadium, customers are clearly treated differently. The second floor is for general admission with partially outside kiosks where burgers and chips are sold. People are calling out to sell beer and there are a few large bars with a small selection of drinks. This floor is mainly comprised of families, and the visiting team’s supporters. On the third floor (which is my favorite) it is all indoors with several bars around every corner, plus food concessions and souvenir shops. On this floor the main consumers are middle-aged men and some women.

In comparison to these two levels, the fourth floor is for clients and private parties. Compass Group staff is constantly being looked after and are held to high expectations in order to please the guests. The fourth floor has priority elevators and the most experienced staff. A goal for the company is to have returning guests; therefore the staff must work hard to please each and every customer.

With this being said, I do feel my coworkers treat customers the same as they would in America. While some of the catering staff is more conscious than others, the general concept is that the customer comes first, and this is parallel between the two countries.

WEEKLY JOURNAL
Week Eight

The first week of my internship I thought my advisor Magda was very welcoming and went beyond my expectations with welcoming me to the office. I was introduced to a majority of the professional staff and event went on a tour of the stadium. I could tell she was a very hard worker and had a lot on her plate; from this, I was excited to have an opportunity to help her.

After a few weeks of my internship, I unfortunately began to become less fond of my supervisor. She repeatedly asked me to work longer days and my effort seemed unappreciated. She
is poor at giving instructions and ignored me for a great portion of the day. At times I would simply call a large list of staff as many times as possible until it was time to leave, and one time she even kept me late to organize the uniform room.

Eventually, I had enough of being treated like a teenager and spoke with the HR manager. I explained to her that I was not learning anything, and would be interested in working with the other departments. Without hesitation she spoke with the Operations manager and I was to work with them the following week. My new boss Andrew is great; I have even decided I want my coworker Sive’s job.

Now I spend my day setting up for events and finalizing details. While this is much more physically demanding, I am having a great time and do not wish to return to the human resources department. I am thankful for both of these experiences, and have learned that I do not wish to sit behind a desk for hours of my day.

WEEKLY JOURNAL

Week Nine

During this past week, I have had the opportunity to work with the operations department. There is an operations manager and two assistants who I primarily report to. I was excited for this opportunity to get more involved in the stadium events, and expressed my willingness to try anything.

Although I do not have much experience with table waiting, during the first week they had me serving tea/coffee and clearing tables. The first function was mid-sized of approximately 30 people; they had breakfast and lunch, with a rolling tea/coffee and biscuit buffet. The second event was larger, of about 500 guests who received breakfast, bagged lunch, rolling tea/coffee and a cash bar reception.

While working with operations, I learned a lot about the preparation for event: how to set a table for a three course meal, how to box a table, how to polish silverware, how to fold napkins and much more. Usually during the day there was a small event going on in one of the stadium suites, and two of us were to periodically check on them. Whether it was refreshing the milk for their tea or taking sandwich orders down to the kitchen, we were to provide superior customer service.

To some, working in this department would have been a drag – and I won’t lie some mornings were – but to me, this was just what my internship needed. After weeks of arranging staff to work the events, it was nice to actually work one myself, and also meet the people who I frequently talked with over the phone.

In addition to enjoying my time during this portion of my internship, I now have a clearer perception of operations. Prior to this I had an idea of what it was like, and I thought I would prefer working behind a desk. Now I am beginning to change my mind. There are so many aspects of sport management and event planning that I am grateful for all the perspectives this internship has provided me with.