



International Communication

Intern in the Netherlands

ASML

ASML is the world's leading provider of lithography systems for the semiconductor industry, manufacturing complex machines that are critical to the production of integrated circuits or chips.



Manufacturing sites and research and development facilities are located in USA, Taiwan and the Netherlands. Additionally, ASML provides optimal service to its customers in more than 55 locations in 16 countries.

International Communication students (BIK) complete their studies by writing their bachelor thesis during a mandatory internship. Since my topic for the thesis was, Cross Cultural Corporate Communication Challenges, I chose to do my 3-month internship at ASML in the Netherlands.

By Arnold Weisz (BIK10)

The main reason for choosing to do the internship at ASML was that it offered me the best place to do research for my bachelor thesis on multicultural communication. Furthermore, although I already have a wide and varied professional curriculum, working in a large global corporation was a new experience. Additionally, as an International Communication student I wanted to maximize the value of my degree by practicing communication in an international corporate environment.



7000 colleagues

Arriving at ASML for the first time is a bit daunting, as the enormous “campus” at Veldhoven (a village just outside of Eindhoven) accommodates almost 7000 staff. No wonder one of the first things they issued us with was a map! Nevertheless, since ASML takes in about 150 interns each year, they have a whole system in place to welcome you and get you going. After being issued with an electronic badge (necessary to enter all buildings) I was guided to building 4, which was to be my workplace for the next three months, to meet my supervisor. Assignment: plan, prepare and execute a range of internal communication activities for the ASML Operations Structural Improvements (OSI) department. It went smooth with the introduction to both the company and department. ASML arranges a full-day welcome event for all new staff, and the OSI also appointed a “buddy” to ease me in. Additionally, the Dutch prefer, just like in Norway, a rather flat organization and casual work environment. This meant that interns are by no means delegated mundane tasks and kept in the background. On the contrary, if you

show interest and initiative you can more or less participate fully in the daily business. Moreover, the corporate language at ASML is English, thus, all documents and meetings are held in English (unless only Dutch are present). Hence, it was easy to settle in and get going with the work-load.

From the scratch

The OSI was a new department within the ASML operations sector and still in the process of “showcasing itself”, and they needed a whole range of communication “products and services”. Since I was the department’s first communications intern, I more or less started from scratch. First task was collecting material, writing, editing and designing a departmental newsletter. It was a great “warm-up” exercise and brilliant way to become familiar with the company and my department. Because soon a string of new tasks followed; re-vamping their SharePoint Collaboration site, organising OSI’s intranet site, putting together a PowerPoint Information Package, designing internal PR posters and information material, supporting project leaders with communication advice, writing a script for the departmental promo video and filming it etc. etc. In spite that everyone had heavy work-loads, my colleagues were cool and helpful. Still, being independent, self-driven and well-structured is vital in this kind of job. I had some contact with the internal / corporate communication department, but for the most part I was expected to take care of all the departments communication needs.



Nijmegen



S'Hertogenbosch

Thesis research

I opted for a 4-day working in order to have some time to work on my thesis. A few days into the internship I realised that my first idea for a topic was too complicated to execute, and I had to improvise a new topic. The department had a few people which travelled and dealt with some of the ASML overseas facilities, and they encountered some communication challenges and meant this not only could be a good topic for my thesis, but it could also help them to improve communications. Thus, my thesis topic became: Cross Cultural Corporate Communication Challenges. With great help from my colleagues at ASML I went about interviewing staff in the Netherlands, and doing online survey with participants from ASML facilities in the USA and Taiwan. Everyone I approached was eager to participate and help in any way they could, which built a good foundation for my thesis. Furthermore, withstanding too much impulsive partying combined with efficient writing, actually gave me plenty of time to travel and enjoy life not only during the weekends, but also on many of my week-days off.

Living in Eindhoven

It has to be said that this city never really got to me. Compared to most other cities in the Netherlands, Eind-

hoven is a pretty dull and charmless place. Nonetheless, this was still “home” for three months and served its purpose. I used one of the real estate companies recommended by ASML to find an apartment near the city centre. I was in touch with them already a couple of months before I arrived to get an idea of prices and the availability. I spent the first 8 days in a hotel which gave me some time to get to know the city and to see a few options. I ended up living in a more or less posh neighbourhood only 10-15 min. walk from the central station / main bus station. You can find places which cater to most tastes and budgets. I opted for a € 750 per month for a fully furnished part of a house, with everything included. Even bedspreads and towels were provided. The real estate company charged me € 1000 for their services. However, I lived with easy access to public transport, both to work during the week and for sightseeing during my days off. Within walking distance from the city centre, it also meant good access to shops, restaurants and the nightlife. Eindhoven has a significant student population (many high-tech nerds though) which means that food and drink are reasonable. Well, at least compared to Norway. Socially, it was much easier to pop down alone to the pub in for instance the UK, than in the Netherlands. Like in Norway, people tend to stick to their circle of acquaintances and leave strangers in peace. And there wasn't any tradition of socialising after work with your colleagues where I worked. This might, however, be different in other places/companies.



Travels

When you have the opportunity to live in another country, one has to use the chance to do some travelling. Public transport in the Netherlands is quite good and comprehensive. The Netherlands is after all a small and flat country. Nevertheless, it is also the most densely populated country in Europe, and trains for instance are therefore often very crowded, in addition to being as slow as in Norway. During weekends the trains were also notoriously delayed and often cancelled. This did not, however, stop me from visiting; Amsterdam, Utrecht, Maastricht, Nijmegen, s'Hertogenbosch and also a cross border trip to Namur in Belgium. One practical advice though, keep a stash of cash, as it very often is difficult to pay with VISA / MasterCard's in the Netherlands. Many restaurants accept foreign cards, but also frequently not. Transport, supermarkets and many other services you will need during your stay, do not accept foreign cards. Thus, instead of a kr. 2,- fee for swiping your card when shopping, you look at kr. 45-60,- at every visit to the ATM.

Summary

I had a great time at ASML, not only by acquiring lots of new knowledge, but also by getting the chance to realise ideas and practise what I had learnt at Uni. Even though this was not by any means the first time I lived abroad, it is always exiting to get to know a new country. Besides, the Netherlands is an easy country to live in, as everyone speaks English and have a culture which does not differ greatly from Norway. Hence, I can nothing but recommend doing your internship at ASML, or generally in the Netherlands.