



Master's Program of Business Administration in Human Resource
Management

Internship Reflection

Capita Selecta

Zoupa Sofika

Student Number: 2603261

Period 5

Academic Year 2016-2017

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. The organization.....	3
3. Role & Tasks.....	4
4. Personal Development.....	6
5. Conclusion.....	7
6. Appendix.....	8

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present my experience as an HR intern in the non-profit organization 'Taste before You Waste', which started at the beginning of January 2016 and with this I apply for the Capita Selecta for the academic year 2016-2017. At the following parts, I will try to provide with the necessary information about the organization's scope, my role, tasks and responsibilities as an intern. What is more, the professional experience will be highlighted and the impact on my development, personal and professional, will be presented. At the end of this paper, in Appendix 1, the tasks and responsibilities of the position of HR Coordinator can be found as these are also stated in the internship agreement.

2. The organization

'Taste before You Waste' is a non-profit organization which was founded in November 2012, but became an official Foundation 3 ½ years later, after registering in the Chamber of Commerce on February 10th, 2016.

The mission of the organization is to create social awareness about the food waste problem and in order to do so, the organization has several activities which are carried out by volunteers and its operation is by largely depends on interns.

The environment in which the organization operates is highly diversified as most of the interns come from different countries and they have chosen to start their career or enrich their working experience within 'Taste before You Waste'. In the semester January –June 2017, 11 interns were occupied in different positions in the

organization and 7 of them are international students who either study in The Netherlands or applied for an internship via 'Erasmus Plus' program. It is also worth mentioning that a high number of volunteers- approximately 35- offer their services on a weekly bases in different roles.

3. Roles & Tasks

When I joined the team of 'Taste before You Waste' it was a period of growing, as more interns and volunteers were joining the organization and the creation of an HR department was essential; before that period the coordination of the interns and the volunteers was done by the founder and the general coordinator of the organization.

From the very first meeting that I had with Mrs. Sophia Bensch I felt that I belong there; the environment and the values that Mrs. Bensch presented to me made me instantly feel that it would a great opportunity for me as a person and as a professional to be part of this organization; and since she felt it too I was offered the position of 'HR Coordinator'. The internship vacancy asked for a person who was knowledge upon human resources management and managerial tasks; someone who can be proactive and work independently and, most of all, someone who can be creative and organize the HR department from the beginning. The person who would hold the position would work closely with the founder of the organization, Mrs. Luana Caretto, and the general coordinator Mrs. Sophia Bensch.

For me this was a great opportunity; I had in my back a decade of working experience in different positions, I had the academic knowledge from my first master study (MBA) and with the knowledge that I was acquiring during my present master's in Human Resources Management and I all I had to do was to put all this knowledge in practice.

One of first tasks that I was assigned was to create the ‘Internship Agreement’ and the ‘Volunteer Agreement’. The organization did not have official papers up to that moment and these documents are needed so as to operate within the legal framework. Since, I did not have any previous experience on this matter, I tried to find information on how to conduct these documents by reading several articles and by finding information through other non-profit organizations. At the end of each document each position is described; has its specific roles and tasks which means that every position should have a very precise description of how the roles are being carried out. Of course, at the end the documents were sent and approved by a lawyer who provides legal advices on the organization.

Next to conducting these documents, I found that another thing that was missing from the organization is a written statement where the mission and the values of the organization were presented; a written statement of ‘Codes of Conduct’. This has now become part of the internship and volunteer agreement so as that every intern and volunteer is fully aware of the values of ‘Taste before You Waste’ and what is expected from them.

Moving forward, another task that was part of my role was to create a document which includes a number of questions while interviewing a potential intern. Again here, I combined my academical knowledge and information from articles so as to create a ‘tool’ for myself, as I am the person who is fully involved on the recruiting process, and for the next HR interns who will join the organization.

Moreover, half way through my internship another task that became my responsibility was to integrate the new volunteers into the team and provide them with access to the several tools that the organization uses for internal communication and for assigning different tasks. This required a fully knowledge of each position so as to provide the necessary access to the right person.

The monthly evaluation of the interns was another project of mine where based on semi-structured questions, the supervisor and the interns would have personal meetings once a month to discuss the process of the internship, any problems that might have occurred or to explore potential new opportunities.

Furthermore, inspired from my previous experience as a store manager, I took the initiative to introduce to the team the 'Exit Interviews' where every time that an intern is about to finish his/her internship, will have to complete the exit interview document. This document is consisted of 15 questions in which the intern evaluates the internship that he/she had in 'Taste before You Waste'. The main purpose of this document is to create an archive of all internships of each semester and to become a tool for the general coordinator, Mrs. Bensch, on how to improve the operation of the organization in the future.

Additionally and in cooperation with the Social Media Coordinator and the Public Relations Coordinator we designed together the flyers about the next internship campaign. The goal here was to create vacancies that would allow the organization to attract young and creative people who would be willing to bring 'Taste before You Waste' one step further.

My final project as an intern in 'Taste before You Waste' was to recruit the interns for the next semester. At the beginning of this process the new vacancies had to be designed as changes were implemented and two additional positions were created. Also, they had to be communicated in different universities among the area of Amsterdam city either via email or to be uploaded in different online platforms.

This process has been very valuable because I needed to make sure that the potential interns match not only to the positions but also to the profile of the organization. Another thing that I realized while recruiting the next interns is that sometimes the capabilities that someone has might not be enough to enter an organization but also important role play the potential that an applicant has; those potentials that can actual make an impact to the organization. So, while I was in the recruiting process, I always had in mind that 'Taste before You Waste' is a workplace that needs creative and proactive people so as to continue adding value to the society through its activities.

4. Personal Development

As I have reached now at the end of my cooperation with ‘Taste before You Waste’ and I look back, I can clearly see the impact that my internship as an HR Coordinator had in my personality and in my career development. For me it was the first time that I was holding a position in an international environment and I had to reevaluate the mindset that I had from my previous working experience.

The challenge that was lying in front of me was how to find ways to implement my knowledge, my capabilities and my potentials so as, not only to succeed in the position that was new to the organization, but also to cooperate with people from different cultural backgrounds.

I exercised even more my abilities to listen to that my colleagues have to say; to exchange my ideas and to embrace theirs; to ask for their help whenever was needed; to think how can my work become a value for this organization; to take initiatives and to present them to my supervisor.

Another aspect of my potentials that grew more during this internship were my organization and time management skills. Throughout the projects that I had to fulfill I had to meet deadlines and to manage my time effectively.

I believe that my professional development came along with my personal development. To be present in an environment that it is open to new opportunities and ideas brought me in the position to ask for even more tasks and challenges. Working closely with every member of the team evolved my managerial skills and create a more open to new ideas mindset.

5. Conclusion

One of the things that fascinates me about this organization is that, although the interns; the people who are adding value to ‘Taste before You Waste’ change every six months on average, the dynamic of this organization is so strong and it actually makes an impact on someone’s life. The weekly meetings that we had were an opportunity for us to discuss about the tasks that we were working on or those that would follow and to exchange ideas upon each topic. In ‘Taste before You Waste’

there is no hierarchy; everyone works on equal level; everyone has the opportunity to implement his/ her ideas within the values of the organization of course.

Personally, the time that I spent as an intern in 'Taste before You Waste' not only gave me the opportunity to learn by first-hand what is needed for an HR department to function, but it also gave me the experience of working in an international environment and being in position to combine different aspects of my knowledge and of my personality and delivering a very nice outcome.

As a closing note, I have to mention that after this internship I followed another one as an HR assistant in a bigger company and one of the reasons that I was offered this position is the experience that I got from 'Taste before You Waste'.

6. Appendix 1

A Human Resources Intern has the following Tasks & Responsibilities:

- Looking for volunteers and interns
- Keeping vacancies up-to-date on various platforms
- Keeping the volunteer work schedule up-to-date
- Arranging the introduction of new volunteers
- Receiving and assessing incoming internship applications - Interviewing the prospective interns
- Communicating between TBYW and the sending institution i.e. the university
- Guiding the emersion of volunteers in TBYW
- Writing a How-To manual for the next HR coordinator
- Any other activity that will help TBYW and our human resources department