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John Fisher

August 25, 2014

Internship with SunEdison Solar Energy: June 2nd- July 27th

I interned at SunEdison in Madrid, Spain for two months this summer.

The offices were located in the financial downtown of Spain's capital. SunEdison is a global leader in solar power and renewable energy. The company manufactures, sells, and provide homeowners and small commercial business with top-notch solar technology. My main supervisor was a graduate from Sewanee. He was in charge of the marketing, legal, advertising, and accounting for all SunEdison offices in Europe. The different "teams" in each department gave me a look into how corporations function. The two months of my internship gave me a wonderful opportunity to enhance my knowledge of Spanish and business while getting real work experience.

I was able to create great relationships with my coworkers. In fact, that was one of the greatest parts of the internship. The work day started at 9:00 a.m. and went until 7:00 p.m. It was a long work day but full of breaks for coffee and "bocadillos", little sandwiches, with fellow workers. My responsibilities were in the legal department but crossed over into different departments in the office. My work was constantly changing and almost never the same. Each day my supervisor and I would sit down and talk about the goal for the day. The legal department was four people. For the past year as the company expanded in the European market contracts, legal documentation, and records were disorganized, hard to find, and not

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accessible electronically. My first responsibility was collecting information from all corporate and employed lawyers in Europe to produce an electronic address book. My next big task was organizing documents in the appropriate binder according to their legal significance. There were partners contracts, employee contracts, contracts with installers, contracts with vendors, car companies; the list goes on and on. In many cases paperwork was missing and needed to be collected from other lawyers and European offices. It was my responsibility to get all of these documents in order and filed in the appropriate binders. I would continuously add and reorganize these binders daily as more contracts arrived. Once I had organized all of the various contracts into binders I uploaded them to "box", the corporation's online database for electronically scanned documents. This allowed every employee in the company to access legal files from anywhere in the world. I then started creating annex B forms that were signed by my supervisor for past expenses. They were important in informing the accounting department and the company of the legal department's expenditures. I was so successful in my role that after my internship was over I helped my supervisor write an application to fund a permanent employee to fill my position.

Over the course of my internship I was able to work on my organization skills and see how important it is even for large multi-million dollar companies.

Organizing documents and filing them was sometimes a nuisance but a valuable experience. I also had to organize and manage my workload. I learned the most

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about dealing with others in the work place. After about a month of working in the office I started attending meetings with the sales and legal department. I was even fortunate enough to get an opportunity running a conference call in English with another lawyer from England. What was so important in running an efficient company from CEO to salesman was clear communication. It was important to speak clearly and direct while addressing all deadlines dates and expectations. I learned to be more assertive with others as well. Many times in Italy I would have to resend emails and be more direct to get a response. This was also true with other employees around the office. Each day for the first week I went to the head of IT to get a company email. He was a difficult person to deal with. He responded each time by saying that he would try to get to it. I began by asking but then learned that I had to be more assertive and demand for it. By Friday he had finally created an email address for me. My supervisor and I discussed several times the importance of being assertive, when to be patient, and also how to deal with difficult colleagues.

My last week working with SunEdison the head of the legal department and I went together to a meeting in one of the nicest office buildings in Spain. The meeting was over legal documents that needed to be obtained in order to open an office in Amsterdam. It was my responsibility to take notes in Spanish. After the meeting it was my sole responsibility to create or track down missing paperwork. It was satisfactory to be able to go to a meeting in Spain's capital, talking and writing in Spanish, and then afterwards find solutions to the problems. I didn't have the

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tools or confidence to do this when I first arrived two months ago.

I'm very fortunate to attend a school with such a strong career services and alumni network. While my experiences in Madrid were priceless and very valuable for any career ahead I also realized that working in corporate offices was not the place for me. I'm very grateful though for receiving funding for my internship that allowed me the opportunity to gain these experiences.