

Team work and culture of prevention: my internship at ベストン (Best On)

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インターンシップ前に

One of the best experiences I had in Japan was doing an internship in Best On: a Japanese company that supervises the security of buildings and constructions concerning to earthquake and fire prevention in Tokyo and other parts of the country. Of course, before starting it, I had a lot of questions about my functions inside the company since my 日本語 was still pretty basic and my major was not related to the company activities. However, the days I spent at Best On from January 22th to February 2nd taught me a lot of things about the company itself and also about Japanese culture.

It all started on November 14th when Guillermo san (also a participant of the program at TUFS) and I had our job interview with the president of Best On which fortunately went pretty good. Matsumoto Kohijiro sama was a very kind person and lucky us, he can speak Spanish. He was really curious about us; about our thoughts on Japan and of course, on the company. It was more like a conversation rather than an interview and we really appreciated the confidence he gave us since that first day.

I think the most difficult part was getting used to Japanese manners in business. At times we weren't sure when to bow and how long. Some other times during the interview, we had a lot of questions about the presentation card and where to put it: inside our wallet or leave it on the table until it was over. We found the answers to our questions some months after when we actually received a ビジネスマナー研修 during the internship.



インターンシップのとき

When the time to start our work at Best On was coming, we received a detailed calendar with each day schedule, activities and instructions about the uniform we would have to wear from time to time. As a foreign student I had this idea of collaboration inside Japanese companies but for obvious reasons, never had experienced a work environment like this before. The first minutes at the office were enough to realize how important team work is. Everyone had to clean the office 15 minutes before starting any activity.

Each worker say what they will do during the day and after that it all starts. I was told “日本に時間がとても大切です” since the first day and I was living the accuracy of that phrase everyday. The schedule was always respected and honestly I can't imagine Japan being so efficient as it is without giving such importance to time.

Our functions at the office were related to the organization of the necessary documents for the inspections at many of the buildings the company is in charge of. They have a detailed control on the dates and places they have to go during the year an also, a control of the inspections done in the past. Language



wasn't really an obstacle in order to understand each other. Since we ate lunch at the company sometimes, we had the chance to talk in Japanese with the people working at Best On. It was amazing how helpful and comprehensive they were at all times.

On the first day, 松本さま stayed closed to us in case we had questions. He was supervising our labor and I guess he was curious about Guillermo san and I. We went to many places during the two week internship. Since the company has a

philosophy of protection and prevention, the first visit they organized for us was to the Tokyo Fire Museum.



We also took part of the supervision of buildings once in which 社長 took us with him and his work team to one of the buildings they check. We had the chance to learn about the importance of security and prevention in Japan in case of disasters and how meticulous this kind of work has to be. We are talking not only about the security of the constructions, but the security of people living and working inside them. Wearing the uniform they gave us, helped us feeling even more committed to what is done at Best On.

We also went to Odaiba and Ikebukuro Life Safety Learning Center where we experienced disaster situations and learned what to do in those cases. This visits had a clear purpose and of course we got to understand it at the end. Our countries (Mexico and Japan) might share a lot of things but those we don't are really important to acquire.



The culture of prevention is one of the biggest values Japan has and it had been, somehow a necessity for this country considering its location in the map. Earthquakes, typhoons and tsunamis might hit Japan anytime and people has to know what to do (actually, they do) but back in our country things are different. Even though we have also been hitted by earthquakes many times, there is an absense of relevant programs that teach people what to do in those cases. In case of emegency, you have to be ready and react correctly. Again, we are talking about saving human lifes.

Fukuda Arisa san and Kikura Miyuki san helped us a lot the whole time and were really nice and comprehensive. They went with us at almost every field-trip we did and took part of the activities. We were already doing a team work by coordinating schedules and words in Japanese, English and even Spanish. Everything was excellent and their commitment to their work was incredible.

One of the best experience I had during the internship was the visit to a school in Saitama. 社長 decided to take us there in order to learn more about Japanese culture and how schools, government and parents work together in order to provide a healthy lunch to kids in schools. This was a big opportunity.



Having lunch with the children, watching them work as a team by giving food to each other while wearing those uniforms was amazing. They were also very curious about my country and myself. After lunch they went with me, all shouting and laughing to the principal's office and saying goodbye in Spanish.



I don't have words to thank Matsumoto sama for this internship which was more like a life experience to me and taught me things I would have never learned in such a close and special way; he was always kind and made us feel part of the team his company is. I see Japan now from a different angle and respect its people and its culture even more. Thank you Kikura Miyuki san and Fukuda Arisa for your help during our stay at Best On; Suzuki Akiko san and Percy san who went with us to

most of the extra activities and made us feel like celebrities by taking us pictures. Than you all at Best On for being patient and helpful to us at all times. This is a experience I will never ever forget.

