

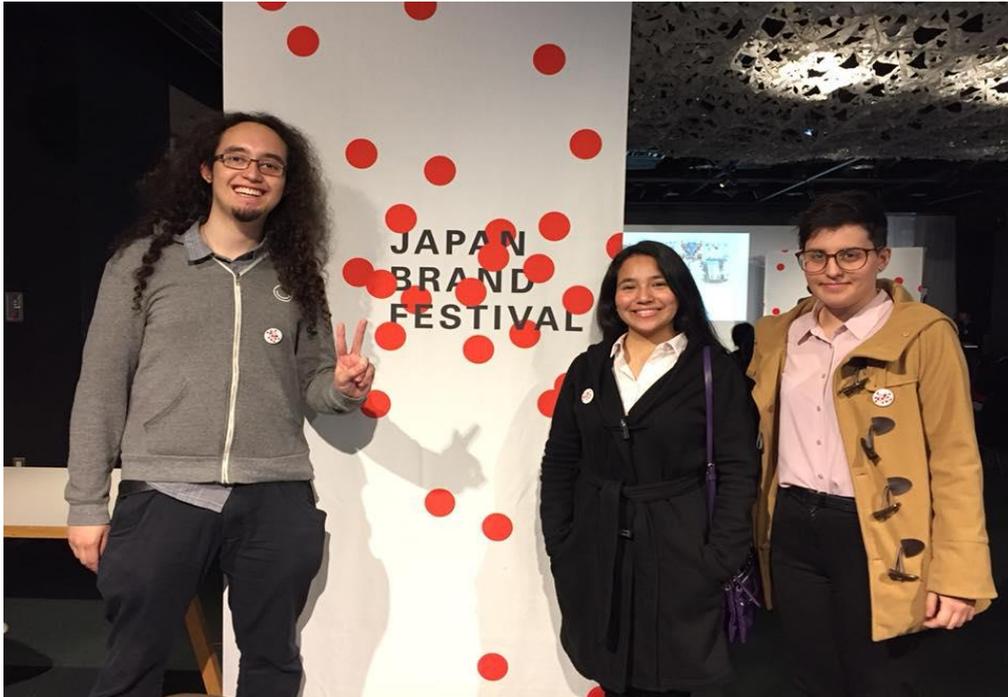
OQTA INTERNSHIP REPORT

By Laura Ramírez Castro

I started my internship in OQTA on February the 22nd and finished it on March the 7th of 2018. Before moving to Japan, I had the opportunity to talk with Laura Gómez, a student from my home university and former intern at the same company as part of the La-CEP program at TUFS in 2016-2017. She told me a little about the company and the product they had developed, a special cuckoo clock. As OQTA is an I&T startup, I was curious about the tasks Laura had to perform in this particular type of enterprise. Her main responsibility, along with the other interns at the time, was to produce a concept video for the company's product that would ultimately be posted on their website. I was intrigued about this, since my idea of an internship consists mostly of office work. I assumed that whatever company I was going to be assigned to, that would be the case. I was especially excited to think about the possibility of working in the area of international trade or marketing department of a Japanese company.

Approximately one month after my arrival, I was told I would be an intern of OQTA, as well. I am interested in the field of technology and business, so I saw it as a great opportunity to continue learning and put into practice some of the things I have learned throughout my career. Two months before starting the internship, we had an interview with the CEO and the Sales & Marketing Director, during which we formally introduced ourselves and discussed our abilities, interests, expectations and the areas of the company in which we would like to be more involved in our internship. Personally, I stated I was interested in marketing strategy, market penetration, branding and positioning of the product. On our first day as interns, we reviewed this part of the interview, emphasizing what we wanted to do for OQTA.

Our first tasks were concerned with recognizing and understanding the product, such as brainstorming to find a name for it and testing it ourselves. The first days were centered on this, setting the clock for us and giving feedback. Then, we were asked for our opinion on the concept video the former interns had made and our own idea of what the video should portray or how it should be made. We focused on this for a couple of days and were assigned the task of producing a new video considering our ideas. I must confess I was disappointed after hearing this, for I was hoping to work in the marketing department, in strategy development in specific, considering that OQTA was exploring entering the United States' market. This way, we concentrated on the production of a new video for the remainder of days. In between shooting and editing, we continued providing feedback, and wrote a 3 minute pitch proposal for an upcoming event in which the company was going to present the product. This was my favorite responsibility, since it was related to my major and I enjoy being creative. We also were invited to an event called "Japan Brand Festival", in which we supported OQTA's stall and attended their presentation.



The last three or couple of days of our internship felt particularly unproductive, in the sense that one of us was in charge of the editing part of the video, while the rest did not have a punctual task. I understand and share the idea that people should be proactive in the work environment, but it was difficult for us to direct our effort and time at something without knowing if it would be of any use to the company. After asking our immediate boss, we were assigned to brainstorm about or create any type of publicity campaign for Mother's Day. This, in particular, made me uncomfortable as it felt like the completion of the task would not have any effect or purpose within the company's goals, but was merely a sudden idea. In effect, we started to transcribe the feedback we had received from our friends and family about the product, and translate to English some of the information on the pamphlet at our bosses' request, and the Mother's Day task was not brought about again.

In spite of this, I consider my internship at OQTA was fruitful for several reasons. First and foremost, I was able to practice Japanese, the listening part at least. I was not confident enough to establish a conversation or reply to some of the questions in Japanese, but hearing it everyday for at least three hours during two weeks definitely helped me to improve. Immersing in a more daily scenario, as a job, contributes greatly to learning a language. Another positive point was experiencing the Japanese work environment. Being a startup and run by relatively young people, may make OQTA an atypical Japanese company, if it is to be compared to the traditional archetype. However, it serves as an example of how work dynamics are changing in Japan as companies try to meet the demands of more modern and fresh markets. In addition to this, the whole personnel was very nice and solicitous.

I consider that establishing a well-defined work plan and setting specific goals for our internship (distributing tasks and responsibilities among the interns) would have been helpful to make the most of our time at OQTA, and is suggested for future cases if the company continues with an internship program, but it is true that I gained a lot from this experience. I

strengthened my teamwork capabilities by working in a multidisciplinary team, as my colleagues had an educational background ranging from humanities to engineering. I was also able to administer my time more effectively to meet deadlines and other commitments; share ideas and opinions with others in an ambiance of respect; and learn about the Japanese market, its needs, tastes and demands.

I would like to thank the University and OQTA for this opportunity. I will not forget this enriching experience, as it has contributed to my personal and professional development. Not only was working and assuming responsibilities what made it significant, but also the challenge of doing it in a completely new scenario as it is Japan what gave it a more valuable meaning.



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