Denmark, Netherlands, UK, Germany, Belgium

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Team Advisor: Charles Grace T’85

1. Had any of you worked in that country before this project?

No

2. What was it like working in a foreign country and how was it different from working in the states?

On the whole, our biggest take away was that working in Europe was not that different than the US. Below are a few quotes from team members:

- I think my biggest take-away was that it actually wasn’t that different. The communications I had mirrored my prior experience. I believe this is partially due to the fact that we were studying in Europe, and in a culture similar to the US.
- During the project, I worked in Amsterdam, Brussels, and Berlin. After a challenging summer internship in Poland, working in these western European cities was not much different than in the US.
- Not a whole lot different, a little bit more structured and formal than US business but I did not find that to be a huge issue. But people were more receptive to phone calls than emails

3. Were there any surprises? Please elaborate.

A few of our big surprises...

- I was surprised by the amount of cold-calling we had to do in order to get meetings. Our success or failure on this single task probably had the biggest impact on the ultimate outcome of our project. The very large majority of our data was from interviews. At the same time, I was surprised by how many individuals were willing to speak with us.
- I was surprised by the amount of independence and autonomy we had to make decisions. I don’t know if other FSIB teams experienced this, as it may be a function of the faculty advisor. But I do know that I learn best in this situation.
- People were more receptive than I thought they would be, loved the fact that we were flying by the seat of our pants instead of solving a structured problem, so I guess findings were new and interesting. Very much a team show with little hierarchy, thought that our Faculty Advisor would be more of an authority figure but glad he wasn’t.
4. How did you manage working with a cross-culturally diverse team?

Our team worked surprisingly well together and in general was representative of other experiences we have had at Tuck. While there were of course some tense moments, they were few and far between.

5. What did you do to immerse yourself in the local culture?

The group went out to dinner with each other most evenings and attempted to try different cuisines and explore various neighborhoods. We also had opportunities to travel to other parts of Europe during the weekends. People also found time to visit museums, go sight seeing, visit some bars and shop.

6. What key things did you learn from your overall experience?

A few direct quotes about our takeaways:

- I learned about a new and emerging technology. I learned about how difficult it can be to find information on an emerging technology and then make sense of it all. I learned how valuable conversations with people within and across an industry can be.
- I’ve become a lot more comfortable (and effective) cold-calling. I also learned that gathering primary research is critical to understanding the subtleties of an industry.
- Cold calling is a necessary evil and the hit rate is low but you’ve got to get on with it. Interesting talking to a lot of stakeholders and listening to their different views. Synthesis of diverse information takes a long time.