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Job Title: Extreme Blue Intern
University: University of Portsmouth
Degree subject: Marketing
Year on Extreme Blue: 2007

Insider Tip: 'you have to be passionate about technology'

1. Why did Extreme Blue appeal to you?

Well the Extreme Blue Scheme as a summer scheme really appealed to me because of the technology. As a business student I didn't come from a technical background. But I was interested in how technology can be used in a business process. So that was really exciting.

2. What project did I work on?

I worked on the Metaverse casting project. So what that involved was getting real life presentations into the virtual world. We used a standard webcam, and the computer scientists within the group developed this technology that would allow motions. So for example, if the presenter was waving their hand - it would be translated into a virtual world so the avatar representing the presenter would also wave. So what this meant is that presentations or conferences that were happening even in IBM Canada or America would be cast in to a virtual world. We would be using 'SecondLife' at the time, so that people in the UK or in the rest of the world could log in and have a similar experience without the travel.

3. What was your role?

My role as the business student within the team really involved two main things. Project management - I was responsible for the documentation, presentations and just generally getting the project to move on time. And secondly I was involved heavily with talking to clients both inside IBM and outside to make sure what we were delivering as a project was what the business would want.

4. What's the culture like at IBM Hursley?

The culture at Hursley is quite different to anything I've experienced before. It's quite bizarre really. You could be sitting in the canteen next to people in suits having business meetings, and yet you're also next to people in jeans and t-shirts talking about computer games, technology and Facebook and all these different social networking things. It's really quite diverse a lot of energy and brains down there.

5. How did your Extreme Blue placement help you when you went back to uni?

I think the placement with Extreme Blue really did help at University. Probably the main thing is my time management skills. Working on an intense project really gave me the skills I needed for my dissertation. Plus I took the project ideas that I was working on at IBM and used them as my final project at university

6. What was the best bit about Extreme Blue?

I think the best bit about being on Extreme Blue, other than meeting some great friends there, was the level of exposure I got and level of experience. It was a really intense programme which meant I was communicating with some really high level people, getting to experience what it was like out in the field talking with clients. It gave me an idea of a whole business process all in the space of 12 weeks.

7. What support was in place?

During the Extreme Blue scheme there was a lot of support and that was simply because the programme is so intense you only have the 12 weeks. So you're given a business mentor and also a technical mentor to support you. You can ask questions and get their guidance but ultimately the project is up to you and you say about how you want it to progress, but there are people there to help you all the way. I was speaking with distinguished engineers as well as speaking with my colleagues who are still at university so there are all levels of support, you're certainly not alone.

8. What would you highlight about working at IBM?

I think the highlights within IBM as a business really involves the work-life balance that IBM has. IBM understands that you are an individual you have your interests and hobbies and you can actually bring those in to work, you can set up groups within the IBM club. It's really not all just work, work, work which I perhaps thought it was before I came into IBM. It's more diverse and individual you can do what you want when you want. Which I think is a really important thing.

9. Would you recommend the Extreme Blue scheme?

I would absolutely recommend the scheme to anybody looking for a placement, whether they're from a technical background or a business background. The amount of experience you gain within those 12 weeks is phenomenal. I don't know if you can get that anywhere else.