

Credited Internship Program (CIP) at SBS-EM: interview with our student Guillaume Cruyt



INTERVIEW OF GUILLAUME CRUYT – STUDENT AT SBS-EM

Interview

HOW WAS YOUR CIP IN MEXICO?

I had been in Mexico for a certain period and I liked the country and the language a lot. I already had planned to do an internship and I figured out that doing it over there would be a great opportunity to **combine professional experience, language development and cultural enrichment**. I therefore signed a **5-month internship with a company called Farm Direct Foods Latin America (FDFLA)**. FDFLA operates in the food service sector, employs 76 people in 4 Latin American countries and generates annual revenues between 20 and 25 million dollars.

My objective was to redefine their financial planning sector, the first step was to **search for strong theory and common practices in the financial planning sector** throughout the market, and then I would have

to **understand how the financial planning worked within FDFLA** and finally **propose and implement the possible changes** to do in order to enhance the financial function. The whole internship took place in Spanish; it was a challenge but enabled me to practice the language daily.

WHAT DID YOU LIKE THE MOST DURING THIS EXPERIENCE?

Learning about finance (or any other branch) in class is always interesting but will never fully prepare you to corporate reality. I enjoyed being able to **apply the theory I learned to real situations**. Other than that, the internship was a great way to **experience the corporate environment before finishing my studies** and having to look for a job.

HOW ABOUT YOUR SUPERVISORS AND THE PROJECT'S MANAGEMENT IN GENERAL?

The whole team helped me a lot during the internship and were always available if I had any questions, but it was before I had found my internship that they helped me the most. I was running late on schedule and the Mexican company who wanted to hire me could not meet certain requirements, however, **the team at Solvay gave me additional time and found an agreement with the company so that they could hire me.**

IN WHICH PROJECT DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE COMPANY? WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU?

As cited before, my objective was to redefine their financial planning sector, the first step was to search for strong theory and common practices in the financial planning sector throughout the market, then I would have to understand how the financial planning worked within FDFLA and finally propose and implement the possible changes to do in order to enhance the financial function.

The most important moment for me was **when I had a meeting with the CEO, CFO, the strategy director and the financial planner of the company to present my findings and propose solutions.** They all gave me an hour of their time to listen to the solutions I had and they all **gave me the green light to start implementing some changes** to the financial function of the company. That meeting was a **highlight** of my internship as it showed me they were taking my work seriously and that my work would have a real impact.

The internship was very interesting but the obvious advantage of doing it in a foreign country is to be able to move around during the weekends and discover amazing new places every week. I cannot pinpoint one travelling memory in particular since all were amazing, **I strongly recommend doing your internship in a foreign country, and your experience will be multiplied.**

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ANY ADVICE TO STUDENTS WHO WANT TO DO A CIP?

Do it in a **sector or a project for which you have a passion.** I would also recommend **doing it in a SME** because you will be having more responsibilities to deal with.

Another thing is, while looking for an internship, **don't forget that the Solvay team is there to help you,** even though they ask certain requirements, their true objective is to help you to find an internship and they can adapt to particular cases if you can prove that you have a serious internship proposition.

FINALLY, CAN YOU GIVE ME KEY POINTS ABOUT THE SKILLS YOU'VE LEARNED IN MEXICO?

- Finance
- Corporate culture
- Corporate structure
- Multi-cultural teamwork
- Multi-discipline teamwork
- Usage of Excel
- Spanish

About the CIP

The **One-semester full-time** credited internship is a program organized for Master students in order to help them further prepare themselves to enter the job market after graduation.

This program incorporates an element of **supervision and guidance** throughout the students' internship experience from the primary steps of signing a contract with the employer to final evaluation and granting the credits.

Finding an internship will be the student's **responsibility.** However, **a program coordinator will support students** to find an internship position, supervises administrative process and secures students' access to all career related resources of SBS-EM.

Interested?



Contact our Career Services Manager.

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Martine George, PhD, PCC

Professor of Management Practice

Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management

CAP Academic Director

Executive Coach

Guillaume's supervisor during his internship

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CREDITED INTERNSHIP PROGRAM?

CIP is a wonderful possibility given to MA2 students to **acquire a first real professional experience** of 4-6 months before ending their Master studies at SBS.

As credited internship professor, it is a real pleasure for me to see students **discovering the professional landscape, exploring a topic, a role in a specific industry**. This is for the student an opportunity to test a job that seems interesting to him/her or to confirm **that a professional dream they have in mind could be a reality**.

It is also amazing to see students unfolding their real potential and their knowledge acquired through the Master curriculum. A great moment is the final presentation when they explain us what they have learned and how this experience has been transformational for them.

WHAT ARE THE STRONG POINTS OF GUILLAUME?

Guillaume is:

- ✓ Bold
- ✓ Ambitious
- ✓ Eager to learn and curious
- ✓ Analytical
- ✓ Ready to leave his comfort zone (learning and working in a Spanish environment with beginner level of Spanish at the start)

- ✓ Convincing the company to adopt new practices
- ✓ Humble
- ✓ Very articulated

WHAT ARE THE LEARNING OF GUILLAUME TODAY?

- Learning a new **culture**, a new **language**
- **Acting as an analyst** reporting to CFO
- **Convincing** their colleagues and boss to develop new practice of financial reporting
- **Taking risk**
- **Developing presentation skills** to management audience
- **Developing his knowledge in Excel**
- **Requesting help** when needed
- **Developing project management skills and practice**



Gaëtan Piret

Honorary chief executive officer

Immobel

Guillaume's supervisor during his internship

*The CIP is a great opportunity for our students to **develop their soft skills such as business communication, problem solving, conflict resolution, intercultural and interpersonal relations**. For me, it has been a good opportunity to **reconnect** with my Alma matter and contribute as a coach with my knowledge and experience; I would recommend this experience to other members of The Solvay Alumni Network.*

THE STRONG POINTS OF GUILLAUME ARE a good understanding of the **financial operations** of a Latin American firm. A successful **integration** to a new cultural environment, including the learning of a new language.

WHAT ARE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO STUDENTS WHO WANT TO DO A CIP?

I encourage all master students at Solvay to **participate in this program** and consider also an international internship; potential employers highly value this early professional

experience. I would also recommend **choosing carefully the internship project**, being in face with the company, their representatives and the tasks to be fulfill.

SBS students are well-prepared for intellectual challenging experiences, so do not hesitate to accept challenging project!