

Work Experience Reflection Paper. Joyería Arte Momposino

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UNIVERSITY OF CARTAGENA

Work Experience Reflection Paper

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by

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Abstract

This project is the three-month experimental compilation of the “filigree museum” jewelry store located in the historic center of the city of Cartagena de Indias. The intention of this whole process was to acquire the necessary bases to adapt to an environment demanding work, learn how to maintain a good working environment, how to perform your tasks effectively, as well as other important points for the development of work skills in a company which will be reflected in this guide.

My purpose is to offer a guide through experiences in labor practice to the reader, in order to get an idea of how the company works and how this process is important for the development of certain skills in the work environment, as well as resolution of problems accurately and effectively, also how to make proposals in order to contribute to the improvement of the company's work quality.

Throughout the development of this experience you will find specific questions about the company in question, environmental management, solution to different problems, among other interesting points, which will have their respective answers.

Dedication

To my parents, who the trust never has lacked

And to all those who dare to daydream

Acknowledgements

To my parents for being my eternal support, always being attentive to me at all times, I never needed anything, despite all the difficulties that this process has been, they have always chosen to give their best and support me until the end. To each one of the professors that I had throughout my career, each one of them has been special and their very significant contribution to my life. To my colleagues and closest friends, for being my emotional and unconditional support and having lived with me many experiences together in all semesters, they are part of my memories, those that we never forget. To my boyfriend, thank you for continuing to be part of my life and for helping me to form my character and be with me in the most difficult moments of my life. To the university for having welcomed me as his student and having provided me with an incomparable academic education. To the Foreign Languages program for having witnessed my academic training and excellent guide in my professional training.

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“Work Experience Reflection Paper”

Context and Expectations

Context and background of the practicum site (clientele, location, physical structure/setting).

The jewelry is currently located in down town in Factory Street # 36-32, just in front of the Colombo. Previously the jewelry was in the Curato street when I began the practicum. The Curato street is one of the busiest streets for tourist in Cartagena, which helped the company's growth and more thanks to Madrid Square and Santo Toribio church which are nearby and they are down town tourist areas.

In Colombia, jewelery is a trade that opens great possibilities in the national market and in the international market, the majority of customers are from abroad, we can say that 90% of our jewelry customers are people who come from other countries to visit our city, the other 10% are people from the interior of the country and people who want their engagement ring and wedding rings.

The jewelry was not very big, it had a large room where the showcases of the jewelry were and the crafts were found and in the back was the bathroom. The space was comfortable and had the necessary adjustments and had air conditioning.

Company/organization's mission objectives and origins.

Mission.

Arte Momposino Jewelry seeks to be an important part of the special moments of our customers. In our jewelry we take care of providing customers, the most exclusive designs of Colombia with pieces 100 percent with Colombian materials. We want that every single customer can take with them a piece from Colombia.

View.

We want to project the jewelry store as the best in the country by presenting ourselves as a sensitive, elegant company and providing quality to all our clients, both nationally and internationally customer.

Values.

Our company is governed by fundamental values such as honesty, responsibility and seriousness, giving our clients high quality, prestige, excellence, creativity and innovation, teamwork, identity, professionalism and above all passion.

Organizational structure (boss, manager, etc.).

Arte Momposino Jewelry is a small company created by Mrs. Julia Echavez Cervantes but for health reasons her daughter Daniela Ospino Echavez is now the person in charge who

was my boss and my advisor was Jorge who is the oldest seller of jewelry and my partner. My boss and my co-worker are very kind people and they are young like me, which was one of the reasons why I could fit very well in the jewelry and the work environment is very nice and friendly and we always had a friendship so much outside as inside the company.

Expectations and personal goals prior to beginning the practicum.

From the beginning of my practices, my goal has been to improve my skills in English and French but when I started, my reality in the jewelry store, my expectations changed. Before starting in the labor field I thought that working in a jewelry store would be very difficult since I must learn the basic principles of jewelry and I also have to pay for the jewels if something went wrong and that is really expensive, but after the time I realized that everything is a matter of practice and my new goal was to become the best salesperson and improve my language skills and to create a new system for improve the sales in the company.

Clientele and Co-workers

Describe the clientele of this Company or organization. To whom are their services marketed? How do they reach their target clients?

The jewelry is field open for every one that wants to buy our product but we all know that buy jewels is a little expensive that's why the majority of our customer are people who can afford it. The jewelry store is located in down town, almost all of our customer are foreigner, most are from the United States, then the Argentines, Brazilians and Mexicans.

With respect to our national customer, most of our customers come to buy and send to make their engagement rings and wedding rings and they are usually sent to make in yellow and white gold.

In the jewelry there's always good moments and bad moments.

In jewelry there are always good times and bad times. As jewelry moves a lot sale thanks to tourism. Sales usually move when cruise ships come and when the off season comes, the company always tries to get customers who are about to get married or always looking to make rebates for the pieces.

Challenges in the workplace (in the physical space, resources, clientele, etc) What are the challenges that this company or organization faces on a daily basis or on a larger scale?

Having a jewelry store is a total challenge and keeping it is another much bigger level. As I mentioned earlier, the jewelries in Cartagena move with the tourism of the city and it is a challenge to always maintain sales to cover the needs of the company, both to pay the rent of the premises and to pay the payroll to the employees. As the low season approached, there were days when it was not sold and it was time to look for sales to solve the losses.

Another challenge we had in the company was the work space, even though it was a comfortable space, it was still a small place for us, thank God now the jewelery had the opportunity to move to a bigger and more spacious place, but in at that time there was not much space for us and it got to such a point that there was no room for customers and it was a bit uncomfortable to see them as some of them were left out in space.

Describe intagibles aspects of the workplace (culture, work ethic, moral) and general staff interation (among themselves and with clientele). Is the environment professional or informal?

Arte Momposino Jewelry is a company created ten years ago, its founder Julia Echavez came from Mompox with her husband and daughter to have more opportunities in the city. When they opened the jewelry and they brought the silver art better known as the momposino filigree that is a significant part of mompox.

In the work area they have their Mompox roots well marked and in the place there are photos of the most emblematic places there.

With regard to the policies of the establishment they are very strict with the dress code, although there is no uniform for the employees, they demand a dress and make-up to attend to the clients, the use of the telephone is prohibited and the visits of relatives also, although we are all young but in our work schedule we all behave professionally and they are very strict with me.

Immediate Supervisor/Mentor

Describe his/her role within the business and management style with you and with others.

My mentor is Daniela Ospino Echavez, she is the person in charge because her mother the founder has health problems and now she is in the United State. Daniela is a great person, she is more or less 22 years old, despite her age she is a very mature person. She has gone through difficult times and I have to take the reins of her home, that's why she is an example to follow. Daniela is a beautiful person but she is quite demanding with her employees, she likes that everything look good and she likes everything to be perfect, she is not a bossy person but she

likes that we are focus on work. She also is the person in charge of the designs of the garments and she is also in charge of paying all the bills and accounts of the jewels

Describe what your supervisor does really affectively in the workplace. Have you observed effective work habits? Are there aspects that you can implement in your own practices, or would you approach certain situation differently?

I have noticed that my mentor Daniela always tries to make the work area pleasant for her as well as for the employees and even more importantly, for the clients. I have noticed that very early in the morning upon arriving at the workplace, she greets us all very kindly, which is very important and generates good spirit, gives us a lot of confidence and tells us many things about her perception and evaluation of the business. It also quickly organizes the workplace and acclimates the place with a pleasant fragrance for all arriving customers. I have realized that in the work area it is very important to greet when you arrive, ask permission and always think before saying something, this maintains harmony and good and healthy coexistence between the people who share the place and a clear example of this is Daniela.

Thanks to the observation and Daniela, I have been able to realize these virtues that I can add to my way of treating people, how to live with them and taking into account to build healthy and lasting social relationships.

Describe ways this person could improve the overall management of the company and the execution of daily tasks in the office.

Daniela is a person who is characterized by her responsibility, order and rectitude at the moment of working, it is surprising how she is able to find a solution to the problems in a fast and effective way, I think that knowing her place of work very well is capable of find solutions without needing to stress. In that order of ideas, there where situations during my stay in which

these characteristics could be evidenced, for example, when I doubted myself and moments in which I did not know how to perform certain tasks; In those moments Daniela, being a very charismatic and empathetic person with others, knew how to approach me and how to tell me things without making me feel uncomfortable or guilty, so I learned fast and I felt motivated and encouraged thanks to her empathy.

It is also important to highlight her leadership ability in front of her business since it is impressive as in those moments in which she had to take charge of most of the tasks of the business and in addition to that, teach me to do my work, there I give myself account that is a leader who can overcome a lot of obstacles without major problem.

So from her, I learned that to be at the forefront of this type of activities requires great concentration and performance, it is also necessary to have the characteristics of a leader, those that will help you to be firm in the face of obstacles that you may encounter in your life.

In what ways has your mentor been most supportive to your professional development? In what ways has he/she not provided sufficient or guidance?

Since I started working in the jewelry, Daniela has been very aware of me, of my process and of my development as a professional, she has given me all the necessary help to be able to perform every task in the best way, she has corrected me when I have been wrong and has been very friendly with me. I think the only way in which Daniela has not lent so much her guidance is at working time, after she taught everything necessary to make my activities in my work area, she evaluates how can I afford a situation for myself, if something goes wrong, she tell me to be able to correct it and try it again. If she can be aware how I am about to do some sale, she does it. If I am about to make a mistake, she tells me in the way so that only I realize it. In this way, Daniela has allowed me to mature and solve the problems in my work area by myself.

Your role in the company

Describe the specific task you are responsible for and how you execute your objectives each day.

The first days in the jewelry shop were with my training in the workshop to learn how a jewelry store works and how the pieces are made.

After my training I joined to the normal activities of the store. My daily tasks were always to sweep and mop when I arrived at the store, then I have to take the jewels out of the safe to put them into the showcases, once to finish with that task we had to take out the handicrafts that are the Wayú backpacks, the bags in palm of Iraca and coconut palm, once finished with that we go to clean the soffits and the jewels and when everything is ready it is time to serve the clients, in our jewelry arrive foreigners from the United States, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil among others. At the end of the day after attending our customers it is time to collect the jewelry and crafts and keep them in the safe and finish with the day.

Describe the biggest challenges you faced during the semester a new, unexpected experience you encountered working for this company.

I think that one of the biggest challenges I had to face in jewelry was the fact of losing my fear of talking with foreigners; it is not easy to see how people get impatient when you are not able to explain what you want, situations like this generate a lot of stress.

Another of the challenges I had to face was to learn how to manage money and that is why I know how to make the sales correctly avoiding mistakes whether they are sales in cash or through credits. On one occasion I had to complete the value of a product sold since there was an error in its sale and there was an embezzlement of at least 5%. It should be noted that another

of the challenges that I had to face was the handling of jewelry protocols which I had to learn, how they organize the jewels, how they give them the value, what the jewels are called, how they make them and how they keep.

Thanks to the help provided by my boss, I was able to face all these situations in the best way since she was very patient with me and explained to me step by step each of the details necessary to perform a certain task in the best way.

Identify your strengths and weaknesses as an employee. In what ways have you felt successful? In what areas do you need to focus on improving?

I think that punctuality is within my strengths since I always showed up at my place of work 20 minutes before my workday will begin, that is, 20 minutes before the rest of the team.

Another of the strengths that I have in my work area is my responsibility when performing certain tasks, my approach and my optimism for doing my best.

I am very proactive I like to look for the most efficient way to perform my tasks. In addition, I try to respect the opinion of the client.

I am quite persuasive, despite not finding many times the terms to express my ideas managed to convince customers to be satisfied with their purchase.

Among the things I need to improve is my patience, many times expected outside the workplace because sometimes my bosses were late or delayed a bit because they were presented with some inconvenience, so I had to find where to sit.

I need to improve my concentration at work a bit since sometimes I have made mistakes that although they are not so serious in sales can at some time in the long term be.

Identify a Problem

Identify a particular problem within the company that requires further work. This issue may be an inefficient work environment, problems with morale, poor use of resources, financial problem, etc., or it may also be on a larger scale within the industry or in Cartagena. What, in your perspective, could make this company or organization perform better?

One of the problems that I could see in my stay in the jewelry store is lack of publicity from them part. Fortunately, it is not a problem that is significantly serious but it has direct influences in the performance of the business in the long term way and in addition to this, over time it can be the cause of other problems of greater complexity such as lack of profits, which can damage the maintenance of the business and for that reason, make layoffs or in the worst case the total closure of the place.

Due to the lack of publicity and knowledge of jewelry, having good days when it comes to sales is a matter of luck, since not being known, people do not often buy, although sometimes there are very good days but it can be better and more frequently if it were more recognized because in this way everyone has a benefit; the employees keep their work and the jewelry continues to function normally.

Suggest meaningful (and realistic) solutions to this problem for further investigations in the second part of your practicum.

In accordance with the problem expressed in the previous paragraph, I would recommend the following as possible solutions:

- Distribute advertising in a physical and personal way about jewelry which has superficial information about it.

- Design a web page which will be in charge of the administration of a person designated by the jewelry store and that contains more detailed information about the jewelry and the sale of the items being promoted.
- Create jewelry accounts in the most prominent social networks in which jewelry is made known and thus have a faster and wider social impact on people by publishing photos and images of the articles.

Identify a Problem

Explain in great detail the problem.

The jewelry has been operating in the city center for quite some time and for longer than it has been, it is not well known as other brands and this affects the results obtained at the end of the month. This depends largely on the advertising that is distributed, which is precarious because they do not give it the importance it deserves. The administrative staff may not be affected much since the earnings of them in proportion of the workers, ones is much greater, since for a sale only 5% of the total value, also called “commission” is obtained, but certainly if the number of people who come to see the items will increase, we would benefit from a greater number of sales, which represents a greater number of profits. In other words, greater publicity, website or accounts in social networks are important to publicize the work that is done in jewelry and that generates greater income for workers.

Why is this situation problematic? Are there underlying causes for this situation that demand further exploration? Why does this issue deserve attention and improvement? Support your claims with scholarly sources.

This situation is problematic in the way that the jewelry is affected by the low demand of its products due to lack of publicity and for that reason it reaches a no return point where workers have to be laid off to reduce costs. Certainly, the jewelry is a technically "stable" but it can easily fall into a crisis of low demand because good days become a matter of luck and it is not precisely the idea. I think one of the causes of this problem is the perception of the administration on the distribution of advertising, they have been told that "publicity stuffs" are expensive, that have to be made and that the jewelry store is not willing to assume because "as it is, it is fine", a perception of conformity that affects us as workers that we have to be 8 hours and if we are lucky to receive a little more than 30,000 Colombian pesos per day. For this reason, jewelry should be given the impetus to implement the distribution of advertising so that the demand for products increases and favors us all with greater income opportunities. It should be noted that paying for advertising should be considered as an "investment" not as an "expense".

Proposal for Solutions

Propose meaningful solutions to the problem. Support your ideas with scholarly sources. (This section should be a short literature review.)

Your proposal should constructive-outlining specific strategies for improvement.

We will begin by stating our first solution to the problem of low demand for products for sale of jewelry, demand caused largely by the precarious investment and support for its advertising. Normally those who are potential buyers of the company's products are tourists: Americans, Russians, Canadians, Chileans, Argentines, among many more, this is because the jewelry culture is not rooted in the middle class of the city of Cartagena which is the majority, seeing it from this point, it is necessary to be emphatic in that the jewelry is recognized by

tourists as one of the most important in the city and this is largely achieved by the image that manages to sell the advertising of it. The effectiveness of this “improvement” option is directly proportional to the level and magnitude of the advertising; It is not the same to offer advertising cards than to install a large advertisement of the company in an important and visible place in the city, which is undoubtedly the quadruple of effective and generates a visual impact on tourists who visits the city. But to begin with, my proposal is based on offering at tourist points such as: monuments, hotels, squares, the presentation cards of the jewelry in Spanish and English on the back, through a jewelry staff. The cards would be made through my lithography company “LEVA impressions” generating benefits for the jewelry store and my person.

The second proposal is based on the design of a web page, as a catalog that serves as a guide for those interested in obtaining the products they want; In the first instance it would only work as digital advertising since I do not know if the company can be interested in receiving purchases online, but to begin with, it would offer the particular details of the items as well as the location of the jewelry within the city and the web address. This page would be added in addition to the physical card.

The third and final proposal is based on the fact that technology more specifically social networks are intrinsically part of the privacy of society today, in other words, it is much easier to reach people through social networks in those that invest a large part of their “leisure time”. So we will take advantage of this factor to create official jewelry accounts which will have advertising on the items for sale with original and striking photos of the products and through personal contacts we can share publications to reach acquaintances accounts, creating connections between the company and people. With these three proposals we will be able to greatly increase the popularity and sales of the company.

Implementation of Plans

Provide a detailed account of how the proposed strategies were implemented. Include support in the form of meeting minutes, proposals to supervisors, employee accounts and testimonials from clients, etc.

What worked effectively? What proved to be ineffective?

To start proposing the ideas, a project was carried out in which it was necessary to present the reasons and objectives that were wanted to be achieved through them. The ideas were presented at a monthly meeting of workers in which they talk about the direction and objectives of the company throughout the month, as well as the results obtained in the previous month and suggestions are presented in order to find solutions or improvements to various situations that may or may have been presented in jewelry.

The ideas were exposed and opinions were shared in the working group, in the final evaluation, the ideas that were selected for possible implementation test were: distribute physical information about jewelry and the creation of accounts in prominent social networks, all with the purpose of promoting the advertising and the services that the jewelry offers to its clients and in this way, to project a furniture in the income for the current month.

Through LEVA impressions, 200 jewelry advertising cards were made, which were delivered at strategic points that contained a large flow of tourists and the “museodelafiligrana” in the social network “Instagram” account was created to impact the market through platforms digital.

As expected, there was an increase in visits to the establishment of 15% as well as the monthly value recorded in 20%.

The idea of the website was ruled out by unanimous decision, the reason: we did not have trained personnel for the creation and maintenance of a website.

“Some of the ideas proposed by Luisa had been considered in the past, but thanks to the security imposed on her project, we were able to prevent risks, maximizing the benefits” Daniela

Outcome

Describe the results of your work. Did your investigation and implementation of strategies yield positive results? Why or why not?

Draw conclusions and provide recommendations regarding the problem.

Reflect on what this experience has taught you as an employee at this company.

How can you apply what you've learned to your future work placements.

-Definitely the proposals yielded positive and beneficial results for the company, these proposals had been previously considered by the jewelry management team, however, support in statistical terms of risk reduction and increased revenue was necessary for that these ideas could be realized. Thanks to the planning and projection of the objectives the short-term goal was reached, eventually the publicity will continue to grow and with it the popularity of the company. It began with a 20% increase in total monthly income and is projected to end the year, an increase of 30%.

-From the conclusions set out in the previous subscripts, it should be noted that it is important to continue building the habit of creating more publicity as the business progresses and do not fear when we find something in our workplaces that can be improved, instead, we must contribute since it can be a great opportunity to stand out within your company.

- This experience has allowed me to reflect the teaching and growth of which I have witnessed thanks to the people who were guiding me throughout this journey. I have learned how it works and how we should behave in a company, it has taught me to become part of the work group, understand coexistence and how to adapt.

I think that something that has remained in my mind to never forget is to identify when there is something in the work area that can be improved and proposals to improve it can be devised. This way your opinion will become very valuable within your workplace and you will make the environment more effective for everyone.