

Reflective report for intergrative management

[Business](#), [Management](#)



A week before we leave the UK for Christmas holidays, we have been told that we will visit Grenoble (on Saturday 19/01/04) as part of a study visit. As soon as we got back in January, we were given a schedule including all the activities and the lectures that we were going to attend during our stay in Grenoble (lectures included managing cultural differences, French business environment, personnel recruitment and Euro's single currency's impact on France would take place in the university of Grenoble). It is worth mentioning that during our stay we would meet with the manager of Carrefour in Grenoble and the one of Alpe d'Huez resort.

That could give us the opportunity to be in contact with managers in their own work environment and be able to pose our questions directly to them. During the second and the last day of the timetable there was planned a trip for skiing and spend time to relax at the ski resort. I did not want to find myself not been prepared during the lectures in Grenoble so I spent some hours, the week before we leave, searching in the internet for general information about the topics that we were going to discuss.

One day before we leave I was really excited and I stayed a couple of hours in my room trying to find out what I wanted to gain from that new experience. Since I am coming from a country which is part of EMU (Greece) but I leave in the UK which is not participating in the Euro-zone I wanted to see how people's and businesses objectives and strategies varies across EMU and of course outside of it. After we got rid of our worries (of how the trip is going to be) when we arrived at Grenoble, on 02/02/04 it was the time for our first lecture; French business environment.

Mr George Room presented many figures and tables during his lecture which made the picture , of how French business operate, more clear inside my mind and especially I was able to make comparisons between UK's and France unemployment rates, taxation, unit labour costs etc. At the end of that lecture I realized that I had broaden my knowledge about the different environments that businesses operate across Europe as I had been taught in economics , from Peter Bell, during the first semester here in Britain.

The same afternoon, John Sadowsky was responsible to inform us of how to manage cultural differences around the world. I never had the opportunity to read any scholarly articles about that topic and my only knowledge was limited to my observations in my everyday life when I first came in the UK from Greece. During Mr Sadowsky's lecture I had the feeling that knowledge was "floating" inside the room from the lecturer to each one of my class mates.

I was trying to gather the most of the information that was given, from both sides (teachers and students opinion)and at the end I had the feeling that I gained knowledge in something completely new to me. I thought that I already know how people act in Japan, Italy, Germany, and USA and more important that I can now understand their behavior without even being there in my whole life. I remember that when we got back to the hotel I spent some time with my classmates in my room trying to find more information about our cultural differences.

On Tuesday 3rd of February we met with the manager of Carrefour while on 5th with the one of Alpes d'huez. Two companies which operate in different

markets but with the same objective: the satisfaction of the customer.

During these two visits I tried to gain as much information as I could in order to learn how these companies deal with the problems that may arise and what methods they use to attract new customers and keep their existing ones satisfied. My comment for these two visits will be that: simple and smart ideas can make the difference for a company.

Some of the strategies that Mr Cristian told us, that Carrefour are adopting, I believe that can be applied in many other industries and with a well organized management can lead to prosperity. On Wednesday 4th of February we attended a lecture about the single currency "the Euro". Although I already knew everything that Mr Phil Eyre said about the single currency and the EMU, I believe that I broaden even more my knowledge about how businesses operate in the same industry(since a really useful video was presented about how Rynair and Air France cope with their customers).

In general, I can say that although I did not find in Grenoble what I was expecting to find(as I said in the introduction) I gained from the whole trip the experience of being in contact with real business environment and the opportunity to attend lectures in a university which operates in a completely different way of the one's in UK as far as it concerns its culture. I believe that I found links between the information I found in Grenoble and the lectures I have been given in the university of Brighton until now.

The trip offered me the opportunity to test some facts and experience how things work in real life rather than just reading a theory from a book. I hope

that one day I will be in a position, again, to say that I am grateful for living such an amazing experience. A really warm thank you goes to my teachers in the University of Brighton and everybody in Grenoble who made this trip an unforgettable experience.