

Dear ParisTech Arts & Metiers,

I hereby, Nicolas VERY, give my full authorization to publish the content of this letter on your website in recognessence of the financial support that you have provided me with.

Full Name: Nicolas VERY

Date: 10/18/2010

Signature: NV

Name of student, background, professional aspirations.

I am Nicolas Very. Coming from a preparatory class to enter an “Engineering Graduated School” (PTSI-PT*), my Graduated school “Arts et Métiers ParisTech” provided me the scientific and technologic basis to understand the world of mechanics and adapt myself to the industry. Coming from France with the idea of being later a program manager, this internship far away from my native culture, made me take some distance regarding my future. It is now through a certification/stress engineer that I see myself in 5 years.

Tell us how you were able to get your internship, and the date and length of your stay.

Involved in a program that lets students do an internship of 6 months abroad France, I started to look for an internship in December 2009 while this one started in July 2010 until January 2011. It is really difficult to interest American companies with ours resumes because they don’t want to spend time to train you in English. But thanks to my personal network, I manage to have a chance to go to the US.

Please tell us the company or university where you interned and the objective of your internship.

In March, I knew that I was about to join a well-known company of the US in the state of TEXAS and discovering, during 6 months, 2 departments I never had the opportunity to work in: a Test Laboratory and a Certification group.

My host was RECARO Aircraft Seating. Well known in Europe for the sport seats, this company had two main advantages: first of all, it’s in an English speaking country (which I consider being the language of the engineer); then it provides equipments to be integrated in a plane. In a close future, aeronautics is the field in which I am considering to work for.

I have been hired for one main reason: to manage the Test Lab during the holidays of my first manager in September. In just two months I had a pretty good understanding of this new department because I was about to manage three people working for the Test Lab, follow two programs of testing at the same time and continue to provide new ideas to improve the process.

Why you were excited to work there?

I was initially involved in a double diploma with Spain, but considering English is the language of the engineers, I was also looking for an internship in the US or in England. After several unsuccessful attempts in different countries, I didn't hesitate while the opportunity to go to the US occurred.

The first biggest step is to find the company. Then to obtain the VISA is as complicated as to find your company... This step can be so long that it makes you give up or strengthen definitely your motivation to go to the US.

However, I knew that this trip would be incomplete without being involved in the heart of the culture. Without speaking about the cost of living (extended stay hotel, collocation...), I was also looking for a welcoming family. It is finally the CEO himself who asked if I would be interested to leave in the house of one of his employees.

Tell us how you used the funds provided by American Friends of Arts et Metiers

To obtain the J-1 US VISA is long and expensive. I spent more than 1200€ before going to the US embassy!

Once in the US, the cost of leaving can be very expensive considering the apartment (\$800/month), the car (to rent a car is very expensive, the first affordable car is around \$5000), food...

Thanks to the financial support of AFAM, I manage to pay all my pre-departure obligations which were already a lot considering the final cost.

Summarize your internship, how you achieved the company objectives, as well as your own personal goals and lessons from this experience

I knew I had to learn all the things to run the Test Lab, and a new intern coming from Germany was about to join the Lab in October. Regarding this situation, I created the Handbook of the Test Lab. It is a big book which summarizes all the process, data, past experiences, programming and everything else which provided the required files to prepare, run and track all the tests. In parallel, I developed a planning showing the charge of the Lab over the months. This initiative allowed us to postpone some due date for the following tests regarding our previous experience.

Then I have been transfer to the certification group. I first had to develop the weight branch with automatic spreadsheets providing an estimation of the weight of each seat, the Center of Gravity... Then, in order to have an overview of the Certification group (much bigger than the Test lab), my second manager asked me to be involved in all the aspect of the certification group, and make another big handbook at the end to train new people faster: Dynamic tests, Certification Test Plan, Qualification Test plan, Ballasting Plan, Flammability and all the reports going with.

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How this impacted your professional aspirations

This internship made me realize that managing people could be much more complicated than I initially thought. I found that the way of thinking in Europe and here in the US is really different: more consideration given to the specific skills, a permanent way of thinking how to make/save more money, more direct interpersonal communication...

It was a very fulfilling experience and in my future I want to keep in touch with this culture even if I work in Europe.