

# 2014

The Geneva School of  
Diplomacy



**Name of the organization:** International Air Transport Association  
(IATA)

**Division/Department/Unit:** IATA Training & Development Institute  
(ITDI)

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**[INTERNSHIP FINAL REPORT]**

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**Name of Supervisor**

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## **Abstract**

The internship programme that I have had the great opportunity to be apart of is at the International Air Transport Association (IATA) located at the Geneva Airport. I am working in the IATA Training and Development Institute (IATA) as a Training Coordinator (TC). The ITDI is responsible for providing training to working professionals in the aviation industry. Participants come from airlines, airports, ground handling companies, Air navigation Services (ANS), Civil Aviation Authorities, Freight Forwarders etc.

The Geneva office is focused on training in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. ITDI has a number of IATA training centers around the world as well as in partnership with regional training partners.

As a Training Coordinator, my key role is to coordinate the courses at the Geneva training center; ensuring that they run smoothly and that the participants are satisfied with the learning experience. To delve deeper, I am also responsible from the initial phases of participant enrolment, payment of the course, collating the course material and sending it for printing etc. There are many elements in my work, and when the course has been concluded and the certificates have been distributed – it is a great feeling to oversee all phases of the process – from beginning to end.

## **PART ONE**

### **Introduction**

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) represents more than 240 airlines worldwide – making up 84% of the total air traffic. IATA is a trade association not only to represent and support the airlines in the industry, but also to help establish industry policies on pertinent aviation issues. At the heart of the association, IATA works towards the implementation of the development in global standards, systems and advocacy positions.

More specifically, the department that I am currently working in is the IATA Training and Development Institute (ITDI). ITDI works towards training working professionals in the aviation industry as well as training businesses all around the world. The focus of ITDI is towards enhancing and developing the international standards and industry regulations with the commitment to making the aviation industry more safe, secure and sustainable.

The training is offered at our IATA training centers, located worldwide as well as in partnership with IATA Training Partners. ITDI also offers in-company training and via distance learning. The objective is to ensure that all training opportunities are catered for to all working professionals that wish to do the training.

My internship at IATA commenced on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2014 and will conclude on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September – making it a 6-month contract. However, recently speaking with my Supervisor and Manager of ITDI, I have been fortunate enough to be offered the possibility of extending an additional 5 months to my internship; making it a total of 11 months. This is still a pending request that I hope will have a positive outcome.

Most internships in IATA, especially in the ITDI department lead to a contract position. It is therefore of great hope and determination for me to work hard towards the possibility of obtaining a full-time job in ITDI as a training coordinator. My long-term goal would be to obtain a contract and work for a few years.

The training that we offer to working professionals is also available to IATA staff. This is a great opportunity to further obtain knowledge in the aviation industry and also in organizational and management expertise. With this in mind, my hopes are to work in a place that continues to challenge me and a place where I can continue to learn.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

As a Training Coordinator, I have the responsibility of ensuring that all aspects of running a course from beginning to end, run smoothly.

From the initial phases of my work, I first focus on maintaining the registration system for each of the courses that are assigned to me. As I am new to the team, my focus is purely on Geneva courses that are held at our ITDI center. The other team members focus on courses held in other parts of Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Maintaining the registrations includes confirmation to participants of their registrations, assisting them with registering to a course if they are having difficulties and ensuring that they have or are in the process of making the payment for the course.

Some of the challenges I have faced in this phase of my work are mainly towards participants not having made a payment. As we offer three payment options (credit card, bank transfer and IATA Clearing House) the great challenge is dealing with orders that have selected bank transfer as their method of payment and have not yet made the payment. This is the only option that allows participants to register without making the payment upon registration.

Once the participant has made the payment, if they need a short-term visa to enter into Switzerland I take the responsibility to issue out a visa invitation letter for them. It is highly important to ensure that they have made the payment as there are a number of fraudulent attempts of people faking a registration just to get visa into Switzerland. The issuance of a visa invitation letter I find needs great attention to detail as usually this process is with urgency (near the commencement of the course) and I need to ensure that all information is correct as it will take the Embassy some time to process the application.

With regards to the registration system, I also respond to general inquiries that concerns course registration and information on content of the courses.

The duty of a Training Coordinator, I find has to juggle many different tasks and responsibilities simultaneously. As I continuously work to assist participants, I also work alongside the Product Manager (PM) of the course. Each IATA course is apart of a portfolio that focuses on key subject areas in aviation, for example: Air Navigation Services, Environment, Ground Operations, Security etc. Each portfolio has an allocated Product Manager that is responsible for the overall quality of the course material and selecting the

appropriate Instructor to teach the course. Once the Product Manager has confirmed that the course will run (usually when there are 4 or more participants enrolled in the course) it becomes my duty to liaise with the Instructors to arrange their travel arrangements and hotel accommodation. As the course start date approaches I coordinate with the PMs concerning the course material. Once I receive the course material, I must ensure that all files have been converted to pdf (due to copyright reasons) and send it for printing.

All our courses commence on a Monday and usually conclude on a Friday, this is our standard 5-day course. However, we do also have courses that are 1-day, 2-day, 3-day, 4-day and even 10-day courses.

The Friday before the course, it is my duty to set up the training rooms according to course type and the requirement of the instructor. On the first day of the course I do a short 10-minute opening presentation to welcome the participants. I introduce them to the instructor and the Product Manager and briefly explain some of our basic procedures regarding the course, grading system as well as more general comments about our training center and facilities. Throughout the course, I am on call for whenever the Instructor or participants may need something.

Every Wednesday our ITDI department holds a Meet and Greet for all the participants that are attending a course that week. We offer them croissants and juice and encourage networking not only between participants but this is also a great opportunity for us to network as well. The Meet and Greet gives the participants the opportunity to ask the Training Coordinators, Instructors and the Product Managers questions relating to courses and diplomas that we offer. During this 30-minute Meet and Greet, all the Training Coordinators take a class photo to provide to all the participants at the end of the course.

Nearing the end of the course, if the Instructor has already released grades, we can go ahead and generate the certificates and attendance letters to hand out on the last day at the closing of the course. However, if the grades are not out during this time, usually the week after we follow-up with the Instructors and post all the certificates to each Participant.

Throughout the whole process of the courses that we coordinate, all Training Coordinators must continue to administer finances for each course. This includes following up on course fees and payments and ageing reports and generating invoices. The key goal in this regard is to ensure that our courses are fully paid and do not generate bad debts. A bad debt is an order

that has not been paid for more than 90-days. Our aim is to ensure that these orders do not reach bad debt.

## **Comments on Assignment**

Even though my job as a Training Coordinator is demanding, challenging and highly diverse, it ensures that I am always busy and allows me to focus on the details to ensure everything runs smoothly. I very much enjoy having to juggle many different tasks as I feel it forces me to stay organized and strive to be more efficient in the time that it takes me to meet my objectives. Even though some days I find myself staying back at work past regular working hours, I find that the enjoyment of the work makes time fly and I often do not realise how much time I have spent in the office.

There are times when I am completely overwhelmed from too many emails in my inbox and too many random tasks to complete. I am however very fortunate that my Supervisor Nestor Rino is always reiterating that we must always be transparent and honest if things get too much. We always have full support not only from Nestor but we support each other as a team. Each Training Coordinator has a “back-up” that is there to support them when the work gets too much, when one is on sick leave or on vacation leave. To have such strong trust and support from each other really makes me feel comfortable in my work knowing that if things get too difficult, it is not a bad thing to speak up about it.

## **PART TWO**

### **Work Experiences**

Prior to this internship, I had very limited work experience. Mid-summer last year I interned for four months at Interpeace; a peacebuilding organization. I was hired to focus entirely on efforts to recruit Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to join the Peace Day Initiative and be apart of the Peace Day coalition.

The key responsibility I had was partnership management and implementation. The key tasks included supporting the outreach strategy, working alongside NGO partners and evaluating



progress. The objective was to raise further awareness for the need for peace and the Peace Day event that was set for the 21<sup>st</sup> of September.

I was also given the opportunity to research, collate and present a how-to-guide on how to organize a meaningful peace day workshop that was presented to the NGO members of the Peace Day coalition. This experience gave me great freedom to be creative and to establish something meaningful that I knew was working towards a greater cause.

My experience at Interpeace helped me greatly during my interview for the IATA internship position. Not only did it provide me with administrative experience that I am constantly adapting in my current work, but it allowed me to also show my current Employer my achievements. One of the questions posed in my interview was “what is your greatest achievement?” to this I had the opportunity to show them that at Interpeace I managed to recruit 300 new NGOs to the Peace Day Coalition. I feel that this showed my current Employer that I am hard working, determined and willing to meet targets.

## **The Impact of My Work**

The most rewarding part of my work is knowing that I am contributing to the training of working professionals in the aviation industry. To be able to assist participants in helping them acquire the skills and knowledge they need to adapt in their work is very rewarding. In essence, with the training institute; we work to make aviation more safer, efficient and sustainable than ever before.

One of the most highly demanded courses that we offer are the Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR) courses. The safety and security portfolio is one of the most demanded and important in the aviation industry. Participants that attend these courses must have an active certificate of prior training in DGR and must renew this certification every two years.

It is of great importance to ensure that Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR) courses are coordinated to the highest standards as the result of the intensive course on participants greatly affects their work. If they fail in their assessment they are no longer permitted to work, as they do not hold the valid certification. Therefore, it is important to work closely with the Product Managers, the Instructor and the participants to ensure that there is a high success

rate. However, it is important to mention that as much as we can do to coordinate these courses to the best of our abilities, it is all up to the participant in the end.

All our certificates and diplomas are recognized in the aviation industry, by CAAs (Civil Aviation Authorities) and by ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization). To be responsible in issuing such qualifications to working professionals shows just how important our training is to the aviation industry.

## **Successes and Shortcomings**

The most rewarding achievement as a training coordinator is getting positive feedback from the participants and the instructors. To know that the work you have done has been effective and has added value to the overall experience is a great feeling. As there are many responsibilities and tasks to do (often times overlapping) it is important to ensure that all components come together in the end and that participants get value for their money.

For my own personal growth, being able to tick off the checklist that I have created for myself is a great success. Once a course has been confirmed I write up a checklist of all the necessary steps to complete up until the last day of the course. Each time I coordinate a course and create a new checklist, I find that I work more effectively and efficiently and try to work towards the objective in completing tasks with much quicker pace.

Some of the shortcomings include not having enough time to complete the tasks on the checklist. The main reason for this setback is because I am working on many different tasks from being on-call in case the instructor calls from the classroom with certain requests to answering emails and inquiries to liaising with Product Managers, the travel department and the finance department regarding outstanding payments. Even though the checklists help me to stay focused and work towards the goal of being more efficient, it does get difficult at times. Often times, the task at hand is very time consuming and therefore does not give enough time for other pending tasks. There is also the need for me to always cross-check everything that I do for errors; even though this is a good habit, it too adds to the time lost on other tasks.

## **My Expectations**

Prior to starting my internship, I was a little concerned with the possibility of not having variety in tasks and not having high responsibility as an intern. The main reason for my concern was due to the fact that at my previous internship at Interpeace, my only task was making phone calls and emailing NGOs to recruit for the Peace Day Coalition. This work became very monotonous and unchallenging and therefore I rarely felt motivated.

What really surprised me at IATA is that I do the exact same tasks and have all the responsibilities that the training associates have. It is a great feeling to be given such responsibility as it gives you the opportunity to grow, adapt and learn along the way. I feel more apart of the team knowing that I am facing the same responsibilities and challenges that all my Colleagues are facing. I was concerned (being the only Intern in my team) that I would not be taken seriously and that I would be diversified, however this is not the case.

## **Benefits of the Programme**

The key benefit to this programme is learning how to manage diverse responsibilities and tasks efficiently and effectively. Not only does it make the job much more fun and entertaining to have variety in day-to-day work, but it also helps to learn about the importance of prioritizing. I feel like I am constantly learning and readjusting my strategy to the tasks at hand, striving towards a positive outcome. This programme teaches time management and goal-setting and the importance of taking things step-by-step in order to piece together the finished puzzle at the end.

I find that this programme has benefits in all areas that are of great importance for a working professional. One of the benefits that I value the most is the one-on-one interaction with the participants and the instructors. As I mostly deal with participants and instructors via email and the phone, it is nice to meet them in person instead of just behind a computer screen. I find that this component adds to the value of my work. Meeting face-to-face provides a great opportunity to network and learn from others. Often times at the Meet and Greet I will ask participants and the instructors questions relating to what they do and more broadly questions relating to the aviation industry. As aviation is of interest to me, I find this the best way to learn more about the industry.

One of the benefits that I value the most is the opening presentation that each training coordinator must do for their courses. Even though this is a simple 10-minute task, I find that it helps me build my confidence. I find public speaking as one of my main weaknesses and having to do presentations in front of unfamiliar faces is a positive step towards this confidence. I find that public speaking is one of the most important skills to have in the workplace and therefore the more I practice, the better and more natural it will come.

## **PART THREE**

### **Observations and conclusions**

The experience that I have gained so far and will continue to gain has been of immense proportions. This is mainly due to the fact that I am involved in many different areas from customer service to logistics and coordination of courses. Having the responsibility to juggle many different tasks not only has made work a challenge, but it prepares me to be more efficient and to better manage my time.

I have observed that staying organized and planning well in advance will ensure for better results, efficiency in completing tasks and the overall quality of the work. Each individual works differently when it comes to planning and executing the objectives of the day. However, I find that visual checklists help to manage the workload and to see the successes and outcomes throughout the process. This tool also ensures that there is less room for error as it can quite often happen that you miss an important step or task.

Staying organized is definitely key to being effective at work, especially in my case where I have a number of courses overlapping and at different stages. At one point in time, I can be running two courses in the classrooms, preparing materials and the classroom for next week's course and organizing courses that will run 2 to 3 weeks in advance. Alongside, answering enquiries from interested participants and helping with registrations.

The second observation I have come across is learning how to prioritize. The issue that I tend to face in my work is that I think all tasks are important. It is therefore highly important to prioritize the tasks at hand from most important to least important. Tending to tasks that are of urgency of course takes precedence from those that can wait. In my work, I try to first focus on the urgent tasks, then moving onto some of the more challenging tasks.

I did also observe that in between tasks of urgency and difficulty, I tend to mix in easy or tasks that I find most enjoyable to do. I find that this helps to keep my motivation level up and in a way gives me a reward for accomplishing the harder more challenging tasks.

To conclude, I believe that staying organized, prioritizing and balancing the different tasks in difficulty has helped me to stay on top of things and to enjoy my day at work. The lower the stress at work the more enjoyable it becomes.

## **Recommendations**

I would highly recommend students to pursue an internship at IATA. In focus, to gain experience from the training and development institute will teach students time management, prioritizing tasks and efficiency. It will also give students more confidence and help with their networking skills. One of the most important skills to develop is being able to network and connect with different working professionals in the field of interest. For myself, having a great interest in aviation, working for IATA has allowed me to be exposed to more knowledge in the aviation industry.

I would highly recommend this internship to highly motivated individuals who thrive with having variety of tasks and workload and enjoys challenges. Even though the work can get overwhelming at times, I recommend working as a training coordinator as it gives the best overview of many different areas – from the financial aspect, to the customer service etc.

Having exposure to different tasks and responsibilities in an internship like this one will give the best experience and build-up of knowledge. Even though I have only completed 3-months of my internship so far, I feel that I already have learnt so much about my capabilities and it has helped me to pinpoint what I really enjoy doing. This internship is one of continuous learning, therefore I highly recommend to students as they will gain the most out of it and will enjoy doing so along the way.