

Interview with Hatice Bayar

Internship at Simge Tekstil, a producer of socks

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Hatice Bayar, at the time a 3rd year student of International Business and Languages at the University of Inholland in Diemen - Amsterdam, was in Istanbul from March to August 2006 to do an internship at a company producing socks. She chose to come to Turkey as she is of Turkish origin born in the Netherlands and "I never got to know my own culture very well. So I was hoping to get to know my own country better."

What were your expectations before coming to Istanbul?

I hoped to learn better how I would create and maintain international contacts. This can happen in different areas such as international purchase and sale, account management, international communication management and export management. I wanted to learn the Turkish business culture better because if I like it, I intend to work in or with Turkey. I hope that my internship gives me a better idea about what I could expect. I also wanted the opportunity to apply in real life what I have learned in theory, and also to understand my weak and strong points better, so that I can improve myself on the points in which I am not yet very good.

How did you first feel when you came to the Turkey? Did you know any people living there before you went?

I had my family (grandmother and aunt), so adjusting was easy. Before I came to Turkey I studied in Berlin for one semester, so I was a little bit used to being away from family and friends.

Can you tell us a bit about what you did within the hosting company?

I was a member of the sales team at Simge. My daily duties consisted of assisting the sales personnel and later on handling my own clients. I also assisted the purchase and quality control department with language issues.

How about your life outside work?

Istanbul is a very big city and after 6 months of exploring I still have not seen all of it. I got to know a lot of people inside and outside the company. I also had my family who took care of me. I had a wonderful time in Istanbul, time went by too fast.

What did you and didn't you like about living in Istanbul?

I liked Istanbul because it was so busy and 24/7 open. I did not like the public transport as it was poorly arranged.

Any surprises & astonishments?

The most 'weird' thing for me to learn was how people address each other. In Turkey when somebody is older than you, you have to say their name and then brother or sister (*abi, abla*) after it. Since I was one of the younger employees, I called almost everybody like that. Sometimes I would forget and just say their names and everybody would look weird at me, because I was being disrespectful.

What are your plans for the future?

Next year I hope to finish my studies and after that I have no plans, maybe I will do my master or start working.
