

Internship report Bayer Schering Pharma

My internship at Bayer Schering Pharma had duration of 5 months (fulltime), which means that it started on 1st of September 2010 and ended on the 31st of January 2011. Please find all information regarding my supervisor attached:

Birgit Heuser

Bayer Schering Pharma AG

Muellerstraße 178

13353 Berlin

birgit.heuser@bayer.com

<http://www.bayerscheringpharma.de/scripts/pages/en/index>

Bayer Schering Pharma is one of the ten largest specialty pharmaceutical companies in the world. They market their products in more than 100 countries, and in 2009 generated sales of over €10.4 billion. Their knowledge and expertise is offered to policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders on a wide range of issues affecting their business by engaging in constructive dialogue. Bayer Schering works and cooperates with health policy experts and trade organizations on national and global scale, like the German Association of Research-based Pharmaceutical Companies (vfa), the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries (EFPIA) and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA). Besides, Bayer Schering Pharma is constantly concentrating on the research and development of innovative drugs and novel therapeutic approaches.

During my internship at Bayer Schering Pharma I was occupied with different tasks and was simultaneously involved in several projects. However, my supervisor was basically responsible for the corporate website. I supported her in developing (which includes writing, translating, coordinating and finally publishing) stories for the internet regarding different issues that were finally all related to the latest pharmaceutical development, information on certain diseases or international affairs the company was involved in. In general, the section Global Media Relations and Issue Management was one of four subsections, that is to say Global R&D Communication, Internal Communication as well as Global Product Communication.

Some stories I developed were closely related to socio-political events or circumstances – for instance a story illustrating the World Health Summit, which has taken place in Berlin or a story about family planning programs in Africa. When talking about my position as corporate website support, there were two main projects that I was actively occupied with besides dealing with new stories. The first project was about coming up with a new corporate concept for Search Engine Optimization (SEO). This, however, has been a quite technical task, but I learned a lot. Amongst others the concept encompasses techniques that improve the search results in common search engines like Google, for instance.

Secondly, Bayer Schering Pharma plans to become active in various social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, Slideshare and Youtube. Even though these channels are quite popular among organizations, the pharmaceutical industry is yet not well represented. Hence, this project needs to be prepared carefully.

Furthermore, I was involved in preparative work regarding socio-political events between journalists, politicians, scientists and medical experts. There have, for instance, been discussions going on that tackled the issue of the most important diseases of the future. Thereby, it was interesting the experience the very different viewpoints as well as the necessity of a good collaboration between industry, government and even NGO's . Hence, even event management was part of my position and work at Bayer Schering Pharma.

Finally, I had to conduct some research for the head of the section, which was mostly about analytical preparation for meetings, interviews or official papers. Often, these research tasks embraced socio-political issues and topics that are related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In addition, I could attend daily and weekly meetings, which gave me a good insight into the daily business of the pharmaceutical industry. Sometimes, I had the task to write press releases.

If I was asked to sum up my experiences from the internship, I would say that it was definitely worth doing it and that I gained a lot of insights. Nevertheless, I am pretty sure that I will not be working for any pharmaceutical company in the future – or even for any other big company. Considering my past internships, I learned what it means to work in a smaller team and to enjoy the same consideration as the other employees. In a big apparatus like Bayer Schering Pharma, this is and probably can unfortunately not be the case. Now that I want to start writing my thesis I realize how important it is to me to work scientifically and - which is even more important – with content that I can identify myself with.

I basically got to know the work of a global player, which I intended to do when I applied for several internships in Berlin. I learned much about hierarchies, the value of a person, that is to say a worker and how fragile this one becomes in a business oriented environment. I learned about distribution of resources and how it should not be done. What I really liked and what definitely should become part of my future work is working together with people having a different cultural background. Working together with people from Pakistan, India or Latin America often makes things so much easier and more social.

However, after this internship I actually could imagine to deal with CSR, but not as a person that needs to verbally fix things that have been damaged by the company before.

Since I have been interested in interdependencies between politics, business and communication from the very beginning of my studies, I have successfully completed various placements in both governmental institutions and stakeholder organizations in Germany as well as in the United Arab Emirates, whereas I especially encountered companies when I was working for the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce on both the national and international level. Hence, my actual internship constituted an essential step within my hitherto existing job life. Dealing with public affairs and different aspects of corporate communication is what I intend to work with after my studies - commonly labelled as political communication. That is why an internship at Bayer Schering Pharma was a great contribution to my previous experience.

Considering the programme, this internship offered a lot of input when it comes to the investigation of numerous aspects of the relationship between public institutions and the interest of a globally acting enterprise. In this regard, the content of the course "Institutions and Governance" - especially rational choice institutionalism -

might be extraordinarily important. I was wondering, if I should investigate the role of Public Private Partnerships in fighting against neglected diseases. However, since I encountered various relations of Bayer Schering Pharma and China, I also feel like taking a closer look at companies engaging in CSR in China. This is certainly an issue that is becoming increasingly important in the future and could easily be connected to the theoretical background I got from the course “Institutions and Governance”.

Furthermore, I started to develop an interest for health politics when I attended the course "Normative theory and Politics". However, one of the main questions was how a worldwide just contribution of health care can be guaranteed. Hence, this internship might offer some input, particularly with regard to my Master thesis. Finally, I have attended two courses that dealt with the issue of globalisation.

Surprisingly said, I also encountered a few people, who were complaining about their position as well as the hierarchies in the company. In addition, I realized that numerous resources seem to be wasted due to management failure (and this might also be the case in various other enterprises). However, to see people unsatisfied with their work, asking for the sense of their work or that they would actually like to do something different, but nevertheless seem to be dependent on the money they earn in this company, I could relate to the question of an unconditional basic income. The people I talked to would like to work in another position or content, but due to far less money they dare to change something in their life. So, instead of not giving 100 percent to the company, they should better feel free to something that makes more sense to them. To me, this is the point when I remember the unconditional basic income, which we dealt with during the seminar “Normative theory and Politics”. Hence, I am currently trying to make up my mind, whether I would like to investigate the issue of CSR in combination with the content of “Governance and Institutions” or if I do want to investigate questions related to the unconditional basic income.