GCE: Contacting Companies

Rodrigo Monteiro

Learnings Report

Abstract—This report describes all the competences/qualities acquired during the execution of the activity for the Independent Studies IV course. The activity consisted of being part of the organization of the IST Summer Internships program, coordinated by Grupo de Contacto com Empresas do Núcleo de Estudantes de Informática do Instituto Superior Técnico. A more elaborate description of the learning process I went through while developing this activity is as follows.

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Index Terms—*GCE*, *NEIIST*, internships, companies, Independent Studies, LATEX.

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1 INTRODUCTION

IN the context of the **Independent Studies IV** course, students are required to perform an extra-curricular activity and produce a report of their efforts during the semester. Following the guidelines provided to the students, I decided to apply for a place in Grupo de Contacto com Empresas do Núcleo de Estudantes de Informática do Instituto Superior Técnico (1). This report describes all the lessons learned during the execution of this activity focusing mainly on the soft-skills acquired in the process.

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Figure 1. GCE @ NEIIST Logo

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2 THE ACTIVITY

IST Summer Internships is an internship program organized by some of Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) student groups from several different areas.

The main goal of this program is to offer a global platform provided by the different student groups, with internship opportunities from many companies, where students can apply, thus bringing students, companies and research institutions closer.

2.1 Responsibilities

Being a member of the organization of this program was a joyful experience but also one filled with responsibility as me and my fellow colleagues were in charge of carrying out the contacts with several companies (one of which might be our employer in a not so distant future), keeping in mind that the students' ability to apply for an internship would depend on our success in gathering interesting, diversified job openings for them to apply to.

Furthermore, handling the Grupo de Contacto com Empresas (GCE) contacts database as my first task, being a newcomer to the group, was also a task filled with responsibility: I knew that a wrongly edited or deleted contact could mean losing track of a company entirely and not being able to contact them in the future, so I always kept a backup of the editions I had made prior to them being reviewed by the head

(1.0) Excellent	LEARNINGS						DOCUMENT						
(0.8) Very Good	Context×2	Skills×1	Reflect×4	Summ×.5	Concl×.5	SCORE	Struct ×.25	Ortog×.25	Exec×4	Form ×.25	Titles ×.5	File ×.5	SCORE
(0.6) Good	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.0		0.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	
(0.4) Fair													
(0.2) Weak													

of the GCE.

Also, I began to check my e-mail inbox more frequently as there was a stage when we got replies almost daily and a delay in my response could mean losing an opportunity.

2.2 Challenges and Difficulties

As this was my first experience where I was put in contact with several people from the corporate world I sometimes had to adapt my way of handling certain situations that I had never faced before. This meant writing in a certain way (not only cordial but following a certain institutional pattern that the GCE abides to).

With that being said, I also struggled to be constantly available whenever my intervention was needed, which proved really difficult due to the amount of work I had on the other 5 courses I was enrolled in this semester.

3 TEAM WORK

3.1 Communication

As far as communication is concerned, apart from an initial meeting we kept in touch via an instant messaging service, where we were told what our next tasks were and also reported the success/failure of our daily attempts of gathering internship proposals, as well as cleared our doubts relative to some institutional matters, such as the group's policies when replying to an acceptance/denial, for instance. This open line of communication between the collaborators and the management enabled us to achieve better results.

3.2 Labor Division

As for the labor division, I think I talk for everyone involved when I say it was crucial to have had our jobs divided so thoughtfully by the GCE. We were each assigned a list of companies to deal with and this greatly aided our work, as we were each able to focus on a set of contacts which in turn also lead to a more personal approach to the people we were contacting (after some exchanged e-mails I felt like I had already the person on the other end) and fortunately all went well.

3.3 Cooperation

The dimension of the internship program, which comprehended seven student groups across IST, meant we not only had to coordinate our tasks with our student group but also each group had to coordinate with the others in a manner such that the same company was not contacted twice and each group would contact the companies that better suited its field of studies.

Internally, team work was also crucial! Had we not coordinated the way we did and I am confident it would not have been possible to provide the students with such good opportunities of internships, at least not to the extent we ended up doing.

The team worked well together and part of that can be attributed to the previous points mentioned but the synchrony displayed by the team members in aiding and complementing each others work was a key aspect of it too. When someone was not as comfortable with a task he/she had been given, the other members tried to help that person and then, when needed, there would be reciprocity (the same person would help another one when they felt they could improve their work) and that, for me, was a great experience.

3.4 Time Management

As I mentioned before, I had 5 other courses to worry about this semester so, when the activity began I knew it would be pretty time consuming, so I set aside specific time periods to develop it, so that I would be able to work in all courses and achieve good grades, as my goal was to improve my grade average.

This strict schedule and the results that followed made me appreciate just how important it is to be organized and designate time frames for every activity one decides to enroll and provided me with enough insight to do the same management in future, similar, situations.

4 CONCLUSION

My participation in the IST Summer Internships program comprised communication, cooperation and time management challenges,

which I learnt a lot from. It was a very enriching experience and I am glad to have been a part of it. I am confident the work we developed this semester will truly make a difference in some students' careers and may even be a *game changer* for some, as they approach the corporate world for the first time and are given the opportunity to learn, while working in the company of their choice and meeting people that do the work they see themselves doing in the future.

Overall it was a remarkable effort from all the members at GCE and I think all of us learned a lot from it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
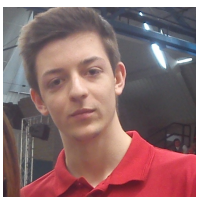
Rodrigo Monteiro Computer Science and Information Systems MSc Student at IST, specializing in Intelligent Systems (as *major* field of studies) and Robotic Systems (as *minor* field of studies).

APPENDIX
STATEMENTS OF EXECUTION

Para os devidos efeitos, declara-se que o(a) aluno(a) *Rodrigo Monteiro*, número mecanográfico *73701*, no *2º* semestre do ano lectivo *2014/2015*, exerceu o cargo de *Colaborador* no GCE – Grupo de Contacto com as Empresas do NEIIST – Núcleo Estudantil de Informática do Instituto Superior Técnico, tendo realizado as actividades *Contactar empresas*.

Lisboa, *31* de *Maio* de *2015*

A Direcção do NEIIST:

(Vânia Mendonça - Presidente)

(Denise Pedro - Vice-presidente)

(Rita Gomes – Vogal)

(Manuel Alves – Gestor Financeiro)