Structure Analysis of Your Internship Workplace

I am honored to intern at a technology startup in Dublin called Optiwifi this summer. Optiwifi is a software startup that provide highly innovative software for the telecommunications industry. Optiwifi capitalizes on the mobile internet data area by offering solutions to answer different needs. It delivers next generation Wi-Fi monitoring and self-optimization solutions to its customers. According to Crunchbase, it is quite successful as it raised 635 thousand Euros from Wayra and Enterprise Ireland. As a startup, Optiwifi does not have a clear organizational chart as the large companies do, nor are there significant identifiable hierarchies and authority structure. Therefore, I think from the lecture and textbook, the simple structure best fit the description of the company. Furthermore, I think leaders in this company use ambiguity as a tool to encourage its employees to for self-guided exploration, as influenced by the Irish culture.

Optiwifi is a 6 people small startup. However, all 6 employees hold either master or PhD degrees. There are distinct technology and business roles in the company to help promoting the marketing and publicity of the company and to maintain and develop the core technology. From the inside, I think people know each other before the founding of Optiwifi. The three company leaders, CEO Mark Burke, CIO Mark Davis, and CTO Camille Voisin all worked in Intel before, and it is highly likely where they met. Therefore, they know what each other's capabilities are and how to delegate responsibilities. From the outside, the website www.optiwifi.com shows the listing of CEO, CIO and CTO and a brief introduction of their backgrounds and roles in the company, therefore, it would be quite easy for outsiders to know who to contact.

I think the Simple Structure, as our textbook describes, best fit the description of Optiwifi. What is slightly different is that there is no identifiable hierarchies and authority structures. Instead of having a "strategic apex and operating level"(Bolman & Deal 78), Optiwifi's structure is more flat. CEO and the rest of the company work together to provide solution instead of CEO or CTO giving specific instructions. It is more of an environment of collaboration rather than an environment of vertical command pipeline.

I think what made this kind of collaboration possible is the Irish culture of ambiguity, such as "giving space" and be "not definite". During the interview with Camille Voisin, the CTO of the Optiwifi, I clearly felt this kind of encouragement to explore things on my own. I asked him what will I be doing and what should I do this week to prepare for the job. He suggested me to read up on how wifi works, but most of my tasks will be around data analytics, web design, and data visualization. These are very broad tasks, and there isn't a brochure or specific job description that specify what I must finish by which date. He further suggested that most of my job will be more like a research where I am free to use whatever tools to create different visualization that delivers easy-to-understand and detailed graphs for the customer. The Irish culture must have profound influence over the encouragement for innovation that Optiwifi possess. In a bigger picture, this could well be the reason that Ireland is known as the Silicon Dock, the heart of the European startups.

I am really excited to start my internship next week and fully experience in working in an Irish startup. I want to understand how the relationship between employee and employer could be like a friend and bring it back to the states to help foster similar environment in my own club and in my future career.