Getting started in New York

I am Julia and I am studying **Media: Conception & Production** at the Hochschule Rhein Main in Wiesbaden, Germany.

It is part of the degree program to spend some time abroad, it can either be an internship in a media related field, or you choose to visit a university in a foreign country and register for some classes. Since I was, and still am, very interested in getting to know the international working environment, I decided to search for a production company abroad. My personal goal is to gain some hands-on experience and learn from professionals when it comes to producing a TV show/commercial, etc.

I also knew right away that I want to do this internship in the “birthplace” of film- and videoproduction ➔ **THE UNITED STATES**!

After a few days of sending out applications to certain production companies in the U.S., I got a respond from Simba Productions, a production company located in the heart of New York City ➔ Manhattan.

We set up a skype interview and a couple days later it was all set, I found my traineeship! I could not have been happier at that moment.

**Arriving in the U.S.**

On July, 29th the time finally came! My flight departed from Frankfurt Airport to New York City ➔ JFK Airport in NYC.

Thanks to Travelworks and CIEE the process of getting all my paperwork done, i.e. receiving the DS-2019 in order to get the J1-Visa etc., was very fast and unproblematic. Everything was well organized and you can reach out to them any time you may have concerns or questions.

**Living in the U.S.**

Since living directly in Manhattan is way too expensive, I was lucky to find a nice group accommodation via Airbnb in Union City, New Jersey. It is located just across the Hudson River. To get into the city, I take the bus every morning. It takes me about 20-30 minutes to get there.

I am sharing the house with five other interns or students from all over the world. This is a great way to exchange experiences and to have some social contact. We spend a lot of our free time together, since we all came to NYC alone. Some of them are Americans (California, Texas) other from France. It is also a nice way of exchanging multicultural experiences.

**First days @ Simba Productions**

I started working on Monday, August 1st. In my first two weeks I got to know my colleagues and the daily work routine at Simba Productions. They gave me some time to acclimatize, because everything is still so fresh and new.

For a client of Simba Productions, we needed to take pictures of a certain building which is located at Times Square. We had to take pictures from all possible angles, which is why we went to five different rooftop-bars in NYC to get the best shots (please don't misunderstand me here ➔ what is meant by 'shots' are the shots of the building, not the one you drink ;-) ). This was one of my first days at Simba Productions and I was lucky to had the chance of seeing the beautiful skyline of New York City in the nicest kind of way.
The first month in New York

Resumé after one month in NYC
One month is already over and it feels like I just arrived. It is crazy, time is flying by when you are having a good time. There is still so much to learn and explore and I only have three more months left. Which isn’t a long time considering all the things you can do around here. Let me tell you what I have done and learned so far.

My daily responsibilities at Simba Productions
Simba Productions is a video production company based in Manhattan, New York. That means, they produce videos/films for a lot of clients from different fields and each client has its own desires and visions which has to be considered during the whole video-production-process. The production basically consists of three steps:

1. **Pre-Production**
   - Script-writing, main idea of the video, preparation for the actual shoot
2. **Production**
   - The actual shoot/filming-process
3. **Post-Production**
   - Animation/Cutting the scenes, working with Premiere Pro, After Effects

It is important to me that I get to know every important step which has to do with producing a video. Luckily, as an intern at Simba Productions, I have the opportunity to get hands-on-experience in every part (means Pre-, Post-, and the actual Production). So I have an overview and get an idea of the whole film-making-process, which is nice and helpful. Since I haven’t specialized in a certain field yet, this is the best way to find out what fills me with the most joy. Besides the fact that I am attending shootings as a PA (Production Assistant), some of my daily responsibilities are:

- Preparing and writing call sheets
- Answering phone calls and writing emails
- Organizing shoots and locations for shoots
- Take care of the social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc.
- Preparing newsletters
- Post-production (cutting/animation)

Work environment in the U.S.
Since it is usually a typical German habit to separate privacy from work (especially if you just got to know each other), it is not in the U.S. My colleagues, and even my boss, immediately started talking to me about personal stuff. At the beginning I was a little confused and didn’t really know how to react. But I realized pretty fast that this is a total normal thing for Americans. They share even private stories with others. This is definitely not a bad thing but for sure it was unfamiliar at first. After one month now I am used to it and I have to say that I like it. It helps giving a personal and familiar atmosphere to the busy office.

Me on the Brooklyn Bridge in NYC
I like to explore new places on the weekends or each day I am off and don’t need to work. I love my internship at the production company but getting to know the American culture and also explore the whole NYC-area is definitely the other side of the medal of being an intern in a foreign country.

Me at a shooting with my colleagues
(INTERVIEW FOR THE MOVIE “EXTRA INNINGS”)
The 2nd month in New York

English developments

After two months of living and working in the United States I can clearly say that I realized some improvements in my spoken and written English.

Since you are faced with the English language most of the time (e.g. at work, listening to the radio, watching TV, talking to foreign students or interns (Americans or even from other countries)) it is easy to get used to it and each day you are talking English you feel more comfortable doing so.

So this internship is definitely a very good way to improve your English skills, not only in a professional (“Business English”) but also in a private way.

“Learning by doing” is the best and most enjoyable way to do it! I definitely recommend spending time abroad.

How I spend my free time

I love to spend time with friends and explore the nearby-area. That is a big part of the whole US-experience, too!

Due to my living situation, I was able to make new friends pretty fast. But there are also other interns at ‘Simba Productions’ with whom I get along really well and we like to spend time together.

Since I came to the US all by myself it is nice to know that there are people you can count on. I love to go for a hike (like you can see on the right) or simply to have a nice dinner in our little town in New Jersey. On the bottom picture on the right you can see me with two other interns, one from the Netherlands and the other one is from Germany as well. That day we went to a festival in Hoboken and afterwards took a nice walk along the Hoboken Pier with a view on the Manhattan skyline.

Me at a hike in Hudson Valley

Last weekend me and my friends went for a hike in Hudson Valley. It is called “Breakneck Ridge Trail” and it is a really strenuous and hard trail. You literally have to climb with both feet and hands to get up the rocks. But it is a lot of fun and definitely worth it. At the end you will get rewarded with an awesome view over the Hudson Valley. It is a great way to escape from the city for one day and just enjoy the nature with its beautiful trees and views.

Me with my new friends at the Hoboken Pier
The 3\textsuperscript{rd} month in New York

Fall- and Halloween Season

October has been a really nice and interesting month for me. Like everywhere in the world fall has come around the corner and places are getting beautiful around here – especially Central Park. It is really nice exploring this places around this time of the year. I am really lucky that I had the chance to be here during summer-time but that I am also able to be here around fall and winter-time.

Halloween was very exciting in NYC. There were thousands of people with a lot of different costumes. Halloween is such a big thing in the USA – it is almost a part of their culture. =) So it was very interesting taking part in it! We had a blast watching the big parade in the city.

Now October is over and November is here. Thanksgiving is coming up and on November 30\textsuperscript{th}, the big Christmas Tree in front of the Rockefeller Center is going to be lit. I am very excited about this event and can’t wait to attend it.

Can I imagine living here for “ever”?

This is a question I asked myself in the beginning of this internship. I was curious what I will have to say about that at the end of my experience in the USA. After 3 full months I can say: It is such a great experience living and working here for a couple of months and getting to know every part the city has to offer. I really like that you are able to gain personal and professional knowledge. Still I have to say that NEW YORK CITY is really the city that never sleeps. Meaning that people around here always seem stressed and hurried in a way. Which is why I could not imagine moving here for good. I am a person who needs friends and family close by. Also I love coming home to a calm and nice place and living near "nature".

But I am so glad that I am making this adventure which helped me finding myself in a way! Thank you TravelWorks and NYC for giving me this chance! =)