

The Boston Consulting Group

IMMIGRATION INTERN

1/7/2020 – 6/26/2020

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Combined Major – Cultural
Anthropology and International Affairs



GENERAL JOB DESCRIPTION



Drinking my daily coffee at the office while looking over Seaport.

- As the Immigration Co-op, I worked on the NAMR Immigration team, which consists of 6 women, spread across 4 offices in North America. (I worked in the Boston office in Seaport).
 - The Immigration Team served as the liaison between BCG employees who are foreign nationals and the outside law firm that BCG has hired to provide work authorization in the form of visas, green cards, and citizenship.
 - The team regularly works with the law firm to understand the current Immigration climate, and to create and implement a high-level immigration strategy for each individual.
 - This was a paid co-op.
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- I reported specifically to one member of the team who gave me daily duties as well as the general team manager.
 - My duties:
 - Review U.S. citizens' form I-9
 - Review H-1B petitions
 - Facilitate One-Off PERM (specialty green card) processes (specifically the initial stages and the recruitment process)
 - Data maintenance/tracking for 1,200+ foreign nationals
 - Help manage COVID-19 contingency plans

PREPARATION + INTERVIEWING PROCESS...

- Sent in a resume and cover letter via NUCareers
- A video conference interview with the direct supervisor
- Tips:
 - Always showcase your *passion* for the job as well as your skills that could help you complete it.
 - Have 3 scenarios that showcase different skills prepped and printed out next to you so you can review them right before you begin.
 - Plan out how you are going to get to the interview (if its not virtual) beforehand, you don't want to be late after missing your train.

COURSE WORK THAT HELPED ME IN MY CO-OP...

- There wasn't a specific class that I have taken that was helpful as I haven't taken any immigration specific classes...
- HOWEVER, I think being a humanities major was super helpful because it gave me **skills** that were essential such as
 - critical thinking
 - attention to detail
 - time management for long projects.

SOMETHING I HAD NEVER DONE BEFORE...

- Big data audit and data maintenance in Excel
 - I performed an audit for all of the One-Off PERM green card processes
 - I cleaned essential information for all the foreign nationals at BCG.
- Before this co-op, I had previously only used excel for very rudimentary spreadsheets or processes. For my big data audit, I had to teach myself how to use formulas, and other complex excel features through video/article tutorials.

THINGS THAT SURPRISED ME ABOUT MY CO-OP...

- I didn't know that I would be working alone for a big portion of the time. Because I was the only Immigration co-op and most of my projects were individual, I didn't do a lot of teamwork.
- There was a lot of EMAILS. Due to distribution lists, I got about 200 emails a day.
- I ended up getting a lot more responsibility than I thought I would... at about the 2-2.5 month mark I started to get big projects which my team really relied upon.
- I became friends with my co-workers and was welcomed into their group 😊 .
- BCG, as a company, was unbelievably supportive (even before COVID-19), and fostered a welcoming, educational, and constantly improving environment. It was not the cut-throat corporate environment I had imagined, and I would happily work there again.

THE MOST CHALLENGING THING ABOUT MY CO-OP...

- Learning all the different kind of visas! (F-1, M-1, H-1B, L-1A, L-1B, TN, E-3, H-1B1, etc.)
- Though I loved getting more responsibility, at some points I felt overwhelmed and unprepared.
 - Specifically in my work for the recruitment process for Specialty green cards (the One-Off PERM processes). I was terrified about making mistakes because it could delay or mess up a person's process/life. I had to learn to set up safeguards/reminders to check my work, and ultimately learn to trust my skills more.

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MY WORK STYLE...

When receiving a project, I like to hear the description, take notes, and then repeat everything back to double check for full understanding and accuracy.

I like concrete deadlines. I need to know how to organize my time for every project.

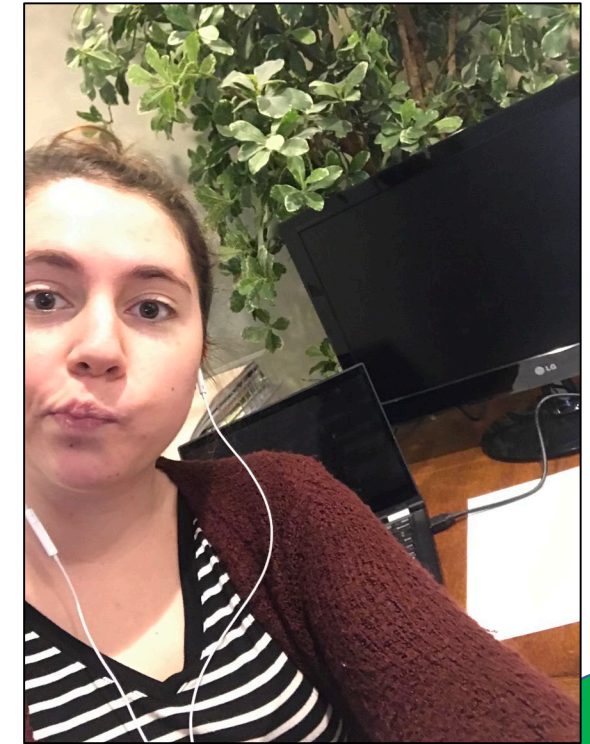
I like frequent and scheduled check-ins/opportunities with my supervisor for me to ask questions.

I focus best early in the morning.

I love checklists and guidelines. It helps me be more thorough.

COVID-19 COMPLIATIONS

- After we found out that we had to leave Northeastern housing, I immediately emailed my manager and supervisor to see if I would be able to work remotely from California. They responded within the hour saying YES and offering me so much support.
- They didn't make me work East Coast hours (halleluia!). In Boston, I worked from 8:30-5pm but in California I worked from 7am-3:30pm. I actually prefer this time schedule because it allows me to have more time in the afternoon to decompress or work out.
- I took a BCG laptop home and attached it to a bigger screen in my living room.
- I loved working from home! I could wear comfy pants, get snacks anytime, not have any makeup on, and not loose anytime traveling to the office (it took me 40 minutes one way in Boston).
- One thing I learned from my team during COVID-19 was the importance of communication. My team made sure that with all of the confusion with COVID-19 that we communicated more often and effectively about work, and about our personal mental health. We had more team meetings and virtual team hang outs.
- COVID-19, and the 2 resulting Executive Orders had HUGE impacts to the immigration climate and created a lot of stress + change for our job. We constantly were creating contingency plans for people who were effected (ex: they couldn't travel abroad to renew their visa.) While I am obviously not thankful for COVID and the EOs , it did give me a unique and intense experience working in Immigration.



Me and my newly put together home office after flying home to California.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS IN THE IMMIGRATION FIELD

The infrastructure of the immigration field is policy. Both at the federal and state level, immigration policy can impact all foreign nationals. For example, executive orders can be released that stop more visas from being approved or block certain people from entering the country. President Trump released two executive orders in the past four months that greatly impacted visas available for foreign nationals, specifically the renewal of H-1Bs. I always knew on the most basic level that policy created impacts foreign nationals however I did not understand the intricacies or how immigration policies can affect entire businesses, economies, and countries.

While I worked at BCG, we not only had to understand how each new policy impacted the individuals but the company as a whole. BCG and other companies rely heavily on foreign national workers. We had to think about how a ban of new visas would impact our hiring process, what employees we might lose, as well as its monetary effect on the business. In addition to the personal, and economic affects of the immigration policy change, the culture of BCG had to adjust as well. BCG had to make it clear to its employees and the government that we support our foreign national workers. BCG had to take a bigger public stance and update its inclusive culture. BCG did this by adding internally adding extra support for foreign nationals, and externally by joining a Business Roundtable with other Fortune 500 companies taking a stance against the restrictions. Before my co-op, I didn't realize how one policy change can create a ripple effect and impact other sectors of the business and everyday world.

HOW MY CO-OP HELPED ME MAKE DECISIONS FOR MY FUTURE...

I entered this co-op with absolutely zero idea about what I want to do in the future. My co-op search consisted of a huge range of jobs at law firms, corporate businesses, non-profits, and government agencies. This co-op helped me realize three things...

1

I want to help people. During the stressful times, the boring times, and the times I just didn't want to work at all, remembering that the work I was doing was important, and was helping foreign national workers to stay in the U.S. and start a life here, allowed me to regain motivation. As well, with the Black Lives Matter protests and COVID-19, I realized that I want to do work at a company like BCG, that puts its belief in people, equity, and inclusion at the forefront of its business.

2

I like to work as a team. I loved working with my supervisor and with my general team. Our team roundtable discussions were an asset to my learning. Working alone and at a desk for 8 hours a day was very difficult. I want to work in an environment where I can collaborate and move a little more.

3

I don't have to decide right now. I had informational interviews with many of my teammates. A lot of them have followed similar paths as me, a humanities degree with possible thoughts of law school, but they have all taken such different journeys. They each reminded me that I have time to enjoy life and discover what I love. Also, what I chose now is not necessarily where I will end up.

