

Experience Report: Anne-Julie Jøssang



As I am finishing my first month at GHK Management Consulting GmbH, I was asked to write a short text about my experiences so far. I happily obliged, as it has been great – I have acquired useful new knowledge through interesting tasks and have made new friends in the great team that make up GHK.

From Norway to GHK Management Consulting GmbH

My road to GHK was quite different than for most of my colleagues. Mostly because I am Norwegian, and only moved to Frankfurt in November last year after meeting a great German guy during my master studies at CBS in Copenhagen, that I decided was worth moving abroad for. In the time between my master's degree and moving to Frankfurt, I held a temporary position at a maritime consultancy in Norway where I mainly worked with risk management, which should come in handy here at GHK where we, among other topics work on risk management projects.

As I did not have any prior knowledge of the German language when I moved here, I spent six months at a language school to learn it well enough that I felt I could be a part of a German working environment. When I reached that level I spent some time searching for the perfect job, as I did not want "just any job", but one where I would be able to work with challenging tasks and interesting projects, where I could use my education and learn even more. Therefore, when I heard about GHK I was delighted, as they seemed to fulfill all of my "wants" in an employer, and I am so far very happy with the job and excited for the opportunity to be part of such a fun team and company.

Working at GHK

Since my first day at GHK I have been given a diverse array of tasks from document processing and making presentations to controlling, and from July onwards I am supposed to start working more regularly on two set projects, while continuing to help out on projects like today. In my opinion, this is one of the great things about GHK: you get to work with several different tasks ranging over various projects and problems, and by gaining such diverse insight and experience, you quickly build a toolbox that makes you well prepared for any challenge you might meet later.

In addition to interesting tasks, the team at GHK has welcomed me warmly and made me feel home right away. We all help each other when needed and the good atmosphere prevalent in the team makes even the longest day fly by quickly. In addition, social gatherings outside of work serve to strengthen the team feeling and add an element of fun to the workplace that I highly appreciate.

Cultural differences in the work place

Cultural differences are found both between companies and from country to country. Even for two so similar countries as Germany and Norway, certain differences do exist. Most of them are quite small, others more substantial. Some are kind of funny, such as how all grocery stores and the like are closed on Sunday's here, while they are open in tiny Norway. However, the kiosks are open to ensure that you can get hold of as much alcohol as you'd like. At home, July is the national month of public summer holiday ("Fellesferien"), while in Germany your summer vacation varies depending on which "Bundesland" you live in. I guess that's how it is when your country has 80 million people vs. 5 million.

Yet, maybe the most noticeable difference is how Germans are much more formal than Norwegians and Norway has a much flatter workplace hierarchy. Our "siezen" died a long time ago, and calling your bosses and colleagues by their last names is quite a normal. Therefore, the first time I was called "Frau Jøssang" here in Germany I almost didn't know whom they were talking to, and to "siezen" people is something I am still working on getting used to. However, this is all part of the experience of living and working in a new country – an experience I wouldn't be without.

Overall, I have truly enjoyed my first month here at GHK and am looking forward to many more.