



## IWTO International Student Exchange Programme 2006 Edition Experience Report

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Placement at Messe Frankfurt France S.A.S. (Texworld) Paris, France

Participating in the IWTO International Student Exchange Programme enabled me to gain invaluable experience in the textile industry through working in my second language in the capital of fashion - Paris, France.

I also gained insight into the world of textile fairs and their role in the global textile supply chain and the wool pipeline.

### **The Traineeship:**

This truly was a traineeship as opposed to the “internship” experiences that I have had in the past. The difference was that my work at Texworld was project-oriented as opposed to task-based.

Under the supervision of Yann Collot, Director of Texworld, I was given a “mission” to specifically work on the trend forum and trend communications at Texworld.

I reported directly to Mr. Collot and also worked closely with Texworld Communications Officer, Mrs. H  l  ne Pichenot and Communications Assistant, Ms. Ellen Walker.

The entire executive team was very approachable and during my traineeship, I had the opportunity to meet personally with the General Director of Texworld, Mrs. Stephanie Keukert, as well as with the President of Messe Frankfurt France, Mr. Michael Scherpe.

I was warmly welcomed at the Texworld office in Paris, where the hours were approximately 9:30AM – 5:30PM. There were occasional meetings scheduled either before or after office hours and I was also invited to participate in social gatherings or celebrations at the office such as birthdays, etc.

As I was quite passionate about my work at Texworld, I often worked later than the above-stated hours, as did many other members of the Texworld team.

During my traineeship, I also went to meetings outside of the office held by various suppliers such as a printer, a graphic design agency and an event/d  cor company. I also accompanied the team on a couple of site visits to the CNIT – L’Espace Grande Arche over the summer.

In terms of compensation, I received a Cheque D  jeuner or restaurant ticket valued at 7.50   every day for my lunch and I was also reimbursed for one half the cost of my Metro pass by Messe Frankfurt France.

IWTO Project Manager, Mrs. Marzena Oscilowska, acted as an ongoing resource throughout my traineeship. She was always quick to respond to any inquiries

that I had, within the framework of the International Student Exchange Programme.

### **Tasks:**

As aforementioned, the reason that I was able to gain, and - I believe – to contribute so much during my time at Texworld, was that my work was project oriented as opposed to task oriented.

My mission or purpose was focused on the trend forum that takes place during the fair and on trend communications to exhibitors, visitors and media.

With Yann Collot and H el ene Pichenot, I developed and circulated a questionnaire to a list of exhibitor trend contacts and presented my findings to Stephanie Keukert. This correspondence with exhibitors was also used as an opportunity to remind them of the procedures and deadlines for submitting samples.

Answers regarding new innovations, best-sellers or trend-right developments were passed on to Mrs. Pichenot for potential media opportunities.

My duties included responding to any inquiries from exhibitors regarding the trend forum and the procedure to submit swatches.

The support that I offered to the Communications department consisted mainly of proof-reading, finessing translations to clarify fashion lingo and technical textile terms and pulling and filing articles from trade and consumer publications.

Much of my time was also spent researching. I accumulated and reviewed industry information on textile and apparel as well as trade show trends in order to better act as a resource for all things “trend” for the Texworld team.

I also acted as a contact for the IWTO Feature Trends competition winners. This involved liaising with the Texworld Technical Manager regarding their set-up and also passing their press release information on to the Texworld Communications department for potential media opportunities.

### **Impressions:**

My main impression is that my traineeship at Texworld, Messe Frankfurt France was distinctly different than other internship experiences that I have had in the past.

I immediately felt that my background and education in fashion and textiles was valued and respected as well as my North American perspective.

Much to the credit of Mr. Collot's management style, it was a pleasure to work at Texworld! The team was cohesive and all members worked together well and treated each other with respect. I was one of several interns/trainees and each of us had our own mission and was treated as a full-fledged member of the team.

The team at Texworld was very diverse, including employees and/or interns of German, French, Austrian, Canadian, American and Chinese origins. This is reflective of the truly international nature of the Texworld fair, which welcomed 678 exhibitors from 40 different countries and 18,780 visitors from 108 different countries to the 19<sup>th</sup> session in September.

All members of the Texworld team were also very patient and supportive of me during the learning curve that I went through while adjusting to being immersed in a French environment. Being an Anglophone was definitely an asset as the principle language for external communications at Texworld is English. However, day-to-day operations in the Messe Frankfurt France office are conducted in French. I am grateful for the opportunity to work in my second language, which I have studied since I was a child and to learn the vocabulary and vernacular specific to the tradeshow and textile industry.

### **Outcomes:**

My ISEP traineeship is truly a success story and hopefully the beginning of my ongoing relationship with Messe Frankfurt and the International Wool Textile Organisation.

First of all, I was thrilled to be hired on to come back to Paris in September (after my traineeship), to be on-site at Texworld during the actual fair and to see the results of my summer's work. I was hired by Texworld to assist their style bureau, Ricerca e Comunicazione with the set-up of the trend forum, to interview exhibitors at the fair and to provide support to the Communications team.

My traineeship has also inspired all of my thesis and creative work for my final year at Ryerson University, School of Fashion. My research thesis is to be entitled: "The Spirit of the Season: Trend forums and the communication of trend forecast information at Texworld."

The balancing act of working in French, yet receiving and sending out most information in English has inspired me to take a class in French to English translations. This is definitely the beginning of a hobby; if not a possible career path for me as I believe that there is a lot of headway to be made in the area of translations specifically for the fashion, apparel and textile industries.

I continue to share my experiences from my ISEP traineeship at Texworld with the Ryerson University community. Last week, I made a presentation on my traineeship, also aimed at increasing the profile of the IWTO and Texworld among tomorrow's industry professionals, to 164 first year fashion students. This week, I am participating in a presentation by the Ryerson University Office of International Affairs on studying and gaining industry experience abroad.