Kent State University

Marketing Your International Experience
**MARKETING YOUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH STUDYING ABROAD**

The Collegiate Employment Research Institute reports that more than 45% of employers found that recent hires with international experience stood out and excelled beyond their peers in these areas:

- Interacting with people who hold different interests, values or perspectives
- Understanding cultural differences in the workplace
- Adapting to situations of change
- Gaining new knowledge from experiences

35-40% of employers identified that recent hires stood out in the following areas:

- Ability to work independently
- Undertaking tasks that are unfamiliar/risky
- Applying information in new or broader contexts
- Identifying new problems/solutions to problems
- Working effectively with co-workers

Students who spend time abroad tend to report the following benefits (NACE Journal, March 2007):

- Cultural immersion
- Personal development *(self-confidence, independence, flexibility, adaptability, pragmatic know-how, empathy, and cultural insights)*
- Cross-cultural learning
- Language learning
- Career development

Skills developed through study abroad experiences can also include:

- Communication Skills
- Organizational Skills
- Global Understanding
- Personal Development
MARKETING YOUR STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE TO EMPLOYERS

In a survey by the College Employment Research Institute, employers identified skill areas in which new employees with study abroad experience stood out. Employers emphasized that the value of study abroad experiences depends on how well a student can reflect on his/her experience, articulate the skills gained, and connect how these skills to the workplace.

With this employer perspective in mind, and as with all self-marketing efforts, it is up to YOU to:

Communicate your skills and experiences with detail, specific examples, and in a way that demonstrates their transferability to the job, organization or industry for which you are seeking.

For example, one of your experiences may be that you were able to have AMAZING conversation with the students in your international residence hall. You met students from five different continents and developed great relationships. Not only would you stay up late talking and hanging out with these students, but you would also cook for each other, visit restaurants representing your countries of origin and discuss the similarities and differences within your home countries.

As you present this experience to employers, consider (1) the responsibilities of the position you are seeking and (2) the context of the company or industry area you are entering.

If you are targeting a position emphasizing communication skills, how could you emphasize the skills you developed through these relationships? Did you adjust your communication style with different students, and if so, how? Were there communication barriers to overcome?

If you are targeting a position emphasizing your business experience, how will the political and economic knowledge you developed through these conversations influence your business practices, decisions or future learning? Did these conversations support or challenge your classroom learning, and if so, how? How will your international understanding benefit the employer(s) you are targeting?

Employers value the skills students develop through studying abroad as long as they are communicated in a way that pertains to the work setting. By studying abroad, you have already taken a great first step in developing your skills and enriching your college experiences. Remember to think strategically about how you connect your experiences to the work roles, industries or organizations you are targeting to sell these experiences most effectively.
DESCRIPTING INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS

Incorporating your study abroad experience and details about what you learned can be a great addition to self-marketing approaches. Remember that employers see the most value in study abroad experiences through the relevant connections you make to their role, organization or industry area.

Resumes:
Study abroad experiences are most often included within the education section of a resume, following your formal degree name. For example:

Bachelor of Arts in ______ May 2014
Kent State University, Kent, OH

Study Abroad

• Webster University, Geneva, Switzerland Fall 2013
  • Coursework focused on International Relations and Public Health
  • Internship at World Health Organization overseeing developing nations project mapping

Academic Intensive coursework or International Service experiences may be listed as follows:

International Short-Term Study Abroad Course

MGMT 495: International Management in Korea/Japan Summer 2011
  • Traveled to Japan/Korea to study management in an international context.
  • Coursework focused on cultural business practices, emerging markets, etc.

International Service Immersion to Quito, Ecuador Summer 2012
  • Deepened understanding of poverty & business practices and norms in developing countries.
  • Engaged in local culture by developing working relationships with community members, local business leaders, and navigating local marketplace.
COVER LETTERS & PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Cover letters provide the opportunity to describe how and why an experience has prepared you for the position you are targeting. Incorporating details from study abroad experiences can be a great way to provide examples and a context for the skills and/or experiences you acquired.

For example:

“Studying abroad in Italy developed my ability to quickly build relationships and rapport. Through taking courses at an Italian university and traveling extensively on the weekends, I prioritized meeting students and travelers with backgrounds different than my own. I developed both interpersonal communication and listening skills and often overcame communication barriers through persistence and patience. I have maintained these relationships through email and online networking websites since returning to the United States. The knowledge I developed through my relationships with students of diverse backgrounds has also reinforced my sensitivity to individual differences. Since studying abroad, I have been especially attentive to how it is important to consider a variety of perspectives when making decisions or considering marketing approaches and would bring this approach to business relationships. These skills will help me succeed in your organization’s marketing position as I professionally present services to existing and potential clients and maintain positive relationships throughout and after marketing campaigns.”

Personal Statements
Like cover letters, personal statements provide the opportunity to describe how and why an experience has prepared you for course of study, a specific university or program that you are targeting in your graduate school application. As you consider your own research interests, career goals, or the skills you will bring to graduate-level study, has your study abroad experience influenced your decision-making? If so, how could you communicate this impact using specific examples?

Interviews
To highlight your study abroad experience, you should certainly be ready to answer the question:
“In what ways will your experience abroad add value to my company?”

*Actively incorporate important details about your experiences and skills from studying abroad into your interview process -and don’t wait for the interviewer to ask YOU!

For more information, contact:
Office of Global Education
Van Campen Hall
edabroad@kent.edu
330.672.7980