



eWBL – Making work-based learning work in an online environment

National Case Studies – Italy (WP1)

28/02/2023

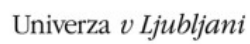
Exploring the challenges met and the alternatives found by WBL providers across Europe in their shift from WBL to eWBL.

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Name of the case	CASE STUDY 3
Country(-ies)	ITALY
Disciplinary sector	SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION
Case written by	ROBERTA BORGOTTI – Career Service
Executive summary	
<p>The traineeship took place remotely, from 05/10/20 to 02/04/21.</p> <p>The beneficiary held a Master's Degree in Marketing and could concretely apply what she learnt in class. During her placement, she had the opportunity to develop marketing plans, carry out market research, prepare press releases, manage the company's social media profiles, etc.</p> <p>In this way, she developed a wide range of abilities, i.e. project management, analytical thinking, and creativity. She improved her communication skills and implemented benchmarking strategies whenever she dealt with the company's customers and analysed their behaviour.</p> <p>The traineeship definitely strengthened her professional growth: she was encouraged to bring innovation to the online environment, acquiring a set of transferable skills to boost her career prospects in the marketing and communication area.</p>	

Section	Answer
1) Organisation's background	<p>HEI: Ca' Foscari University of Venice</p> <p>Founded in 1868 as the first business school in Italy (and the second in Europe) Ca' Foscari has remained faithful to its founding and original mission to promote research and education well beyond our national borders. It offers a wide range of BA, MA and PhD programmes in 4 subject areas: foreign languages, economics, humanities, and sciences.</p> <p>Nowadays Ca' Foscari is renowned worldwide for its excellence within and across the disciplines of its tradition as well as for the international network of relationships it has developed. Students and recent graduates can take advantage of the University's multiple services not only whilst carrying out their education, but also once their studies come to an end. Among these services, in order to facilitate the placement of its students and graduates in the workplace, Ca' Foscari offers a wide range of on-the-job training, i.e. traineeships in Italy and abroad, recruiting events, seminars and workshops with Alumni and counsellors, etc.</p> <p>Following the pandemic, all the traineeships and initiatives have been moved online, to provide continuity and flexibility to obtain a degree and to facilitate job transitions. The positive feedback given by the trainees, the host partners and the academic staff has encouraged us to keep on arranging our projects in blended mode to provide high-quality reskilling and upskilling opportunities that can translate into sustainable employment opportunities for job seekers and productivity gains for firms and the economy more broadly.</p> <p>For further details, please visit https://www.unive.it/pag/17095/</p> <p>COURSE OF STUDY: MASTER'S DEGREE IN MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION</p> <p>The Master's Course provides general training in the planning, management and control of marketing and communication activities. In the training process, international marketing policies, brand management and new product development issues are analysed, as well as the policies of distribution channels, advertising in the real and virtual world and public relations in competitive national and international contexts in profit oriented or social enterprises. The course integrates didactic lessons with</p>



	<p>workshops with partner enterprises and with periods of internship. The programme integrates management, quantitative and legal courses.</p> <p>HOST PARTNER: The company is a Benefit company dealing with communication and branding strategies, design, web architecture, social media and content, as well as with CRM & Data Analysis. The portfolio of clients includes national and international partners.</p>
2) Design, delivery and management.	<p>The trainees attended a 192-hour training course before starting the placement, which took place remotely and included tasks to carry out in small groups to develop soft and IT skills. For each traineeship, a monitoring plan was previously arranged and was implemented through regular phone and video interviews with the company tutor and academic supervisor.</p> <p>Before the pandemic, the company had already implemented opportunities to partially work from home, for example, each employee was given a laptop, and specific software helped to better organise activities and manage documents. Each company unit has a head who assigns tasks and responsibilities and coordinates the team.</p> <p>Among the IT tools, the most used were Google Meet, Slack, Zoom, Teamwork, and Go to Meeting.</p> <p>Thanks to a well-organised structure and a precise monitoring plan, the online/offline relationship was not affected. Everybody had a clear view of the tasks to carry out, the schedule, the priorities, etc.</p>
3) Differences and similarities	<p>There were no significant differences between online and face-to-face WBL, because all the stakeholders were familiar with remote working, communication software, etc. Generally speaking, it is more difficult to integrate the trainee into the working environment when working from home. It takes longer but if you have good communication channels, the integration is smooth.</p> <p>Quality was however guaranteed because the trainees were well monitored and could develop a set of skills for their personal and professional growth.</p>
4) Learning outcomes	<p>Working remotely undoubtedly increased independence, problem-solving, time management and organisational skills.</p> <p>The traineeship was linked to the degree programme in the framework of marketing. As a consequence, the trainee could apply what she learnt in class but also developed practical experience, because she dealt with external clients, ad-hoc project works, etc. She could increase her professional network because she was in contact with external stakeholders. The traineeship acted as a springboard: after concluding it, she found a similar job at another company, where she is currently working .</p>
5) Pedagogical innovations	<p>The company organised online socialisation opportunities, for example, meetings and a newsletter to inform staff about ongoing projects. An online Christmas dinner was arranged with all the staff and trainees, to break the ice and foster interaction.</p>

6) Technological innovations	Web conferencing tools, collaborative tools, server links and clouds and other IT tools were used for monitoring purposes, to motivate online trainers and allow training actors to ensure continuity.
7) Drivers and barriers to eWBL	Both the trainee and the company tutor pointed out that during a fully remote placement it is more difficult to absorb the company culture and make friends with the other colleagues. A blended mode (for example, 2 days remote and 3 at the office or vice-versa) would be perfect for a better work-life balance and to develop specific soft skills: at the office, you will definitely improve your network and see different aspects of the company, working from home will allow you to improve your independence, sense of organisation and time management. It is essential to have a precise monitoring plan, a good Internet connection and a company tutor to support the trainee.
8) Long-term impacts of eWBL	The company will keep on working in a blended mode because they have sound experience in remote work. They will be offering other traineeships in this way.