

Sofy Kamenova
Marketing Placement Student



In the interview below, Sofy tells us about her Undergraduate Placement experience at Centerprise.

What attracted you to a one-year placement with Centerprise and what did the role entail?

Before I started searching for a placement, I had created a detailed list of expectations and responsibilities I wanted my future role to entail and I felt the Marketing placement at Centerprise ticked all of these boxes.

Another great advantage for me was the fact that I was going to be the first intern joining the Marketing department in the last few years, which meant that I had the opportunity to shape my role the way I wanted and to have greater exposure to the business. I think the benefit of working for a medium sized company is that you have much more responsibility and freedom, and there are many successful individuals in senior positions you can reach out to that can help with your progress, guide you in challenging times or simply talk to you about their own career paths.

What knowledge did you gain and which skills and disciplines did you develop that you will take away from your placement and utilise in your final year of studies?

I had completed internships before and I also had two part-time jobs while I was at university, however, nothing can prepare you for life after graduation as much as a placement can. Something that I now realise and appreciate is how much this experience has changed me in a positive direction. I became very pro-active in always seeking new opportunities and trying to think outside of the box. At the beginning of my placement I was quite introverted and shy, but over the course of the year I had to overcome my fears and learn how to communicate effectively with people across all levels and in a range of situations.

Furthermore, it taught me a lot of industry-specific skills which will help and guide me throughout my final year. The subjects I have chosen will benefit from the marketing insights I have accumulated, and vice-versa: my marketing job after graduation will benefit from my better understanding of the subjects undertaken.

What have you learnt at Centerprise that has stuck with you the most?

I became quite disciplined when it came to time management and mostly importantly I learnt how to effectively multi-task, a skill I wasn't familiar with before. In marketing and especially in Centerprise you hardly ever work on just one project, you usually work on several completely different projects that require different sets of skills and are targeted towards different audiences and departments. Previously, I was used to concentrating on writing my report once a week, then switching to studying for an exam the next one. This placement has taught me how to switch my attention quickly so I can concentrate on completing several deadlines each day. I became much more efficient and was trusted with more responsibility over time, which is the biggest accomplishment for me.

What was your greatest achievement from your time at Centerprise?

It is extremely hard to decide my greatest achievement, however, I can confirm I am proud of two very different projects.

The first was the 'Defence Technology Show', an event Centerprise organise for the UK's Defence sector that brings our clients and partners together for a full day of exhibitions and entertaining presentations. Since we are a small team of four and my manager was always looking for ways to help me develop my abilities, a huge amount of the responsibility was given to me. I was involved in the full process of organising the event, from contacting sponsors and engaging with them on



almost a daily basis to ensure everything runs smoothly, to managing invites to customers and working on marketing campaigns to promote the event. It was a great challenge that the marketing team worked on for months, juggling other projects on the side as well, but it turned out to be one of the best experiences I have had. I realised that in order to deliver a stress free event, you had to put in more effort during the months prior to it. We worked extremely hard to ensure all preparation was complete prior to the day. In particular, I learnt how important attention to detail is and how to plan for an event from start to finish. At the end, the feeling of satisfaction comes when you see those hundreds of people under one roof enjoying and benefitting from an event you helped create.



The second achievement was becoming the dedicated marketer for BOXX Technology, a professional workstation company that is US-based and has a branch in the UK. Throughout the year I was working alongside the BOXX Manager and the Private Sector team to create a detailed marketing plan and work on strategic marketing campaigns. Over the course of one year, I was

able to increase the social media followers by 30%, I had the opportunity to represent BOXX alongside Pny and Asus at the Vertex event in London which had several thousand visitors from around the UK, and also work on a variety of marketing campaigns, including more than ten full page printed adverts for different magazines. One of my final projects with BOXX was redesigning the whole website in order to make it more efficient, trendy and informative. I had to work on the design of 80+ web pages and then learn how to apply SEO on all of them which was definitely challenging, but also worth it.

Overall, I would like to say that my greatest achievement is that after my first month at Ci, I was no longer treated like an intern. I was constantly proving to myself that I could take on a challenge and deliver great results over time.

What was your favourite part and the most challenging aspect of your placement at Centerprise?

My favourite part was that each day was different and I was able to choose from a variety of tasks and projects each day when I went to work. For example, organising events, creating designs or creating content. Each day provided different opportunities and often I had to adjust my priorities, regardless of how I was feeling personally, which is important in order to become consistent in my output. The biggest challenge came in March, when we had to completely change our way of living and working due to Covid 19. I had to quickly adjust to working from home and communicating to my colleagues mainly through emails and calls. While this has been a great challenge due to limited face-to-face interactions, it has also taught me how essential time-management and good communication skills are. It has also developed my resilience and the ability to work under pressure, as the business continued to operate during lockdown and there were new projects to support. I am lucky enough to be in a team of equally motivated members that support each other and I was grateful to be able to ask for help when needed. I am confident to say that the marketing team found a way to continue working efficiently regardless of the environment we were in.

How does working in a full-time role compare to your expectations prior to commencing your placement?

I have always been a hard-worker and a high-achiever, so I was used to having a busy lifestyle before my year had started. I think what I didn't expect was that my job would take such a huge portion of

my days and my colleagues will eventually become some of my closest friends. Moving away from home and from university, Centerprise became a huge part of my life. Regardless of my working hours, I would still think about work in the evenings and during the weekends, as I was mentally fully invested in all of the projects I worked on. During lockdown, the border between work life and personal life became even thinner. It made me realise how important it was to enjoy your job and be able to adapt to different working environments.

How does your placement year compare to other employment or work experience you have undertaken?

Even though I have worked in plenty of places before, I have never been so emotionally invested in my job. I especially liked the event management side of my role, which involved a lot of challenges and pressure but helped me grow as an individual. Some projects were so enjoyable that they didn't feel like a job, which is something I haven't experienced in any of my previous employments.

What advice would you give to an undergraduate joining the business in a similar role, especially someone new to the IT industry?

My advice, especially when it comes to marketing, would be to try as many things as possible, even if it seems hard in the beginning. Due to my ambition and curiosity, I was able to get involved with web design, video editing, event management, campaigns, copywriting and a variety of internal activities. The IT sector might seem overwhelming in the beginning, so you have to put in extra effort and have exceptional attention to detail in order to get up to speed quickly.

My biggest advice for anyone who is at the beginning of their placement is to have a positive attitude and the appetite to learn more. The connections you make and the knowledge you will get if you ask the right questions and engage with the right people are second to none.