
Innovation at Work - Alcatel-Lucent's WebTV Transcript edition 06/2009 - We Made It!

Hugh SCHOFIELD

Welcome to another edition of Innovation at Work. Alcatel-Lucent is one of seven partners in a project called in French the "Cercle Passeport Télécoms". It's a program to give business-style mentoring to students from modest backgrounds and help them to get into the top universities. Well, Alcatel-Lucent has now launched a competition called "We Made It" to allow some of these students to come to the United States to see Alcatel-Lucent's operations here and to get to know the American way of life. In this program we're joining the twenty or so lucky winners as they spend a week in Murray Hill, New Jersey, staying with local families, learning from telecom professionals, and of course, seeing the sites.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

The students have arrived in Murray Hill, where they are getting their first taste of life in America with their host families, all Alcatel-Lucent employees. For many of them, it's their first international experience. It's quite a unique opportunity made possible by the Alcatel-Lucent Foundation.

Béatrice TASSOT

Executive Director, Alcatel-Lucent Foundation

It's an international landscape in which they will work and live, they are future leaders - and the world is smaller and smaller and they need to be part of that community.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

First thing on the agenda is getting to know one another. Marie-Carole is staying with Mary Lou and her family. It's total immersion as they'll have to speak English all day for one week. Of course, this takes a bit of effort at the beginning.

Marie-Carole NDIAYE

It's a little difficult now but I hope it will come back bit by bit. I can still use my hands to get by. I'll try my best to speak so that afterwards it will be natural and fluid.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

Abdul Aziz is being hosted by Frank. Born in Burkina-Faso, for four years he has been studying in France. The Pilgrim family has its origins in Trinidad and Tobago. The mix of cultures comes naturally.

Abdul Aziz OUEDRAOGO

It's as if the family has left a place just for you. You arrive and there's your place. You're integrated in the family and that's great.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

Now it's time to get down to business. Their first introduction to a large international company is made by Victor Agnellini, Senior Executive at Alcatel-Lucent and Chairman of the Alcatel-Lucent Foundation.

Victor AGNELLINI

Chairman, Alcatel-Lucent Foundation

We have a set of values as a corporation that we are really doing our best to comply with and we need to be sure that you understand, you listen carefully and you really go with the right attitude to accomplish those things and teamwork is one of our key values.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

The students then get an idea of teamwork by visiting the different labs in Murray Hill. Meeting engineers and researchers is a unique opportunity to witness the making of tomorrow's technologies. And no visit to Bell Labs is complete without a tour of the museum, to see a heritage of more than 80 years of scientific discovery that continues today: six Nobel prizes, the transistor, the laser - and many more recent breakthroughs...

Jérémie LE BOT

I have just realized what a privilege it is to work here. You can come across some of the most talented people in their country. It's really impressive because the things invented here, we use every day.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

During their time at Bell Labs the students also have the chance to do some « shadowing ». Saïd is following Ron Sharp, an IT specialist through a typical working day.

Ron SHARP

Engineer, Alcatel-Lucent Bell Labs

Right now what I am testing is how well the software works.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

What's more, they'll maintain contact after the trip. When Saïd returns to France, Ron will be his tutor. They'll hold regular telephone conversations in English, so that Ron can follow Saïd's progress.

Ron SHARP

Engineer, Alcatel-Lucent Bell Labs

I was lucky enough to actually get a student to host who is actually my student that I will be mentoring. So now, when I talk to him on the phone, I will be able to picture him and we will know each other and we will know what interests we like, what you like what like... And so we can just continue the relationship that we already have started here.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

Another highlight is a visit to AT&T, a leading telecoms operator in the United States and an important client of Alcatel-Lucent. For these future engineers, the centerpiece is a tour of AT&T's Global Network Operations Center.

AT&T representative

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the world's largest and most sophisticated Operations Center. The AT&T network carries an enormous amount of traffic. We're averaging just over 17,000 trillion bytes of data. If you could visualize a stack of these CD's 36 kilometers high...

Karim HARAKAT

Right there you can see the live network in action. It's extraordinary for me to be there. All those screens it's like being at the NASA - it's amazing - it's like being in a movie !

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

New York's Financial District. Now it's time to talk about opportunities for working abroad. Today is dedicated to meetings with French people who've made their careers in the States. Thanh Nguyen has been here for five years, she is responsible for Business Development at Orange North America. Manuel Barbero chose to set up his own consulting business. Two different experiences - two different possible paths to follow...

Salomon MBATEL

He spoke to us about his career and the opportunities we could have and how we should behave to take them...

Moussa WAGUE

It was very interesting. It gave us some ideas about what we want to do.

Manuel BARBERO

Ineum Consulting

My international experience and background mean that I can represent both sides of the Atlantic. What's interesting for someone from France who goes overseas, is to use both dimensions rather than sticking to one - whether America or France.

Thanh NGUYEN

Orange North America

It makes you dream and fulfilling your dreams takes energy. At their age they need to be aware of this.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

The trip is almost over. To top off a busy week there's time for some well deserved moments of relaxation on the streets of New York.

(Voice off)

It's great to be here isn't it

Jay DEIVA

Totally! First I didn't think I'd be selected. Once selected, we then found out what was planned for the week and I realized just how special it is to take part in this program.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

Here in the United States, the students who all have diverse backgrounds have done more than a simple trip. Without a doubt, they have just experienced a crucial step for their future.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

Some last photographs of Manhattan before it's time to leave. Back home, they will be able to pass on to future candidates impressions of a week packed with new experiences and truly say of themselves : We Made It!