

Briste Pasantía

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My Experience with an International Internship and Latin America.

One compelling aspect of the LAIB program here at Clemson University that attracted me when considering my field of study was the idea of an internship in a foreign country with an international company. Having studied Spanish throughout my education, starting in middle school, I was very interested in International Business because I hoped to incorporate a language into the business world.

As a student at Clemson University during my first year, I knew I wanted to explore the world and broaden my horizons. I am incredibly grateful to the entire LAIB department here at Clemson University, especially Professor García, for advocating for me and pushing me out of my comfort zone. Professor García support and encouragement were pivotal in my decision to study abroad in Argentina, which transformed my academic experience. Without his guidance, I wouldn't have gone to Argentina, and my speaking and listening skills in Spanish would not be as strong as they are today.

After spending the last four years studying international business, I want to pursue a global supply chain management or marketing career. My six months in Argentina significantly improved my Spanish proficiency far beyond my expectations, and I want to continue using that skill in my career. Being bilingual will help set me apart from other candidates in future job applications.

Before my time with Briste, a tech start-up in Córdoba, I had never worked in an internship before, let alone in an international business environment. My time as a market research intern at Briste opened my eyes to how to do meaningful and practical work in an office setting, and it allowed me to apply my language and cultural knowledge in a real-world context.

My first day at Briste was simply an introductory day, where Director Rojas accompanied me to the office to meet the team and get to know the company. Briste's

office is located between downtown Córdoba and Argüllo and is about 45 minutes away from my host family's house. The commute was indeed much longer than I expected for my internship, but I appreciated it because it is very likely that I will have long commutes in my future career. I was able to practice time management skills and took pride in arriving at the office on time. Punctuality has always been essential, and I made it a principle not to be late, and I was able to uphold that principle. I was so punctual I would arrive too early on some occasions.

On the first day, I met Marcos Brizuela, Guillermina Lerussi, and Guillermo Stettler, the company's founders. They were very welcoming and excited to have me on their team. They presented me with a detailed and organized schedule and itinerary, as well as the goals and objectives of the company that I would be working on during my internship. It was a bit overwhelming, but my courses at Clemson and the time spent in the classroom had prepared me well enough to be an effective intern and to complete meaningful work. Guille and Guillermo had thoroughly planned the objectives and tasks I would be completing and paired me up with Fernando Tacuri, who serves as Briste's Sales, Customer Support, and Client Onboarding Coordinator (BOIT System) it brought me peace knowing that they cared about my development and were willing to provide one of their key employees to help guide me with my work. I left the office on the first day with confidence and excitement for the months ahead, as I was eager to work in their office and collaborate with different people.

Briste: The Platform and its Impact on Agriculture Briste is a company that has designed a platform allowing users to monitor their soil conditions with an AI-powered system that gathers data instantly. The platform is incredibly efficient and user-friendly, requiring just a few clicks to get vital soil information. One of the critical benefits of BIOT is that it does not rely on external sources for data; instead, it uses real-time measurements from the soil itself. While other platforms pull data from various web sources, Briste's BIOT uses direct readings from the soil, ensuring the data is relevant and accurate. The platform's design is both visually appealing and easy to navigate. Users can upload their soil data, and the AI generates insights for improving irrigation and fertilization, optimizing agricultural practices. Farmers find it especially useful, as the platform supports geolocated soil readings and offers a mobile app for easy access. Briste serves various agricultural sectors across Latin America, providing modern tools to enhance farm productivity and sustainability.

My First Major Task and Insights During the Internship one of the first significant tasks during my internship involved learning how to navigate working with a new culture. My first client was Paraguayan, and having never met someone from Paraguay before, I quickly realized that Paraguayans and Argentines have distinct approaches to conducting business. While Argentine professionals often focus on relationship-building and informal communication, Paraguayan clients can be more reserved initially, emphasizing clear protocols and direct problem-solving. This difference was particularly evident in how they

approached technological challenges. the client was having trouble understanding how to operate the BIOT app, and thanks to guidance from my colleague Fernando, I could better understand the cultural nuances and adjust my communication style. Fernando's insight into the subtle differences between how Paraguayans and Argentines manage business interactions helped me confidently navigate the situation. As a result, I successfully assisted the client in rectifying the issue with the app, ensuring they felt supported and satisfied. This experience allowed me to develop cultural adaptability and highlighted the importance of understanding a client's unique perspective to provide tailored support. Working with diverse professionals, especially in a new cultural context, gave me valuable insights into how business is conducted across Latin America, deepening my professional and personal growth.

During my internship, we communicated primarily in Spanish, although I occasionally taught my team some English words, turning it into a fun game that helped improve my language skills. The Argentine work culture was quite different from what I was accustomed to in the U.S. Adjusting from the formal work environment back home to a more informal setting took some time. We all worked at a large communal table, which fostered open conversation and collaboration. It wasn't uncommon for us to take breaks to play foosball together, which strengthened our camaraderie.

Fridays were especially memorable. We would start the day by gathering for an hour-long coffee and breakfast, discussing the workweek in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. This informal style helped build strong team bonds and encouraged a sense of community, something I needed to be used to in a more structured U.S. office setting. These experiences enriched my cultural understanding and made the workplace more enjoyable and interactive.

This shift in the environment from a structured to a more casual work culture taught me to adapt and appreciate different working styles. It also significantly improved my Spanish, as I was immersed in the language daily. In return, I shared some of my English knowledge, which helped create a dynamic learning environment for everyone.

This experience has prepared me for navigating diverse work cultures in the global business world, showing me the value of balancing work and social interaction. It reinforced that workplace immersion isn't just about language learning but about gaining cultural awareness, enhancing cognitive skills, and becoming more adaptable in international settings.

To begin with, my thoughts and analysis on the linguistic impact of language immersion during my internship provided me with a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and business etiquette. This was particularly important when working with my first Paraguayan client, where I learned how business practices in Paraguay differ from those in Argentina. The informal, relationship-focused Argentine style contrasted with the more reserved and protocol-driven approach of Paraguayans, which I successfully navigated with the help of my colleague Fernando. These experiences taught me how intertwined

language and culture are in business settings and how important it is to adapt my communication style to different cultural contexts.

This immersion has been precious for my future career in international business. Fluency in another language, especially within the context of business, not only makes me a more attractive candidate for multinational companies but also prepares me for roles that require cultural understanding and knowledge of diverse markets. Whether leading international projects, managing multicultural teams, or negotiating deals with foreign partners, these skills are essential in today's interconnected global economy.

My parents have always emphasized—and I've since experienced firsthand—that learning a second language enhances cognitive skills such as problem-solving, creativity, and multitasking. Working in a fully immersive Spanish-speaking environment accelerated these benefits. At Briste, this translated into more effective decision-making, innovative thinking, and the ability to handle multiple tasks efficiently, such as helping a client troubleshoot the BIOT app. These cognitive advantages, paired with my understanding of cultural dynamics, will be precious in any professional setting, positioning me as a versatile asset for leadership roles.

The immersive experience of using Spanish in a professional setting has enhanced my communication skills and deepened my passion for exploring the world and experiencing new cultures. As a third-culture child, growing up in Southern Africa and later moving to the U.S., I've always been drawn to understanding different ways of life. This background uniquely prepared me for my internship in Argentina, where I had the chance to develop my adaptability and cross-cultural awareness further.

For example, working with my Paraguayan client showed me the subtleties of navigating business interactions across cultures, reinforcing my excitement about working in global markets. Whether it was learning how to balance the informal Argentine work culture—where we played foosball and enjoyed breakfast together on Fridays—or adjusting my communication style to meet the expectations of a more formal, reserved Paraguayan client, each experience helped me grow professionally and personally.

This immersion has further fueled my love for exploring new environments and cultures, allowing me to integrate my language skills with my international business aspirations. Being bilingual opens doors in international marketing, translation, and other fields. Still, more than that, it aligns with my passion for working across borders and connecting with people from different backgrounds. My upbringing, which fostered an understanding of multiple cultures, perfectly positioned me to take full advantage of this internship and its valuable experiences.

Ultimately, my experience in Argentina has strengthened my ability to communicate in Spanish and amplified my global perspective, which I plan to leverage as I pursue opportunities in international business. I hope to apply to various international companies,

and my cultural knowledge and language skills will allow me to thrive in multicultural settings. This journey has enhanced my ability to navigate diverse markets and deepened my commitment to a career that blends cultural exploration with global business opportunities.

E-Valuados Pasantía

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