

INTERNSHIP IN MICRO COMPANIES?

GOOD REASONS - GOOD ADVICE - GOOD CASES



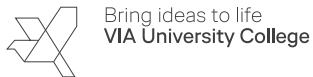
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Why focus on internships in micro companies?

Through the InnoMatch Project, nine Danish and Swedish partners have worked together to strengthen the contacts and matches between students in higher education and micro companies in Denmark and Sweden. The purpose of this has been to increase the motivation among talented students to pursue a career in micro companies, as well as to increase the capacity of innovation in micro companies by bringing academics into play as innovative resources.

The reason for this work is that the Öresund-Kattekat-Skagerak region has a large number of micro companies, and exactly these micro companies have a great potential for creating growth throughout the region. Furthermore, micro companies can many times serve as a very good platform for academics to “create their own job” as academics many times bring about new visions, competences and knowledge that will help the micro companies to come up with new products or new ways of working.

The three methods of connecting students with micro companies have been through the organizing of talent programs, the organizing of innovation cooperations – both with real life cases with actual micro companies – and a focus on promoting and increasing the number of internships done in micro companies. The last method is the scope of this handbook.

The handbook seeks to list the many good reasons for choosing an internship in a micro company – including the issues special to micro companies and the advantages that students tend to experience throughout their internships in micro companies – and the good advice for the ones, who might consider pursuing an internship in a micro company. The handbook is built around cases with students telling how they experienced their internship in a micro company and what they learned. We hope it will inspire and motivate more students to consider exploring the many interesting opportunities in micro companies through an internship!





What is a micro company?

This handbook concerns internships in micro companies. So a definition of a micro company is a good start.

We are looking at micro companies in a Scandinavian context, and this handbook includes 8 cases with real life startups and interviews with individuals, who did a student internship in these startups.

Micro companies in Scandinavian context:

- Less than 10 employees.
- More than 150.000 companies.
- Represents many sectors, such as consultancy, tech, life science, IT and communications.

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GOOD REASONS

When asked to mention good reasons for doing an internship in a micro company, students and companies simultaneously mention things as larger responsibility, less hierarchy, the possibility to try many different tasks and so forth.

RESPONSIBILITY

Even as an intern in a micro company, you are often given responsibility and might be working with big tasks which are important to the company. Furthermore, you often work single-handedly and have control over your own time and tasks, which strengthens both your independence and the ability to plan time and tasks.

CLOSE TO THE TOP

In a micro company, you are often close to the management, which means that you to a greater extent can shape and influence the business development. Micro companies appreciate – and almost expect – that you as an intern state your opinion.

RESULTS

When you work in a micro company the products, solutions and opinions you bring to the table, can be turned into reality really quickly and make a bigger impact than they would make in a larger and more established company, where even small decisions and processes often have to be approved by a person higher in the hierarchy.

CREATE YOUR OWN JOB

Micro companies are usually good places for creating your own job. The micro companies are often open to listening to other people's suggestions about what the company needs to do differently within specific fields and situations.

MANY DIFFERENT TASKS

Because of the size of micro companies, all employees can hold many different roles. This means that you very quickly will learn about all the aspects of a project and its processes. Because of this, you will "grow" simultaneously with the project and can shift between different tasks.

DON'T EXPECT TO BE BORED

You will rarely be bored in a micro company, as there is "no place to hide". All employees need to contribute to the company's progress, as the company is more responsive to changes in customers, economy, etc. This means that your working day often will be both more involving and exciting.

CLOSE WORK RELATIONS IN SMALL TEAMS

In a micro company you will enter into very close work relations, where you and your colleagues need to make something succeed. You will get to know people fast and usually you will quickly become an important part of the company, as it consist of few people, where everybody need to help in order to solve the tasks.

PROJECTS AND PROCESSES IN ITS PUREST FORM

In a micro company you will, so to speak, be able to see and experience how a project or a process, in its purest form, takes place. There is no one to distort the image, because there are not too many people or decision-makers to be part of the project or process. This experience can empower you with the ability to see parts of processes that may be unnecessary and can be removed.

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GOOD ADVICE

When asked to give good advice for the ones seeking to pursue an internship in a micro company, students and companies mention things as “true involvement”, finding the “right way in” and how it is important to be “spot on” in relation to where you can add value to the company.

REAL ENGAGEMENT

It is an advantage to be genuinely interested in the company and the things it works with because often people here are quite passionate about the place and their tasks. Make sure to acquaint yourself with what the company does and be able to see yourself working with it.

FIND THE RIGHT WAY IN

You need to contact the right person in the company (search on the internet and find the right person). Try to avoid the company's normal application processes, as these usually are spammed and a small company has less time to these formal processes. If it is possible try to find a "back way" and create the contact this way.

HOW CAN YOU ADD VALUE TO THE COMPANY?

Try to think of a way of how you can add extra value to the company. Examine what they do, how they earn their money and then think of a new angle and think of ways to explain how this can increase the company's customer segment, area of business, revenue etc.

GET TO KNOW THE CULTURE

When you have to work closely together with a small number of people it is a good idea to see the company a few times before you start your internship. By doing so, you can get to know the culture of the company and find out if there actually is a good match between you and them.

MAKE SURE TO ALIGN EXPECTATIONS

It is always a good idea to align your expectations, but this is even more important when doing your internship in a micro company, where each person – usually also the intern – plays a crucial role in order to perform different tasks, take responsibility, etc.

SELL THE DIFFERENCE

You need to tell the company, why you believe the company is exciting and why you would like to become a part of it. It is important that the micro company can feel that you can make a difference for them – and what this difference may be.

BE HONEST AND DON'T BE SHY

When you work in small, close teams it is very important that you prepare yourself for stepping forward, state your opinion, articulate what you are good at, but also being honest about what you need help and advice on. Don't be shy!

EMPHASISE YOUR "T-SHAPED" PROFILE

Micro companies depend on new specialist knowledge but at the same time they often rely on employees to be able to take on different tasks and responsibilities. So you have to emphasize having both some specialist knowledge in your main field as well as having a broad profile – being what one could call a "T-shaped" profile.

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GOOD CASES

THOMAS JACK MCNEE TAIT

NAKDCOM ONE WORLD

"It was certainly a new experience for me, walking into a micro-enterprise and working on a flat organisational hierarchy."

KASPER SCHMIDT

GREEN WORLD

"In micro business the distance between you and the management is almost none-existent."

JULIE SABRINA PETERSEN

LIFESKILL

"You are in control of your own time. You have more options available to you, and no days are alike."

ERIK SÄRMAN

NORDIC SURFERS

"It's special to work in a micro enterprise because everyone is doing everything and everyone is responsible for making decisions."

DIMITRIOS PALYVOS

INKONOVA

"I have always been curious about drones, but learning how to actually design and build one was very interesting and provides knowledge of an emerging market product."

ANNE METTE FALCH

BUNKER43

"Choose an internship in a micro business if you want to try out different work tasks instead of a single one."

HEIDI TENENBAUM JACOBSEN

VISOMETRIC

"It was great to experience the energy and enthusiasm of the people working in the startup; everybody was very passionate about the company."

AMALIE LYSELL TORPING

AVECDO

"I really gained an insight in my own abilities from trying so many different things, having so much responsibilities and being showed so much trust."

NAKDCOM ONE WORLD: LEARNING FROM SWEDISH PIONEERS

Thomas, who is a graduate student in International Marketing, did an internship in the micro company, Nakdcom One World, in Sweden in the autumn of 2017. The company has a reputation for being one of the fastest growing fashion e-commerce companies in Europe, and Thomas' internship provided him with an opportunity to learn from some of the pioneers who initiated the digital success.

Which work tasks did you have?

During my internship, I was given the opportunity to work through areas of my own personal interest, ranging from trade to specialist areas of digital marketing; where I explored and demonstrated my passion for Paid Search Marketing and SEO (Search Engine Optimization red.).

Which results did you create?

I strongly believe that the results of any company are directly associated with a team level. However, attention to my efforts did not go unnoticed and I was nominated for Digital Marketer of the Year.

According to you, how is the work in a micro company compared to bigger companies?

It was certainly a new experience for me, walking into a micro-enterprise and working in a company with a flat organizational

hierarchy. I was strongly encouraged to voice my own opinions and to suggest organizational improvements. I especially enjoyed the tight working team, who under a closed roof were very welcoming to a new member of the team.

How has it benefitted you to do an internship in a micro company, and how can you use it in your future career?

I had the opportunity to showcase my understanding in a small setting, working closely with pioneers in the industry of Digital Marketing. The contacts I have made are well recognized industry leaders who have had the time and drive to educate me in best market practice and innovations in the field of e-commerce.

Would you recommend others to do an internship in a micro company? Why/why not?

I would highly recommend it. You will get the chance to show everyone what you are made of!

“ It was certainly a new experience for me, walking into a micro company and working on a flat organizational hierarchy.



Name: **Thomas Jack McNee Tait**
Study Programme: **International Marketing**
(**Economics and Business Administration**), Aalborg University
Company: **Nakdcom One World** (www.na-kd.com)

GREEN NETWORK: FILLED WITH LEARNING AND RESPONSIBILITY

In the autumn of 2016, Kasper, a master student in Applied Philosophy at AAU, did an internship at Green Network A/S, which is a CSR knowledge- and training center. For Kasper, which is very interested in both CSR and sustainability, the internship was a unique possibility to work in an exciting company. After he finished his internship, Kasper was offered a student job and later a full-time job at Green Network.

Which work tasks did you have?

I primarily worked with evaluation of one of the Environmental Protection Agency's projects called "The Green Change Agents" [Grønne Forandringsagenter]. Besides that, I also worked with different events, courses and ad-hoc tasks.

Which results did you create?

We made an assessment report for the Environmental Protection Agency, which both contained qualitative and quantitative material about the participants of their course. Besides that, I also helped with knowledge collection, facilitating meetings, project management, news and social media.

According to you, how is the work in a micro company compared to bigger companies?

The decision-making process is short. It was very easy for me to talk with the CEO and getting things started. It was also possible for me to undertake responsibility and influence things.

How has it benefitted you to do an internship in a micro company, and how can you use it in your future career?

First and foremost, my internship lead to an offer on a student job and later-on a full-time position in the company. Furthermore, I also learned a lot about project management and obtained professional knowledge about how you in practice work with CSR in smaller companies.

Would you recommend others to do an internship in a micro company? Why/Why not?

Absolutely! In a micro company, you have good possibilities to have influence and make a difference. In a micro company the distance between you and the management is almost none-existent. Clearly, the smaller businesses have some good and neglected possibilities, which you don't get as easily in bigger companies.

“ In a micro company the distance between you and the management is almost none-existent.



Name: **Kasper Schmidt**
Study Programme: **Applied Philosophy [Anvendt Filosofi],**
Aalborg University
Company: **Green Network A/S (www.greennetwork.dk)**

LIFESKILL: INDEPENDENCE AND INITIATIVE AS THE KEYWORDS

In the spring of 2018, Julie, a marketing management student from Dania Academy, completed her internship at Lifeskill. Lifeskill is a B2B company that offers health checks and targeted courses for employees through an online platform. Lifeskill is a micro company with two permanent employees and eight affiliated external consultants.

Which work tasks did you have?

There are many opportunities in a smaller company, and I have performed a variety of tasks. In general, the company was in need of specialized knowledge about marketing and sales, so I have used a lot of my time on marketing and visibility, social media in particular. In addition, I have also worked on optimizing the company's website, and I have worked with appointment booking and sales outreach.

Which results did you create during your internship?

That would be the optimization of the Lifeskill's website where so many things have happened, and apart from that it would be getting the company positioned on social media.

According to you, how is the work in a micro company compared to bigger companies?

You are in control of your own time. You have more options available to you, and no days are alike. In many situations, I have taken the initiative myself, because no one else has been there to get me started. You also need to be prepared to juggle many simultaneous tasks and still work in a structured manner because you will end up working on so many different things.

How has it benefitted you to do an internship in a micro company, and how can you use it in your future career?

It has prepared me for the working life, and it has given me a sense of independence. It has helped me believe that what I can do is good enough.

Would you recommend others to do an internship in a micro company? Why/why not?

Yes, I certainly would. It does require that you are competent enough to make the right calls, when you are on your own though. If you would rather prefer following a plan someone else has lined up, maybe you should pick a larger company instead.

“ You are in control of your own time. You have more options available to you, and no days are alike.



Name: **Julie Sabrina Petersen**
Study Programme: **AP Degree in Marketing Management,**
Dania Academy
Company: **Lifeskill (www.lifeskill.dk)**

NORDIC SURFERS: NO LIMIT TO WHAT I COULD LEARN!

In the summer of 2017 Erik Särman, a master student of International Marketing, did an internship at the creative agency Nordic Surfers. His work tasks included being part of organizing the annual festival Hallifornia. From this experience among other things Erik gained competences within project management and all the things this includes: planning, organizing, budgeting and so forth.

Which work tasks did you have?

I worked as a project manager at the creative agency Nordic Surfers that organizes Hallifornia. Hallifornia is a festival, which want to promote the new coastal culture in Varberg and Halland. The main tasks for me were to plan the whole area of Surfers Corners, which included everything from booking artists, booking audio equipment, producing marketing materials, doing the budget, managing all the logistics, for instance making schedules for the volunteers and so forth. In addition, I also organized the main party of the festival – “Grand Finale” – which was situated in Surfers Corner.

Which results did you create?

Surfers Corner had not been there before, which meant we had to do everything from the beginning. So among other things I developed a concept for Surfers Corner that can be developed even further in the years to come. I also established good relations with new sponsors, an artist manager and a good catering company, which will be useful in the 2018 festival.

According to you, how is the work in a micro company compared to bigger companies?

It's special to work in a micro enterprise because everyone is doing everything and everyone is responsible for making decisions. At the same time it's fun because you get to know everyone in the workplace very well very fast; you become a little bit like a family.

How has it benefitted you to do an internship in a micro company, and how can you use it in your future career?

I have been involved in so many different decision making processes and I have gained insight into so many different aspects of event planning and project management. Also I've learned to be very flexible and agile in the project work. So it has been very rewarding.

Would you recommend others to do an internship in a micro company? Why/Why not?

I would not recommend everyone to do it. It takes a lot of you as a person. It's a very high pace and many people you meet work too much, which can make it very stressful. But if you are a person who likes changes, who enjoys hard work and who deals well with responsibilities then an internship in a small business can be perfect. For me it was an extreme fun and rewarding workplace, where there were no limits for what I could learn!

“It's special to work in a micro company because everyone is doing everything and everyone is responsible for making decisions.”



CAMPUS
VARBERG

GRAND FINALE

erfrågade utb

Name: **Erik Särman**

Study Programme: **Masters in International Marketing
(Economics and Business Administration)** , Campus Varberg

Company: **Nordic Surfers**

INKONOVA: DESIGNING CONCEPT DRONES IN A START-UP COMPANY

Dimitrios, a student in Industrial Design, did his internship in a micro company, “Inkonova” in Stockholm, Sweden. He designed concept drones, did market research, and was able to test his limits in relation to his educational background.

Which work tasks did you have?

I worked as a concept developer, packaging designer and market researcher. I have always been curious about drones, but learning how to actually design and build one was very interesting. It also provided me with knowledge about an emerging market product.

Which results did you create?

I created a condensed market analysis on the competitors of Inkonova when a new concept was evaluated. I designed three concept drones, one of which will be developed further in the future. Last but not least I created advertising posters for Inkonova when the company participated in expos.

According to you, how is the work in a micro company compared to bigger companies?

I got the opportunity to develop a close relationship with my colleagues due to the small size of the company. Also, by applying the theoretical knowledge I have

gained through my studies in project management, I was able to test my limits in a real job environment where more responsibilities fall upon individuals.

How has it benefitted you to do an internship in a micro company, and how can you use it in your future career?

I have discovered a lot about myself as an employee. I started to measure my industrial designer skills efficiency on different tasks, which in return allowed me to develop better time management in a multitasking job environment. Also, it helped me develop better communication skills in terms of design in a multidisciplinary environment.

Would you recommend others to do an internship in a micro company? Why/why not?

It is a pleasant experience. My advice would be to make a thorough research and talk/clarify your tasks and expectations with the person that will be supervising you in the company. Things tend to fall off really fast if you do not clarify these things.

“ I have always been curious about drones, but learning how to actually design and build one was very interesting and provides knowledge of an emerging market product.



Name: **Dimitrios Palyvos**
Study Programme: **MSc in Industrial design,**
Aalborg University
Company: **Inkonova**

BUNKER43: FULL FOCUS ON CONCEPT AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

In the autumn of 2017, Anne Mette Falch did her internship at Bunker43, a micro company that works with technology and software within the fields of health, experiences and logistics. During her internship Anne Mette, a master's student in User Experience Design, had the opportunity to try the whole spectrum of the company's different tasks. It was a perfect match between Anne Mette and Bunker43, which ultimately lead to a full-time job as Bunker43's Creative Director.

What was your work tasks?

As a User Experience Design Student, my primary task was to concept develop on different digital solutions for museums. Here, I worked with all the different things related to a concept proposal – from ideation to the specific graphics of the proposal. If we were able to sell the concept, I took part in the development, implementation and testing of the product, but also participating in different meetings with our customers.

Which results did you create?

Together with some other talented employees, I helped starting up Bunker43's sister company Nytte. I came with knowledge and experience, the company didn't have, which meant that we could create more user-friendly products. Because of this, I was hired as Creative Director, after my internship ended.

According to you, how is the work in a micro company compared to bigger companies?

For me, the most special thing about working in a micro company is, that you are allowed to be part of the development and given so much responsibility, as I did. Moreover, all of my ideas and stances have been heard. From my perspective, micro companies have a peculiar and special attractiveness.

How has it benefitted you to do an internship in a micro company, and how can you use it in your future career?

The head of the company had big confidence in me, which meant that I sometimes was thrown in at the deep end and didn't really know if I could make it. But, every time I managed to handle it and come out stronger than I was before. Due to these experiences, I know that I am well-equipped for the labor market when I finish my education. Especially the contact with our different customers have given me a lot, particularly because every customer have different demands and wishes.

Would you recommend others to do an internship in a micro company? Why/why not?

Definitely! I would recommend other students to do their internships in micro companies, if they want to try different work tasks and not only work with one type of task in 3-4 months. In a micro enterprise, you quickly become part of the company and you are close to your boss, which I don't believe is as easy in a bigger company.

“Choose an internship in a micro company if you want to try out different work tasks instead of a single one.”

BUNKER43

USING TECHNOLOGY



Name: **Anne Mette Falch**
Study Programme: **User Experience Design (Oplevelsesdesign),**
Aalborg University
Company: **Bunker43 (www.bunker43.dk)**

VISOMETRIC: A START-UP WITH FREEDOM TO IMPLEMENT IDEAS AND SKILLS

In the spring of 2018 Heidi Tenenbaum Jacobsen, an AP degree student of Marketing Management, did a 12-week internship at the start-up company Visometric in Horsens. The company does intelligent visualization solutions through Virtual Reality allowing architects to see the design of houses before they are actually built. Visometric is a start-up and has three full time employees.

Which tasks did you have?

There were both some big and some smaller tasks. I was the only one working with marketing and was in charge of starting the company's marketing strategy and improving their visibility. I worked on the development and update of the webpage and on the company's SEO-strategy so the company would be easier to find on Google. The company did not have presence on the social media and I created and maintained their Facebook profile. Moreover, I communicated with clients and was in charge of setting meetings up.

How was it to work in a startup?

I enjoyed working in a small company because I knew my colleagues very well and the working environment was very friendly. It was great to experience the energy and enthusiasm of the people working in the startup; everybody was very passionate about the company.

How has it benefitted you to do an internship in a start-up, and how can you use it in your future career?

I had a chance to apply my academic skills into practice and I had freedom to work with my own ideas. I was feeling very appreciated by my colleges, as I was the only one who had knowledge about marketing.

Would you recommend others do to an internship in a startup? Why/why not?

I think one should really consider if there is a match between one's wishes and the company's needs. An internship in a start-up will be perfect for someone who loves having freedom to implement his or her ideas and skills because you can do so from day one in a start-up. On the other hand, working in a bigger company can be more suitable for a student who would like more guidance and mentoring during his or her internship.

“It was great to experience the energy and enthusiasm of the people working in a startup; everybody was very passionate about the company.”



Name: **Heidi Tenenbaum Jacobsen**
Study Programme: **AP Degree in Marketing Management,**
VIA University College
Company: **Visometric**

AVECDO: AN EXPERIENCE WITH TRUST, TEAM SPIRIT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Amalie Lysell Torping did her internship in the startup Avecdo in Viborg. Here she gained a lot of experiences since she had functions in all parts of the company and therefore could influence the processes and ways of working in an almost brand new company. Amalie's tasks took her from the support desk to the advisory board, which meant she got a very broad picture of an interesting company.

Which tasks did you have?

I have worked a lot with analyzing the company's processes and giving suggestions on how to improve them. I have also worked generally with strategy – the vision, mission and values of the company – and more specifically with the marketing strategy and the business model of Avecdo. I have functioned as moderator of meetings, I have been in charge of the company when my boss was gone, I have participated in key events on advisory board level, and I have also made some improvements of the webpage and been a supporter for a day or two. So a little of each!

How was it to work in a startup?

I think it was nice to experience the enormous trust everyone had in me – and it was obvious for me that I was of great value to the company; they had a lot of

work for me and received my suggestions very well. Apart from that, I think that getting a lot of responsibility is also typical for a startup or a micro company and also that you get to try multiple things. I also enjoyed working in a small company because you become part of an intimate team and get to know everyone very well.

How has it benefitted you to do an internship in a start-up, and how can you use it in your future career?

I think the most important thing to mention is how much I feel like I grew personally. I really gained an insight in my own abilities from trying so many different things, having so much responsibility and being showed so much trust to independently come up with solutions.

Would you recommend others to do an internship in a start-up? Why/why not?

I think it is an excellent opportunity if one is interested in a lot of very different tasks, and one is comfortable with responsibilities and individual problem solving and not afraid of presenting one's opinions. On the other hand, if you prefer to qualify on one or two professional areas maybe a larger company is the right place!

“ I really gained an insight in my own abilities from trying so many different things, having so much responsibilities and being showed so much trust.

IN PROGRESS:

DONE:

Deltage
i møder
(AID, Status og
Kundenvejer)

På Modifeds
formidlingsstrategi
implementeret

Feedback
af Niels
(ledelse og
medarbejdere)

Kommunikation
for samarbejde
og netværk

Udvalgte
mål
for projekterne

Hvordan styres
projekterne
i Modifed

Estimering
på projekter
Prioritet

Name: **Amalie Lysell Torping**

Study Programme: **Business Economics and Information Technology,
Business Academy Aarhus**

Company: **avecdo**



**Inno
match**

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