

Darla Moore School of Business
University of South Carolina

Full-Time **MBA Programs**

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Project Profile:
Alexandra Nigh

IMBA Class of 2013
Company: Cumfin
Location: Lyon, France



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Journal Entry #1

Bonjour tout le monde!

It's been a whirlwind of a month in Lyon, France. I'm currently working at Cummins France as a Marketing intern. I'm approaching my one month anniversary with the Chassieu firm that works as a distributor of Cummins Inc. Engines. The facility also works closely with 10 dealers in France. Cumfin, based out of the same office, is a service provider for six businesses namely Cummins, Mecatlantic, C.M.T., R.A.M.S., Cumas, and Teramat.

Thus far I have started working on two projects. One project is with the Marketing department where I am responsible for creating two marketing documents for Cummins and Rams for their various dealers. These documents will allow dealers to understand which construction, agriculture, marine, and industry builders contain Cummins or Rams engines. This information is important for their marketing outreach. For the second project I am working with the Technical department to register many of the dealers Cummins works with to an internal Cummins system, QuickServe Online, which conveys important information to dealers about engine design, maintenance and warranty as well as enables dealers to have direct access to Cummins experts regarding Cummins products.

Working in a French environment has been challenging, but also incredibly rewarding and awkward at times. Equipped with previous language training and four months of intensive language courses in Clermont-Ferrand, France, I continue to be surprised that for the most part I understand what is going on around me. (I even had my first French business call this past week which went remarkably smoothly despite my fears.) I remain surprised at and thankful for my co-workers patience with my language skills (and lack thereof depending on the hour) and efforts to include me in office life.

Aside from working in French, the one major challenge has been the French keyboard. Personally, I think I can type quite quickly. However, the French keyboard has proved to be a nemesis at work. The A, Z, W, Q, etc. are located in different places on the keyboard. Shift is needed to successfully enter a number as well as a period. It is frustrating, but on the bright side of things, I have easy access to all needed French accents without a need for a side character window.

I have noted a few key differences between French and American work habits. The first of these differences concerns office interaction. When working in the US and in South Africa, I always made a point to say hello to the people I came across in the office in the morning when I arrived and in the evening when I left. Without thought, I continued this habit in France. While I had noticed my fellow co-workers in Cumfin saying hello and good-bye to nearly everyone in the office, I didn't think much of it. However within the first week of continuing my usual behavior, my supervisor and some other co-workers spoke to me gently about my behavior. They explained to me that in Cumfin and in most of France (as I later found out), it is tradition to greet and bid adieu to **all** co-workers in

your area each morning and evening. It was explained to me that this tradition fosters a greater working spirit within the organization.

The second difference in the two countries' work life involves the lunch time tradition. In my past work experience, it has been the norm for me and many of my co-workers to work during our lunch break while eating. However, in Cumfin, perhaps also in the rest of France (I don't want to make generalizations), lunch is observed in its entirety either sitting communally and sharing a meal with your co-workers or going out for lunch. It's during these lunches in the office's kitchen that I find myself getting to know my co-workers better and working on my French language skills. I've even noticed that I come back to work with much more energy than I ever did when I "worked through lunch."

My final reflection after these first couple weeks is one of gratitude. I have been showered with kindness since I arrived. The company has been amazing. When I arrived, I had a place to live. My co-workers have also been incredibly generous. My co-worker, Anabelle, has been driving me to work every day since I arrived. Most days we speak French in the car, but we have also started having "English" days too, to make the exchange more mutual. She's also invited me to go running in Lyon's amazing Parc de la Tete d'Or. My other co-worker, Gaelle, rode the bus and the tram with me to show me my way home. Another co-worker, Leila, continues to check on me through-out the day to make sure I am getting along well. She has set me up with an American TV series in French to ameliorate my language skills and has invited me out to social gatherings.

It has been a really great first month! I'm looking forward to all the good things to come. Until next time!

PS. It's official after starting my first Marketing project I've officially become my mother's daughter. My Mom works for Cummins in the U.S. in the Marketing department. She has always had a turrets-like response to trucks and construction/agricultural equipment. It is second nature to her to wonder aloud and/or know if a truck or a piece of construction/agriculture equipment has a Cummins Diesel engine in it. Since starting the marketing project, every single truck or piece of construction or agricultural equipment jumps out at me. I have without a doubt become my mother. I can't help but wonder when I see trucks and this type of equipment - do they have a Cummins or a Yanmar engine in it?

Journal Entry #2

Salut!

After two months and one company orientation, my understanding of the company, Cumfin, and my role are becoming clearer. It is difficult to believe that I have already come to the halfway point of my internship.

I would like to begin with a somewhat large clarification regarding the first paragraph of my last blog entry. I am, in fact, employed by Cumfin (not Cummins France as previously stated); however, due to the dual objectives of my internship, I technically work for Cumfin while supporting the Marketing department and Cummins France when supporting the technical department.

Cumfin, created in 2000, is a holding company that provides administrative and accounting services including Human Resources, Quality, Marketing, and Information Technology for seven businesses. Cumfin has a staff of approximately twenty people to support Cummins France, Cummins Energie Alergie, Mecatlantic, C.M.T., R.A.M.S., Cumas, and Teramat. Together these seven companies generated approximately 109 million Euros in sales in 2011, an increase of 17 percent from 2010. Of these joint sales, Cumfin generated 2.1 million Euros (1.3 after taxes) in 2011.

Cummins France S.A. (CFSA), on the other hand, is an independent distributor of Cummins, Inc. products. CFSA evolved from a subsidiary of Cummins USA, Cummins Sales Corporation, which was established in Lyon in 1971. In 1996, the current CEO of Cumfin purchased Cummins Sales Corporation creating Cummins Diesel S.A., and making it an independent distributor of Cummins Inc. Cummins Diesel S.A. became Cummins France S.A. (CFSA) in 2007 to align themselves with the new brand standards of Cummins Inc.

CFSA specializes in four services: Parts, Commercial, Technical, and Logistics. CFSA's geographic coverage includes all French territories (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, et Nouvelle Calédonie) and is comprised of 10 Cummins dealers and 17 sub-dealers. Their marine network covers the French coast (Guadeloupe, Martinique, and French Polynesia) and is comprised of 5 dealers and 27 sub-dealers. In 2011, sales reached approximately 60.5 million Euros. At the end of 2010, the sales composition was as follows: 28% Parts, 18% Algeria engines, 15% Gensets, 11% Marine engines, 10% mobile engines, 8% ONAN, 8% Service, and 2% Gensets.

A job of many hats...

Marketing at Cumfin is a one-stop shop for seven different companies. Each day before I start a project, I need to remind myself of exactly who I'm working for. Is it RAMS, Cumas, C.M.T., Cummins France, etc? To further illustrate this, over the past month, I have had the opportunity to create a new website for Cumas, build a database of potential buyers of Cummins Power Generation's (CPG) new series of gensets and

begin gaging customer interest, create a photo show documenting a promotional day for Cumas, and write a briefing memo for an upcoming trade show this Fall.

By far the most character-building experience this month has been related to the preparation of launching the new CPG series of gensets. After building the database of potential buyers, I, then, proceeded to call hundreds of companies to retrieve further information about their needs for our marketing outreach. Calling French companies using my American-accented French was a good experience, both embarrassing and nerve-wrecking for me. I have come away from this on-going exercise with a more relaxed approach to speaking to strangers in French and an even bigger appreciation for the fearless multi-lingual people of this world!

My work with the technical department continues. All dealers have now been registered to QuickServe Online (Online). All that remains of the project is trouble-shooting user difficulties and facilitating the forwarding of invoices to the dealers.

Highlights from life outside of work in Lyon...

- Renting bikes and riding through Lyon's fabulous Parc de la Tête d'Or, along the Rhone and the Saone, on the Presqu'île, and through vieux Lyon.
- Watching part of a BMX bike exposition constructed in a day outside of La Part Dieu train station
- Tasting my first quenelle, a Lyonnais specialty
- Running through the beautiful city center of Lyon in L'Equipe's 10k

À bientôt!

Ali
