



Mercedes-Benz Vans LLC, Charleston, SC

Carolin

Maschinenbau_M.Sc. Logistik_3. Semester

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Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes- Benz Vans, LLC

Mercedes-Benz Vans, LLC (“MBV”) assembles Sprinter vans for the U.S. market under the brands Mercedes-Benz and Freightliner. In March 2015 Mercedes-Benz Vans, LLC announced that they are investing \$500 million in the construction of a new Sprinter production plant, in addition to an expansion of existing operations. In July 2016, MBV officially broke ground on the site of its new plant, located next to its existing operations in the North Charleston area. More than 112,000 Sprinters have been assembled in North Charleston and delivered to destinations in the U.S. since 2006. The U.S. is now the second largest market for Sprinter vans, after Germany.

Charleston, SC

Charleston is the largest and the oldest city in South Carolina with a surface of around 400km². It is located on the east coast of the United States and has around 134.000 inhabitants. The city was founded in 1670, originally named Charles Town but since 1783 it has been called Charleston. It is also called „The Holy City“ for its tolerance for religions of all types and its many historic churches. The city has a rich history and many sights to visit for example the Fort Sumter National Monument, Patriots Point and several former slave plantations.



Tasks during the internship:

In the material control and logistics planning department it was my responsibility to support the local logistics planners with the implementation of the just-in-sequence suppliers. I had to track different milestones and evaluate supply chain and emergency concepts. Also, I organized and participated in supplier visits and had the chance to visit some of manufacturing plants of these suppliers. It was fascinating to see how parts are produced and how their delivery to the line is planned. During my internship I also participate in the organisation of two supplier days where all suppliers came together for a workshop.



During my internship I learned a lot about the details that occur in a ramp-up phase. Everything must be planned out from zero, that is a special task and could be stressful sometimes. It was a great experience to see how the colleagues here handle the challenges and transfer the knowledge from existing plants. I especially learned how important teamwork and information sharing is for a successful working environment.



Impressions

I never had so many new experiences in such a short time. The whole planning including the visa and the application process was already exiting. But the time here was even more exiting. Living for a few month alone in a foreign country changed my life. It is a challange to handle everything from buying a car, to renting an apartment, and managing everything in an other language. At the end I could say it was worth the effort. I made many good and bad experiences. This experiences will be in my mind forever and help me to have a different view on things than before.

Culture

It is the south! The people are friendly and helpful in Charleston. Work culture is a little different compared to Germany. Politeness is important for the working environment and you will have to be careful what you say to your colleagues and what not.

The weather is hot and humid which causes problems I would have never thought were possible. In the summer it is not unusual to have extreme heat and heavy storms. You will also experience seeing wild animals that you do not usually see in Germany. Alligators, snakes and cockroaches are common in South Carolina. Also the variety of churches which exist here was a very interesting thing.

The food culture in Charleston was big, sweet and heavy. A typical southern dish is „Mac and cheese with Fried chicken“ – yummy 😊



Cultural Shock: Tons of Plastic

In the grocery store you get plastic bags for everything. Sometimes a single item is packed in two bags. Nearly no one uses an own bag for groceries and if you bring your own one the shop assistants are confused.

Tipps & Recommendation for next interns

- Start with your VISA process as soon as possible to avoid fees for express processing
- Organise everything in advance for a relaxed start in the foreign country
- Leave important information at home so your family or friends can help you better in case of problems during your internship
- Keep cool no matter what happens, you will have unexpected situations but for all problems there is a way to solve them
- Have contact with locals, they could tell you a lot about the culture and the country
- Try to do a very good job but never forget to have fun and enjoy the time abroad 😊



After my internship...

... it is time for vacation 😊

When arrive back to germany I will begin writing my masterthesis at the Mercedes-Benz Vans plant in Duesseldorf. The internship was a great combination of theory and praxis and exposure to logistics. I enjoyed my time at Mercedes-Benz Vans LLC, and made many friends but I'm glad to return home. During my internship i recognized how important my family and friends are to me and that I do not want to live without them.

But the most impotant thing I learned is, be like the turtle - No matter what happens „Keep your head up!“



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