



INTERVIEW WITH AN ENTREPRENEUR

November 10, 2020

Company overview

Finnkone is a 100% Finnish owned major full-service workshop equipment supplier. In its current form, the company began operations in 2005 as the result of merging the companies McRolls and Suomen Täsmäkorjaus Oy into one functional entity.

Markku Loikkanen, founder and member of the board of Finnkone briefly explains his experiences and gives his opinion on collaborating with educational institutions.

1. Do companies and educational institutions cooperate enough?

At the moment I must admit that we are not cooperating in anyway with educational institutions – mainly due to the COVID-19 situation. But we have cooperated in many ways with educational institutions over the years. We have offered opportunities for internships, topics for assignments and also for theses. Briefly answering the question I would say that there is not enough cooperation and the contacts we have experienced have been started unilaterally.

In other words, the students have come to us requesting any kind of cooperation. There has been no direct contact with any kind of school.

2. What kind of experiences the entrepreneur has had with the students learning at the workplace / on the job training?

The past experiences have been very positive. Students were able to get firsthand information and experience for their projects apart from a starting point for their professional careers. They have known the internal processes from a firstline position and they have understood the challenges – and at the same time the rewards – of being an entrepreneur. In some cases students have simply come to us with the mission of gathering information for any kind of activity, but in others they have had continuity with us as employees. There have also been some cases where they have taken the risk of initiating their own professional projects.

3. What kind of cooperation entrepreneurs could / would do with the educational institution?

In order to get the most of the experience for both the student and the company, it is important to dedicate enough time in mentoring trainees in a more specific and in-depth manner – not just in basic and routine tasks. For this reason, there should be more collaboration with educational institutions for a more detailed and coordinated plan of cooperation. It is important to know what students expect from their experiences but also what we need and expect as a company.

My own reflection

Although the existing contacts with companies and educational institutions seem to be numerous and clearly beneficial for both parts, the way these contacts are coordinated seem to be unstructured and at some point improvised. In other words, there is no defined common ground between these two parts or a proper defined space for encounter. Yes, there are spontaneous contacts sometimes started by the student and sometimes with the initiative of the company but there is not a well-defined organisation or forum – in public or private hands – where the former present their abilities or learning expectations and the latter their needs and professional expectations.

If a more fluent dialogue were possible, current needs in every sector would be transmitted to schools in a clearer way. Schools would then design their curricula more specifically. At the same time, future trends, predictions and new procedures would be more rapidly developed and incorporated into companies through well-prepared students.

Apparently the example presented has not put enough light on the relationship between companies and students as young entrepreneurs – but has shown that, even without a well-defined strategy, these experiences have served as a powerful link for students as entrepreneurs-to-be or at least as a good job generator.