

HANDS-ON EXPERIMENT IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT IN THE STUDIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL INDUSTRIES

AT SAVONIA UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED SCIENCES



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As learning to become successful entrepreneurs and specialists Savonia University of Applied Sciences' students visit local agricultural companies, craft their own magazine and organize an event to acquire the skills of networking, managing editorial staff and disseminating knowledge.

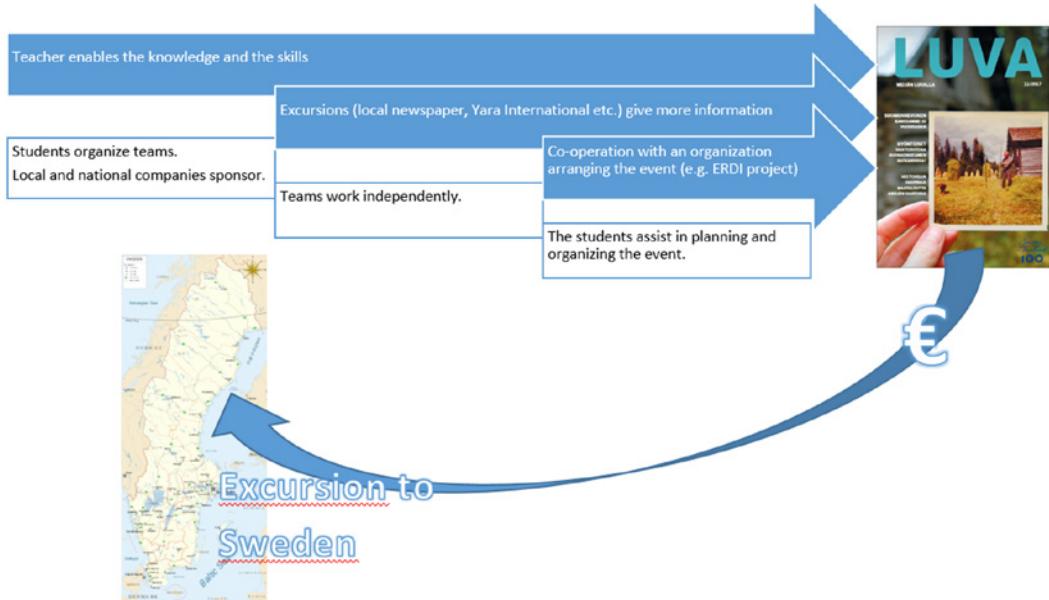
In the studies of Agricultural and Rural Industries in Savonia UAS, students aim at becoming entrepreneurs or agricultural specialists and advisors. To work as a successful entrepreneur or advisor, one needs the skills of networking and managing. As a tool for this Savonia UAS provides students a course that contains planning and making a magazine, going on several field trips to local companies and taking part in the planning and organizing of an agricultural event. The course is integrated into Swedish studies and excursions to Swedish businesses, as well, to broaden the scope.

The process begins in the spring. The students organize teams of editorial staff, marketing, photography, and layout. The students themselves plan and make everything. This course deals a lot with management, and especially the chosen editor-in-chief and managing editor, as well as the marketing chief, gets hands-on experience in this area. During the summer, the students take atmospheric photos and make interviews. In the autumn, they finish their articles and start to put all the contents together. To finance the printing of the magazine and the excursion to Sweden, students sell ads for the magazine. It is also one way of networking with the regional companies and getting to know the local agents.



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In the course of corporate communications, the teacher is mainly an enabler, who takes care that the students have enough knowledge and skills to achieve the goal: a real magazine, which is also distributed to thousands of homes together with the most read agricultural newspaper of Finland, Maaseudun Tulevaisuus.

In acquiring enough knowledge and skills, the local enterprises have a big role. During the course, students meet experts in the local newspaper and printing house and get to learn that having good relations with local newspapers helps to disseminate the agricultural knowledge to a broader public. There is also a teacher from a local private company who teaches the layout and photography teams: how to use Adobe Photoshop and Adobe InDesign. Knowing how to use image-processing programs, such as Adobe, gives the future entrepreneurs skills to make one's own marketing material.



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Figure 1: Process description

In this course, the excursions also include visiting a global firm specializing in agricultural products and environmental protection agents: Yara International. Yara has a factory nearby the campus, in Siilinjärvi. The students also visit some other companies, for example, Lujabetoni Oy, a company that provides solutions and services for the construction. During these excursions, the students get to know how communicational structures are built in big companies in addition to the agricultural knowledge they also get.

By planning an event and implementing it to action, for example, ERDI project's final seminar held in Iisalmi at Savonia UAS, 29.10 – 1.11.2018, students get the experience what it is like to organize a big event which will be beneficiary in their upcoming role as agrology experts. They also get the idea of how to disseminate knowledge. During the arrangements of an agricultural event, the networking is in a big role. Students get to work with project and excursion partners as well as with other students.

Overall, this process of magazine making and planning an excursion and an event gives students a realistic view of what it is to manage different areas of corporate communications. With having this experience it will be easier in the future to build successful networks with other agricultural agents.



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