

1. Transcript interview Francisco Casalins Suarez

Date: 25 February 2008, 11-12hrs.

Participants: Francisco Casalins, Maaïke van Esch

Building: Cronos, floor 1

I1: Could you explain how the Centre has started?

R1: Yes, no problem. When we started in 2003, we tried to organize to start a journey of growing significantly. With a handful of people from IBM Spain S.A we started. These five people tried to develop the concept of ISC Madrid. At that time I was not working here. Within 6 years from now, a high growth has been realized. From 5 to 750 employees. The great challenge was to go ahead and get the opportunity. And how to comply with the recruitment? How could we attract new employees?

I2: How did the Centre develop during the years?

R2: Nowadays, 750 people are working in the ISC. Around 400 here in Cronos and 350 in Trianon. Diversity is one of the key values marking our International Services Centre in Madrid. Well, to come back to the point of diversity, employees came here from all over Europe the past years. Even 42 different countries are present here. Without looking to my screen I know that 55 different languages are spoken here by all those people. That is a real sign of diversity and our strength.

I3: Why did IBM chose Madrid as a location for one of the International Services Centres?

R3: Other cities were taken into account as well. IBM tried to make a comparison of various countries and various sides to create the best business services. Spain is a Western country and a city where people exist. It attracts people from other cities and is especially an attractive place for European citizens. Diversity did not only exist in the mixture of people and cultures in Madrid. You probably know it already, but Spain and Madrid in special has a huge number of universities. This was relevant for our situation. We had to attract new employees and where do you find them better than in universities?

I4: Yes, that is right. Was it because of their talent?

R4: Exactly, we needed their talent to incorporate them in the ISC. People's abilities and skills are our raw material. The question of the future is how can we grow, educate and retain people?

I5: Indeed. How would you like to achieve that?

R5: Yes, attraction is easier than keeping them. This multilingual, international environment is very attractive to young people. Flexibility in terms of time tables or where to work from as well. We have to try to apply flexibility when it is allowed. The work – life balance is important.

I6: Alright. I would like to ask you if it is difficult to keep people. How does that process work?

R6: Bringing in people is not considered to be very different. Retaining on the long term is much more difficult. In the ISC, 75% is not Spanish native. People start families, some stay or leave after a few years.

Many have a university degree. A lot of talent is a positive factor. How can we challenge this talent and benefit of them?

I7: Okay, I think that is clear for me. Another question; what are the main goals of the Centre for the coming years?

R7: We want to add value to our customers, clients. We actually have two sets of clients.

The internal business clients, the companies. They meet the demands of the clients.

And then we have the real customer client. Everything that we do should increase value, satisfy and anticipate to what our clients need. We are in a real client experience where we deliver goods, services or business solutions. You might know that we are collecting money from customers who received goods.

I8: Yes, I have heard of that before.

R8: Very good

I9: So, the client is the most important for the Centre?

R9: True, they make the decisions for the next time; the key role is that they determine what happens. Everything should be thought of. The circle of customer fulfilment should be complete. I believe that we have to strive for maximum client satisfaction always. On how improving our service. The client has to think that IBM ISC is the only one.

I10: That is a very useful answer for my research. Thank you.

R10: You are welcome.

I11: Right. How is the contact with clients coming from all different places?

R11: You have to understand that we are in a global environment. We have to understand clients in different countries. The aspect client is not a generic word.

I12: Could you specify that a bit more?

R12: We should understand different types of clients, processes and different demands. It is linked to diversity. It is a very, very wide set of countries that we deal with. Not only languages, but also cultures.

Knowing the culture where you do business is important for mutual understanding. In the end we are a service organization, we have relationships to clients, manage them properly.

I13: What are the exact future goals again?

R13: We have to put effort in delivering or enabling capability to develop employees. And to develop the centre of course. How can we promote professional development of employees? How do we get people interested in movement, development education, training, career opportunities? Getting ready for new business opportunities is our goal and delivering better results in productivity are our goal. We want to have talent to achieve this. We believe in this. Improve processes, waste of time, low value activities, put this in place. The best marketing is to be excellent

I14: What role do the employees have in this process?

R14: We are proud of the people we have, the talent. We are a winner! We have to make it happen. We rely on our employees and have to deliver satisfying. Fighting to improve is important for good results if we want to be the number 1.

I15: Thank you very much for your time.

R15: You're welcome. I think you have enough information right now?

I16: Yes for sure. It is a lot. Now I will incorporate this in my thesis.

R16: Can you show it to me when it is ready?

I17: Yes I will.

R17: Great.