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## **CROSS BORDER ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Abstract:**

The authors of this presentation are members of a network called Nordic-Baltic Network for Internationalization of SMEs or Nobanet. The main goal of Nobanet is to create and widely disseminate new knowledge on successful internationalization in the Nordic-Baltic region. This aim is achieved through close cooperation of higher education institutions and SMEs in the entire region. Faculty, students and companies work closely together within educational courses and through real-life international assignments.

The main goal of this presentation is to explain how real-life assignments across borders can benefit all three groups: students, educators, and the SMEs. Students were tasked with finding strategies to facilitate the company's entry into a new market, what the company's marketing strategy should be, who would be their target market, and so on.

Surveys were done, one for each of the three groups. All three groups were asked about cooperation between universities and SMEs, specifically the advantages and disadvantages of a cooperation between these three groups. The result from the student group shows that this kind of a cooperation was rewarding to the students, the students said that direct interactions with SMEs through real-life cross border assignments felt more important than regular assignments. The students also pointed out that it was inspiring for them to work with a real-life company knowing that their results could have an impact on the real world. The teachers pointed out that having new and real assignments was important to them and through this cooperation; it was easy to connect the theory to reality. As for the companies, they got consultancy from students in the market they wished to enter and got marketing plans and marketing entry plans that they could easily put in practice.

The findings of the research urges further collaboration between these three parties. The authors of this presentation made a working procedure that explains how a cooperation of these three parties should be done. The model explains a few steps that is important to bear in mind for a cooperation of this sort to be fruitful for all three parties.

### **Keywords:**

Real-life assignments, SMEs, Cooperation,