Q-Step Internship: Business Intelligence at One Manchester housing association

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The One Manchester housing association has as an objective to invest in people and nrighborhoofs in order to allow them to grow, develop, and thrive. My role as a Business Intelligence Intern was to collect data about One Manchester's neighborhoods in order to assess what sort of investment is needed, based on these conditions.

Objectives

The aim of the project was to focus on one of One Manchester's priorities, 'Place' which ultimately entails investing in people and neighborhoods in order to allow them to grow, develop and thrive.

The 'Place' strategy put in was fairly new, but one of the main goals was to present relevant data about One Manchester's neighborhoods in a visual and comprehensive manner. This will ultimately give the firm and investors a clearer picture about neighborhood conditions and what suitable investment would be needed based on these conditions. On the long run, mapping all of Manchester's neighborhoods in such a way will be beneficial not only for One Manchester, but for the entire housing sector and beyond.

Since the provess was fairly new, and no methodology was set in stone, I was required to conduct research on two neighborhoods where One Manchester owns properties.

Method

Given the two neighborhoods, I had to compile a list of community assets that are located within a 5 mile radius of each neighborhood. These community assets included schools, parks, leisure centres, libraries, and other cultural centres. Moreover, I had to find charities or social enterprises that operate near these neighborhoods. However, the chunk of my research included finding out what sort of funding do the two neighborhoods receive from organisations that operate on a national level. Some of the notable organisations I looked at were the Big Lottery Fund and Comic Relief. On a more local scale, I also looked at data published from Manchester Community Central to find more funded projects within or near the two neighborhoods. In order for such information to be mapped, I also had to find out the approximate geographical area in which the funded project took place, or the funded organisation is located. This meant I had to list their postcodes and constituencies. Ultimately, I created a large spreadsheet with a multitude of categories documenting necessary details about the funding carried out over the last three years..

Challenges

Because the project is still a fairly new initiative, I did not see any end results of the project, as there was still alot of work left to do on other neighborhoods after my internship was finished. Furthermore, there was no set-in-stone methodology, so my research mostly depended on trial and error, which was arguably not very time efficient. And because there was still very little data I'd barely gotten the chance to work on data analysis. Also, finding an accurate geographical location of funded projects proved to be a difficult task, as it was not possible to narrow all of them down to a postcode and in turn to a constituency.

Although I did learn about data cleaning, validation, and filtering, I did not utilise any softwares besides excel.

Conclusions and Learnings

Overall, my experience at One Manchester was interesting and challenging. I had the opportunity to work in a professional working environment, which is drastically different from the university atmosphere I am used to. Moreover, I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the process of improving tenants' standards of living and developing Manchesters' neighborhoods in an meaningful and effective way. I appreciate One Manchester's approach to addressing and tackling deprivation in its neighborhoods, which is by working towards cultivating and nurturing their assets, not just exhibiting an unempathetic tenant-landlord relationship.

Apart from the research I was carrying out, I was introduced briefly to the mapping program that will be used later on, as well as reported on the some contrasts between the two neighborhoods' demographic data.