

Professional internship report carried out at dialectica Colombia S.A.S.

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Contents

Introduction.....	12
1. Business practice report carried out at Dialectica Colombia S.A.S.....	13
1.1 Context of business practice	13
1.2 Justification.....	13
1.3.1 General objective	14
1.3.2 Specific objectives	14
2. Company profile	15
2.1 Company name	15
2.2 Corporate purpose of the company.....	15
2.3 Address, telephone number, email address and immediate supervisor in the company.....	16
2.4 Organizational structure.....	16
2.4.1 Company mission.....	16
2.4.2 Company vision	16
2.4.3 Company organization chart	16
2.5 Economic aspects.....	18
2.5.1 Macroeconomic environment.....	18
2.5.2 Microeconomic environment	20
2.6 Portfolio of products and/or services of the company	21
2.7 Aspects of the market served by the company	23
3. Position and duties performed.....	24
3.1 Position held	24
3.2 Assigned functions.....	24

3.3 Processes, procedures and tools.....	26
4. Conceptual and regulatory framework.....	27
4.1 Conceptual framework.....	27
4.2 Regulatory framework.....	29
5. Contributions.....	31
5.1 Added value proposition to the company	31
5.1.1 Identification of the problematic situation	31
5.1.2 Contribution of knowledge to the company.....	31
5.1.3 Impact from results and/or achievements.....	32
5.2 Company contributions to the training process	33
5.3 Improvement plan.....	34
5.4 Implementation timeline.....	37
6. Conclusions and recommendations.....	38
References.....	41

List of tables

Table 1. <i>PEST analysis</i>	20
Table 2. <i>Market segmentation by client geography, industry focus, and project type</i>	24
Table 3. <i>List of assigned duties and hours.</i>	26
Table 4. <i>Processes, procedures, and tools involved in the internship.</i>	27
Table 5. <i>NNSPs recruited by month during the internship.</i>	33
Table 6. <i>Proposed improvement plan</i>	36

List of Figures

Figure 1. *Client Service Team organization chart.* 17

Figure 2. *Implementation timeline for the intern onboarding improvement plan.*..... 38

Resumen

Problema: hoy en día, las empresas de consultoría, los fondos de capital riesgo y los fondos de cobertura deben disponer de información de primera mano sobre el mercado para tomar decisiones y asesorar a terceros, información que no se puede obtener en fuentes públicas, como Internet o las bibliotecas, lo que ha dado lugar a la creación de redes de expertos, intermediarios que pueden facilitar este proceso al ponerles en contacto con expertos en la materia que disponen de datos directos. *Objetivo:* el presente informe tiene como objetivo describir las prácticas profesionales de Nicolás Ramírez, estudiante de la Universidad Santo Tomás y de KEDGE Business School, en Dialectica Colombia S.A.S., donde trabajó en el Equipo de Atención al Cliente (CST) del 9 de febrero al 9 de agosto. La colaboración del autor ayudó a Dialectica en tareas como la búsqueda de expertos, la captación, la selección y la logística, con el fin de proporcionar perfiles de la mejor calidad a las empresas de consultoría. *Método:* el informe se basa en la experiencia del autor: búsqueda diaria de candidatos, realización de actividades de captación y funciones de selección. Además, incluye un análisis económico y normativo del sector. *Resultados:* A lo largo de las prácticas, el autor reclutó a 23 especialistas no relacionados con redes (NNSP). El autor fue reconocido como el becario con mejor rendimiento del equipo de atención al cliente en el mes de abril y recibió un reconocimiento a nivel de toda la empresa durante el evento «All Hands» de Dialectica, que se celebra cada tres meses a lo largo del año. También se propuso un plan de mejora para estandarizar la investigación de proyectos asistida por IA durante la incorporación de los becarios, con el fin de facilitar el proceso de trabajo con los nuevos proyectos. *Discusión:* Las prácticas ponen de manifiesto la gran importancia que tienen la asimetría de la información y la intermediación en un sector global en expansión, al tiempo que señalan una oportunidad: mejorar el rendimiento de los futuros becarios de la empresa.

Palabras clave: red de expertos, intermediación empresarial, asimetría de información, práctica profesional, negocios internacionales, firmas consultoras

Abstract

Problem: nowadays, consulting firms, private equity funds and hedge funds must have first-hand information on the market to make decisions and advise third parties, information that cannot be obtained in public sources, like internet or libraries, resulting in the creation of expert networks, intermediaries who can make this process easier, by connecting them with experts on the field who have direct data. *Objective:* this report aims to describe the professional internship of Nicolas Ramirez, a Universidad Santo Tomás and KEDGE Business School student within Dialectica Colombia S.A.S's, working in the Client Service Team (CST) from February 9th to August 9th. The author's support helped Dialectica with tasks such as expert sourcing, engagement, qualification and logistics to provide the best quality profiles to the consulting firms. *Method:* The report is based on the author's experience: daily sourcing, conducting outreach, and screening functions. Also, there is an economic and regulatory analysis of the industry. *Results:* Over the course of the internship, the author recruited 23 Non Network Specialists (NNSPs). The author was recognized as the Client Service Team's top-performing intern in the month of April, and received company-wide recognition during Dialectica's All Hands event, which is held every three months during the year. An improvement plan was also proposed to standardize AI-assisted project research during intern onboarding to facilitate the process of working with new projects. *Discussion:* The internship demonstrates how information asymmetry and intermediation are so important in a growing global industry, while pointing to an opportunity: improve the performance of future interns in the company.

Keywords: expert network, business intermediation, information asymmetry, professional internship, international business, consulting firms

Glossary

Client Service Team (CST): refers to the commercial team in Dialectica, responsible for managing client relationships, receiving project briefs, obtaining the profiles who fit the project requirements and directing all the logistics behind connecting the client and the expert according to their schedules.

Cold calling: the practice of contacting a prospect by phone without prior contact.

DNC (Do Not Contact): an internal designation applied to an expert who must not be contacted again, either because they opted out or due to an NDA agreement with their employer.

Due diligence: investigation done to better understand how a business is performing in terms of finance, operations and commercial aspects, usually done to decide if purchase is a good idea.

Expert network: a company that connects organizations seeking specialized industry knowledge with professionals who possess first-hand experience relevant to a specific research question, facilitating structured consultations rather than producing independent analysis (Inex One, 2026).

First List: the initial set of candidate experts presented to a client within the first hour / hour and a half of the project, intended to demonstrate the quality and relevance of available profiles early in the engagement.

Hedge fund: a privately organized, pooled investment fund that uses flexible and often leveraged investment strategies, typically limited to accredited or institutional investors (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, n.d.).

Material Non-Public Information (MNPI): information about a company or its securities that has not been made available to the public and that could influence an investor's decision if disclosed, subject to strict handling requirements under U.S. securities law.

Maven: Dialectica's internal expert database, used to index candidate profiles, document screening responses, and maintain records of expert engagement.

NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement): a legal agreement in which one or more parties agree not to disclose confidential information shared during a business relationship, relevant to expert consultations involving sensitive client or project information.

NNSP (Non Network Specialist): an expert identified through independent research, primarily via LinkedIn, who has not yet accepted Dialectica's Terms of Engagement (ToE) or a Proactive Recruitment email, and has not subscribed through the company's website.

NSP (Network Specialist): an expert identified primarily through Dialectica's internal tools such as Maven or Search Agent, who has already accepted Dialectica's Terms of Engagement (ToE) or a Proactive Recruitment email, or has subscribed through the company's website.

Private equity firm: an investment management company that raises capital from institutional and high-net-worth investors to acquire ownership stakes in companies, typically privately held, with the goal of increasing their value before an eventual sale (U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, n.d.).

Screening: the process of verifying a prospective expert's professional background against a project's specific criteria before presenting them to the client.

String (Boolean string): a search query built using Boolean operators (such as AND, OR, and NOT) to filter candidate profiles on platforms like LinkedIn Sales Navigator according to

specific criteria, such as job title, company, or industry (author's elaboration, based on internship experience).

Introduction

First-hand and reliable information has become a key asset in the growing market we live in today and the decisions that can be made with this information can help investment funds to make clearer, better and more accurate decisions. The competitive analysis that is needed for these companies can only be made through verifying the relevance of that information. But how should companies treat the problem of trying to get the information, and more important, how to check if the information is reliable? This brings up an opportunity for the expert network industry, offering knowledge services that connect organizations in need of specific information with professionals who possess this first-hand experience and are able to answer highly specific business questions.

This report presents the professional internship carried out by the author, a dual-degree student in International Business between Universidad Santo Tomás and KEDGE Business School, within Dialectica Colombia S.A.S.'s Client Service Team between February and August 2026, centered on supporting client due diligence and strategy projects for predominantly United States-based clients, through the identification, engagement, and qualification of industry experts. In this document, the whole author's experience is examined through established economic and sociological theory, particularly information asymmetry (Akerlof, 1970), transaction cost economics (Coase, 1937), network theory (Granovetter, 1973), and intermediation theory (Howells, 2006), all of which help explain why an organization such as Dialectica exists and how the value it creates for its clients works.

Beyond the theoretical aspect, this document also explains the practical, day-to-day dimension of the internship: the specific duties performed, the tools and processes used, the competencies developed, and the concrete contributions made by the author to the host company, alongside a proposed improvement to its intern onboarding process.

1. Business practice report carried out at Dialectica Colombia S.A.S.

1.1 Context of business practice

This internship was carried out between February 9 and August 9, 2026, within the Client Service Team of Dialectica's Bogotá office, under a tripartite Agreement between the author, KEDGE Business School, and Dialectica Colombia S.A.S., as part of the requirements for the dual degree in International Business. Dialectica operates in the expert network industry, within a growing segment of the global knowledge-services sector estimated at approximately USD 3 billion in 2025 (Inex One, 2026), connecting organizations such as consulting firms and private equity funds with industry professionals, helping them to better understand the market and advise more accurately.

1.2 Justification

The Colombian labor law requires that private companies that have 15 or more employees have to hire a minimum quota of SENA apprentices, calculated at a rate of one apprentice per 20 employees, with companies permitted to cover up to 25% of that mandatory quota through university-level interns instead of SENA apprentices (Congreso de Colombia, 2002, art. 32). Given that Dialectica Colombia S.A.S. employs approximately 500 people in its Bogotá office, the company maintains an important internship quota they must ensure, giving space to the author to fulfill this position. Beyond this legal dimension, hosting interns also aligns with Dialectica's broader institutional strategy: having operated in Colombia for fewer than five years, the company has prioritized establishing itself as one of the country's leading employers, including offering a strong first professional experience to interns and early-career hires as part of its positioning in the local market.

The option to perform the internship at Dialectica instead of other options was mainly taken because of the international scope that the Greek company has. Being able to perform in a full-English environment while understanding many industries was an opportunity to develop the author's skills on a daily basis, like communication and negotiation. Also given its origins as a European multinational firm with global operations, Dialectica represented a stronger addition to the author's professional background than a smaller company, supporting the author's broader goal of building an internationally oriented career foundation.

Since the expert network industry is not very known outside of specialized business circles, the internship began with the author not being entirely sure what his main tasks were going to be nor how the day by day would look like, so the value proposition at the beginning was centered on a strong, consistent work ethic and a commitment to measurable performance, which, as demonstrated throughout this report, translated into concrete contributions such as the recruitment of 23 NNSPs and formal recognition as a top-performing intern within the company.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General objective

Support Dialectica Colombia's expert-sourcing operations for due diligence and strategy projects through the identification, engagement and qualification of industry experts.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

Identify industry experts relevant to the due diligence and strategy projects through digital prospecting tools.

Verify the professional background of prospects against client-defined screening criteria prior to scheduling client interactions.

Analyze the microeconomic, macroeconomic and regulatory context of the expert network industry in order to situate prospecting and screening tasks within the global market.

Design a structured improvement plan with generative AI to enhance interns' comprehension of projects and optimize screening techniques ensuring the high quality of the expert database.

2. Company profile

2.1 Company name

The company operates under the legal name Dialectica Colombia S.A.S., registered as a simplified stock company with the Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá. Formally incorporated in the country on February 25, 2022, it holds the tax identification number 901.570.012 (Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, 2026). Dialectica Colombia S.A.S. constitutes the Colombian subsidiary of Dialectica, a global expert network headquartered internationally, with its main office located in Greece.

2.2 Corporate purpose of the company

As stated by its commercial registration, Dialectica is classified under CIIU code 7020 (which refers to management consultancy activities). Nevertheless, that is not the most accurate label for it, since there is not a specific code for expert networks in the national registry. In practice, however, the company's actual line of business differs from that of a traditional management consultancy, a distinction addressed in detail in section 2.6 of this report.

2.3 Address, telephone number, email address and immediate supervisor in the company

Dialectica Colombia S.A.S. is located at Calle 90 #11-13, in Bogotá D.C. and its official contact telephone number is 601 746 6072 (Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, 2026). For the internship process, the student's institutional email address was nicolas.ramirez@dialecticanet.com and the immediate supervisor during the internship was Yiannis Drivas, Manager of the Client Service Team, who was responsible for overseeing the intern's performance, assigning projects, and validating the quality of the work delivered during the internship period.

2.4 Organizational structure

2.4.1 Company mission

Dialectica's mission is to become the leading company in the insights market by delivering unmatched and exceptional client service (Dialectica, 2026).

2.4.2 Company vision

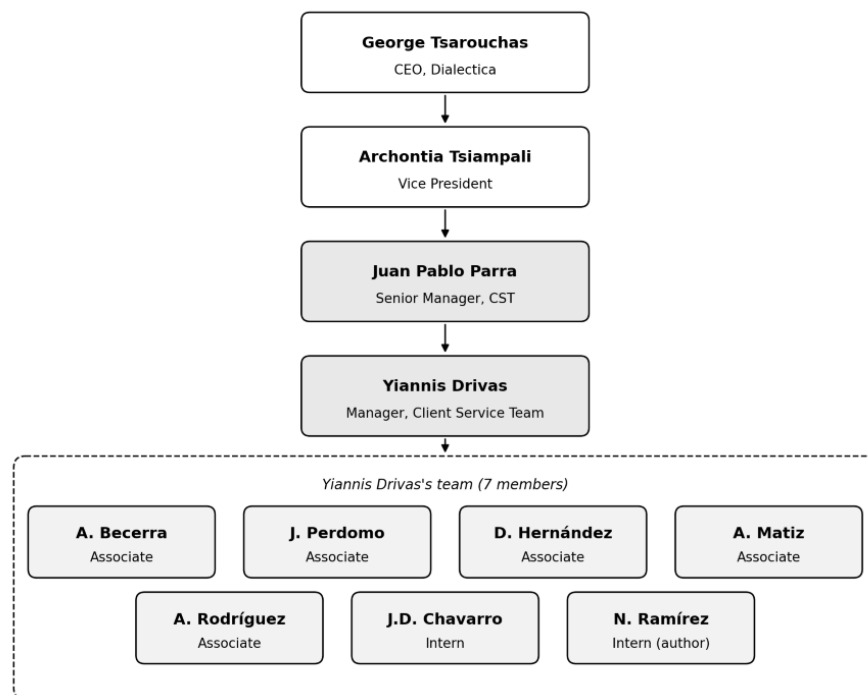
Dialectica's corporate vision states that the company aims to become the global information services company that shapes better decision-making worldwide (Dialectica, 2026).

2.4.3 Company organization chart

Here is a non-official organization chart for the Client Service Team as it relates to the author's branch. The organization chart is not public, so this is a recreation from the point of view of the intern. The head of the company is George Tsarouchas, CEO of Dialectica. After him, there was Archontia Tsiampali, Vice President. Then, there is Juan Pablo Parra, Senior Manager of the

Client Service Team (and also the person who the author had the interview call to get the internship). Parra oversees five managers, each one having their own group. One of the managers Parra would oversee was Yiannis Drivas, manager of the Client Service Team and the author's direct supervisor. Drivas' team consists of five associates (Alejandro Becerra, Juanita Perdomo, Daniel Hernández, Alejandra Matiz, and Alejandro Rodríguez) and two interns (Juan Diego Chavarro and the author). These functions are summarized in Figure 1 and described in further detail below.

Figure 1. *Client Service Team organization chart.*



The functions associated with each level of this structure reflect distinct areas of responsibility. Yiannis Drivas would be, for his team, the first point of contact with the clients. He was in charge of receiving all of the project briefs, structuring them and distributing target

companies among his associates and interns. Also, he oversaw the closing of each completed interaction, ensuring that experts received payment and that clients were invoiced accordingly.

Associates and senior associates carried out the same core responsibilities. The only difference between them lies in seniority and experience rather than in scope of work. Both roles involved identifying expert profiles within company-approved target lists, contacting and persuading candidates to participate in a call, and moderating live calls between clients and experts, coordinating scheduling logistics in real time. On the other hand, interns performed comparable prospecting and outreach tasks but were restricted to sourcing Non-Network Specialists (NNSPs), experts not previously affiliated with Dialectica's network, rather than drawing from the existing pool of experts that Dialectica has. This was the main criterion taken into account to evaluate interns. Also, interns would not moderate calls. If an intern was able to schedule a call, the responsibility would rely on his assigned associate.

Juan Pablo Parra's responsibilities were to oversee performance across the five manager-led cells reporting to him and to travel internationally on occasion to maintain relationships with key clients. The intern's visibility into the day-to-day responsibilities of this role was limited. Finally, roles above the senior manager level, including the Vice President and the CEO, involve broader strategic and organizational direction that falls outside the intern's direct daily interaction.

2.5 Economic aspects

2.5.1 Macroeconomic environment

Handling data is subject to a rigorous and strict regulatory environment, directly affecting expert networks. Because these firms usually manage sensitive and confidential information across borders, the Superintendencia de Industria y Comercio filed a bill in August 2025 to modernize

Ley 1581 of 2012 on data protection, to align it closer to the international standards. In Europe there are also laws regarding this topic, where the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies. This regulation increases compliance requirements for expert networks, in this case, Dialectica, who has to manage and keep expert and client data across a great variety of jurisdictions.

The economic landscape shows a wide expansion in the industry, as the expert network market reached roughly USD 3 billion in revenue in 2025, growing around 12% annually between 2023 and 2025. The future looks good: The market could expand at a compound annual rate of 15% until the early 2030's (Inex One, 2026). These factors are driven mainly by growing private equity deal activity, since firms increasingly rely on expert networks to minimize risk in their projects, along with a considerable number of investment firms adopting this model. The amount of companies that are beginning to use these services increased by about 150% between 2022 and 2025, showing that more than 11,000 firms globally are looking to make better decisions. Consulting firms remain the largest spending segment, accounting for nearly half of the industry revenue.

This growth reflects a bigger shift in the way companies use expert networks. What was once a main tool for hedge funds, now is commonly used in corporate strategy and market research (Inex One, 2026).

Reinforcing all of these shifts is the accelerating role of artificial intelligence, which has become a pillar, modifying how the industry works, both from the demand and the supply side. Organizations lacking in-house AI expertise turn to expert networks to access specialized knowledge in a short time (AlphaSense, 2026), meanwhile leading firms are integrating AI into their own operations. Dialectica, for instance, has fully embraced AI, generating more than 50

generative-AI tools to make the expert sourcing process easier (Dialectica, 2026). At the same time, Dialectica has started new areas inside the company that are growing so fast that have become independent in the last months, a clear example of this is Human Edge AI. Taken together, these political, economic, social, and technological factors are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *PEST analysis.*

Factor	Key points
Political	Modernization of Colombia's Ley 1581 (data protection), moving toward GDPR-like standards; cross-border compliance required due to Dialectica's European operations under GDPR
Economic	Global expert network market $\approx$ USD 3 billion in 2025, growing 12-16% annually; consulting firms remain the largest spending segment ($\approx$ 50% of industry revenue)
Social	Growing normalization of “micro-consulting” across industries and professional roles; client base broadening from PE and hedge funds to corporates ($\approx$ 11,200 firms globally in 2026)
Technological	AI-driven expert matching and vetting tools, e.g. Dialectica's proprietary Knowledge Graph; rising use of AI to summarize calls and automate research workflows

2.5.2 *Microeconomic environment*

The core operational strategy of Dialectica is using professional networking data, which is primarily sourced through Sales Navigator, a LinkedIn special feature to find potential leads by filtering according to the project needs. The CST team is capable of filtering by year, current or former company, seniority and area of specialization. The company operates in a direct-to-client model. This means that the CST managers are always in communication with the clients, either through slack channels or emails, the channel is up to the client.

The previously mentioned relation with the client is something that differs from some other expert networks that may work as a third-party aggregator, with emerging industry aggregation models such as multi-network dashboards used by some competitors (Inex One, 2026). This is the main platform for the company for expert-sourcing, working together with Maven, so it was extremely fast to index profiles and auto-send them emails with the info of the one-hour paid consultation

Taking a look at the demand side, the client base is composed of consulting firms and private equity firms, along with a smaller share of hedge funds and advisory firms. All of them have confidence in the expert network market as an important way to obtain fast and reliable information to support their strategic decisions, as it's described in section 2.6 of the present report.

Seeing this competitive landscape, it is pertinent to present Dialectica's main competitors: GLG, AlphaSights, Third Bridge, and Guidepoint. The consulting companies mentioned in the previous paragraph (or at least, The Big Three, referring to McKinsey, BCG and Bain) are in touch with four or five expert networks, while smaller ones would usually stay in touch with one or two.

2.6 Portfolio of products and/or services of the company

Dialectica is an expert network specialized in connecting organizations that are in need of specific information with experts in the needed field. The company itself is classified under CIIU code 7020, which stands for consultancy activities. Dialectica is currently innovating in a new product, in which they do advise small clients, but this is just a beta product managed by a very small team of no more than 5 people. Besides this, the relation to be classified under consultancy activities is that they facilitate the easy access of industry experts with the companies that require it.

The company mainly focuses on solving one problem the companies may have: find those experts who have experience and meaningful insights on the field. This is not the same as searching public information, because although there's plenty of it, it is not the strategic insight that will help make decisions. Public information usually relates to not specialized or quite the most recent aspects that companies need to take into account. Neither internet, libraries or AI can obtain the same information as a person who is in the field and has the first hand experience needed (AlphaSense, 2026). The value Dialectica offers is found in reducing time and complexity when identifying those specialists. They take care of finding, verifying and doing all the logistics so the client only needs to join the call and ask their questions.

Some primary clients are strategy firms, consulting firms, private equity firms and hedge funds. During the internship, the author realized that something that differentiates Dialectica from other expert networks like GLG, AlphaSights and Third Bridge is that those competitors have been in the market for many more years. As a consequence, they have a bigger pool of experts in their database where they can contact them easier.

Dialectica is more specialized in looking for the most specific and required expert, so even if the company has a profile who may be a good fit in their database, there will always be research to find a perfect fit. Internally, those experts who have consulted before with Dialectica are called “Network Specialist”, also referred as NSP. Those experts who have never consulted with Dialectica and are contacted for a first time consultation, are called “Non-Network Specialists”, also known as NNSP. Recruiting these new experts is treated as the main way to evaluate interns' performance.

2.7 Aspects of the market served by the company

As a company that operates world-wide, Dialectica's projects were assigned primarily by time zone instead of physical proximity. Bogotá would manage clients located in the US as a majority, but there were always a few projects depending on demand from other continents. In the same way, Athens and Thessaloniki would manage European clients and Ho Chi Minh City was focused on Asia. None of this was applied to the experts though. The author could reach out to them from almost every country in the world, except for some restrictions. The author was working in a team where the client was located in the Pacific West Coast, giving reason to his daily schedule from 10 A.M until 7 P.M.

The projects managed during the internship covered a wide variety of industries: tech, HR, health and law, just to mention a few. The most common ones were focused on data science and software engineering, showing how there is a high demand for technical fields nowadays.

Experts' purpose is to solve questions for consulting or investment firms that are going through due diligence projects. This term refers to the process made before conducting a business transaction, like acquisition or investment. The objective is to evaluate the legal, finance, commercial and operational aspects of a target company to make the best decision. The author sometimes also participated in strategy projects, not from his division, which are focused on identifying areas and improving internal processes of a company, instead of evaluating a third party. This is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. *Market segmentation by client geography, industry focus, and project type*

Dimension	Categories observed	Approx. share / rationale
Client geography	United States (West Coast)	≈ 80% — aligned to time-zone overlap with Pacific Time
	Europe, Asia	≈ 20% — occasional cross-regional assignments
Industry focus	Enterprise software, data science, software engineering	Majority of projects
	Healthcare, construction software, other sectors	Minority of projects
Project type	Due diligence	Majority of projects
	Strategy (internal process assessment)	Minority of projects

3. Position and duties performed

3.1 Position held

The position that the author held during the internship was denominated Client Service Team Intern, as is stated in the tripartite agreement.

3.2 Assigned functions

As a Client Service Team Intern, the functions that the author had to perform were focused on identifying, doing outreach and verifying how qualified experts were for the ongoing projects. All of the functions and activities done during the internship are detailed in Table 3 along with how much time each one would take per week.

The main task was expert sourcing and research. It would consume the most amount of hours during the day. As soon as the project was received, the intern had to use Gemini (which is

the AI used officially by the company) to better understand the industry of the project and comprehend the niche meanings. Then, he would generate a boolean string to funnel the experts on Sales Navigator, in order to index the profiles who fit the requirements. This indexing process was continuous during the day, as building a big pool of experts was crucial.

The second function was expert outreach, involving contacting previously identified prospects via phone (cold calling), InMails on LinkedIn or SMS. On a daily basis, the author would generate between 40 and 100 call attempts. If the expert responded in a positive way, saying they were interested in the project or they would like to hear more, the intern would proceed to schedule a screening call. With this the author could explain any doubts the expert may have and send them the project terms, so they became part of the expert network.

Expert screening was the third task, and it consisted of a quick call that would usually last ten minutes, in which the intern verified the candidate's professional background to see if their knowledge matched the project requirements. Each project would usually have pre-set questions to confirm this. If the expert was good, the next step was filling the questions with their answers in Maven, Dialectica's internal platform, so the client could take a look at each expert and what they answered to every question. On average, the author would complete screening documentation of 1.4 experts per day.

The last main function was scheduling and coordination. Since this task was only required when an expert found by the author was requested by the client, it was less common (because the client would request anyone worthy from the whole pool presented by the team, including all of the associates of Drivas' team and sometimes other teams). In this task, the author was responsible for the logistics of scheduling a call, checking on the expert's availability to make it happen as soon as possible. Another task valuable to include, but not as a main one, were the daily team

meetings, where a brief chat with the team would be done, as Yiannis provided all the updates he had from the clients so the associates and interns understood and prioritized those projects that needed more attention.

Table 3. *List of assigned duties and hours.*

Function name	Hours per week
Expert sourcing and research	31
Expert outreach (cold calling)	4
Expert screening and documentation	3
Interview scheduling and coordination	1
Team morning meetings	1
Total	40

3.3 Processes, procedures and tools

A process can be understood as “any activity, or set of activities, that uses resources to transform inputs into outputs” (Robledo, 2017, para. 2) and a procedure refers to the “specific way in which that process must be carried out” (Robledo, 2017, para. 4). Tools refer to “all types of goods essential for the worker to provide the agreed service” (VLex, 2016, para. 7), and their provision is the responsibility of the employer. Taking into account these concepts, a table is presented (Table 4) to make clear the distinction between those processes, procedures and tools involved during the internship.

The table explains four processes during the internship, the procedure followed for each one and which tools he implemented.

Table 4. *Processes, procedures, and tools involved in the internship.*

Process	Procedure	Tools
Expert sourcing	Generate Boolean search string using AI, search and index candidates from Sales Navigator into Maven	Gemini, LinkedIn Sales Navigator, Excel, Slack, Maven
Expert outreach	Contact candidates by email; conduct outreach calls	Email, Zoom, LinkedIn
Expert screening	Conduct screening call; document profile and responses in Maven	Zoom, Email, Maven
Interview scheduling	Confirm date/time with client and expert; send calendar invitation; conduct final call	Google Calendar, Twilio or Zoom, Maven

4. Conceptual and regulatory framework

4.1 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework brings together a reasoned set of ideas that, when combined with prior knowledge, offer a clear understanding of the object of study (Ortiz García, 2006). This is useful for this report to further the economic and organizational logic behind the expert network industry and behind Dialectica's business model.

To begin this analysis it is necessary to understand why companies are willing to pay for time with experts to obtain information. This is called the theory of information asymmetry, formalized by Akerlof (1970) in his analysis of markets in which one party holds better or more reliable information than the other, he shows that when buyers cannot verify quality, markets become less efficient and trust goes down. This can actually be very common, since low-quality information can circulate freely. A similar dynamic is present in the expert network industry. Organizations like private equity firms or consulting firms need to verify the accuracy of the market information available to make investment or strategic decisions. This creates demand for a

mechanism that credibly connects them with individuals whose first-hand experience can be trusted.

Coase (1937) proposes a very interesting theory that also supports Dialectica's existence. Using the market involves costs beyond just paying a price. Doing research or negotiating or verifying backgrounds results in a more expensive activity for a single company, since they have to do that process with every single candidate they need. Dialectica exists in Coasean terms because it can perform this search, negotiation and verification function at a lower aggregate cost than each client organization could on its own.

Individuals obtain new, valuable and non-redundant information through weak ties, meaning distant acquaintances, instead of frequent and strong ties. This theory, proposed by Granovetter (1973), explains that new individuals with no prior contact are more likely to provide new information since those weak ties act as bridges between other disconnected social circles. It is possible to connect this concept to the industry when treating NSP (strong ties) and NNSPs (weak ties), since the second ones refer to someone entirely outside Dialectica's existing circle of contacts, and therefore, more likely to provide genuinely new information than an expert who has already been consulted repeatedly by the company's existing network.

Howells (2006) published a very interesting theory in which he defines intermediaries as actors who connect two parties facing high transaction cost, communication barriers or a lack of trust. Among the intermediaries he proposes, there are the informational intermediaries that focus on gathering and transmitting information without actually producing the knowledge themselves. This matches Dialectica's own role as they act as a company that facilitates access to expert knowledge instead of generating independent analysis.

Evaluating the previous theories to fully understand the framework that surrounds the company, it is possible to affirm that Dialectica exists because information is not perfectly distributed, because it's more efficient than if each party would make their research independently, because the most valuable connections are outside of the strong ties, so there's always a need to find new experts and because the company works as an effective intermediary between those ones who have the information and the organizations that need it.

Not every part of this framework fits perfectly. Granovetter (1973) describes weak ties as still involving some prior contact, no matter the distance. However, NNSP differs in the aspect that these experts have no previous relation with the company at all. Representing a more complex case, this can be taken more as an analogy than a precise fit for what Granovetter originally studied. This does not weaken the overall argument nor the qualifications value of the framework; it only notes that the fit between theory and practice, as is common in applied business contexts, can be used to exemplify a situation for better understanding.

4.2 Regulatory framework

A couple of aspects can be found in the regulatory framework. The main themes are related to the internship, to how personal data should be handled by Dialectica and how to manage sensitive information in the market. To begin, Colombian labor law obligates private companies within the nation to have a minimum of quota SENA apprentices, if they have more than 15 employees. 25% of this SENA quota can be fulfilled with university interns (Congreso de Colombia, 2002, Art. 32). A little bit deeper, under Decreto 0223 de 2026 (Ministerio del Trabajo, 2026) it is possible to formalize a “vinculación formativa”, which creates a tripartite arrangement involving a student, an educational institution, and a host company. Congreso de Colombia (2020)

recognizes the internship as certifiable professional experience for higher education graduates in Colombia.

In relation to a very sensitive aspect, data protection, there are two main laws that fall directly under Dialectica's performance. Collecting and processing personal information of experts is governed by Colombia's foundational data protection statute, Ley 1581 de 2012, which is currently being modernized through a bill filed (Superintendencia de Industria y Comercio, 2026) to align it closer with international standards. This international standard connects directly with the second law related to data protection: General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This European law also applies to Dialectica due to the company's international structure, Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2016) which has applied since May 25, 2018. It imposes strict requirements on lawfulness, purpose limitation, and data minimization for all the data that belongs to individuals that reside in Europe, regardless of where the processing organization is based.

An important regulatory dimension that is fully related to the expert network industry is how companies receive and manage Material Non-Public Information (MNPI) in relation TO their clients, private equity firms and hedge funds. Those companies who work in the expert network industry are constantly in contact with information that does not belong to them, meaning they cannot use it in any form or way that could create a benefit. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) now requires investment advisers, under Section 204A of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 and its associated Code of Ethics Rule, to establish and enforce written policies preventing the wrong use of MNPI obtained through expert consultations, including the logging of calls and monitoring of related trading activity (U.S. Securities and Exchange

Commission, 2022). These rules followed a series of insider-trading cases that started around 2010, several of them pointing at expert networks as a channel for leaking MNPI.

Industry practice distinguishes research, sometimes referred to as “mosaic theory” analysis, in which an investor combines multiple public and legitimately obtained pieces of information to form an investment view, from the improper receipt of specific, non-public, forward-looking information from a source with a duty of confidentiality. This regulatory context shapes the screening and documentation procedures including the structured logging of expert profiles and screening responses into Maven.

5. Contributions

5.1 Added value proposition to the company

5.1.1 Identification of the problematic situation

Broadly speaking, consulting firms, private equity funds, and similar organizations struggle to access first hand and reliable information quickly. Deeply looking into the author’s role, the problem translated into identifying and successfully engaging Non-Network Specialists (NNSPs). Since these professionals didn't have any relation with the company, it was harder to engage them compared to NSPs, making it the most demanding task for the author.

5.1.2 Contribution of knowledge to the company

There was a step by step process so the author could achieve the high volume of experts expected from the company. This is an example of how it was done:

1. Understanding every new project project and client update using Gemini (Company's official AI) to create a boolean that allows the author to search for profiles.
2. Once the author has the boolean string, apply it to search on Sales Navigator to identify the profiles and index them into maven, the internal database of the company. On a daily basis, the author would index an average of 150-200 profiles.
3. While indexing, the author had the option to categorize each profile depending on how good he would consider they were with flags. He could apply one, two or three flags to the profile so he knew which profiles were the ones he had to focus on. Although sending emails and followups was something done for every expert indexed, cold calling would be better for the best profiles, since it consumes more time. An average of 70 call attempts were made per day.
4. To also compensate for cold calling, sending personalized emails and connections via LinkedIn was an option to obtain an answer from those experts, in case the author couldn't find a phone number.
5. Lastly, keep following up with responsive candidates to schedule a quick 10 minute call to explain the project and make screening questions and verify their background to check if it's a good fit for the project.

5.1.3 Impact from results and/or achievements

The amount of NNSPs the author was able to get during his six-month internship is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *NNSPs recruited by month during the internship.*

Month	NNSPs recruited
February 2026 (onboarding week)	0
March 2026	6
April 2026	7
May 2026	4
June 2026	2
July 2026	4
August 2026 (until August 9th)	0
Total	23

5.2 Company contributions to the training process

The internship contributed to the development of several competencies relevant to the author's professional training. The most significant of these was a marked improvement in phone communication and self-confidence. When the internship started, the author lacked experience for conducting cold calls. This is something experts could feel through the phone, making them less willing to engage with the project. By the end of the internship, the author was able to initiate expert conversations confidently and efficiently, introducing the project's purpose clearly within the first moments of a call, to the point of being able to manage multiple parallel tasks, such as researching additional candidates, while conducting outreach calls.

Time management is a skill that was highly improved during the past months. Instead of following a fixed routine, the author had complete autonomy to select how much time he would spend on indexing profiles and conducting outreach, this being clearly aligned with the amount of demand that each project would represent. At the beginning of the project, when the pipeline was

small, more time was dedicated to indexing experts, and as the pool grew, the daily task would switch from indexing to cold calling and sending inmails on LinkedIn and SMS.

A third aspect improved was rapid market comprehension. Given that due diligence projects vary in a wide range of industries, many of which the author was not entirely informed about, he needed to research these new sectors and familiarize himself with the terminology. For example, one project required research on computer-aided engineering (CAE) software, a category of simulation technology applicable across seemingly unrelated fields such as air conditioning systems and the automotive industry, illustrating the breadth of technical knowledge the role required the author to acquire on short notice.

These developing competencies were formally validated by Dialectica during the internship period. The author was recognized as the top-performing intern within the Client Service Team for the month of April, and was one of only three interns, out of approximately 40 across the Bogotá office, to receive formal recognition during the company's All Hands corporate event, where the author was presented with a certificate and a performance-based clothing bonus in front of the entire organization.

5.3 Improvement plan

The low response and conversion rate of NNSP was found to be one of the main problems among the interns. The six months the author was in the company allowed him to identify what could be the root for this: low experience. Unlike associates, who usually have more experience with fast paced projects and many industries, interns usually don't have the same skill to understand all of the concepts and what do those industries involve. This reflects directly in

identifying the best experts for the project, making the interns to sometimes index profiles who may not know about the industry or the specific topic required.

As a result of not fully understanding the industry and the topics or specific terms that are used within it, interns ended up indexing a large proportion of profiles that did not match the client requirements, wasting time and contributing in a very small way to the team because of the low conversion rate. Since this is a problem that new interns face and not the Client Service Team, the plan proposed aims to improve the intern's training process during their practice period.

This intervention connects with the PEST analysis as it relates to how the expert network industry is being modified by two major external forces: integration of AI tools to optimize knowledge discovery, and a more strict regulatory landscape related to data privacy and security compliance.

Dialectica uses Gemini as a product, and the AI assures that no information in the chat would be used for improvement of the AI, meaning that the chats are private. Even though, as a measure of prevention, new interns would be able to use AI responsibly to better understand projects if a process of standardizing Gemini prompts is put in place at the beginning of projects without exposing sensitive information of the client. At the same time, if the intern fully understands the project and the specific terms used in the industry, he can get rid of complicated words and actually have a more fluid conversation with experts, making a more dynamic and comfortable experience for them when they are first approached.

The plan also tracks how well new intern cohorts adopted both tools to ensure the training process sticks in the company and makes an actual impact. The plan is presented below in Table 6.

Table 6. *Proposed improvement plan.*

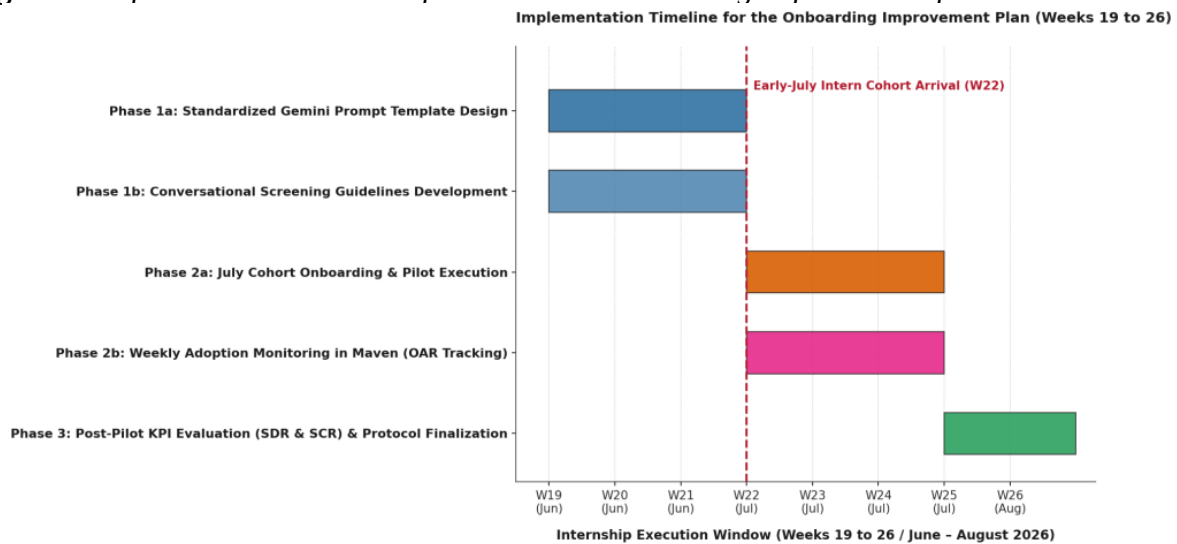
Aspect to improve	Goals	Actions (incl. verification)	Indicator	Responsible	Resources & Timeline
Precision and speed of project/industry understanding among new interns when using Gemini for expert sourcing	Reduce the proportion of irrelevant profiles indexed per project by new interns. A reduction in time spent clarifying context with Gemini is expected as a secondary effect.	Design a standardized prompt template, introduced during intern onboarding, requiring interns to input the project brief, target company, and screening questions in a fixed, structured order before requesting a Boolean search string. Verification: pilot the template with incoming interns on two new projects; compare disqualification rates against historical intern averages.	Sourcing Discard Rate (SDR) = (Profiles discarded during screening / Total profiles indexed in Maven) x 100. Target: reduce by 25% vs. historical cohort average.	Client Service Team management, with input from the intern	Gemini; a shared document or Slack channel to host and iterate on the template. Timeline: 30 to 45 days, aligned with the average duration of a full project cycle.
Standardization of dynamic, conversation-based screening technique for new interns	Reduce the perceived rigidity of screening calls conducted by new interns and improve the amount of information gathered per call	Document the technique of asking open, day-to-day questions (e.g., asking an expert to describe their daily responsibilities) instead of listing screening questions sequentially, and include it in intern onboarding materials. Verification: compare the Screening-to-Consultation Conversion Rate before and after introducing the conversational technique, for newly onboarded interns.	Screening-to-Consultation Conversion Rate (SCR) = (NNSPs screened scheduled for client calls / Total NNSPs screened by the intern) x 100. Target: increase by 20% (reaching 70-75%).	Client Service Team management	Existing Training Month sessions, mentorship from senior associates. Timeline: next Training cycle.
Institutionalization of standardized onboarding tools among new intern cohorts	Ensure full adoption of the standardized prompt template and conversational screening technique by all newly onboarded interns within their first month	Incorporate both tools as mandatory checklist items in the onboarding process, verified by team management during each new intern's first month.	Onboarding Adoption Rate (OAR) = (New interns actively using both templates / Total newly hired interns) x 100. Target: 100% adoption by end of month 1.	Client Service Team management	Onboarding checklist, Training materials. Timeline: assessed at the end of month 1 for each new cohort.

5.4 Implementation timeline

In order to understand how the improvement plan execution was proposed, the author designed an eight-week implementation timeline in Figure 2. With a special focus in the last eight weeks of the internship, from June to August, this schedule shows how the plan is intertwined with Dialectica's monthly onboardings.

The first phase was during week 19 and 21 of the internship. Here, the author executed both designing the standardized Gemini prompt (Phase 1a) and formalizing the screening framework (Phase 1b), validating both phases with the CST. During these weeks, the author prepared for the arrival of the new interns batch, on week 22.

When week 22 started, it was time to test the execution of the plan in a pilot process (Phase 2a). It was a time to check how well interns adopted this process (Phase 2b) that lasted for 3 weeks, until week 24, approximately until July 26. After this, the third and final phase started. In this section, it was meant to make a post-pilot evaluation of the performance checking KPIs like Sourcing Discard Rate or Screening-to-Consultation Conversion Rate.. This took place during the last two weeks, from July 27 to August 9, prior to the internship's conclusion.

Figure 2. *Implementation timeline for the intern onboarding improvement plan.*

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Along this report the lecturer could understand the professional internship carried out by the author in Dialectica Colombia S.A.S working inside the Client Service Team between February until August of 2026. Besides, it is possible to observe the results of every objective proposed as followed in the next paragraphs.

To begin, the author had to identify industry experts relevant depending on the project assigned using prospection tools, as it is marked as the first specific objective, indexing between 150 and 200 profiles per day in the internal database platform, Maven. He did this using boolean strings aligned with the client requirements to find the best leads. Followed by this, the second specific objective was to verify the background of each expert and see if they knew about the industry indeed. To perform this, the author had to go through screening questions in a quick call, to make sure the expert was not looking up the information.

After these two objectives, there is analysis of the micro and macro economic context of the industry. This was explained through a PEST analysis by studying Dialectica's model in a fast-

paced growing industry, shaped by a strong data-protection regulation, rising corporate adoption and increasing considerably the use of AI. Lastly, the fourth specific objective was to design an improvement plan closely related to AI in order to improve the interns process of understanding projects and spend less time indexing profiles that aren't worthy for the project, measuring this with KPIs like Sourcing Discard Rate and Screening-to-Consultation Conversion Rate.

The results observed in the internship allow one to conclude that these objectives have been successfully achieved. The total recruitment of 23 NNSPs during the six months, the recognition as a top performing intern in the CST in the month of April and the acknowledgment at the All Hands event support this conclusion. The analysis of this report relies primarily on the author's direct experience during the internship, since no survey was conducted and there were no records of the KPIs analyzed previously, impeding the possibility of making a comparison. With that context, the improvement plan should be understood as an initial proposal rather than a benchmark validated across multiple intern cohorts.

It is very interesting to understand how the scope of this internship differs in three different levels: Locally, speaking about the Bogotá Office and the impact that the intern had in it, nationally, reflecting how the company aligns with Colombia's legal framework promoting professional training for students in the private sector, and the most important one, at least for the author's intention to keep going in future professional steps, internationally, the constant relationship to support due diligence and strategy projects. This is particularly interesting for him because of the global expansion and the perception of how many industries he could understand with experts and professionals from all around the world, even when the clients he had were primarily located in the United States, particularly on the West Coast.

The whole experience allowed the author to come up with two main recommendations. The first one, for Dialectica, is to formalize the AI-assisted help to improve project understanding and conversational screening techniques. The second one, for future interns, is to focus on developing comfort with cold calling as soon as possible, as well as understand unfamiliar industries before working in a project, since those were the areas identified where there's more room to improve, so the competences required to succeed in an expert network are met.

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