



Building Relevant Work Experience

***Getting the Most From Your
Internship***

Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers

Why Pursue an Internship?

- Start with Specific Goals

I want to see how a marketing plan develops from beginning to end.

I hope to observe a trial in Family Court.

I want to see the responsibilities of a financial analyst first hand.

I want to work with special needs adults to see if that's a population I am comfortable with.

I hope to find out how the board of a nonprofit organization works. I may want to start my own some day.

Am I more interested in the management track or applied track in an engineering firm?

Benefits of Internships:

- Learning and Confirming

What can
interns
learn?
(Content)

- The industry
- The employer (history, competitors, financial status, power structure, mission)
- New career-related skills
- Effective communication with professionals
- Organizational culture

Organizational Culture:

- Unwritten, Informal Rules That Guide Behavior
 - ✓ Degree of formality/Dress code
 - ✓ Communication style (Mr. Smith or Jeff)
 - ✓ Power structure
 - ✓ Rituals: birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, and so forth.
 - ✓ Socializing
 - ✓ How time is structured

Learning and Confirming

What's
the best
way for
interns to
learn?
(Process)

- Keep your eyes and ears open for clues
- Ask questions/communicate clearly and effectively
- Carefully read everything that comes across your desk: memos, annual reports, e-mails, etc.
- Follow directions
- Do each assignment to the best of your ability
- Spend time informally with colleagues: lunch, etc.
- Interview colleagues to learn more about the field and industry

Questions

- Information Interviews
 - ✓ What is a typical day on the job like for you?
 - ✓ How did you find out about this job?
 - ✓ What do you like best about your job?
 - ✓ What position would you like to hold in five years?
 - ✓ What is your educational background and training?
 - ✓ What advice do you have for me if I want to eventually have a position similar to yours?

Building Relationships

How will
you impress
your
internship
supervisor
and
colleagues?
(Process)

- Persevere
- Work independently and finish assignments on-time. Do your best.
- Offer to do more than required
- Apply your technical skills and offer to help colleagues
- Be punctual; stick to schedule; show, good manners, and respect
- Offer to present to senior staff

Communicating Effectively

- With Colleagues and Supervisors
 - ✓ Start with a positive statement or point of agreement.
 - ✓ Be specific about what you would prefer to have happen.
 - ✓ Provide a brief explanation.
 - ✓ Check out your supervisor's reactions.
 - ✓ Express thanks for his or her time and attention, regardless of response.

Typical Internship Scenarios

- Where Effective Communication Is Needed

Asking for more complex or relevant tasks.

Explaining that you will be unable to do an assigned task.

Asking to be included in a relevant workplace activity.

Asking for feedback on your internship performance.

Communicating about conflict or dissent in the workplace.

What Your Resume Says

- About Your Internship

Your resume should contain a rich description of your internship activities

- Itemize and specify your tasks
- Quantify your actions
- Describe what you learned
- Credit your impact and contributions
- Include positive changes that occurred during your internship

Examples

- **Tasks You May Have Undertaken in Your Internship**

Created a Facebook and Twitter presence for my internship organization.

Researched Great Britain's policy on capital punishment.

Interviewed mayor about his election to this post.

Created flyers and posted them in downtown businesses.

Created a list of potential donors.

Used Excel to create spread sheets and charts for a budget presentation.

Did You Meet Your Goals?

- You were offered a job by your internship organization!
- Received stellar recommendations and referrals.
- Gained valuable career-related experience.
- Added to your repertoire of skills.
- Bolstered your resume.
- Added to your professional network.
- Gained a better understanding of your field.
- Created some work samples for your portfolio or website.
- Made some new friends.
- Discovered what you *don't* want to do with your working life.
- Developed answers, based on your internship, for potential interview questions.

End of Internship Tips

- ✓ Ask your internship supervisor or colleague if he or she would be willing to provide a recommendation for you. Provide him or her with background information.
- ✓ Send a written or e-mail thank-you note to your supervisor and others who have assisted you and worked with you during the course of your internship
- ✓ Ask about joining your supervisor's or colleague's professional network, social media group, or professional association