



Extracurricular Activities

INTERNSHIP TIPS

COLLEGE TO CAREER TRANSITION

By Michael Lebeau

College as Preparation:

Your time in college provides you an excellent opportunity to lay the groundwork for your career. College students are strongly urged to begin early preparing for their transition into the job market. It is recommended that you begin the process in your Freshman year and continue it throughout your college tenure. To help ensure job market success after graduation, by the time a student completes his or her Senior year, he or she should have engaged in any number of these experiential or extracurricular activities:

- Participate in a mentoring program
- Participate in a job shadowing program
- Join a campus club or student organization
- Join a professional organization or society
- Obtain a part time job related to your field
- Obtain an internship related to your field
- Participate in a volunteer community service project
- Attend a professional convention or conference
- Assume a leadership position

Extracurricular Activities:

Employers continually express a strong preference for candidates with experience that extends beyond academic credentials. With more and more college graduates entering today's competitive job market, it becomes necessary for candidates to demonstrate how their college experience yielded more than just a degree. Employers seek candidates who gained additional or co-curricular experience during their college tenure through involvement in campus organizations, internships, community service projects, and part time jobs.

Transferable Skills:

Through active participation in campus clubs, organizations, and other extracurricular activities, students are provided an opportunity to use and develop their skills in leadership, interpersonal relations, event planning, committee membership, fund raising, and a variety of other skills that can easily transfer to the workplace. Volunteer activities also offer students a chance to gain valuable experience through a wide range of community service projects and philanthropic efforts.

Practical Experience:

Practical experience in a risk-free environment can be gained through internships, programs, part time jobs or temporary jobs. In addition to acquiring career-related knowledge and skills, students are able to make important personal contacts

within their field of interest. It is a chance for them to "get their foot in the door." Moreover, candidates with experience have more credibility and maturity and a better chance in the job market than candidates without experience.

Experience does not need to be in the form of a paid or fulltime job in order to be relevant. Valuable experience might be gained in any number of part time, freelance, or voluntary settings. Some of the best experience students gain takes place on the college campus and perhaps for no pay.



INTERNSHIP EXPECTATIONS

By Penny Loretto

As with any experience, you may find yourself faced with obstacles in your internship that you hadn't anticipated. When going into any new situation, we usually assume that everything will run smoothly and that the overall experience will offer what we hoped for; in this case, an opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. Unfortunately, you may find yourself faced with challenges that you don't feel able to handle. The two important things to remember is to always maintain your professionalism and always work to find ways that are mutually beneficial to both you and the employer that will help solve the problems you are facing. Below I've listed some tips on how to face some of the challenges that you may find cropping up over the course of your internship.

The internship is not what you expected.

One thing that might make your internship go more smoothly is to map out your expectations with your supervisor beforehand. Once you've done this, you can always go back and reiterate your expectations. If you didn't come to an agreement during the course of your interview, you may want to have a discussion with your supervisor as soon as possible to see if you can come to a mutual agreement on what you will be expected to do.

Communicating your discontent will give your supervisor an opportunity to make some changes whenever possible. Always keep your communications on a positive note by letting your supervisor know that you are interested in learning and doing more to help with the running of the overall organization. Employers respect employees (and interns) who show initiative and are able to communicate their needs and expectations clearly using positive communications that serves to meet both their needs.



If you find yourself in conflict with your immediate supervisor, what should you do?

Here again communicating your needs and expectations honestly can often defuse a stressful situation. Supervisors generally want their interns to have a positive experience and usually enjoy mentoring them throughout the internship experience. Differences of opinion are a fact of life and learning how to deal with personality differences is a great lesson that can be used throughout your internship and your future career. Again being mindful of your supervisor's goals and expectations, you will often be able to work things out for the better. If you deal with problems constructively and not ignore them, you will have a much better chance of solving them.

You find yourself bored with not much to do.

This is an easy one. Ask your supervisor for additional work to do. If he/she does not have any work for you, ask if you can contact other departments to see if they have work that you can help with. If these tactics fail, use your time wisely by reading journals in the field, scheduling informational interviews with co-workers, and offering your knowledge and talents to devise new and better ways to do things within the department.

You find the office politics difficult to handle.

As an intern or new employee it is recommended that you stay away from office politics as much as possible. You want to promote yourself as a professional and engaging in backstabbing and negative communication will not serve you well in meeting your personal and professional goals.

As a new professional, learning how to handle these types of difficulties is an excellent learning experience in itself. Developing open, honest communications can often diffuse many situations that occur in the workplace. By demonstrating your maturity to handle these and other situations that often occur on the job, you will be providing the employer with a positive impression of your interpersonal, problem-solving, and communications skills and your ability to deal with anything that may come along.

VALUE OF AN INTERNSHIP

By Ann Blasik

Although your internship may not be what you expected, is there some value you can take from the experience and turn it into a learning experience that works to your advantage? What should you do if you consider your internship to really be a waste of time?

I'd challenge any student to consider two factors that are often neglected when weighing the value of an internship:

Internships can teach you more about what you do AND what you don't want to do. No one's career path is a straight line. Everyone starts off with a vision of their ideal job, but this vision is really just a guess based purely on hypotheticals. A funny thing often happens when someone starts working at their ideal job, they realize it's not so ideal for them after all.

Would you rather make this realization as an intern or as a full-time hire after graduation?

Internships are a unique opportunity that you will never again encounter throughout your career. This is your chance to test drive different positions to see which ride you enjoy most. Utilize it! Use your summers (and maybe even a fall or spring semester if your school allows it) to intern.

Internships provide you with INVALUABLE soft skills:

Ideally an internship will provide you with work experience that is directly related to your major. If your internship falls short in this department, keep in mind that you are learning something else that may be even more valuable in the long run. ALL internships teach you soft skills, and every employer is looking for soft skills (which is why behavioral interviewing is so prevalent).



Most employers rank interpersonal, communication and teamwork skills above technical aptitude. There's no better way to acquire these skills than to jump into a corporate environment. It doesn't matter if you'll be working for a small start-up or a Fortune 500 company. Regardless you'll be learning firsthand how to work with coworkers of all ages, function in a staff meeting, wrestle with a copier machine, communicate with a supervisor, and maybe even navigate the company picnic.

This is truly on-the-job training! You may not personally see a difference in yourself, but I promise you will leave a bit wiser, more mature, more confident, and a better candidate for the next internship or full-time job.

INTERNSHIP GOALS

By Penny Loretto

Before checking out the internship listings online or contacting employers about potential internships, make sure you make a list of goals and establish what you hope to gain from doing an internship. By skipping this step you may find yourself in an internship where you are unhappy and one that is not related to your future career goals or aspirations. On the other hand, an internship is a time to explore different career fields especially if you are unsure of what you want to do after graduation.

Why Do You Want to Do an Internship:

Internships will provide experience to see if a particular industry or career is the right choice for you. By doing several different types of internships, students can compare different career fields and better understand where their skills and interests are best suited. For example, if you are a business major and interested in marketing and advertising, you might want to get an internship in both of these areas to find out more about each one and learn about the duties and responsibilities of each job.

What Do You Hope to Gain From an Internship:

Internships offer experience and a way to see what it's actually like working in the field or industry. An internship will provide relevant experience in a field to include in a resume as well as providing you with professional references and networking contacts.

What are Your Specific Career Interests & Goals:

Perhaps you are interested in pursuing a career in your major or minor and you want to go out and try it out before committing to a field. You may be interested in pursuing something totally different than what you are studying in college. Remember, organizations make their hiring decisions based on college performance as well as any co-curricular, professional, and volunteer experiences of the applicant.

What Type of Work Environment are You Looking to Do:

Are you seeking a large Fortune 500 company or a non profit agency in which to work. Think about the type of environment where you thrive best and what culture you will find yourself feeling the most comfortable. Smaller companies often provide new hires with an opportunity to learn many facets of the business as well as a chance to move up in the organization rather quickly. On the other hand, if a company is too small their may be little room for upward mobility or you might enjoy the exciting challenges and teamwork which are often a part of the large corporate culture.

Where Do You Want to Intern:

If you are planning to do your internship during the college semester, you will need to find an internship in close proximity to your college. During the summer months you may prefer to find an internship close to home to avoid having

to pay for housing and personal expenses or you may be interested in moving to a place where you plan on finding a job after graduation or someplace totally new where you've always wanted to live.

Are You Looking to Do a Paid, Unpaid, or Internship for Credit:

Although there are a significant number of internship that pay (and some quite well), there are still many internships that are unpaid. If you are looking to gain experience in a non profit agency, there usually is not money available to pay interns to work for the summer. Sometimes employers who offer unpaid internships require interns to do their internship for credit.

What are Some Internship Alternatives:

Transcript notations and 1 credit internships have recently become more popular since they do not require that students pay a large sum of money to do a summer internship. Some colleges even allow students to do internships for credit during the summer and have those credits awarded in the fall semester (and rolled into fall tuition) as long as total credits for the semester are kept under 18.



TYPES OF INTERNSHIPS

By Penny Loretto

Internships provide real world experience to those looking to explore or gain the relevant knowledge and skills required to enter into a particular career field. Internships are relatively short term in nature with the primary focus on getting some on the job training and taking what's learned in the classroom and applying it to the real world.

Paid Internships:

Paid internships exist primarily in the private sector or in large organizations that have the money to pay students to learn while they work. Given a choice of paid or unpaid internship, paid internships are definitely the internships of choice. More and more organizations are recognizing the value of internship programs and the enormous benefit they play in the recruitment process. As these organizations work to train interns, they are also scrutinizing them on all fronts to evaluate their potential as potential future full time employees. For this reason, companies that can afford to pay their interns will usually make a decision to go ahead and do so.



Internships for Credit:

Internships for credit require that the experience is strongly related to an academic discipline to be deemed “credit worthy”. The main question is determining the value of the internship experience in a higher education context. Internships that are primarily clerical or mechanical do not qualify for academic credit. Students looking to do an internship for credit usually need to have an academic sponsor to oversee and set criteria for the internship. To meet the academic component of the internship, students may be required to complete a journal, essay, or presentation during or immediately after the internship to illustrate the knowledge and skills they learned over the course of the semester.

Non Profit Internships:

Doing an internship for a non profit organization is usually quite different than working in an organization for profit. In a non profit organization, there are no stockholders and no one shares in the annual profits or losses that are determined by the organization each year. Non profit organizations include charities, universities, government agencies, religious organizations, and some hospitals. Since the purpose of these organizations is not to make money, instead they focus more on providing a service. Interns generally do not get paid when interning at a non profit. Completing an internship in a non profit organization provides some very useful skills required by employers when seeking to hire entry-level employees in this field.

Summer Internships:

Summer internships are usually eight to twelve weeks long and can be full or part time. More students do internships during the summer than during any other time of the year. These short term experiences provide a real insight into what it’s actually like working in a particular job or career field. There’s ample time to get into a regular work routine and gain valuable knowledge and skills. Summer internships can be completed for credit but they don’t have to be. Getting credit during the summer can be helpful since it can lighten a student’s course load during fall or spring semester but the downside is that most colleges require tuition in order for student to receive credit.

Service Learning:

Although there are different perspectives on what constitutes services learning, there are several specific criteria that must be met for an experience to be considered a service learning experience. Service learning requires a combination of meeting specific learning objectives by completing some type of community service work. It is different from other forms of experiential education in that it requires that the recipient and the provider of the service both benefit in some way and are changed equally by the experience. These are very structured programs that require self-reflection, self-discovery along with gaining the specific values, skills, and knowledge required for success in the field.

Co-Operative Education:

The main difference between an internship and a co op experience is length of time. While internships generally last anywhere’s from a few weeks to several months, co op’s normally last one or more years. Usually students will attend classes and work on their co op simultaneously or they may do their co op during winter and/or summer breaks. Co ops and internships are both excellent ways for students to gain valuable knowledge and skills in their field of interest plus they offer an opportunity network with professionals already working in the field.

Externship:

Externships are very similar to internships but only of a much shorter duration. Another common name for externship is job shadowing. Although these opportunities may only consist of one day to several weeks, they tend to offer participants a bird’s eye view of what it’s actually like working in a particular career field as well as providing some professional contacts for future networking.

IMPORTANCE OF INTERNSHIPS

By Penny Loretta

Internships Provide a Link Between Academic Learning and Professional Employment

Internships provide a link between academic learning and professional employment. Since many employers list previous internships as a requirement for their new hires, many applicants are already behind the eight ball if they have not done some type of internship experience during their time in college. It is recommended that students try out several different internships to be able to get a sense of what it’s like working in a particular career field. This experience allows students to see what it’s like actually working in the field and a chance to evaluate the types of jobs that match their personal interests and personality.

Developing Essential Knowledge & Skills Increases Chances of Getting Hired

The opportunity to meet people currently working in the field, gaining valuable references, as well as getting exposure to the working environment, are three good reasons for students to consider doing one of more internships during college. Since many employers use their internship programs to train and select new hires for the organization, it's crucial that interns do their best to prove to the employer that they have what it takes to be successful in the job. Internships are a way for students to build on their knowledge and skills while increasing their chances of getting hired for full-time positions that open up in the future.

Gaining Exposure to a Career Field Increases Likelihood of Retention

Not only are employers looking for individuals with relevant experience in the field, they are also looking for people who have had exposure to the field and the company and who really understand what it's like working at that particular job. Employers understand that individuals who have not had any exposure to the field, may find that it wasn't exactly what they expected and may decide to leave after receiving several months of training. Since training is costly for employers, they usually try to avoid these situations whenever possible.



Doing an Unpaid Internships versus Getting a Job

Students often ask if they should consider doing an unpaid internship or if they would be better off finding a job and make some money. The answer to this question is, it depends. If you are able to do an unpaid internship without any undue hardship, the experience will provide valuable work experience at the least and at the most may end up leading to a full-time job. Students who think that they cannot afford to do an unpaid internship, might try combining it with a part-time job to sustain themselves over the course of the internship. Even though an internship is unpaid, it could provide invaluable experience that paves the way to a full-time job. If you are working in a field that offers paid internships, then you may be able to have the best of both worlds.



SUMMER INTERNSHIP TIPS

By Sarah Ward

It's internship season! The ideal internship situation will include both learning and a paycheck. If you are looking for an internship this summer, here's some places to find one.

Check your college job board for internship openings. Keep an eye on your campus's job board to see all the latest postings. Ask your career counselor about internships. Your college career center is going to have the 411 on the best internship opportunities in your specific area of study.

Look for internships online. Take advantage of great resources online like Monster, Internships.com or Intern Queen, Inc.

Attend job/career fairs. You'll get face time with recruiters and companies that have openings. Before you go, make sure you read what not to do at a career expo.

Ask teachers if they've heard of any internships. Teachers are in the know and may have a suggestion of any internship availabilities that may be ideal for you. One of our writers got a summer internship simply by asking his professor!

Find a place that does what you want to do, and offer to be an intern. If there's a place you want to intern, why not contact them directly? We know a guy who is doing a cancer research internship this summer who landed it by contacting them directly. He sent the company his resume, told them why he would be an ideal intern, and got the gig! Since all the paid internships had been taken, the company even found him a scholarship to compensate for his time.

Start looking for internships early! Since the early bird gets the worm, it's never too early to start looking for an internship opportunity. There's a lot of students who want an internship, and starting the search early will pay off.

Some companies use internships as a means of recruitment and basic job training. If they like you, there's a chance you'll have a job waiting for you down the road.