

Resources

Top Tips for Internship Success

Roxana Hadad & Kay Peterson

Even if you're working for free, your internship can be worth a fortune - in job experience and valuable career connections. But it's up to you to see that your efforts pay off. Make the right moves to make the most of your internship.

* Be Professional *

To impress, take your responsibilities seriously. Treat your internship like a full-time job by always behaving professionally.

- Show up on time. Tardiness is not a quality employers look for in potential hires.
- Take only the specified break-time for lunch or coffee and always return on time.
- Avoid missing work. If you must be absent, request permission from your supervisor in advance.
- Dress for success. Take cues from your co-workers and dress appropriately.

* Project a Positive Attitude *

Almost as important as the work you do is the way you work. Keep motivated and positive to make sure you're the kind of worker employers love to hire.

- Don't complain about the tasks you are given. Even menial chores can teach you a lot about how an office works. Approaching your work with enthusiasm is a good way to convince supervisors to give you bigger responsibilities.
- Get along with others. Be pleasant and courteous to everyone and try to get along with the other interns.
- Stay out of the grapevine. Gossiping about employees, interns or company business can get you in trouble.

Make the Most of Your Work

Your internship can be the foundation of a great career. Be proactive about using your internship to lay that foundation.

- Develop additional responsibilities. Interns who identify office needs and ask to take on new challenges demonstrate the initiative and motivation that companies are looking for.
- Look for opportunities to further your education. If there is a project that interests you, ask your supervisor if you can help out.
- Network. Getting to know people in the company can lead to great opportunities. You can do this by arranging informational interviews with full-time staff members.
- Before you leave your internship, schedule an interview with your supervisor to review your performance.

Maintain a Record

Even if your internship experience seems unforgettable, you may need to refresh your memory later on. Keeping a record can help.

- Log in with a daily journal. Create a list of your daily tasks and chart your feelings about your work. Which tasks did you like the most? Which seemed the least interesting? Reviewing the list later can help you make future career decisions.
- Record your various projects. Describe the purpose and guidelines of each project and your particular contribution.
- Keep a professional souvenir. Ask your supervisor if you can keep a copy of any projects you work

on - brochures, reports, etc. These can be a great addition to a portfolio when you're looking for a job.

- Keep in touch and keep a record of your performance. Ask for copies of any performance reviews. At the end of your internship, ask for a letter of reference.

Your internship might not make you rich, but it can bring lots of rewards to your career. Make the most of your experience and start out right on your career path.