

# Making the Most of Your Internship Experience

Pomerantz Career Center – Internship Team

Congratulations -You've landed an internship! Now what? Many students make the mistake of thinking that all they have to do now is show up to work and take it all in. Unfortunately, "It's just an internship, not a real job" is something we hear all too often. But doesn't it make sense that if you are going to be spending all that time working, you might as well learn as much as you can? If you play your cards right, an internship can be an amazing learning experience, can be a great resource for references and can sometimes lead to a full-time position. Here are a few tips to help *you* get the most out of *your* internship:

- ✓ **Set personal goals**  
Begin your internship with an idea of areas you would like to learn more about, skills you would like to build on, people you would like to meet etc. Set realistic and attainable goals. Keep in mind that your goals will probably change as you progress through the internship.
- ✓ **Have regular meetings with your supervisor**  
The initial meeting is a great time to ask about the dress code, your work hours, and what will be expected of you. Once you begin the internship, these meetings are a great opportunity for you to obtain feedback from your supervisor – both positive and negative. Use this time to speak openly with your supervisor about your performance and goals. Take the initiative – if your supervisor isn't scheduling regular meetings with you, request that they be scheduled.
- ✓ **Maintain a positive attitude and be professional. Have fun!**  
Chances are, you will probably end up doing some menial office tasks. Approach all tasks with enthusiasm and professionalism. Your ability to successfully complete these menial tasks may be a stepping stone to more responsibility within the office. No to negativity! Avoid complaining, being rude, disrespecting your co-workers and/or not performing your tasks on-time.
- ✓ **Immerse yourself – take initiative – do your best work**  
Employers love interns who jump at the chance to tackle tough problems and can provide unique solutions to their problems. Make sure to work closely with your supervisor –share your successes and try not to over-step your boundaries. If you finish projects and have nothing else to do, be sure to ask your supervisor and/or other members of your department if they have additional work for you.
- ✓ **Network!**  
Finding a mentor within the organization is a major key to a successful internship. A mentor should be your supervisor and/or someone else within the organization. They will watch out for you and make sure that you are given opportunities to learn and accomplish your goals. Build professional relationships within the organization. Socialize and try to go out of your way to meet employees in various departments. The more you are exposed to new ideas and new people, the more you will learn. Never burn your bridges – always leave on good terms because you never know when you when and where you will see these people again.
- ✓ **Keep track of your accomplishments**  
This is a great time to create or add to your portfolio! Keep a journal to help you keep track of your accomplishments. These should be updated on your resume and cover letters.
- ✓ **Leave on a positive note**  
Be sure to thank everyone who helped you. Write a formal thank you letter to your supervisor.

## Sources:

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