Internships Are a Valuable Starting Point

A company interviewer wants a good candidate for the internship. Beyond simple basics, like researching the company and its values and policies, students must stand out in a crowd of resumes and interviews.

Beginning the Search

A good way to start early is to find an alumni mentor or advisor in your field. For example, in the medical industry, students should connect with healthcare professionals who’ve graduate from their schools. Bryant & Stratton College in Syracuse facilitated this with an alumni-student event for medical professionals and aspirants during their “Employability Week.”

The “Medical Employer Panel” included Bryant alumni who discussed internship opportunities and interview processes with students. To shine during interviews, one expert elaborated on “How to really present yourself and be able to articulate your academic preparedness in relation to helping a company and how you can have a positive impact on the things that are important to them” (Reinhardt, 2013).

After four or more years of study at a university, graduates still face daunting challenges in actually finding a job in their field of choice. This is especially challenging because an undergraduate degree, so common among young adults, no longer differentiates them. To ensure that undergraduates will find meaningful first jobs after college, they need to recognize the value of internships, learn how to earn them, and know how to perform once they become interns.

Companies want students that already have the experience to be a part of the company’s team. They want talent and students that are ready to become productive employees. For example, Long Island University has an internship program where students can work together in student-run businesses. One student involved in the project stated that industry professionals have been “very intrigued” that she has the experience from the program (Starzee, 2014).

Internships connect students with companies. Firms providing internship opportunities lower their usual barriers and prioritize interns over other applicants. Some qualified students get the privilege to work with their prospective employers ahead of time.

Undergraduates need to understand how to properly obtain coveted internships.
True Value from Internships

Education should be the foundation for a successful career. "Education should be very much founded in the real business and economic problems out there," said Vernon Smith, a Nobel laureate and professor of economics at Chapman University (Hughes, 2014). The idea is for students to use their education and surround themselves with successful professionals, so that in the end, students will be able to produce results.

While a college education does provide insights into business and introductions to professions, internships provide invaluable direct experience. They supplement and enhance a degree. “[Tyler] Buck, of Jay, has a few courses to finish his degree at [University of Maine at Farmington] but gained the experience of ‘working in the real world’ through an internship with the company, he said” (Bryant, 2014).

The technology industry very commonly works with students who are looking for positions as interns. Tyler Technologies is one such firm that hires many interns and helps them work their way into permanent positions at the company. “At Tyler Tech, an internship provides a chance to show not just aptitude but attitude and the ability to be team player,” says their human resources director, Liz Rensenbrink (Bryant, 2014).

Another firm, Arkatecture, also hires developers from its intern pool. Full-time application developer named Chris Bond notes the advantage of internships. "Internships break down walls," he says. “The experience was like getting that first interview out of the way” (PR Newswire, 2014). By being in the company already, the employer knew what he could offer and he learned what the company needed from a new hire.

Not All Internships Are Equal

Not every intern slides quickly into a full-time position. Luke Siuty, a journalism graduate from Northwestern University, has yet to find in the field of video-game journalism. “So far, though, Mr. Siuty has held a string of unpaid and part-time paid internships, and continues to apply for full-time work while living with his parents and older brother near Midway International Airport.” (Sweeney, 2014).

Luke Siuty has plenty of time to travel.

Siuty and others like him are hindered by two factors. He did not actively start his job search until after graduation and he is not in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Medicine) field. According to a 2013 Harris-CareerBuilder poll, “Forty-one percent
of graduates who started their job search before their spring semester of their senior year are currently employed full-time, compared to 34 percent who started during the spring or later” (PR Newswire, 2014). Furthermore, “Health care and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) graduates are slightly more likely to be employed full-time than non-STEM graduates (40 percent vs. 34 percent)” (PR Newswire, 2014).

**Not Just for Bachelors**

Not only do internships positively impact undergraduates, they also benefit their those with law degrees and those either in or pursuing masters and doctorate degree programs. An example of this is Francis Fungsang. After graduating from law school, passing the bar exam, and starting an internship, he found out that he did not enjoy business litigation. The internship helped him focus his career goals and avoid the practice of an area of law that he did not enjoy. (Bullard, 2014).

Jordan Field is another law school graduate turned intern. With the Detroit Tigers, he did everything from driving team members to the airport to reviewing contracts for current and future careers. “I did everything I could to impress the right people to earn an opportunity to stay” (Shea, 2014). After the success of his internship, he landed an entry-level job as a planning coordinator.

The fruits of his internship are plenty. He established the Detroit Tigers Foundation as the only philanthropic arm of the baseball team. “Since then, the organization has provided $15 million in direct and in-kind donations, he said. The foundation, with a staff of five, has paid to renovate more than 60 school and community baseball and softball fields in the area, manages two scholarships, and aids players doing individual philanthropy” (Shea, 2014). His internship was a boon to both and his community.

**About the Author**

As the son of a Korean immigrant, I grew up determined to succeed college. After middle and high school, I knew I wanted to attend a university, but first I needed to study in a community college. There, I joined the ROTC and ignited my passion for the military. I knew that I wanted to join the Air Force and enlisted immediately. From Boot Camp, I learned discipline and camaraderie with my brothers. From there, I returned to California to finish my AA at Selano Community College. I received two associates’ degrees. Now at Cal State Los Angeles, I study business. I am schedule to graduate in March, and am looking for internships to begin my professional career.
Bibliography (11/4/2014)


