

**BEFORE YOUR INTERNSHIP BEGINS**

Before you begin, think about what is necessary to make your experience a meaningful one. The internship experience is one of the most vital to your future career successes. Remember that you are entering a professional environment. Your e-mail address, voicemail message and social networking tools should reflect this. Learn all you can about the organization by conducting research and make the most of your experience. If you are doing the internship for credit, be sure all appropriate paperwork is completed.

**ON THE JOB TIPS**

- Make sure you are clear about your supervisor's expectations in regard to hours, start/end date, and dress.
- 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 in person and confirm it via e-mail.
- Dress for success. Take cues from your co-workers and dress appropriately.
- Turn off your cell phone and use the computer for work related activities only.
- Understand that some general office work is part of the job.
- Introduce new ideas gradually and avoid trying to change too much too soon. Be careful not to be critical of current practices. Provide suggestions and solutions to problems.
- Gradually ask for more responsibility and actively look for things to do. This initiative will prepare you for positions in the future.
- Build a good relationship with your boss by keeping an open line of communication and understanding your boss's agenda, preferences, and perspective.
- Network in the office and keep in touch online! It is important to establish contacts with people who are doing what you think you would like to do. They may also be able to help you in future career opportunities or lead you to other contacts. Connect with co-workers on LinkedIn.
- If there are other interns in the office, strive to develop relationships with them, this can be a great support system. Avoid becoming too cliquish with the other interns.
- Maintain records and 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 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 useful when you are looking for a job.

**REFLECTING ON YOUR EXPERIENCE**

Now that your internship is over, what is the next step? Reflection is a great place to start. 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. Review your journal and think back to your best and worst day. Maybe you learned what you want to do when you graduate. Maybe you learned what you do not want to do. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What were your goals before the internship? Did you accomplish them?
- What did you accomplish above and beyond your established goals? What did you fail to accomplish?
- What new skills, equipment, or office technology did you master?
- What was the most important thing you learned from this experience?
- How would you describe the corporate culture?
- What did you notice about different supervision styles?
- What did you learn about running a meeting?
- What did you observe about different styles of decision making?

The answers to these questions will help you describe your internship, your key responsibilities, and your accomplishments. These will all be helpful when writing your résumé and cover letters and will prepare you for discussing your experience during future interviews.