How to Nail Your First Internship

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As Millennials, we're starting to jump into the real world. We're graduating high school, seeking summer jobs, and full-time employment to build our resumes. Starting this process can be extremely scary and daunting. How do you get an internship if you don't have any work experience? What if you don't know what you want to study yet?

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These questions and others can cause lots of stress to our generation. Because of that common stress amongst millennials, today we're going to dive into how to nail your first internship. And those in top positions in a business are asking themselves if they should ever hire interns. You want them to say "yes."

Research and prep

The first step to nailing your first internship is to research different fields of interest and talk to people in different work and leadership positions. For example, you may want to go into business, but not yet know which aspect of business you want to dive into.

When starting your research, look up videos online

or read articles to understand different jobs.

This can be as simple as understanding the difference between marketing and sales, or finance and accounting. When doing this research, make a list of which seem to be somewhat interesting to you. Once you find an area or job that interests you, you're ready to pursue those positions.

Even if you don't have much or any work experience, people are always willing to help young adults seeking a job because they were once in your shoes. People are an amazing resource for you to use. You can try to connect with people via LinkedIn, through school clubs or other organizations, or even your personal network.

As you meet with these people in formal and casual environments, ask questions about the job and their experience in it. Let them know that you're interested in obtaining employment in that specific area, and ask if there's anyone else you could talk to about interviewing for that position.

If you're genuine and polite, odds are you'll be able to land a few interviews. Likewise, bringing positive energy will give you a great start to nail your first internship.

Interview

The interview process may seem like another daunting aspect when trying to obtain an internship. When preparing for the interview, prepare a few questions you would want to ask. For example, you can ask high-level questions about the industry and the company's plans to beat out competitors or reach yearly goals. Also, ask lower-level questions, like what you would be doing on a day-to-day basis, and other questions specifically about the position you're applying for.

Thoughtful and genuine questions will help you stand out more from other applicants, and will make it more likely that you get the internship.

Prepare just a handful, as you don’t want to be too pressing during the interview. Also, be sure to research the company, such as their competitors and company values. Then, be sure to name those values or competitors during the interview to show you’ve done your research.

The interview will also include some questions that they’ll ask you. For example, they may ask about why you’re interested in the job and what skills you bring to the table. Even though you may not have previous work experience, you still have strengths that you can bring up to give you a better shot at getting the intern job.

You can do strengths-finder tests online to see what you’re good at. Once you have that figured out, you can look for examples in schoolwork, extracurriculars, or other ways to show that you have those strengths and skills. Also, be sure to dress appropriately for the interview, and be warm and friendly. If you interview well, you’ll stand out even more.

As you apply good interviewing principles, you’ll be on your way to nailing your first internship before starting.

Ask questions

Once you’ve nailed the interview, you’ll have a real good shot at getting the position. As you interview for various positions, you’ll eventually get a position. Now that you’re in a real office doing real work, the best thing that you can do is to ask questions.

As an intern, you may seem intimidated by other employees. Even though they have more experience, most employees are willing to help you solve problems in your given tasks. If something doesn’t make sense or if you hear a concept you’ve never heard of, ask about it.

Internships are great for work experience and cash, but they’re also great growth opportunities. When I start any

internship, I mention that I’m going to ask a good amount of questions. This has a great response all the time, as people take it as a sign you want to learn and do good work.

Be resourceful

Being resourceful is another great tip to help you nail your first internship. Before you ask questions, see if you can solve the problem on your own. The company will likely have resources outside of Google or the internet to help you complete everything you need.

You may surprise yourself a few times and find that you can answer your own questions with the resources they’ve given you. Even watching youtube videos online can help you get to where you need to go.

However, if you’ve gone online and used other resources, you can take a step back and work through it yourself. Outline what the problem is, and why you can’t solve it. If you’ve taken paths to try to solve it, write those down as they may be beneficial later on.

When you ask for help, explain your thought process and why you can’t get around an obstacle.

This gives your mentor or manager an idea of how you think, and they can teach you ways to improve, as well as acknowledge what you’ve done right. This will help you get a better understanding of how to do the work and solve problems. Lessons learned can help you solve problems in the future, and help in other aspects of life as well.

Conclusion

Applying for an internship for the first time is really scary. However, as you prepare and research for the interview, you’ll set yourself apart to nail your first internship.

Once you have the position, be sure to ask genuine questions and be resourceful to solve problems on your own. As you apply these principles as an intern, you’ll see success in your work and personal overall growth.

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