

TURN YOUR INTERNSHIP INTO A FULL-TIME JOB

Many of the Fortune 500 companies eyed by students, such as consulting and financial services firms, rely heavily on interns to fill entering classes. While not all internships are such a fast track to permanent employment, following these tips will greatly increase your chances of getting an offer at any company.

HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Treat an internship like a real job: Don't show up late or not call in sick. It's not like a class which you can sleep through or arrive at late with no ramifications.

Your attitude should be, "I'll do whatever it takes." Sure, nobody wants to be stuck running errands or making copies, but if you can't do the little stuff how will they trust you with big stuff? "If you can't handle photocopying, why would we give you an editing job?" says Caye Serling, an associate producer at MSNBC who was offered a job after her internship at CNBC.

"It's just good common sense," says Jeanne Marinai-Belding, senior editor for recruiting and special projects at the San Jose Mercury News. "Do the best job you can on every [project] no matter how small. It's the quality we look for." And don't assume you know everything. You might be a star student but that doesn't mean you'll know what's what on the job. "The bottom line is, if you already knew how, you wouldn't need to intern—that's at least true in TV," says Serling.

HAVE A FOCUS

When given the option, many students think of an internship as a smorgasbord, and want to try a little of everything. But you can't do everything if you're only in job for a semester. Pick one or two things to focus on; you'll not only prove your commitment but also gain valuable, marketable skills.

TAKE THE INITIATIVE

If there is something you want to do, ask. It won't be handed to you on a silver platter. If you're not finding enough guidance, request a mentor or supervisor—someone you can shadow or work with directly. The Mercury News doesn't typically hire a lot of interns, but as one editor said candidly: "We offer when they prove themselves to be just as good and tenacious as our staff reporters."

SOCIALIZE/NETWORK

If you want to fit in as employee, fit in as an intern. "A lot of interns keep to themselves—do their homework and talk on phone—and don't get to know the staff," says Serling. Networking is important on a professional level, but interacting socially is equally important if you hope to be considered as a potential hire.

KEEP IN TOUCH

A lot of getting a job is timing. If there's not a job when your internship ends, there's not a job. But keep in touch with contacts at the company. If a spot opens up, chances are you'll be at the top of the list.

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