

Internship Guide

Introduction

There is no better way to fulfill the FBLA goal of facilitating the transition from school to work than participating in internships and other pre-professional opportunities! Internships are work experiences that facilitate your field of study or career interest and expose you to the business world. As an intern, you learn new skills, work with professionals, and contribute to the work function of your company. With this guide, you will gain valuable tips to assist you in the search for pre-professional opportunities.

Know What Opportunities Exist and Their Benefits

Before you begin your search, you want to understand what opportunities are available to you. Internships are long-term experiences in which you directly become part of the company's workforce and support its work function. Job shadowing is a short-term experience, around one or two days, in which you shadow a professional through daily activities and gain an insider's view of a career field. During the school year, you may opt to conduct a job shadowing on the weekend or a free day, but during summer or winter break it is best to search for an internship as you will have more time and companies are more likely to be looking for interns.

There are many benefits to pre-professional opportunities. The first and foremost benefit is that you will gain valuable work experience that puts you a step above others when applying for jobs. In addition, you'll have the opportunity to network with professionals, establishing contacts for letters of references and networking. Furthermore, you may also be able earn money, which can help pay for tuition and other expenses.

Build Your Professional Network

A professional profile can open up doors to new opportunities and connections, so start by creating a LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a free social-networking service that allows you to easily connect with other professionals. By creating and maintaining a LinkedIn profile, you'll be able to easily reach out to other professionals. Other great websites include Internships.com and Groovejob.com. In addition to maintaining professional profile, make sure you regularly update your resume with your education, experience, and skills. It is also important to have a strong cover letter that highlights the important parts of your resume. Remember to make sure that neither your resume nor your cover letter are too long, as hiring managers read through many applications every day.

Find an Internship

This may seem like the hardest part, but fortunately there are many resources out there to assist you in the process of finding an internship. Begin by visiting your school's career center. Here, teachers, administrators and counselors will help you search for internships and other opportunities, as well as proofread and edit your resume and cover letter as needed. Another great location to find opportunities are at local job fairs, where businesses looking for interns or employees will have booths where you can get more information. Look for ads about

job fairs in your local paper or Chamber of Commerce website, and be ready to attend. If you are still having trouble, then specialized websites such as Internships.com are great tools to utilize, as they can help you find available opportunities in your region. Without a doubt, the best way to land an internship is to network, network, network! Whether it be a friend, family member, or acquaintance, always talk with the people you know about openings they are aware of or people they know who are looking for interns.

How Members Can Contact Interns:

Dear _____,

I am a (grade) at (school) and I am very interested in pursuing (career interest). I was advised by (person) to contact you.

Your company has a reputation for excellence, and I am especially fascinated with your (company aspect). I would like to offer my service as an intern for your company. I maintain a (GPA), participate in the (organization related to career interest), and serve on the California State Leadership Team for Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), the largest student-run organization in the nation (or list other relevant experiences). I am confident I can be of great use to your company's work function. For more information about my education and experiences, please refer to the attached resume.

I am reachable by phone and email, but I will also follow up by next week.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,
(email signature)

Preparing for the Interview

Once you find an available internship, you will most likely be required to apply and interview. Acing the interview is key to securing an internship. Begin by researching the company prior to the interview, and learning more about their values and goals. Demonstrating knowledge of the company during interview will impress your interviewer. Make sure that you dress in appropriate business attire and sound professional and confident. Most importantly, however, be genuine and express your true feelings about what the internship would mean to you.

Enjoy the Internship

Make the most of your internship! Network with others, develop new skills, and ultimately be a reliable and useful intern. Once you complete your internship, be sure to evaluate your experience and stay in contact with the people you met.