

Getting an Internship - Two First Steps

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If you are a student seeking an internship, the first question you are probably asking yourself is "What would I most want to do this coming summer?" Instead, the question you should be asking yourself is "What job would I most want in 1-2 years when I come out of school?" If you ask that second question, then your action plan for the summer job search could be quite different and your results will be more positive and predictable. The reason is that you should be planning your internship with your end goal in mind – a good job where you can learn a lot, be successful, and enjoy. That job may take a year, two or even three years to get, but if you don't develop a plan to become a highly competitive candidate, you may not get there anytime soon.

Here are two important first steps in your internship search that will best position you to obtain that dream job when you finish school no matter what industry you are targeting.

Step 1: Identify the job(s) you would be really excited to land when you finish school and then develop an in-depth understanding of the profiles of people who currently have or have had that job in the recent past.

- Start by reaching out to recent graduates whom you know or who are former members of the clubs, teams, groups, etc. that you are affiliated with and also search your school's alumni database. While most folks spend hours on job search web sites and career centers for that ideal internship, you will win by speaking to people who have worked in those jobs and by researching their organizations.

Step 2: Try to answer the following questions:

- What experiences and key accomplishments did they have prior to getting the job? For example, if a successful candidate for a sports event marketing job is able to say that he/she planned and coordinate events while in school, then you should pursue internship opportunities that enable you to have hands-on involvement in events - whether or not they are sports related. (These could include working school reunions, state fairs, industry conferences, etc.) If you are seeking a job in finance after school and you learn that those who are in the job

have led a major initiative as part of their school's finance club, then you should work toward a similar goal while in school.

- Focus on the specifics of what they did and what impact they had. There is nothing wrong with applying right now for an internship in exactly the area where you want to work after school, but you should also be very focused on an internship (as well as extracurricular opportunities) that will give you a compelling story that will make your resume and interviews extremely competitive next year.
- For example, if you would ideally like to work in sports marketing or entertainment after school, pursue opportunities with the companies that spend money to promote their brands through sports leagues and media companies – ideally in a sales or marketing capacity.
- Also consider working at non-profit that is a key charitable partner of the company you are targeting. In either case, you may have the opportunity to work directly on projects that relate to your target firm and build relationships with individuals there.

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[How to Engage Potential Mentor](#)

 [Advice for people interviewing for I-Banking internships](#)

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