8 Tips for a Successful Internship

Learn the Organizational Culture
Watch, listen, ask questions, and implement what you learn about the organizational culture (both the spoken and unspoken codes of conduct, behavior, and work style).

Set Internship Goals
Meet with your supervisor to find out their expectations of what you will accomplish during the internship. Set realistic and attainable goals for yourself for what you would like to learn during the internship, and discuss your interests with your supervisor. Ask if there are ways to get involved in areas of interest that may not be a direct part of your internship.

Be Positive, Enthusiastic, and Ready to Work Hard
Approach everything with enthusiasm and build your reputation as someone who has a “can-do” attitude—work hard, do what needs to be done, and seek out ways to take on extra projects or be helpful to those around you.

Ask a Lot of Questions
Set up meetings with supervisors, executives, and other employees to find out more about what they do and what they have learned in this job, so you can learn more about the company and your career field. Don’t be afraid to ask for clarification on projects and assignments.

Take Your Assignments and Deadlines Seriously
Listen carefully to instructions and ask questions so you can turn in high-quality work. If you have slow days, be proactive and seek out new projects and tasks. Above all, manage your time wisely. If you are unsure of the timeline or a deadline for an assignment, ask! If you are unable to meet a deadline, let your supervisor know as soon as possible so that they are not surprised by a late project.

Find a Mentor
Make an effort to meet everyone that you work for and work with, and start building positive relationships with your colleagues, including your fellow interns. Seek out someone who is willing to take an interest in your career development and success, and who can share with you their knowledge, perspectives, and insights on career pathways, job-hunting, and other aspects of the job search. Plan to develop this relationship and keep in contact with this person even after you leave your internship.

Be Flexible
Accept a variety of tasks and assignments, and adapt to changes in your internship as they happen.

Be Self-Reflective
Take some time to assess what you have learned, how you have grown, and whether you have met your goals. Consider keeping a journal or private blog throughout the internship and regularly reflect on your experience. With this record, you can review how your thoughts and feelings about the experience changed and developed over the course of the internship.
Internship Action Plan

Over the course of your internship, use this action plan as a guide and a reflection tool.

Goals
List 3 goals for your internship this summer:


Networking
List 3 of your new connections and the best piece of advice they shared with you:


Accomplishments
List 3 of your proudest accomplishments from your internship:


Areas for Growth and Improvement
List 3 areas where you feel you struggled during your internship and ways in which you can continue to grow and improve in those areas before you begin working full-time:


