

Five steps to a successful internship

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6 Dec 2022

Internships are a not only a way of providing real-life exposure for scholars and graduates looking to enter the job market, but also a viable avenue to unearth bright minds, new skills and future talent.



Image: Supplied

Internships play an important role in the shaping of a young career allowing young people to gain insights into a variety of working environments. In a post-Covid workplace where employees continue to work primarily from home, or in a hybrid arrangement, the challenge for both interns and employers alike is to navigate these relationships from behind a screen and keyboard - something rather unfamiliar.

Here are five considerations when undertaking an internship:

1. Broaden your expectations – When you arrive at a new job, at any level, it's unlikely that you'll immediately find deep satisfaction and love for what you do. When starting out in your career path, you'll be drawn into many activities that you don't particularly enjoy or derive much pleasure from. An internship is something that you'll have to persist at to eventually gain mastery in your career and gain ultimate satisfaction.



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2. Insist on a full induction – In some instances, interns are added to a permanent team when there is an oversupply of work and under-supply of resources. The result is an 'all-hands-on-deck' approach whereby formal inductions and onboarding might be overlooked in favour of getting the job done. However, it is vital for any new entrant to get a full sense of a business, its background, vision and reason for being, prior (or alongside) to rolling up their sleeves. Gaining a view on

the business you've joined is really important to understand where your work fits in and how you can make a difference in the business.

3. Leave the role better off than when you joined – The best interns are those who arrive with an immediate willingness to learn and a high level of energy and enthusiasm. Displaying a sense of professionalism is key, but also the desire to leave whomever and whatever they work with and on, better off.

4. Be bold enough to ask – Although it might be nerve-racking, interns must demonstrate the boldness to ask if they're not sure of the task or situation. Many interns might be scared to ask questions and ultimately, it only leads to damage to both them and the task or programme they might be working on.



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5. Cherish your mentor – A mentorship or internship programme is only successful when mentors are committed to the process and bring passion to the responsibility. It's important to understand that internships take an immense amount of time and dedication from team members who are tasked with teaching and guiding their intern.

Selection is really key for employers when it comes to a successful internship. Selecting an intern candidate that is going to naturally fit in from the beginning is a game changer. Whether it's from a personality, culture or approach perspective, it makes the whole process far easier for everybody, the intern included.

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