

## Making the Most of Your Internship

To get the most out of your experience, you must start planning in advance. The following ten suggestions can help you maximize your own internship experience:

1. **Chart your course:** Before starting an internship, create a checklist. List the skills you hope to learn, people you want to meet, types of projects you'd like to work on, ideas you have about the company, etc. As the internship progresses, check off items on the list to ensure that you're making the most of your experience.
2. **Expect Some Busywork:** All internships (and most jobs for that matter) involve some menial tasks like photocopying, faxing, and filing. While your internship will hopefully involve substantive work beyond busywork, don't expect to be running the show. No one likes an intern with unrealistic expectations or delusions of grandeur.
3. **Use Your "Intern-al Access":** Because interns tend to be viewed by employees as young, energetic visitors, they often have access to meetings and areas of the company that young employees don't. Make the most of this access to learn about the inner workings of the company and the people who work there.
4. **Bond with Your Fellow Interns:** Be sure to meet and share ideas with other interns at your company—even ones who are not in your particular department. Your fellow interns can be a powerful source of information about the company, letting you know, for example, which departments are hot and which are not.
5. **Say Hello to Higher-Ups:** When passing executives in the hallway, don't hesitate to introduce yourself and chat with them about the company. Most interns are too intimidated to say hello to higher-ups, so by taking initiative, you'll stand out as motivated and engaged.
6. **Volunteer for Extra Assignments:** During slow periods, be sure to track down your supervisor and volunteer for extra assignments—something few interns bother to do. The more initiative and enthusiasm you show, the more responsible you'll get.
7. **Participate in Activities:** If your company offers interns access to field trips, brown bag luncheons with executives, barbecues, tickets to sporting events, or other traditional internship activities, by all means participate. Some interns' most memorable and rewarding experiences occur outside the direct scope of employment.
8. **Be Nice to Everyone:** Many interns do not realize that gaining the respect of assistants, mailroom workers, and other support staff can be as important as winning appreciation of executives. When it comes time to be considered for a full-time position, how you treat support staff can make the difference in whether you get the job offer.
9. **Get a Recommendation:** While your work is still fresh in the minds of your supervisor, make sure to ask him or her for a detailed letter of recommendation. Even if you have no immediate need for a recommendation, it is useful to have already secured one when you later search for a job or apply to graduate school.
10. **Stay in Touch:** After your internship ends, keep in touch with co-workers with periodic calls or emails. This is an easy way to get company updates and keep your name fresh in the minds of employees when hiring decisions are made.

Taken from 10<sup>th</sup> Edition *The Internship Bible* (Slightly Modified)