

Internship - A Pathway to Job Offer

Internship, a coursework that all graduate students participate in during their degree program, can be critical in defining their career path after graduation. The aim of an internship program is to expose you to the realities of your chosen industry and organisation and help you outline your career goals. An internship not only prepares you for jobs after graduation, it can also lead to a job offer or a pre-placement interview offer with the organisation where you complete your internship.

The network of professionals and hiring decision makers in the company assess your performance while you intern with them, and if they like your performance and find you suited to their company culture, the company may offer you a job or a pre-placement interview offer. It is a well-known fact that most companies rely on interns for a lot of tasks to be completed. In the process, these interns are constantly reviewed to fill up a permanent position. So it is safe to say that your summer internship is equivalent to many weeks long job interview!

Here are some ways by which you can increase your chances of converting your internship training into a job offer:

1. **Choose the right sector and company:** Find the right industry and company that will provide you with the work experience you need to meet your career goals ahead. This is important because if you feel aligned with the organisation's nature of work and if it is something that interests you, you will find the right motivation to work and make a good impression at the end of the internship. Research sectors, companies, and meet people to understand what you want to do in your career ahead.
2. **Understand your role - work hard:** You will be assigned a project when you start your internship. Routinely discuss the progress of your work with your project manager and don't hesitate to ask for help when needed. It is a learning experience for you and your manager/mentor will appreciate your keenness towards reaching the best result. You will be required to create a report for your college submission and have it approved the company. Your hard work of six to eight weeks will also be showcased in form of a presentation to your team and department, and could be attended by other senior members of the company too. Make sure your work reflects you in the best light and leaves a favourable impression on senior management.
3. **Add value:** Look beyond the primary assignment assigned to you. Volunteer to help in other projects, as this will reflect your keenness towards the work to your project manager and other decision makers. It will also allow you to pick up more skills that are important for employees of that organisation, making you a valuable resource in the future.
4. **Accept feedback:** You will be more effective in completing your internship project and fitting in well in the company if you understand clearly what your manager and the company expect from you. Regular feedback from your project manager will ensure that you are on track with your work and the areas of improvement you need to work on to make an impact.
5. **Network with colleagues and seniors:** Internship allows you to make contacts and expand your professional network in your area of interest. Take the initiative to learn more about the people you are working with - your project guide, team members, and also employees in other departments. This establishes your credibility with those you work with and helps build a rapport with the organisation. An important aspect of converting summer training into a full-time job is to show the company that you can be part of a group. Make sure to attend and participate in company-organised events or parties for interns, as these are good networking opportunities.
6. **Dress like an employee, not an intern:** You must **dress for the job you want** rather than for the job you are in! Dress and behave such that people around know that you mean business. You may not like it, but the fact is that the way people around you behave with you depends a lot on the way you dress - so out with the relaxed, casual jeans and tee shirt look! Invest in smart, formal wear and some basic grooming - a neat hairstyle, every day.