

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR INTERNSHIP

FINDING THE **RIGHT** FIT

1. Before you apply, you need to determine where you want to be. The answer can be as broad as an entire industry, or as specific as a position in a particular company.

So, where do you want to be?

2. Keep this answer in mind when you research your prospective company to ensure it is aligned with your own future aspirations.

What are some of yours?

3. Don't only look at one company. Do enough research before you decide on where you'd like to do your internship.

Name three prospective companies that might be right for you:

4. Familiarise yourself with the company's website beforehand so that you're equipped with knowledge and confidence when you start your internship.

THE **BIG** ADJUSTMENT

Internships can be quite an adjustment for young, first-time interns with limited or no work experience. As a millennial professional, some of the following can be tough.

Which of these do you think you might struggle with the most?

You may have to break your **social media** addiction by limiting your internet leisure time to your breaks.

If you're going to drink and party in the week, you'd best have a **miracle hangover cure**. If not, confine it to the weekends.

When socialising and speaking about yourself, keep the **intimate** details to a minimum.

Keep **emoticons** out of your e-mails and professional work.

Don't curse.

Of course, every workspace is different, and some may be more informal than others. As a rule-of-thumb, when starting out, err on the side of **formal** – because you can't really err on the side of formal.

REMEMBER THIS IS A STEPPING **STONE**

Internships are seldom glamorous. They may include menial tasks like **coffee runs** or filing. It's also easy to become defeatist about your pay, which may well range from minimal to nothing. Rather than giving in to **boredom** and **frustration**, keep in mind where this is taking you and how it will propel your aspirations forward.

When your **end-goal** is clear in your mind, you will find the patience and grace to handle the more **mundane** parts of your internship. That being said, you should never allow yourself to be **exploited**. If you feel that you are being taken advantage of, either stand your ground and say something, or leave.

Here are some forward-looking tips to keep progressing as an intern:

FORWARD-LOOKING TIPS:

- Think about what you want to gain from the internship.

Make a list of your top five goals and expectations:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- Dress and present yourself well, as this shows ambition and professionalism. Know the dress code and make it work for you.

Start a shopping list of sleek, professional clothing items that would make you feel confident:

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FORWARD-LOOKING TIPS:

- While you may feel a bit intimidated, you no doubt have something new to add to the group. Offer your perspective and give your input.

What are some of your ideas?

- Compile a portfolio of the work you're doing, including details of your performance, and the kinds of tasks and responsibilities assigned to you. This will be useful when applying for permanent work.

What are some of your current tasks?

ASK, OBSERVE, AND VOLUNTEER

Ask every question. Nobody will find this odd. Everyone knows that you're new and inexperienced. They expect you to ask questions.

Observe the processes that are **new** to you (which will probably be most of them) and take notes. Soak up the company culture and notice the different functions within the team.

Volunteer to do tasks that interest or **challenge** you.

NETWORK

Form working relationships with people in **different positions**, fields, and roles. Not only will this expand your network of professional connections, but you might also discover that you like **another job** more than you thought. Get to know your peers as well as your managers, and make a lasting impression across all levels.

Add your new connections on **LinkedIn** so you can keep in touch and build on this network in your future employment endeavours. Consider finding a **mentor** (someone in the company whom you respect) and ask them about their experience and whether they have any wisdom to impart.

Start listing your new professional connections:

Name	Cell number	Email address

For more information on internships, you can read this blog post: [Is an Internship the New Entry-Level Job?](#) from [Oxbridge Academy](#).