

From Summer Job To Just Plain Job: How To Turn Your Internship Into A Promising Career



You've fetched coffee, made copies and done all the typing and filing for an entire department. Congrats! You've finally finished your summer internship! In many ways, just going back to school would be a wonderful relief, but you might be looking for more.

You took this internship as a stepping stone in your career. If you want to take the next step, though, you'll need to transition it into an actual job. That can be an intimidating process.

Here's the the good news: You've made it through the door. Most companies prefer to hire and promote from within. They don't want to go through the interview process again any more than you do.

The bad news, though, is that doesn't make it automatic. If you're expecting the company to do the work of finding a place for you, you're going to be disappointed. That said, it's not impossible. It just takes the right combination of accomplishment, luck and know-how to get the position you've been dreaming about.

If you're struggling with planning how to convert your internship into a full-time position, remember these five pointers!

1.) Ask for a specific position

One of the biggest mistakes job-seekers generally make is asking the broad question "Are you hiring?" The answer may be yes, but it's unlikely – especially at large firms – that anyone knows about every possible position. For external applicants, doing the legwork to track down potential openings is tricky. That's one of the advantages of the internship.

Keep an ear to the ground for new projects, new teams or new promotions. Those are places where there are likely to be new positions opening. Your immediate supervisor may not be in a position to make a hiring decision, but they can

probably put you in touch with the person who is. A recommendation from someone within the company will go a long way toward putting you in that office.

2.) Time your ask

The last day of your internship is not the right time to have the first conversation about your future with the firm. Timing like that makes you seem like a procrastinator. You're giving the impression that you put off thinking about your future until the last possible minute. This is not a trait companies want in their employees.

Ideally, you'll want to ask about a new position after a big win. If you've just finished a major project, you've got the limelight, but only for a brief window. It doesn't have to be one of those cinematic, vital to the life of the company projects, but it should be a significant success that shows your skills and determination.

When you reference this accomplishment, always do so with a humble-brag. Ask your immediate supervisor if the task was done to their satisfaction. Getting them in the headspace of singing your praises will make them much more likely to recommend you for another position.

3.) Be everywhere

Part of the benefit of an internship is the chance to see the inner workings of a company. Yes, you're gaining experience doing a specific set of tasks, but you're also learning about different aspects of a business in your field. You don't do that by keeping your head down and doing the work in front of you.

Instead, take every opportunity to visit and work with other departments and people. You never know who you might impress! The more people in the company who know your name, the more likely it is you'll get to stay.

4.) Become indispensable

Lack of experience is typically seen as a liability by employers, but you can turn it into an asset through your internship work. That you don't have any experience provides you with tremendous flexibility in how you tackle tasks. Find some piece of technology, new practice or set of procedures you can master. This means taking every training opportunity and looking over the shoulder of as many folks as possible. Your objective is to become an expert at the company in something.

The truth is, it doesn't matter what. If you're the only one in the department who knows how to run the copier, that's a strong argument for keeping you on. Running the copier may not be your dream job, but it can get you in the door.

5.) Be professional

The best attribute you can display in your internship is follow-through. That means showing up on time every day, dressed like you're there to work, and taking on every task — no matter how menial — with enthusiasm and dedication. Demonstrate to your employer that you're the kind of person they want to hire.

The summer internship can be a great start to a great career, but — like every opportunity — you get out of it what you put into it. With a lot of work and a little luck, it can be the first in a series of career successes.

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