

How Will an Internship Help You Reach Your Goals?

by Linda Ray, Demand Media



Gain relevant on-the-job training from an internship.

Internships can provide a great transition between the education process and a career. There is a tradeoff involved with internship positions, however. On the one hand, many internships are unpaid. On the other hand, you get an apprentice-level experience not typically available. By bridging the gap between learning and finding a career, internships can speed up the process of moving you toward your career goals.

Choosing a Career

An internship allows you to try out a career in a low-stakes situation, helping you to make more informed decisions on what you want to do with your life. For example, after attending culinary school, you are convinced that being a chef is your dream job. After graduating, you land a job as a chef, only to find out that you can't stand it. This scenario is quite common among new graduates, because on-the-job experience is quite different from classroom experience. An internship fills the gap that formal education does not address and allows you to try a career before making major commitments.

Experience

New graduates face a common and frustrating problem: You need relevant experience to get a job, but you need the job to get that experience. Internships address this problem. Businesses may be willing to hire an inexperienced intern for a short-term period and at low or no pay. They would be less willing to take a chance on an inexperienced employee in a full-time paid position. Internships allow you to gain experience by watching, learning and participating in the work. This experience can help you land a permanent position, perhaps even at the same company.

Networking

Networking is one of the primary benefits of internships. People you meet during an internship can later become mentors, sources of job opportunities and references. They may help you develop skills and offer moral support in your early career. Building a strong network of contacts is reason enough to do an internship.

Resume

Your resume is a record of your accomplishments, talents and experience. If you don't have what the employer wants, you won't get hired. An internship is a proven way to build up your resume. Potential employers will focus on the skills and experience you gained during an internship, as well as the professionals you list as references. Work samples you gained through an internship will also be valuable when you seek a job.

<http://work.chron.com/internship-reach-goals-9195.html>