

An internship is a smart career move

By **Kim Thompson** on May 5, 2016 at 9:14 AM



Accepting an **internship** can⁰ be a smart career move regardless if you are a freshman or a senior preparing for future graduation. What you want to do in life will be a point of discussion throughout your entire college experience and that's why it is important to plan on how you will get the experience in a career field

that interests you.

Waiting until you graduate to gain work experience can make you somewhat less competitive in the job market knowing that employers are naturally drawn to candidates who have work experience. **Lauren Berger, CEO of Intern Queen, Inc.** describes how internships helped her develop a broad view of different jobs and shares her advice on five key benefits that internships provide. She successfully landed 15 internships and the experience helped set the foundation for some great career habits that will follow you throughout the future.

Here are the five benefits that apply to both paid and unpaid internships:

- **Hands-on education** – the power of having hands-on experience is difficult to dismiss. No matter how hard you have studied there is nothing like working in an actual work environment watching how problems are solved and observing how management operates. It is important to gather as much hands-on experience as possible before you graduate.
- **Networking** – this is a lifelong area because your career opportunities are largely based on who you know and who knows you. As an intern, your job is to meet people. The managers and colleagues you meet during this time can serve as future contacts and help you with job leads. It's important to keep in mind that observation is a two-way street and your future boss could be observing you as well. How you perform during your internship gives employers a glimpse of your

future behavior as a possible employee.

- **Resume building** – an internship adds to your resume and to an employer it spells “experience” which makes you a stronger candidate once you enter the job market. The achievements reached during your internship will strengthen your resume accomplishments and give you results to talk about when interviewing. Work experience gained from an internship takes you out of the classroom and into a real business environment giving you a more in-depth understanding of what employers look for in candidates.

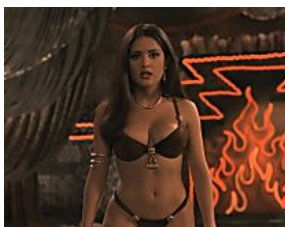
- **References** – working hard says a lot about you, but if those around you can’t validate your experience then your hard work can suffer. Making good impressions and developing professional perceptions are critical steps in your career. It’s important that you learn to develop good rapport with decision makers who can speak highly of your contributions and work style.

- **Pursuit or elimination** – I like the way Lauren describes this area and agree with her that too many students tend to put pressure on themselves by worrying about whether their internship experience will be successful. All **internships are beneficial** in more ways than one by confirming if you are on the right path or need to go in a different direction. Keep in mind that experience is valuable and can never be taken away from you. Experience adds to your background when writing your resume and helps shape your knowledge of what direction you want to pursue.

There is stiff competition in landing a job, and it pays to focus your time and energy on gathering work experience and building relationships while you are in school.

How has your internship affected your career choice? Would you say that an internship was worth the time and effort?

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