

Instructions on How to Land an Internship (or just some advice)

Here is some helpful advice that I discovered myself and found most helpful.
Here is a general overview of the steps; each step is explained further later on.

Steps:

1. Be at least 14 years old
2. Decide on what your interest is in (medical field, technology, etc.) and stand out
3. Search and find a suitable internships
4. Apply
5. Interview
6. Decide on whether to accept or deny
7. Get use to a working lifestyle
8. Impress & Hold on

Step #1:

Be at least 14 years old. Pretty self-explanatory. The reason being is that you need your high school transcript to show as proof of your knowledge/abilities. So if you are under 14, make sure to keep those grades and extracurriculars up, and most importantly, discover an interest. Most successful students land their internships in junior year of high school, typically because of a solid GPA or firmly established interests. Try to keep a consistent GPA, and improvement is key, especially if you know you're going to be competing with college students, you want to stand out. I got mine as a sophomore, because of my unique application, which I will get into further at step 4. All the stuff that makes a student stand out, I will go more in-depth in the next step.

Step #2:

Know what you want to do for the rest of your life. Sounds pretty extreme, but if you have a semi-solid idea, then it's good enough. Internships are meant for college students; they know their major, which is pretty much what their job is going to be related to. So, as a high school student, you should make sure you have a sense of the path you're going down. This is so that you don't end up waking up every morning forcing yourself to go to work, and trust me, if you don't like your job, every minute that passes by will feel like an eternity. Remember, you love your job and it is a privilege to be employed in this economic time! So with that mindset, make sure you aren't forcing yourself to do something you don't like. Now with that said, how does one even decide what they like? Well, the best way to decide on what you'll probably enjoy doing is by simply taking a look at your strongest subject along with your favorite hobby. For example, I'm great in math, it's my strongest subject and I love the fact that it's just conceptual; along with my hobby, I like playing around with computers (making music, playing games, etc.), all that kind of stuff makes me wonder, how do people engineer these kinds of things? So with that thought, an internship that I would love doing would be related to technology. That passion/interest may vary after a while of experience in the industry, but you set a foundation on which you can build off of, so I might choose a specific field of interest within technology, like software engineering, etc. So with that being said, it is crucial that you be able to stand out. What I mean by this is that you need to be able to show your employer what makes you different and better than the rest of the applicants. From this point on, awards are pretty much the name of the

game, because a GPA of 3.5 in high school just won't cut when there are applicants who already graduated and are attending a university (the only exception is if you're an all A student, and I mean all A's). So make sure you get awards that relate to your field of interest, but any award you get should be added to your resume. For example, I had to go the extra mile and get certified in the technical field (which I won't go further into) in order for me to stand out, and I believe that to be the key reason why I got in the first place, other than the fact that I was serious and had a 4.0. The sooner you get started building your future, the better off you'll be.

Step #3:

Once you set a solid foundation on your interest which you think you can build on, feel like you can prove your worth, and forged a strong academic record, it's time to look for an internship (the hardest step in the process). Location and work hours is key when looking for an internship, especially if you're a high school student, because you don't have that much flexibility when school is in session, and in summer, it would be very beneficial to have your license. So make sure you find the closest one that accommodates you and doesn't provide that many inconveniences. So in looking for an internship, I would suggest the following websites: <http://sfbay.craigslist.org/>, www.usajobs.gov. These are the two legit ones that I highly recommend. Usajobs is government, but they have great student internship programs called STEP, so just search that and you'll get a list of the closest ones. They have great paid opportunities in the health care industry, homeland security, etc. So they got great stuff that hits all areas of interest, the only problem with them is the location (most annoying factor). Government jobs are always large city based, so you're pretty much looking at Oakland, SF area stuff, which would make a ridiculously inconvenient commute, so that would be a major factor in not choosing one of their internships. Craigslist on the other hand, lists internships that most start-up companies post, so those employers are usually open minded about who they employ, but as always, competition is fierce; they usually select the most intelligent applicant with the most freedom (the more hours, the more better), aka the college grad. So make sure, the minimum requirements for applying don't say, "Must be undergraduate pursuing bachelors degree". But here are some tips on how to successfully search on craigslist: keywords are key (include 'high school' in the search box so you get pretty decent results), make sure to click the internship or non-profit radio button, and select a decent distance in which you are committed to make the commute. And always check out Craigslist once every week for new job postings. But the absolute, without a doubt best way to find an internship is to talk with your school counselor and visit the career center. Remember, those places are designed specifically for high school students interested in volunteering or getting an internship. They know everything about employment in your local community, so don't be afraid to ask. Craigslist and usajobs, is just for those who want to be unique, but I would suggest talking with the counselor first before searching online. There are many unknown opportunities you can find within walking distance of your high school. Your next reliable source on finding an internship is your parents. Don't be afraid to tell them about your interests, you'll be telling them when you're 19 years old anyways so the earlier the better. They can help you by talking with family friends who know other people who know other people, etc. And if you get lucky, you'll find one without the hassle of online searching. I used craigslist to find my first internship, and used a family friend to find the other.

Step #4:

Your resume and cover-letter must be the best that they can possibly be. Ask your parents about how to write one. Just keep a couple things in mind when applying. Make sure to follow all instructions. Some jobs require extra forms to be filled out, and some require that you fax over transcripts. If your employer wants you to email them your resume and cover letter, which they

probably will (since it's the 21st century), use a professional email address. It's really not that hard to make a professional address, just use your real name. Using stupid email addresses like ilikecheese@yahoo.com or something like that just shows how little you care about your job. Employers look at stuff like that and it shows a lot about your personality especially if you have something ridiculous (sexual innuendo, etc). I'm not going to show you my resume, but some key things that they want to see are what you think makes you qualified, nice big words (self-motivated, expertise in..., accomplished, outgoing), and a list of all your awards and extra-curriculars. And make sure to include any professional courses you take outside of school (at community college, summer courses, etc.). Expect a reply within a week or so, and if you haven't got a response within 2 weeks after the ending period of the applying date, then resend or give them a call.

Step #5:

If you made it this far in the process of getting an internship, congratulations! You now have a chance of actually landing the job. This is your time to shine and make an impression. The interview is set up through email, so make sure to keep strong communication skills and do it in a professional manner. If the interview is physical, then dress nicely, always take initiative (be the first to extend your hand in a handshake), be extremely polite, and be yourself (speak from your mind and please don't be awkward). If the interview is through telephone (which mine was), make sure to stay relaxed, have a strong signal connection (just give them the number of your landline to be safe), stay engaging (ask if there's anything else they would like to know after question period is over) and last of all, make sure there aren't any background noises. Some helpful advice: research the company you applied for, because out of all the questions they ask about (your work ethics, personality) it is guaranteed they will ask something like, "Well, do you even know what we do?" Once the interview is done, remain polite (be the last to say goodbye and the first to say thank you), and follow up with an email saying how much it was a privilege and a general thank you on the patience and time they took out of their day to see you.

Step #6:

If they want you, accept.

Step #7:

This is my favorite part of an internship. The transition from student to part-time student, part-time intern is an experience of a lifetime. Just look at your internship as a period to relax and learn the stuff you actually want to learn. Make sure to keep strong communication skills, and get in the habit of checking every email account you own; luckily for me, I was given a separate outlook account for work. Get use to all the things you'll be doing everyday. You will most likely be given an automaton/clerk kind of assignment, but when your duty starts to change, make sure you know what you're doing and take time to learn stuff at home if you have to. But always know that your job during school is to be a student; school comes first before internship, so if you have any projects/assignments that take time, don't be afraid to call in and let them know you can't come in on that day.

Step #8:

Just remain yourself throughout your entire time at work. They selected you because of your personality, so just stay the same way you were when being interviewed. It is important that you always ask what else you can do when finished with the current task. And last of all, don't be afraid to get

personal (ask how your manager's day went), just know when it's the appropriate time. Do a thorough job on all the work given to you, and keep a positive attitude in the work environment (leave all personal issues behind when walking into your work place).

So I hope the advice I gave was helpful, and for more information on that whole process, contact your counselor, parents, older siblings, or college board (<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/high-school/8382.html>). Thanks for reading!