

10 strategies for securing a summer internship

Posted February 07, 2017 by [Matt Krumie](#)

Remember what your teachers and professors constantly said, from kindergarten through college? There are no bad questions.

The same goes for internships. There are no bad internships. Whether it's at a small company, large company, start up, non-profit, public or private company, government agency (the list goes on), there is tremendous value in an internship.

In fact, [there are even hidden benefits of internships that go bad](#).

But obtaining an internship takes hard work, planning and preparation. And to [obtain an internship this summer](#), college students and recent college grads need to start the process now.

"The internship cycle is a moving target and seems to be starting earlier and earlier," says [Kathleen Powell](#), Associate Vice President for Career Development for [The College of William & Mary](#) in Williamsburg, Virginia, and President of the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#). "In fact, college career centers work with many employers who are looking to fill internships in the fall semester. But don't let that dissuade you, start the process now."

So what does one have to do to land an internship this summer? Follow these tips and strategies for success:

1. Find the right fit for your goals: Finding the right internship is about fit, says Powell. It doesn't matter if the [internship is with a large employer or a small employer](#). "It truly is about the skills you'll use and develop within the experience," says Powell. "Yes, a large employer will bring brand recognition, but if your capacity within the internship is limited, you may opt for a more robust experience at a smaller organization." Perform your due diligence first: Know what you want, what you can offer and what skills you're trying to develop and that will lead to the right internship for you.

"We recommend that you search both small and large company opportunities," says [Stephen Patchin](#), director of Career Services at [Michigan Technological University](#), a State University located in Houghton, on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. "We often find the large companies do a majority of their summer hiring the previous fall and are back-filling now for positions that went unfilled or were declined late in the process. Small companies often tend to be more last-minute in their hiring, basing it more on volume of work. This often leads to openings later in spring semester."

2. Think outside the box: Students should think outside the box, especially if larger organizations have already filled their internship slots, says [Rob DiCarlo](#), Associate Director for Internship Opportunities at the [State University of New York at Geneseo](#). Studying accounting? Contact area non-profits or government organizations instead of [focusing on the Big 4 firms](#). If the Metropolitan Museum of Art internship deadline has passed, research smaller organizations like local historical societies whose art collections would be smaller. Research organizations like the United Way or local chamber of commerce to find organizations of interest. "Then contact directly by phone to see if they would be receptive to hosting an intern," says DiCarlo. "Applying to actual internship programs is fine, but recognize that the competition might be fierce."

3. Look beyond specific titles: As Head of Advisor Strategy and Development at [Merrill Lynch](#), Cheri Lytle works closely with Merrill Lynch's internship programs. "When looking to find an internship, don't limit yourself to only opportunities that seem like a match for your specific background," says Lytle. "You might think that most companies require you to have relevant past experiences or certain technical skills to land an internship with them, but that's not always the case."

For example, if you're a psychology major, look for opportunities with employers looking for interns with strong analytical, communication, and interpersonal skills, among other soft skills.

"The purpose of an internship is to explore your interests, expand your capabilities and learn how to become a successful team member," says Lytle. "In my role, I focus on bringing interns and new financial advisors into Merrill Lynch, and for us, as long as a candidate has the interest and right attributes, we can provide them with both the soft and technical skills needed to succeed."

4. Be open to a wide variety of industries: Work in IT? The sky is the limit – literally. Every single industry in the world relies on IT professionals. So if you want to work in health care, manufacturing, finance, hospitality, health care, engineering, science, education, and so on, there are [employers looking for specific skill sets to fill internships](#). The same can be said for sales and marketing professionals, or anyone with a business, economics, communications, or [liberal arts background](#), among many others. An internship provides a chance to get started in an industry of interest, but if it doesn't work out, keep in mind the skills learned in other industries are just as valuable, and can [transfer to other industries](#) once starting your career.

5. Look for companies with dedicated internship programs: Large companies with dedicated internship programs are committed to developing future full-time hires, says Lytle. Being a part of company's internship program also allows interns to network and connect with others who are part of the same "class" of interns. This helps build professional relationships within one's industry.

"Internship programs typically have great training and can teach you a lot about what it's like to be a full-time team member," says Lytle. "Ultimately, it can be the best way to decide if the company or role is the right fit for you and if you'll be happy moving forward."

For example, the Merrill Lynch internship programs look to ensure interns are getting hands-on experience and can make an informed choice about the right path for themselves.

"The program is a great way for us to identify new talent and for recent graduates to mutually evaluate us," says Lytle.

6. Search for an internship with an open mind: [Sharlys Leszczuk](#) is an Assistant Account Executive at New York City-based [Feintuch Communications](#), an award-winning strategic relations firm. She held internships for three years before starting her career in public relations. She started in-house at The Fresh Air Fund, a not-for-profit that provides free summer experiences to New York City children and then spent a full year at Ketchum, the fourth-largest PR firm in the world.

"An internship is a time to explore career options, says Leszczuk. "If you've held internship positions in the past, try something new in your field. This diversity gave me a better depiction of the PR world and a good idea as to what I wanted to do once I graduated."

But don't wait – start the process now.

"Although you may be stressing out about upcoming midterms or a heavy course load, waiting to apply for summer opportunities will make it much harder to find an internship," says Leszczuk. "Also, this is reflective of your professionalism when you are applying. Employers who receive internship applications from students at the last possible minute might question your dedication to your career or your ability to manage a busy schedule."

7. Attend campus career fairs: On February 22, Michigan Tech will host a spring career fair. Of the 210 employers attending, 143 are looking for summer interns. Attending campus career fairs is a great way to meet face-to-face with employers. Most campuses host career fairs throughout the school year, take advantage of these opportunities.

"Do your homework before the career fair to get background information on the company and their openings, and approach them at the career fair," says Patchin.

[Learn how to get the most out of a campus career fair.](#)

8. Utilize your campus career center: The professionals at campus career centers are well-connected, and have access to internship opportunities throughout the country – and world, points out Powell. They are connected to alumni and employers, and may know of internship opportunities based on those relationships. They can also help you connect with alumni for [informational interviews](#), and for resume writing and cover letter assistance. They can also assist with interviewing prep, and other aspects of the job search that will serve you well as you apply for internships and/or your first job after college.

"Take the opportunity to sit down with a career advisor to walk through the process of landing an internship, review the resources available and start applying," says Powell.

[Learn how to get the most out of your campus career center.](#)

9. Consider creating an internship opportunity: Many small employers may not have the resources to develop an internship program, or even commit to working with an intern, but it doesn't mean they wouldn't want to bring on an intern, especially someone who can provide value. Want to work in social media? Find a local business that would benefit from your services and skills. Want to work in sales?

Find an employer looking for help all elements of the sales cycle. Work in marketing? Offer to help create email marketing campaigns, or to develop marketing plans. The possibilities are endless, but you have to create a real business case, and value proposition to show how you can help this business.

[Learn about the benefits of an internship at a small company.](#)

If you do create an internship, be sure to work with your campus career center, or professors within your department so they can approve potential college credit for those still in school, or needing to complete an internship to graduate.

“Students do create opportunities that lead to an internship,” says Powell. “Be sure to prove the value you’ll bring to an organization and be prepared to make a case of why the employers should consider or hire you.”

10. Utilize CollegeRecruiter.com: College Recruiter is connected to many small and large employers who are searching for interns.

[Search thousands of job openings](#), internship opportunities and [register for job alerts](#). To help build your job search skills, stay connected to College Recruiter by [visiting our blog](#), and connecting with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#).

And finally, consider these additional strategies from Patchin:

- Reach out to alumni [through your alumni association](#).
- [Notify professors that you are looking for an internship](#). “They are regularly contacted by corporate recruiters and former students now working in industry for recommendations on current students who might be the best fit for their jobs and internships,” points out Patchin.
- [Tell your parents to notify their friends in industry](#) that you are looking for an internship and make sure they have a copy of your resume, in case someone asks for a copy.
- [Network with your friends on campus](#) who have parents in industries of interest or those in their own corporate network that you can reach out to.

[There is a summer internship](#) out there that’s right for you, but to find one, start the process now. Use this ultimate guide to landing a summer internship and follow these 10 strategies to secure an internship this summer to find an internship that’s right for you.

No related posts.

Posted in [Advice for Candidates](#), [Career Fairs](#), [Internships](#), [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged Tagged [accounting and finance](#), [best-internships](#), [Campus career fairs](#), [campus job fairs](#), [Cheri Lytle Merrill Lynch](#), [college students](#), [entry level job seekers](#), [finance industry internships](#), [How to land a summer internship](#), [insurance industry internships](#), [internship tips](#), [Kathleen Powell NACE](#), [Kathleen Powell William and Mary Career Center](#), [large company internships](#), [Matt Krumrie](#), [Matt Krumrie College Recruiter](#), [Merrill Lynch internships](#), [michigan technological university career center](#), [public relations internships](#), [recent college grads](#), [Rob DiCarlo State University of New York](#), [Sharlyls D. Leszczuk Feintuch Communications](#), [Stephen Patchin Michigan Tech Career Services](#), [top internships](#)

POPULAR JOB SEARCHES

TOP ENTRY LEVEL JOBS

[New York Entry Level Jobs](#)

[Los Angeles Entry Level Jobs](#)

[Dallas Entry Level Jobs](#)

[Houston Entry Level Jobs](#)

[Chicago Entry Level Jobs](#)

TOP INTERNSHIPS FOR STUDENTS

[Accounting Majors](#)

[Marketing Majors](#)

[Computer Science Majors](#)

[Economics Majors](#)

[Psychology Majors](#)

POPULAR JOBS FOR RECENT GRADS

[Jobs for Business Majors](#)

[Jobs for Psychology Majors](#)

[Jobs for Nursing Majors](#)

[Jobs for Biology Majors](#)

JOBS IN GROWING INDUSTRIES

[Healthcare Services](#)

[Physical Therapy](#)

[Language Translator](#)

[Biotechnology](#)

[VoIP Services](#)

[BROWSE ALL JOBS](#)

Job Seekers

[Find a Job](#)

[Resume Builder](#)

[Job Search Advice](#)

[Articles, Blogs & Videos](#)

Recruiters

[Advertising Solutions](#)

[Conference & Events](#)

[Testimonials & Awards](#)

[Articles, Blogs & Videos](#)

About

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

Social Media




**COLLEGE
RECRUITER**

College Recruiter believes every student and recent grad deserves a great career. We believe in creating great candidate and recruiter experiences. Our job postings and other interactive media solutions connect high-quality students and recent graduates at scale to great part-time, seasonal, internship, and entry-level career opportunities.

Copyright 2020 © College Recruiter, Inc.