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What To Do If You Didn't Score the Internship

Kristine Ahlfield
Iowa State University

Julia Taborskaya
Iowa State University

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You touched up your resume, donned your business casual best, and knocked their socks off in the interview, but you didn’t get the internship. Now what? Here are ten things to do to keep your summer from being a total bust.

1. **Keep in Touch**

   In today’s fast-paced world, networking is very important. Keep in contact with the companies you applied for. If you interviewed with a company, write a thank you letter and follow up (and no the pre-written thank you cards left over from high school graduation aren’t appropriate). That connection could be helpful when you look for a job or internship in the future.

2. **Get Creative**

   If you can’t find a job in your field, look for a position indirectly related to your major. Pick a couple of key skills that employers value in your field, then look for something that allows you to build on those abilities. Communications major? Write the newsletter for your local church. Finance major? Keep the books for a local organization. Anything that will help you gain work experience will help you in your chosen field.

3. **Take Charge**

   No matter where you work, look for opportunities to get into a position of leadership. Whether you’re managing a project or looking after budgets, you are building on leadership and decision making skills that employers look for in their employees.

4. **Volunteer**

   Joining a volunteer organization is another great alternative to an internship. It definitely shows dedication when you’re willing to work that hard for no money and employers will appreciate that. If you volunteered somewhere last summer, try to move into a position of leadership this summer.

5. **Get Your GPA Up**

   Another key point employers look for in interns is a strong GPA. Is this what hurt you? Try taking a class or two over the summer. Since daytime TV sucks anyway, you’ll have lots of time to focus on them. Those grades should help out your GPA.

6. **Job Shadow**

   Job shadowing is a great way to expand on your knowledge of your chosen career. Watching a professional will give you a hands-on experience and give you insight as to what they want in their employees. Job shadowing is also another great way to network with professionals and make connections that could benefit you in the future.

7. **Set Up an Informational Interview**

   An informational interview allows you to meet with an employer and ask them questions about their job. If you’re not sure exactly what a certain job entails or what traits they look for in their employees, an observational interview is a great way to gain knowledge (and make another connection).

8. **Work on Campus**

   Professors are constantly doing research and they almost always have undergrads helping them. However, most professors don’t advertise that they’re looking. Do some research on professors in your field and the research they’re doing. Be aggressive if you find a good match.

   Working hard to get the job will show the professor you will work hard for them.

9. **Attend Summer Programs**

   Some companies host leadership programs over the summer. For example, Deloitte and KPMG, two highly respected audit and tax firms, offer programs like these that allow students to network and learn more about the company. Do some research on companies in your field. If they offer programs like these it’s a great way to build connections and your resume.

10. **Don’t Give Up!**

    Start looking for fall or spring internships. Keep in contact with employers. Anything that can add to your resume and make you a stronger professional will help you in the future. Don’t just sit on your couch in your pajamas watching re-runs and eating cereal out of the box all summer. Unless you’re looking to be a professional couch potato, this will not help you. Keep your chin up—if you’re persistent, your once-dreaded summer can turn out to be a great one.