



PR POINTERS



## The Top 10 Dos and Don'ts of a PR Internship

[By Bill Fleishman]

A message to students looking for PR internships: an internship is really an extended job interview. Rather than a single interview to make an impression, you have an entire semester to make yourself invaluable to a potential employer. The following tips can help give you an advantage when graduation rolls around:

**Do:**

- **Act like an employee.** If you perform like a full-time employee, you will be treated like one. Take cues from your supervisor and other standout employees to best model your office behavior. Always hold yourself to the same standards you would if you were an employee.
- **Dress professionally.** Take pride in your appearance. When you step into an office, you are a professional. Jeans and t-shirts may be acceptable on casual Fridays, but it is always a good idea to check the employee handbook just to be sure. If you are still uncertain, always err on the side of caution. You will always be safe if you overdress.
- **Introduce yourself.** There may come a time in your internship when you are asked to work with someone new. If that is the case, stop by and say hello. Your supervisor will know who you are, but chances are others would appreciate a reminder. Make sure that person knows when you are working and how to reach you.
- **Prioritize.** Ask your supervisors which tasks need to be completed first and tackle those right away. If you are not going to finish something on time, let your supervisor know with enough time to assign someone else to the project.

- **Go the extra mile.** The best interns go beyond what is asked of them. Although it may feel awkward, try to make recommendations to improve the finished product when you can. This will show your personal commitment to the success of the project.

**Don't:**

- **Be late.** Take advantage of every day you can spend in the office to get the most out of your time. A company depends on you; show them you can be trusted to keep your schedule.
- **Flatter too much.** Everyone appreciates recognition, but do not lavish your supervisor, or anyone else, with praise just to stand out. People will be more impressed by hard work than empty compliments.
- **Be afraid to express interest.** It may not get you out of doing administrative work — that always needs to get done — but expressing interest in certain areas could lead to experiences you would not have had otherwise. An internship is an opportunity to explore a potential career, so you should feel empowered to try new things and discover what you like.
- **Wait to be asked.** If you have free time, try seeking out new projects rather than wasting time updating

your MySpace page. There is always something that can be done. Keep abreast of what your supervisor is working on and offer ways you can help out.

- **Make assumptions.** Recommendations are reserved for the best interns, and if you work hard, you could walk away from your internship with a powerful advocate. Routinely check in with your supervisor to assess your performance and identify areas for improvement. If your work earns you acclaim, ask your supervisor if he or she would be willing to write a *positive* recommendation.

Above all, the most important lesson is to always be someone your colleagues will want to work with every day. If your supervisor is sad to see you go, it is a good sign you may have a future with the company. Perform as if you are a full-time employee, and you may just end up as one.

**About the Author**

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Cone creates stakeholder loyalty and long-term relationships through the development and execution of Cause BrandingSM, brand marketing, corporate responsibility, and crisis prevention and management initiatives. Cone is a part of the Omnicom Group (NYSE: OMC).



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