



# The Indispensable Intern

*Make it your job to prove they can't do without you.*

## Get more than just your foot in the door.

Let's say you've landed an awesome internship at your dream company. Whether your field is finance, fashion, human services, or IT, you now have an ideal opportunity to turn an internship experience into a full-time position after graduation. In fact, Forbes.com reported in 2012 that over 60 percent of paid internships turned into full-time offers.

So, how do you improve your chances of transitioning from intern to employee? To begin, you make it your job to convince your internship supervisor to keep you around long-term. In other words, you need to make yourself indispensable.

## The ins for becoming indispensable.

**Communicate.** First, try and understand how your office and your manager communicate. Some firms communicate mostly via email, while others hold meetings during the day to brainstorm. Observe your co-workers' communication styles and emulate them. Are people direct and assertive when contributing ideas, or very formal and polite? Ask your manager questions if you don't know the answer; knowing when and how, even whom, to ask, is essential in the workplace, as is knowing how to convey information effectively. Learn to listen. And don't overlook good verbal or written skills, even when composing brief emails.

**Ask for feedback.** The purpose of any internship is to learn as much as possible. In the process, it's likely your supervisor will give you periodic reviews on your work. However, if you proactively *ask* for feedback, you make it clear that you value constructive criticism and are genuinely interested in making your internship experience as valuable as possible. Plus, you'll allow your manager to clearly communicate what she/he expects from you.

**Show up on time.** It goes without saying that you should show up on time every day of your internship. An internship is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge *as well as* your character and commitment to both yourself and to the company. Being prompt is proof that you are reliable and invested in your own success.

**Be involved.** Be willing and eager to participate in all projects and meetings as much as possible. Let's say you're interning for an advertising agency and there's a big pitch coming up. Offer to stay late to assist. You'll learn an exceptional amount from the experience, plus be on your way to becoming an integral part of the team.

**Meet deadlines.** This is a no-brainer. Time management and an ability to prioritize are a must. You'll gain increasing respect with every deadline that you meet—even if it is for a small task. Don't be discouraged if your initial assignments include basic tasks like filing, answering phones, or ordering supplies. Small duties are a way for a manager and a company to build trust in your work and to see that you are able to complete assignments in a timely and professional manner. Focus on delivering quality, and whenever possible, more than what is asked.

**Be proactive.** When you feel you are ready for additional responsibility, take the initiative and ask for it! If you want to be involved in more substantial work, speak with your manager. Ask if you can review reports for the project, or ask to be involved in their weekly meetings. Present ideas, willingly assume more responsibility, and NEVER complain!

**Don't be afraid to fail.** Every project you're asked to be a part of is an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm. If asked to participate in a brainstorming meeting, contribute your ideas, even if you think they are not the strongest. Everyone fails at some point, whether they are an intern or the CEO. View it as a chance to learn. Plus, by sharing your thoughts and concepts you show that you are actively engaged in the company's business. Convince an employer that you put their interests first, and you may earn the right to become a permanent part of the team.



## i n a nutshell:

An internship is a chance to stand out from the crowd and show you've got what it takes to get hired:

- **Actively communicate; ask questions; demonstrate an exceptional work ethic**
- **Inform your supervisor of your progress; ask for feedback**
- **Show up on time; participate**
- **Meet deadlines; be organized and detail oriented; check your work for accuracy**
- **Be proactive; take on new assignments; contribute ideas**
- **Be receptive to feedback; learn from your mistakes**

An internship brings you one huge step closer to a rewarding career. So seize the opportunity: deliver results, earn the employer's trust, and prove that you're employee material.