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CONTACT

Colleen Madden Blumenfeld, Director of Public Relations

Office: 312-422-5074

Mobile: 314-807-1568

colleenmadden@challengergray.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Are Internships the New Entry-Level Position? **HOW TO BEST UTILIZE YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE**

CHICAGO, June 13, 2019 – The likelihood of nabbing a full-time offer increases for those who have held internships, according to a recent study from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), and for those with paid internships, the chances are even better. As internships are increasingly becoming an entry point into the job market, students who are able to fully utilize their experience and communicate their accomplishments to employers will stand the greatest chance of landing a full-time job, according to one workplace authority.

The unemployment rate for workers aged 20 to 24 stood at 7.0% in May of this year, up from 6.5% in April and far higher than the national average of 3.6%. This could mean that competition for entry-level work is fierce, even in a tight labor market. An internship that includes significant experience and opportunities for growth will give graduates a leg up on other recent graduates.

“It’s no secret that the internship is increasingly important. However, just holding an internship does not guarantee a full-time role. Interns not only have to find, apply to, and land an internship, they also need to demonstrate meaningful tasks and accomplishments during this time,” said Andrew Challenger, Vice President of global outplacement and business coaching consultancy Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

“After students secure and perform well during an internship, they then must be able to present this information on their resume and in interviews. Merely having an internship will not necessarily impress an employer,” he added.

Experience is key in hiring decisions. Another NACE survey revealed that 95% of employers said candidate experience is a factor in hiring decisions, and nearly half wanted that experience to come from internships or co-op programs. Interns who are able to measure their success will not only find a position, but will likely secure a desirable starting salary.

One way for graduates to promote their successes at internships is through LinkedIn.

“Over 80% of recruiters look at LinkedIn when making hiring decisions. Entry-level job seekers and recent college graduates would be wise to start building their LinkedIn profiles as soon as they have professional experience,” said Challenger.

“Students and graduates should not only include any paid employment, education experience, and relevant classes or publications on their profiles, but also internship experience, including day-to-day tasks and any accomplishments or success stories they may have experienced during their tenure,” he added.

Interns should also ask for written recommendations from their supervisors and colleagues, according to Challenger. These are useful for LinkedIn as well as to show potential employers.

In light of the growing importance internships have in career development, Challenger offered the following advice for getting the most out of these positions.

TIPS TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP AND GET A JOB OFFER

Be open to anything. Although many students worry about interning for companies in their field, it is best to open up to many different companies across various industries. It is important not to be especially picky when it comes to superficial aspects such as brand recognition. Expanding your target company list past high-profile companies and demonstrating interest in local start-ups, small or mid-size businesses, and non-profits allows for the possibility of multiple offers. Additionally, interning for small- to medium-sized companies is ideal because the opportunity to take on meaningful work and make a significant impact is high.

Network, network, network. Ask for informational meetings or coffee with employees who work in the companies or departments that interest you. You can also reach out to employees through LinkedIn or Twitter. If your relationship grows, they may pass your name along to HR or a hiring manager. Keep track of all of your contacts so you can consistently stay in touch with them and prioritize the more important opportunities. Once you have the internship, make sure to meet with people within the organization, both with whom you directly work, but also those outside your immediate purview.

Treat your internship as a real job. The best way to prove you are qualified for a permanent position is through action. Think of your internship as a trial period or extended interview for obtaining the position you desire. Always be on time and meet deadlines. Maintain a positive attitude and show that you are eager to learn and succeed by seeking out feedback to improve your performance and develop new skills.

Take initiative and exceed expectations. By taking initiative, you can show management your capabilities. Do not be afraid to voice your own ideas, offer solutions, and ask questions. Show interest in attending meetings and seek out extra work and new projects. When you go above and beyond what is expected of you, you demonstrate your commitment level and gain the attention of management.

Adhere to company dress codes. While you want to stand out from the pack, you don't want to draw attention to yourself for the wrong reasons. By dressing professionally, you reinforce the impression that you can adapt to and fit in with the company's culture.

Keep track of your contributions and accomplishments. Keep track of the projects you worked on, your individual contributions, and the results achieved. Having a tangible record of your achievements with the company is a helpful tool in convincing a manager why you should be hired full time.

Communicate your desire for full-time employment. Let your employer know that you would like a job with that particular organization. Ask about open positions and express your interest in them. An employer will be more likely to consider you for a position if they know you are interested in it.

Stay in contact. If you don't get hired for a position immediately after your internship ends, stay in touch. Check in with your contacts and provide updates on your progress. This will help to keep you in the forefront of the employer's mind when a position does open up.

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