MBA Internships: Justen Downing (MBA '24)

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Justen Downing (MBA '24)

Concentrations: Business Analytics & Finance

Internship: Operations - Intern, Syneos Health (Pharmaceuticals/Consulting), Somerset, N.J.

How did you approach the internship search process, and what strategies did you find effective?

After discussions with my career consultant, I created a tiered list of desired companies.

Can you share a memorable moment or experience from your internship that had a significant impact on your professional growth?

Going out to lunch with the COO, who expressed an interest in my career progression.

How did your internship align with your career goals and aspirations? Did it confirm or reshape your career path in any way?

It helped me to gauge where within this organization (or organizations like it) I may like to work.

Were there any challenges or obstacles you faced during your internship, and how did you overcome them?

One challenge I faced was getting buried in all of the operations the company is involved in, and knowing how my role/responsibilities can best be applied to these processes.

Did you have a mentor or supervisor who played a crucial role in your internship experience? How did they support your development?

I did. They supported me by matching my skillset with projects that I might find interesting.

In what ways did your internship allow you to apply the theoretical concepts you learned in your MBA program to real-world situations?

I was able to apply my knowledge from business analytics to aid in developing a control Excel sheet that accumulates the entries of multiple other sheet submissions to acquire more easily comprehendible data. I was able to create a survey which prompted responses from sales team leadership to reflect on the effectiveness of the training materials that upper management supplied to them.

Did your internship provide exposure to a particular industry or functional area that you had not previously considered? How did this influence your career decisions?

Yes. Pharmaceutical consulting, incentive compensation, sales targeting and alignment, and business analytics.

Did your internship experience involve any international or cross-cultural elements? How did you navigate and leverage these aspects to enhance your learning?

Yes. I worked with an individual from overseas. I edited the material within a corporate training video that they were creating to display best communications practices.

Looking back, what advice would you give to current or future MBA students about maximizing the value of their internships?

Make sure to find an internship that will give you broad exposure to many different functional areas, if possible.

How did your internship contribute to building your professional network? Did it lead to any valuable connections or mentorship opportunities?

I made multiple valuable connections. This is especially important in the pharmaceutical industry, because it is a relatively small world.

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