

Completing The Merchandising Internship

CADS 4920

Syllabus

REQUIREMENTS

1. Work requirement At least 10 weeks of full time employment (or 400 hours total).

2. One e-mail letter each week to your faculty supervisor (put your name, the name of your firm and the week number on the subject line).

- The first letter must include a brief overview of your role and responsibilities, the firm's product &/or service (what they provide) organizational structure, their contact information.
- All emails should relate your experiences that week - what you have learned, did, and contributed. The may be brief.
- Call or email your faculty supervisor if there is a problem or issue of concern to you.
- The weekly email should NOT be a replication of each day's journal entry – typically one short paragraph will suffice.

3. Daily anecdotal journal describing your work, learning experiences, and your thoughts and insights. This is a brief record of your experiences & reactions to your work assignments to be submitted at the end of the term as part of your notebook. A computer log is preferred.

4. Internship portfolio/notebook presenting your company (in your own words) and your role/work there must include the following:

- A brief description of your company, e.g., its business (products &/or services offered), size (sales, no. stores, no. employees, etc.), and position in the marketplace (compared to all competitors).
- A description of your company's target customer / core customer and how the firm targets this market.
- A brief summary of the key systems, procedures, policies, and/or technology the company uses -- in your own words.
- Ten (10) (digital) action shots/photos of you "on the job in your workplace" in professional dress. Include captions with each photo providing explanatory information.
- Ten (10) Interviews of key management and executives (see # 5 below). Include a brief overall summary of all interviews (1 page limit) along with a 1 page (or shorter) summary of each interview. Include a business card (or complete title and contact information) for each interviewee. A photo of you and the interviewee is optional.
- Store/firm project (see # 6 below)
- Self-evaluation & program analysis (see #7 & # 8 below)

- Thank you letters. Write and mail personal thank you letters to your internship supervisor, principal(s) of the firm and other key players in your internship. (Include photo copies of these written letters in your notebook)

5. Interviews with 10 employees who occupy *key leadership positions* (not other associates) in your company. **These are to be one to one, face-to-face interviews. In a small setting, you may also interview vendors, executives in competitive firms, or executive level professionals in related businesses.** The objective of these interviews is to introduce you to varied functions, perspectives and approaches to the same business **at the executive level.** **So interview only top management &/or corporate level executives.** Begin interviews early in your internship and finish them by mid-term. Submit a 1 page summary of each interview with your mid-term report. **For each interview, list the persons' name, complete position/title, company, contact information, and date/time/place of the interview, at the top of the page.** Include their business card in the hard copy of your portfolio/notebook (if they have business cards). You may add a photo of you with the person you're interviewing. No group interviews, e-mail or survey interviews. Include a brief overall summary (1 page limit) of all the interviews (combined) to summarize your impressions and any themes that emerged as you reflect on the interviews.

Suggested Interview protocol/questions:

- Briefly summarize your career path, your current position and future goals.
- What are the "primary responsibilities of this position?"
- What are the major challenges of this position?
- What competencies are necessary for success in this position?
- What advice would you offer a student interested in a career in this industry?
- What current trends or issues have the greatest impact on this job/business?

Because executives are busy, carefully prioritize your questions before the interview. Keep your questions limited in number. Always be professional in manner and appearance.

6. Internship project – You must complete a project to solve a problem or capitalize on a work-related opportunity. Describe/explain the ultimate goal &/or purpose of the project (as a SMART goal), briefly explain why it is important and how you plan to achieve your goal as specified above (1 page typed). Present this information to your firm supervisor for written approval; then scan and email your approved project proposal (A & B below), to your faculty supervisor for approval at least 2 weeks before beginning the project. After you receive approval and complete the project, write a 2-3 page description of the project including visual documentation (pictures, charts, illustrations, etc.) to show the process (before & after) and your success in meeting the stated goal(s). Follow the outline below.

- A. 1) Brief description of the specific problem or opportunity,

- 2) State the specific goal(s) of the project (must be SMART goals --Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-specific),
 - 3) Explain how these goals will benefit the firm.
 - 4) Explain how results will be measured to objectively document success in meeting stated goals.
- B. Plan of Action: What you will do to achieve these goals.
 - C. Procedure: Briefly describe how you actually executed your plan to meet the goals and measure your success in meeting each goal.
 - D. Outcome: Findings presented in text, charts, tables, pictures, etc.
 - E. Objective evaluation of the outcome –**Document** your success in achieving your goals. Explain why you did or did not meet a goal. What were your site supervisor's comments? What would you do differently "next time?"

8. Self-evaluation - (1 page) Evaluate yourself as to how you handled yourself at work (e.g., your work habits, thoroughness, reliability, assertiveness, role as a team member), your reaction to the type of training or supervision received, and your potential (and desire) for working in a similar environment. Include your reaction to your supervisor's evaluation.

9. Program analysis -Evaluate your preparation for the internship. (1 page)

- What courses or course activities were most helpful to you?
- Were there any assignments that particularly prepared you for this internship?
- Is there anything you would have benefited from knowing better? Were there any situations when inadequate preparation interfered with you doing your best?
- Are there any courses which you wish you had elected to take?
- Are there any curricular topics which should be strengthened?

Your analysis, coupled with the same from other students helps us to continuously evaluate the program. Mention any ideas that you think deserve consideration.

10. Evaluation by on-site supervisor (CADS 4920 INTERN EVALUATION (hot link)

Have this evaluation form completed by your on-site supervisor and include it in your internship notebook (in the front left pocket). Ask your supervisor to discuss your performance with you and suggest any areas that you may need to work on to improve your performance. Include your reaction in your self-evaluation.

11. EXTRA CREDIT (OPTIONAL)

- **If you meet any AMDP alumni, please network with them and share** the person's title, contact information, year graduated, and AMDP degree option (merchandising or design) with the Program Coordinator.

Send your portfolio/notebook (hard copy) to Dr. Forsythe at 308 Spidle Hall, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849-5603, so it will be received by the last day of class AND also download a soft copy of the completed notebook in dropbox.

EVALUATION FOR GRADE ASSIGNMENT

Your grade will be based on the following components and percentage weights:

- 10% Daily anecdotal journal- regular entries with evidence of thoughtful comments
- 15% Notebook/portfolio -thoroughness, creativity, professional presentation
- 15% 10 Interviews - logical selection of executives and thoughtful, written description
- 20% Internship project -quality of analysis, planning and execution, and evaluation of success.
- 5% Self-evaluation, program analysis -evidence of thoughtful analysis
- 25% Evaluation by on-site supervisor
- 10% Evaluation by faculty supervisor, including evaluation of weekly letters