



3 Things Internship Candidates Need to Know

By Denise Felder, <http://DeniseFelder.com>

Finally! I'm able to bring in a few interns to help with the mounds of career development projects I have for the next few months. I interviewed a few college students for the positions and picked two.

How did these two candidates rise to the top? What do I (and other employers) look for in an intern?

1. A resume targeted toward the type of job they want.

None of the resumes I received was perfect, however, some of them showed relevant skills and experience better than others.

When I (or any employer) post an intern or entry-level position, I'm not expecting to get resumes from people with five years of professional experience. I do, however, expect the candidates to use their skills and/or education sections to highlight their knowledge and abilities that relate to my job posting.



The candidates with resumes that listed unrelated jobs and used only one or two lines to describe the professional skills they are working toward did not get called for interviews.

2. Professional, courteous communication skills.

A candidate's resume is only part of my first impression of him or her. I also looked at the e-mail in which the resumes were sent (including e-mail addresses) and their cover letters.

Most entry-level candidates waste an opportunity to impress an employer by submitting little or no information in the body of the e-mail. Use that e-mail to send a short cover letter (or put your whole cover letter in the body of the e-mail

to cut back on the number of attachments you send an employer). At the very least, make sure your message in the e-mail uses complete sentences, has correct spelling, and addresses the recipient with respect.

Also, if you have a playful or odd e-mail address, don't use it to communicate with employers. Create a Yahoo or Gmail account that is a simple variation of your name. Resumes sent from goofy e-mail addresses do not get taken seriously.

3. Enthusiasm for the job, and excitement about their career goals.

When I meet an intern or job candidate who seems more interested in the school credit they'll get from working with me, or only wants a paycheck, I cut the interview short and move on. I want to work with people who have a genuine interest in what they do. Employers want to see a real interest in learning and gaining experience.

How do I measure real interest? First, I look at body language and eye contact. Some people seem stiff and don't talk a lot when they are nervous (many introverts like me act this way). Demonstrated enthusiasm through eye contact and showing that you are listening — and thinking about — to what the interviewer is saying.

Employers also expect the interviewees to ask questions. Either during the interview or at the end, ask questions that show you've been thinking about how you would do in the job.

One or two visits with a college career services representative, talking to a licensed career counselor, or attending a job search workshop at a One-Stop Career or WorkForce Center (www.servicelocator.org) or nonprofit employment service can fix many of the mistakes entry-level job seekers make.

Knowing how employers think will save you a lot of time and heartache in your search for your next job or internship.

Keep looking up.