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5 things you must do to have a successful virtual internship experience

June 2, 2020

by Kristen C., PR Intern

In May, I accepted a position as the Public Relations Summer Intern for the Parker College Office of Marketing and Media. Like many, I had intentions of spending my summer interning in Atlanta. However, COVID-19 taught me you must learn to be flexible and adapt easily to unexpected changes. I interviewed for this internship from the desk in my bedroom via Google Hangouts; I work from home; I meet once a week with my supervisor via Google Hangouts to discuss the plans for the week; and I've had to self-educate myself on the many software applications we use. Fortunately, I work under someone who makes herself available to me at all times, so she is easy to get a hold of when I have questions. Because my internship is completely virtual, I've had to make some minor personal adjustments to ensure I still have an effective internship experience even when we are in the middle of a pandemic.



Here are 5 things to help you be successful in your internship ... virtual or not ...

1. Be overly organized!

While being organized is great, I've had to practice being overly organized. I keep an electronic folder as well as a physical binder of every task I work on, so it is easily accessible for my Monday morning meetings with my supervisor. It will also be beneficial at the end of the semester when I compile all of my projects and assignments into a portfolio.

2. Communicate effectively!

Communication is always important, but it's even more important when completing a virtual internship. While this is my first virtual internship, I'm also the first virtual intern for the Office of Marketing and Media. It's kind of strange to have never met my supervisor face-to-face, but we have managed. We've learned how to work together to ensure we understand each other. Effective communication is so important because if

we don't understand each other, then we risk the chance of a task not getting completed or it being completed incorrectly.

3. Be timely!

Due to not reporting to an office on certain days at certain times, I've had to create a schedule with designated times that I should be working in order to keep myself accountable. I've learned to always start working on a task early because anything can happen. Working virtually, there are times I have questions, and she may be unavailable at that moment, so I have to wait until she is free to talk. However, I still have my assignment completed and on time because I started early.

4. Ask questions!

I've had to learn that it is okay to ask questions. Again, we are in the middle of a pandemic, so things are weird. This is a first for both me and my supervisor. Things are likely to get misinterpreted at times, so asking questions is the only way to have a clear understanding. Anytime I encounter a problem or have questions, I immediately call or text my supervisor, and she is able to assist with no problem. She always reminds me she is here to help and to teach me. Asking for help is the only way to learn and to ensure that the task is completed correctly.

5. Limit distractions!

Working virtually can be challenging, especially for those who get distracted easily. So, the best thing to do to ensure you complete all work planned for the day is to limit any possible distractions. I make a point to stay off of my phone while working; that way I'm not distracted by my personal life. I also make sure to include my family and close friends on my work schedule, so I'm not being bothered constantly. If you are not distracted, you are more likely to get all of your assignments completed correctly and on time.

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