

## My Summer as Comcast's Public Relations Intern

By Amanda Barberena

Being 20 and working for a telecom giant as the Public Relations intern is empowering. All my PR experience at Michigan State was in preparation for this internship. I felt so mature and professional... until I couldn't open the door to the other side of the building. It took me about ten minutes to realize that I was scanning my badge to open the closet next to the door... there were two sensors and I had been using the wrong one *for ten minutes*. That's humbling.

And that pretty much summarizes any new experience: no matter how prepared you are, there will still be things you don't know and mistakes you will make. But this is how we grow.

On the first day of my internship at Comcast, I remember thinking – among the thousands of swirling thoughts like: what do I wear, where do I park, how do I hold a conversation with strangers again – I kept thinking what have I gotten myself into?

But it was one of the best decisions I have made. As soon as I stepped in the door, everyone was kind and supportive, and I could tell they wanted me to succeed. The other interns were friendly, and it was great running into them around the office or in the lunchroom. It also helped that immediately my boss Michelle Gilbert included me in meetings and gave me projects to work on. Suffice to say, there was rarely a boring day, and I was grateful for that.

I gained an unbelievable amount of knowledge while working at Comcast, from information about the business (I will never forget to keep my Wi-Fi router three feet off the ground and in a central place in my house) to all the different tasks a PR employee faces (it's not just crisis control).

Most of the time, Michelle and I were brainstorming new stories to pitch to reporters, like integrating technology and the outdoors. This story became a huge hit and took us to radio and TV stations across the Metro Detroit area. I've worked in radio for six years, so seeing the radio stations was exciting because I was familiar with the technology. However, I was awestruck when I saw Fox 2 in Detroit. I got to watch Michelle film a short [segment](#) with Meteorologist and Reporter Derek Kevra. There were huge cameras and set pieces all over the warehouse.

I was particularly giddy when Michelle asked me to go on a business trip with her to Grand Rapids. Previously, the most traveling I had done for an internship was driving down the street or walking across campus. We had a packed two days: first, we had a Women in Cable Telecommunications (WICT) event where we networked with WICT members from the western side of the state; later, we rented out a suite at the White Caps baseball game and entertained media members for the night; the next day, we met with Mia Jankowiak, the director of Marketing and Event for the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce; and lastly, we had lunch with Tasha Davis, one of the technical operators in the Grand Rapids area. It was a successful trip, and I gained a lot of new connections on LinkedIn.

During the course of my 11-week internship, I touched over 250 projects from writing press releases to editing blog posts. Some of the stories that I pitched to reporters turned into successful interviews that aired close to 50 times across Michigan. The work I did had a profound impact on the Public Relations department and on the company. I wasn't getting coffee or running errands; I was a valued employee that contributed to the good that Comcast does.