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How to secure an internship with a startup

July 10, 2016



About the Author : Gandharv Bakshi is the founder of [Lumos](#) – a smart apparel startup and maker of [Aster](#) – world's safest backpack for cyclists.

The purpose of this blog is to tell you how you can secure your dream internship with the startup you love.

The first aspect is to understand why startups hire interns? There are several reasons – to complete short-term work that might not

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merit a long term hire, to build a talent pipeline for the future (in the form of PPOs etc.), or to complete the work that might merit a long term hire but which they can't afford. Very rarely startups hire you because they want to teach you something – your college is supposed to do that! Management bandwidth (time spent in teaching you, talking to you, and evaluating your work) is very expensive. Thus, startups are very careful while hiring interns!

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So, how should you prepare for the internship at a startup? First, do your homework – read about what they do (from their website) and about what they don't do well (from the online reviews). Think whether the startup's mission is exciting enough to be worth your time – you can't do multiple internships during your college! Second, understand your role carefully – the role invariably would hint at the pain point they want you to solve. If the role is very transaction oriented (e.g. email 50 customers each day), think about the outcome of the internship from the startup's perspective and link it to their pain point! If you're not clear about the expected outcome from the job description, write to them and ask – it is perfectly fine to do so!

Now, assume that you are hired for the internship. Start listing down ideas for how you would achieve that expected outcome. Also, it is not enough to just list down the ideas in broad strokes ("I will do email marketing"). You should go a step further and make a specific plan for how you will do it (e.g. Week 1: Evaluate email databases and set up a temporary website to collect email ids; Week 2: test content for email marketing). Try to think about what kind of challenges you might face – both in terms of lack of knowledge and lack of resources. Make sure that you talk about them during the interview. Finally, you are all set for the interview!

When you walk into the interview, be calm and realize that you know the role well, you have done your research, and you are being interviewed because they see potential in you! Be professional and confident – you are walking into the interview with ideas and a plan. That itself would put you in the 0.1% percentile in terms of initiative. Ask the interviewer if you can present your ideas and plan but first, ask any questions you might have had. Interviewers like it when questions are asked – it shows

curiosity and it shows that you are willing to seek information before jumping to answer everything.

Above all, know one thing – you are valuable to the startup! Most startups are resource crunched – they NEED you to take on some workload. If you show the startup that you are going to be a great asset and will not need much ‘managing’, you practically own the role!

Here are some real examples of dos and don'ts (from actual interview experiences) which you should keep in mind:

Do's :

1. Be punctual- Use Google Maps to find the required time to the interview location and add 30 minutes.
2. Show initiative- “I haven't learned about B2C marketing, but let's get to the basics. This is how I'll approach it.” Or, “I haven't learned that, but I can probably learn from X or Y.”
3. Be comfortable and confident- Remember that you are important and the company needs the talent.

Don'ts :

1. Don't insult the startup- “Sir, how come I've never heard the name of your company?”
2. Use lack of resources as an excuse- “Our college doesn't teach that.”
3. Use casual language. An intern sent us this – “Hey, can u call me” in reply to our shortlisting mail. At least provide the context why you want us to call you!

Now that you are aware of the know-hows of getting an internship with a startup, start applying today! You can apply to some of these [cool internships](#) according to your profile.

If you find the information provided in this article helpful and are curious about working with the mentioned startup, you can apply for [International Marketing internship at Lumos](#).

Image source: Ashtonmedia.com

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**Sahil Kanojiya** · Engineer at MERCHANT NAVY

I got a mail about getting participation certificate for the Internshala content writing contest in association with UCweb. I would like to know its status and how shall i get it.[virtual or physical]

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · Jan 16, 2017 3:34pm**Internshala** ✓

Hi Sahil,

Thank you for writing in. We will issue the participation certificate for the Content Writing contest with UC Web by end of this week. If you have any queries, please write to contest@internshala.com.

Thanks

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Rahul says:

July 15, 2016 at 8:42 PM

This blog is great. And you guys are doing great job helping freshers.

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Internshala says:

September 29, 2016 at 6:09 PM

Thanks, Rahul :)

Reply

Aishwarya Priya says:

September 27, 2016 at 7:46 AM

Can one get a chance of internship in btech 1st year, stream CSE

Reply

Internshala says:

September 29, 2016 at 6:11 PM

Hi Aishwarya,

Yes. You can apply for the internships. To apply to awesome internships register with us using the following link (it's free!)

<http://internshala.com/registration/student>

You can check internship in the field of Computer Science here –

<http://internshala.com/internships/computer%20science-internship>

And apply to the ones which suit your profile the best. Hope it helps.

Thanks

Reply

abhik says:

September 27, 2016 at 9:11 AM

Nice blog....lots to know..

Reply

Internshala says:

September 29, 2016 at 6:10 PM

Thanks, Abhik :)

Reply

arun says:

September 30, 2016 at 11:01 PM

how can I find ECE internships in btech 2 year

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Internshala says:

October 3, 2016 at 1:02 PM

Hi Arun,

Thank you for writing in. You can apply for the internships. To apply to awesome internships register with us using the following link (it's free!)

<http://internshala.com/registration/student>

You can check internship in the field of Electronics here –

<http://internshala.com/internships/electronics>

And apply to the ones which suit your profile the best. Hope it helps.

Thanks

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monisha says:

December 23, 2016 at 7:59 PM

I have heard many saying that there are free online training sessions, but i couldn't find those.Can u help me find them?

Reply

Internshala says:

December 26, 2016 at 11:23 AM

Hi Monisha,

Thank you for writing in. Internshala organises free online workshop every Saturday. You can get the details here-

<https://workshop.internshala.com/>

Hope it helps.

Thanks,
Team Internshala

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