

Top 5 Mistakes That Prevent Interns From Landing—And Keeping—Jobs

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College internships are no longer optional benefits; they are essential stepping stones to landing full-time jobs and enabling career success. **Avoid these five mistakes to land—and keep—the job safely** rather than crash and burn on the approach.

1. **ims n txt msgs r hw u write.**

Instant message and text message writing styles have no place in the professional world. Use full sentences, good grammar, and proper punctuation in business writing—which is any writing for and in the workplace. Go beyond spell-check and proof your writing for readability and correct content.⁽¹⁾ Have someone else review what you write before you distribute it. Take a writing class outside the workplace or on the Internet. Poor writing skills demonstrate a lack of professionalism.

⁽¹⁾ **Spell-Check Error-Free Results**

Eye halve a spelling chequer. It came with my pea sea.

It plainly marques four my revue miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye have run this poem threw it. I am shore your pleased two no

Its letter perfect awl the weigh. My chequer tolled me sew.

2. **Wear flip-flops and club clothes to work.**

You may be dressed for success, but it's not the success you want in the workplace! For the interview and job, expand your wardrobe to include attire appropriate to business professionals. At a loss for what this means? Go to an upscale clothing store or use your favorite Internet search engine to query "business professional attire". Ask your employer for their dress code. Observe others in your workplace—especially those in leadership positions. Ask your teachers or counselors to help you prepare for an interview. Business attire need not be expensive; just appropriate.

3. **Chew gum and—like—speak like, whatever.**

Park your chewing gum at the door—preferably in a trash can. Speak clearly and succinctly in the workplace. Avoid, like, unnecessary words, you know. And, um, be clear and concise when you

end sentences, or whatever. You can dress professionally and be well-groomed, yet when you open your mouth you can quickly negate—or reinforce—your professional exterior. Effective communication skills are the foundation for interview and career success.

4. **Use first names, and eat like you're hungry.**

Whether someone is older or younger than you, address them with formality until they give you permission to do otherwise. "Mr.", "Ms.", or titles ("President", "Officer", "Judge", "Congress[wo/man]") work best. "Yo", "Girlfriend", and "Hey Junior" will send you right out the door. Use good dining etiquette when you go out to eat. Even the local fast-food establishment is a place to demonstrate that you have civilized eating habits when you eat with your work colleagues. Shoving food into your mouth and slurping drinks as if you are consuming your final meal are quick ways to lose the chance to turn a temporary relationship into a permanent one.

5. **Wait for instructions, and do only what is necessary.**

Your internship is the time to show your stuff. Your stuff had better be above and beyond "just your job"—and workplace-appropriate. Show initiative and volunteer to tackle unfavorable tasks. Give presentations where others fear to speak. Ask questions to clarify tasks and expectations, then see that you complete your project efficiently and effectively. Demonstrate that you have a positive work ethic by being thorough, accurate, enthusiastic, and by working well with others.

Learn more about professional behaviors for interviewing, on the job, and career advancement at SpringboardTraining.com and SuccessLanguage.com.