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10 tips for college grads who complete an internship without a job offer

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Many recent college graduates head into a summer internship hoping they secure full-time employment with that company once the internship is completed. But, for a variety of reasons, it doesn't always work out that way.

Now what? How do recent college graduates and entry-level job seekers move forward in the job search when they don't secure a full-time job from an internship?

With confidence, because they just gained the invaluable on-the-job training employers covet.

Because, for recent college graduates, the number one goal of any internship should be to gain work experience in a professional business setting, says Bob LaBombard, CEO of GradStaff, a company that serves as a career matchmaker for recent college graduates, and companies that are looking to fill entry-level jobs.

While larger companies tend use their internship programs as a way to evaluate interns for employment in a subsequent year, small and medium employers are more likely to hire interns to accomplish specific goals, like completing a well-defined project or to cover staff for the summer vacation season, says LaBombard. Not getting hired full-time is in no way indicative of an intern's performance on the job.

"Either way, internships are a great way for students to apply their skills in meaningful work, and learn how to receive feedback and apply coaching tips from supervisors," says LaBombard. "Even if an internship does not result in a full-time job offer, the experience should help interns better define their value proposition to employers by gaining a more focused appreciation for the core skills they possess, and how they have been successfully applied in the

workplace.”

So what should job seekers who completed an internship without a full-time job do next? Start by [registering as a job seeker with College Recruiter](#). We'll send you new job leads tailored to your interests and preferences and save you the trouble of searching for them on a regular basis.

Next, consider these tips from [Bill Driscoll](#), district president for Accountemps, and [Tel Ganesan](#), Board Chairman of Kyyba, Inc., a global IT, engineering and professional staff augmentation company, and Managing Partner of Kyyba Ventures. Both have experience [working with recent college graduates](#) who have completed internship programs. They help answer the question:

My internship is over, now what:

- 1. Be flexible:** College graduates looking to land their first jobs need to be flexible, proactive and creative. Consider [volunteer assignments](#) or temporary work as a way to continue to gain additional experience and build your skill set, says Driscoll.
- 2. Network:** Online and off. Many companies don't advertise open positions, so networking plays an important role in [finding out about hidden job opportunities](#). “Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job, whether in-person at industry association events, or using professional networking websites,” says Driscoll. “You'd be surprised at who might be able to help.”
- 3. Use college career center/alumni resources:** College career centers usually welcome recent grads and can help in your job search. You also might be able to connect with other alumni who can provide advice. These resources are often underutilized by recent college grads who don't go back to their college/alumni career center seeking assistance. They are ready to help you – even now that you graduated. [Learn more about how to use your college career center in the job search](#).
- 4. Don't overlook your online image:** Applicants need to actively monitor and maintain their professional reputations online. Keep a clean online profile. Future employers are watching.
- 5. Initiate contact:** Research companies you would like to work for and [ask for an informational interview](#) to learn more about the organization. “It also can help employers get to know you so you're top of mind when that company has a vacant position,” says Driscoll.
- 6. Meet with a recruiter:** Staffing executives can be your eyes and ears in the job market. Recruiters also provide useful feedback on your resume and interview skills, and help you locate full-time and temporary jobs.

7. Ask for references: Before your last day, ask your manager, and/or co-workers if they will be references. Professional references can sometimes hold more value than a supervisor from a work study program, or college professor (but those are both viable references if need be).

8. Update your cover letter and resume: Did you track your achievements and successes at the internship? Be sure to update this information on your resume and put it at the top of your resume, right under education. “Highlight any unique activities you partook in that may set you apart from the competition,” says Ganesan. Include project work and results, being a part of a team, technical/computer skills learned/used, and any other success story.

9. Apply for more than a handful of ideal jobs: Set target companies or jobs, but be flexible in your search. “Consider numerous possibilities, especially when you’re just starting off,” says Ganesan.

10. Use your social network: Use your social media network, as well as family and friends, to find a personal connection at particular companies. “That individual may be able to assist in securing an interview or simply provide advice and insight into the organization,” says Ganesan.

Don’t view the completion of an internship without a job as the end. View it as a new start, and a new beginning to a job search that is now backed by real world internship experience – something every employer craves.