

Intern WALL OF FAME

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College Program Merchandise Intern

Walt Disney World

In the fall of 2009, I did an internship in Walt Disney World through the Disney College Program. I worked at the Magic Kingdom in the Emporium, which is the largest gift shop of all Disney Parks. I assisted 1000's of guests a day and worked with fellow cast members from all over the world. I was given assignments such as door greeter, merchantainer, stocker, and register. While door greeting my responsibility was to greet all gusts coming into the store and acknowledge all gusts leaving the store. Since the Disney Company is primarily an entertainment company, they took the role of merchandise and the role of entertainment, put them together and made the role of merchantainment. All cast members working in the merchandise role had to go through a specific training course on how to properly "merchantain" the gusts. The responsibilities of the merchantainer are to walk around the store, engage guests in conversation (i.e. ask about their day and how their trip is going). The ultimate goal of this role is to find out what the guests like, give them an opportunity to test out merchandise, and finally, make a sale.

Through both door greeter and merchantainer, I was able to obtain some valuable skills in sales and it forced me to become more outgoing. Prior to the program I was generally a shy person, but after working here I am now able to approach people and start a conversation. Being outgoing was also important when working on register. It was important to talk with the guests when ringing them out. It makes them feel important, and I was able to learn a lot about people through these discussions. Working on register enhances my ability to work under stressful situations, especially at closing time and during the holiday season when I would complete 100's of transactions in an hour. Over time, I was able to better multitask and get the job done as efficiently as possible.

There were days when I was schedules a stocking shift. I was assigned a section of the store and expected to keep that section looking full and organized. There were moments during the program when the inventory in the back was very low and we have to use our creativity and problem solving skills to make the shelves appear to be fully stocked when it actually wasn't. Through this process, I was able to enhance my creativity and problem solving skills which I know I will be able to apply to future jobs. Both the positive experiences and tribulation I encountered during my program have prepared me for the future career. Most people think that working at Disney is all fun and games but in reality, it's a fast paced, demanding job. Since this company is so popular and so large, I feel it has prepared me for the business world because I know that I will be able to survive in such a large company. My experience there was stressful and very hard at times but it was the most rewarding and outstanding experience I would have ever asked for. The college Program opens up so many opportunities. There are many options if you want to stay with the company. For example, I was offered the opportunity to extend my College Program for an extra semester. I was also given the option to apply and participate in a

professional internship program where I would work with higher ups in the company in a field of my choice. I was also asked to stay as a part-time or seasonal employee. There were a few full-time positions available as well. Having the Disney Company on my resume I will be given opportunities that I otherwise wouldn't have found. I would definitely recommend this internship to other students, not only for the working experience but also for the friends one will make and opportunities that will come one's way.

If working for Disney doesn't sound like the right path, I would still recommend that students find an internship somewhere else. With the economy the way it is, the job market is as competitive as ever. The more experience a student can get in the professional world the better. The Career Development Office is an excellent place to start. Personally, I have had only one positive experience at the CDO. The counselors at the Career Development Office are more than happy to help in any way they can and are always readily available for even the simplest of questions. I have had help with my resume and cover letter and been given advice on how to begin the search for internships or jobs. The CDO website is constantly posting dates for career fairs, when certain companies will be coming to campus, and when certain presentations will be held. The CDO's Quest site is continuously updates with internship and job postings. Through my experiences I feel that the counselors really care about the student's futures so not utilizing the CDO would be disadvantageous to one's future.