



## ASK THE EXPERTS

AUGUST 2023

### COLLEGE STUDENTS

***I am starting an internship in the fall 2023 semester. Do you have any recommendations on what I should do so that this experience positively impacts my future career?***

A co-op or internship can have a long-term, positive impact on your future career. Take advantage of every opportunity to grow your skills, build your network, and gather recommendations.

#### **Connect with Everyone You Meet**

- Take advantage of the incredible networking opportunity that a co-op or internship provides. Send a LinkedIn connection request, with a personal note, to everyone you meet: colleagues, vendors, executives, fellow interns, department heads, etc.

#### **Keep a Log of Everything You Do (Create a Career Brag Book)**

- Potential employers want to see quantifiable or qualitative accomplishments on a resume, so keep track of everything that you work on (size of the project, how long it took to complete, any cost savings or other positive outcomes, etc.). Also, keep track of any new skills you learned and how you used them.
- Do not keep a record of any confidential or proprietary information.
- Use a binder or folder to organize your brag book. You can use dividers to separate different sections such as education, work experience, skills, etc.

#### **Add any "Kudos" Received to Your Career Brag Book**

- Most co-ops or internships require the direct manager to complete a review of your performance. Place a copy of the review in your Career Brag Book. Keep a copy of any recognition you received (awards, call-outs, emails, etc.).

#### **Request Recommendations**

- After you have connected on LinkedIn, send those contacts a Recommendation request. To be effective, recommendations must be specific and contain details about your strengths/accomplishments. It can be helpful if your request includes a reminder of the work you did together.
- Be sure to send a thank-you note/email after a recommendation is given.

#### **Evaluate Your Experience**

- A co-op or internship is a great way to figure out what you want to do for the rest of your life (or what you don't want to do). Your experience can give you insight into the size of the company, industry, employee support and interaction, and the type of work you would be happy doing after graduation. You will be working for a long time: make sure you do something that you love.
  - What did you learn from your internship? Think about the specific knowledge, skills, and competencies that you gained or improved during your internship.
  - How did your internship help you bridge the gap between theory and practice?
  - How did you contribute to the organization? Think about the value that you added through your work, projects, and interactions.
  - How did you demonstrate initiative, creativity, and professionalism in your role?
  - What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?
  - How will you apply what you learned from your internship to your future studies, work, or life?
  - How will you maintain contact with your host organization or network?