



September 10, 2015

Networking: Where the Search Starts

INTERNSHIP

BY SCHNEIDER DOWNS PROFESSIONAL

When I decided accounting was the major I wanted to pursue, there were two words that kept echoing in my head from hearing them so many times: network and internship. These two words go hand in hand and seemed way harder than they actually were. Networking started my journey that led me to amazing internships that have given me a head start towards my future.

After asking around and getting to know new people in the accounting field, I landed an internship the summer after my sophomore year of college at a small firm that has been a client of Schneider Downs for many years. At least once a week, someone would tell me, "Schneider Downs is a great company. You should really try to apply there if you want to work in public accounting." After hearing that statement so many times, I decided to research the company a little more. I found way more than just an accounting firm. I found a company that fit right into what I was looking for. They were based out of Pittsburgh and growing quickly.

When I heard Schneider Downs was coming to W&J to interview students for internships, I was thrilled. After turning in my resume and receiving the news that I was chosen to be one of the students getting an interview, I became instantly nervous. That feeling didn't last long. One thing that I didn't find while researching Schneider Downs is how inviting the company was. All the students being interviewed were invited to a dinner the night before to meet the John Popies, Tom Harvey, and Mike Collins, who would be interviewing us the next day. We were also introduced to W&J hires who just started working at the firm within the last couple of years. It was very welcoming to be invited to dinner before they even chose who was going to get the internship.

After getting an offer to be a summer intern, the welcoming feeling continued to grow. Being treated as if I was already a staff member was such a good feeling. I was invited to the holiday party in the winter and to the Kennywood picnic in the summer. It was such a nice feeling to be looked at as someone who is part of the firm, and I knew this was going to be such a great experience for me.

My first week working with clients once again left me with a nervous feeling. I'm sure every other intern gets that feeling on their first day. Once again, that feeling did not last long for me. My Senior quickly made me feel like part of the team. I was given work to do that was more than just stapling and copying papers, and everything was explained to me as if I wasn't just a temporary intern for the summer. After working at Schneider Downs as an intern, I have learned so many things about public accounting that cannot be taught in the classroom. I also learned that not only is this a quickly growing accounting firm based out of Pittsburgh, it is also a firm that welcomes everyone in and treats them as if they are family.

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