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Big Thinking. Personal(ity) Focus.

INTERNSHIP

BY SCHNEIDER DOWNS PROFESSIONAL

Ever since I declared my accounting major, I had my heart set on a Big 4 internship because that's all I ever heard about from advisors and professors. However, after checking out the Pitt job listing website, I came across the summer audit internship with Schneider Downs and decided to keep my mind open to other options. I spent at least an hour reading everything I could on the Schneider Downs website, and quickly realized this seemed like the kind of company I would really fit in with. As I tend to do a lot of forward-thinking, I liked the big focus that Schneider Downs has on family and caring, which I did not see as much from some other firms' websites.

I applied right away and was so excited to find out I was chosen to be interviewed. The pre-interview dinner initially made me nervous, but after meeting some of the employees, I was immediately able to relax; everyone was so easy to talk to. I remember meeting Ted Pettko and thinking he was hilarious. I hoped that he would be the one to interview me the next day. Sure enough, at 8:00 AM the next morning, Ted walked out to greet me with "¡HOLA! ¿Como estás? Can we do the interview in Spanish?" because he saw on my resume that I studied abroad in Spain. My whole interview was basically a conversation (in English, thankfully), and I was surprised when it seemed to end so soon—45 minutes later. Ted gave me his business card, and on my walk home I realized it said "Shareholder" before his name. I've always pictured shareholders to be so serious and intimidating, so at this point I had two thoughts: (1) wow, I should have been a lot more nervous being interviewed by a Shareholder, and (2) if this guy is a representation of the top management of this company, I need to work here.

Fast-forward to my first audit and working with Logan Kowcheck, Dan Nesbit, and Dan Soos. They only further reinforced my positive thoughts on the people of Schneider Downs. I learned that auditing is a lot of fun, especially when you're working with great people who have great personality. The professionals at Schneider Downs definitely contradict the "boring accountant" stereotype. Not only did I find that I share many common interests with them and other employees at Schneider Downs, but they even let me exceed my limit on questions for the day! (The cutoff was probably at 50.) Every individual I have had the opportunity to work with has been so open to answering any and all of my questions, and I am so appreciative for the experience and knowledge I have gained this summer.

Now, more than half way into my internship, my only wish is that I could stay longer. I've gotten to do the work of a first-year staff, and am excited to finish up grad school, so I can begin my career in public accounting. I definitely feel that my experience at Schneider Downs has prepared me for a career in auditing, and I'm very grateful for that. Looking back, I am so glad that I had an open mind during recruiting season.

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