



June 21, 2017

# My Path to Schneider Downs

INTERNSHIP

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My expectations of what an internship with Schneider Downs would be like were constructed from the experiences of my past internships as well as from the advice and information I was able to gather from friends who had recently gone through internships at other top-caliber accounting firms. Piecing this knowledge together, I formed an idea of what I believed my summer would be like. I was right about a few things and wrong about others.

Last summer, I attended the firm's Summer Leadership Program, which was two days of a variety of presentations and exercises built around learning more about the firm and industry. I would be lying if I said I wasn't nervous walking into the office for the first time, but that worry was quickly washed away after meeting the event's organizers and the other attendees. We were able to meet and ask questions of more than a few current Schneider Downs employees. I saw this as an incredible opportunity, since at the time I had never had the chance to go in-depth about what the work truly entails with someone experienced in the business. I came away from that short program knowing unquestionably that I not only wanted to put in the time and effort necessary to become a CPA, but also that I wanted the chance to prove myself and hopefully become a member of the Schneider Downs team.

Since I had attended the Summer Leadership Program, I was asked to come to the office for an interview before fall classes and the recruiting season began. I spoke with higher-level employees and ate lunch with those closer to my age. Much like my experience during the program a couple months before, I came away from this experience with a very positive view of the firm – and was fortunately offered an internship in Audit for the following summer.

At school throughout the year, I tried to do research into the industry and learn what I could on my own. As I read more and more about CPAs, I realized just how many leaders have the certification, not only leaders in public accounting, but leaders in almost every type of business out there. One of the most memorable things I have ever heard about CPAs came during a talk at school from a higher-level employee of a major Pittsburgh-based corporation. When speaking about those with the certification, he described having it following your name as a "smart stamp," which made my face light up, as someone working towards a future in the industry. This was coming from someone who was not a CPA himself. I walked out of that event as excited and proud as ever to begin my internship.

Starting the internship, I was confident but definitely had some reservations. I knew that these internships require a lot of on-the-job learning and was wondering how difficult the work would be on my first day and how quickly I would be able to pick up what was going on. That first week is where I got a huge taste of the

Schneider Downs culture. The team I was working with realized and let me know that it was alright to have some questions and it was not expected that as interns, we would know everything on day one. They helped me work through each question I had without getting frustrated or showing anything but a positive attitude. This makes for a great atmosphere to work in, and is a fantastic characteristic to have in the social and team-oriented environment that is such a critical part of public accounting.

Outside of the people, the other highlight of my internship so far has been the type of work I have been assigned. From day one, I have been given work that is vital to meeting the engagement's objectives. It makes you feel like you are truly helping, and that is the main reason I believe the job is so absorbing. It is a business where you become amazed at how fast the days go by, and I have been astounded by how engaged I find myself getting in the individual tasks.

The positive perception I had of the firm from my first experiences with it last summer has only strengthened through my internship so far. It is as easy to genuinely enjoy the work as it is to enjoy being around the members of the company. I'm glad to be able to share my experience with the firm this summer.

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