

Intern WALL OF FAME



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I had the opportunity to be a Child Talent and Production intern at Sesame Street for their 45th season. I assisted with all aspects of hiring child performers including working auditions, communicating with parents and agents, compiling payroll paperwork, and wrangling children to hair, makeup, set. I never imagined I would be a Child Talent intern, because I had no prior knowledge in the child casting process, but I was chosen because of my prior internship experiences, my experience with working with children at sleep away camp and student teaching, and the impression I left after my interview. I knew it wasn't exactly what I wanted to do, but just to get my foot into the door was all I hoped for. The hours were extremely long, arriving at 7:00 a.m. and sometimes not leaving until 7:00 p.m. because we had to wait until the episode wrapped up, but the days flew by because of how much fun we would have just being there.

Whenever a child was on set, we were able to watch the episode being taped and watch the puppet wranglers get into their roles. It was amazing to see how a normal, everyday individual could change their voice to sound like the characters we all know and love; Elmo, Cookie monster, Oscar the Grouch, Bert and Ernie, and Big Bird. Being on set showed me how a successful network television show takes place and everything that goes into it.

As a part of the episodes of Sesame Street I was an extra 4 different. My internship coordinator was so pleased with our work that she recommended me to the production department who needed additional help, saying that I would be a great asset to them a day or two a week when I was not needed in the Child Talent room. I got the opportunity to work with the production department as well as getting to meet all the staff who worked on the show, learning their specific roles. Assisting to set tours and distribute the scripts each time they were revised to the appropriate individuals was just a small part of my everyday experience. I even got to sit in on a production meeting where they broke down the script with everyone involved; the prop guys, wardrobe, camera guys, audio, to make sure that everything could be done. I would rate this internship as excellent. It was extremely hands on and helped prepare me for the real world. I felt as if I was more of an employee rather than an intern, which is very important because I learned how to be hands on and independent in the job world.

Child Talent is a seasonal department, so my boss did a lot of freelance casting and research work with Disney and Nickelodeon. She took me on as a freelance Research Assistant during my time at Sesame to help out with research for Disney Junior children's show Henry Hugglemonster. I learned how to properly compile research by observing children's behaviors to stories that were read to them about the content in the show and interviewing them accordingly. Although it was still not something I exactly wanted to do, I gained more experience and learned more about children's television which was another step in the right direction. I have learned that whether it is your dream internship or a company that you would never imagine ending up at, it will always lead to something greater. You will learn what you want to do, and what you don't want to do by both good and bad experiences.

After walking during graduation in May, I still didn't know what I wanted to do which scared me. There were parts of my major that I really enjoyed, but sometimes I felt as if I was just going through the motions, and couldn't put the pieces together. I also didn't feel like there was one part of my major that I was very strong in which discouraged me. I had 3 internships prior to this one working for a morning radio show, newspaper, and local business and none of them felt right to me, until this one. I realized that I learned more doing something I loved at my internship than I did throughout some of my college experience.

I knew I didn't want to work with Child Talent, but I knew I wanted to work with children's television after spending time in the environment and observing what was constantly going on. I learned to keep looking until I found the place that I wanted to succeed in and be happy at the most. Reading the scripts in the production office and getting to know the head writer, I realized I wanted to write for television because writing was always my true passion. Figuring this out was like a breath of fresh air, feeling like I have found my place, but knowing that it would be a long journey to reach this position, and I was okay with it.

After my internship was completed, I knew I wanted to work at Sesame Workshop or Nickelodeon, working with children's television. It took a couple of months of searching, but I never gave up. I continually met with different people at Sesame Workshop for informational meetings, asking their advice on what I should be doing to find a job. I was told constantly that it is near impossible to receive an entry-level position at Sesame Workshop. None of the employees want to leave because they love working there so much, and they don't need entry-level individuals because even administrative assistants are experienced. I was told to work elsewhere and then try and come back to Sesame when I had more experience. I still looked at other companies, but my goal was to end up at a major children's television network. I met with 3 different people, a lady from Human Resources, a lady from the Publishing Department, and a man from Production, and I made a lasting impression on the lady in the Human Resources department that I met with.

The end of February I received a call asking if I would accept a month long temporary Administrative Assistant for the Vice President of International Creative & Global Interactive Strategy. His first day was the same day as mine, so they wanted someone who could start right away and someone who knew the Workshop. He was a Producer for the hit Disney Jr. children's show's Little Einstein's and Nick Juniors Team Umizoomi. His game credits include Rock Band, Grand Theft Auto and Red Dead Redemption, and his movie credits include Shrek 2 and Madagascar. I was very intimidated working under such an experienced and successful individual with no full time work experience, but I realized working hard was important to my future. I kept working like each day was my last. I was a sponge, constantly trying to absorb as much knowledge and information as I could, and trying to stay as involved as possible.

As the first month was ending my boss told me that he was extending my contract another month because of how much he enjoyed working with me and how great of a job I was doing. During my second month my supervisor is preparing to create a full-time position for me which would include more than being just an assistant to him; but also assist with both the International and Interactive departments that he is in charge of.

Each day I was given more experience; attending meetings with my boss to take notes, which kept me in the loop. He constantly told the department to include me in projects, so I am far more than an administrative assistant. I am helping the Interactive Department create an app by doing all the testing of our competitors games to see what is successful and what isn't. I also was just asked to help write voice over scripts for upcoming games and apps that Sesame is creating, which gives me more writing experience. Even though I was hired as an Administrative Assistant, I have become so much more which proves that with experience and dedication I am not limited based on a job description.

With just under a year of experience as of May 2014 I am considered to be a full time employee through the Sesame Street Workshop. I am one of, if not the youngest person working at Sesame, achieving an entry-level position when everyone told me it was impossible. I will continue working hard to move up the ladder overtime at Sesame and down the road plan to become a writer on the show; my dream position.

My advice that I have for other students would be to intern as much as possible and learn from the experts. The moment you think that you have learned everything you need to know is the moment you fail. It is important to gain those connections because if you leave a lasting impression you will be someone that employer calls when a position opens or they will reference you to another company that is hiring. Be the person that works hard and does such a great job that they can't let you go. Also, don't get discouraged if you don't know what you want to do or you don't get the internship you wanted. I received many e-mails saying that they gave the position to someone else, and many times I applied for something and never heard back from the company. Keep working at it and eventually you will find your place. Most importantly, never give up on your dreams or take no for an answer because the sky is the limit.

Looking back, I wish I had taken advantage of the Career Development Office services more when I attended Fredonia. You can make an appointment and talk out anything having to do with your career with the experts, for free! When I was preparing for my first interview and was extremely nervous; they gave me a list of questions that are usually asked during an interview and a list of questions to ask the interviewer to remain engaged. Rely on them to make your job or internship hunt a lot easier.