Leicester Graduate Internships Case Study - from a Marketing Assistant to a Project Manager/Marketing Executive within 6 months of doing a graduate internship

The graduate
Ketan Bhavan graduated from the University of Leicester in July 2012 with a degree in Management Studies. Whilst his studies provided him with a solid theoretical foundation, he decided that he needed to acquire practical experience in a professional environment in order to realise his long term ambition of starting his own business. Ketan discovered the University of Leicester Graduate Internships programme, which seemed to be the “perfect opportunity” to gain this experience.

After applying and successfully getting through an interview, Ketan embarked upon a role as a Marketing Assistant with Williams Commerce (Leicestershire based UK ecommerce web development). This gave him responsibility for producing marketing materials, researching competitor trends and managing social media. As a result of business growth, Williams Commerce were seeking a hard-working, enthusiastic, intern who could solve marketing problems and produce recommendations.

The Internship experience
Recruiting a graduate was a really good decision, admits Keri Williams, Marketing Director. “Ketan has turned out to be an absolutely superb fit for the business”. Within a short time Ketan was able to prove his worth to the business. “His strengths in research and analysis became quickly apparent and his attitude, proactivity and energy to taking on new tasks were exemplary”. He showed he was able to develop himself for the benefit of the company, without being prompted, and make a pro-active contribution.

The biggest challenge for Ketan at the beginning of his internship was he says “not knowing things.” While his university degree equipped him with marketing theory, the transition from the classroom to a professional work place environment turned out to be tougher than expected. “Whilst not understanding certain concepts, I used as much time as I could to learn how the company works, familiarise myself with each departments functionality and teach myself the skills needed to make a difference.” Consequently, Ketan began to learn basic coding and website content management systems.

When asked about the most enjoyable aspect of his internship, Ketan responded that: “Apart from the fact that everybody here [at Williams Commerce] is so friendly, I think that the most enjoyable aspect of my internship was the feeling of self-achievement – accomplishment after completing a project. The moment of looking back and saying: ‘I did it’ has been a great feeling, and [gave me] a real sense of achievement”.

Following his internship, we had no hesitation in asking Ketan to take on another role announced Keri. With his strong analytical skills and understanding of IT he was offered a project management internship. This entailed front end design and development of websites, (working with platforms like
Word-press and Magento), as well as liaison with stakeholders to manage e-commerce projects through to completion. Ketan’s internship was enabled through sponsorship by the Santander Universities Programme.

Advice to students and employers
Ketan’s advice to other students considering doing an internship would be first, to start researching internship options early on and second, to be determined and motivated. “Try your best, don’t give up! At the beginning, it might seem tough, as working is so different from studying, it can even feel overwhelming. It is a steep learning curve, but once you get over the initial hill, you’ll feel that you have learned so much and it’s been so valuable.”

In as far as advice to other employers, Keri, underlined the importance of having a clear idea of the outcomes expected from the internship, as well as being prepared to provide initial supervision and mentoring to help the intern adapt to a new work environment. Keri describes Ketan as one of ‘the new wave of graduates’ whose inherent understanding of IT and social media can bring considerable benefits to business. Following her experience, she would recommend internships to many other businesses:

“Taking on an intern can provide you with a really high quality member of your team, with the ability to “hit the ground running” with a minimal supervision. Interns can enrich your business by bringing fresh approach, valuable set of skills learned throughout their degrees, as well as enthusiasm and proactivity.”

Plans for the future
For the next five years or so, Ketan’s main career objective is to build upon his professional experience gained through his internship. Thanks to his experience at Williams Commerce, Ketan has had the chance to get involved in many sides of the business which he has found extremely beneficial:

“My time at Williams Commerce has been truly invaluable. From developing my communication skills to my overall project management and time keeping skills, I do not feel I would have had the chance to build on so many varieties of skills anywhere else.”

Having successfully completed his internship, Ketan has now been offered a full time job as an Assistant Online Merchandising Manager with the Home Retail Group.