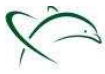




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## **1 BEFORE YOUR INTERNSHIP/PROJECT/ASSIGNMENT**

### **1.1 Choose the topic/objective for your internship/project/assignment that you are going to undertake**

#### **1.1.1 Importance and presentation of the objective of your internship/project/assignment**

The most difficult thing that figures in to the success of your internship/project/assignment is defining your objective.

This must be the subject of discussions and negotiation.

The objective of an internship/project/assignment:

- Shouldn't be a presentation of an empty promise: *"Discover opportunities on the market"* or *"Understand better the risk zones of your strategy"*.
- But must show something useful, concrete, and functional that your interviewer can implement without your help after your departure.
- For the 2 previous examples, the objectives could be:
  - *"Identify the three importers of Dapaland that are the most in line with your company and most interested in your products and services"*.
  - *"Identifying your two major strategic risks and recommendations. Three concrete measures to implement for each one for you to monitor."*

#### **1.1.2 Techniques for writing objectives**

***Two simple and effective techniques that allow you to define an objective.***

- **Technique # 1 : Incomplete sentence**

Complete the sentence:

*"At the end of my services you will have/will know/will be able to..."*

Follow with a sentence using:

- an active verb followed by an object of the action verb;
- a criteria on the performance measure;
- conditions for implementation.



- **Technique # 2 : Consultant**

Define in writing the type of internship/assignment/project that you would be able to undertake for a company if it can pay you (as a consultant):  
1,000, 5,000, 10,000 €, £, \$.

### **1.1.3 Other items to specify**

It is also good to specify:

- the resources that you will use;
- the time that you will allocate for each phase of your internship/project/assignment and to the whole project;
- the final deadline for your work;
- your contact person in the organization.

## **1.2 Have realistic expectations**

Experience shows that the objective of an internship/project/assignment is often too ambitious and requires in most cases twice as much time as expected to require.

This is indicative of:

- your inexperience in the subject matter;
- the euphoric spirit in which negotiations are undergone;
- the optimism and the impatience of the representative of the company with which you are negotiating;
- and other unexpected reasons...

Before committing to an objective:

- meet with people who have completed an internship/project/assignment similar to yours;
- discuss with supervisors of internships/projects/assignments and/or with professors;
- study reports on the internship/project/mission to which you can have access, written by your predecessors.

## **1.3 Confirm your internship/project/assignment in writing**

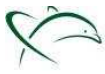
Once the details of your service have been made clear, check with the company to confirm in writing what has been discussed.

To ensure that you obtain this document, a sentence such as:

- *"Do you wish to confirm in a letter our agreement or would you prefer that I do it?"*

Or

- *"To be sure, can we confirm our agreement in writing or would you prefer that I prepare the document?"*



The document which shows your agreement can be:

- a company letter;
- a protocol signed by the two parties;
- a contract signed by the two parties.

#### **1.4 Be informed: gather the maximum amount of information**

- Reading (books, professional magazines, annual reports, journal articles...).
- Or discuss and interview your peers, friends, colleagues...

This information centers around:

- the topic of your services;
- the host organization;
- the field/sector in which it is developing;
- the person to whom you will report during your internship/project/assignment.  
Rest assured that there will only be one!

When you begin your internship/project/assignment, you will get to know:

- the organization chart of your employer;
- the names and titles of the persons with whom you will be in contact;
- the field jargon (there are between 50 and 150 specific words for every sector or job);
- key ratios of the profession (you should know between 5 and 10);
- names of the main competitors;
- the declining products/services, those which are in a growing phase and those which are just being launched.

#### **1.5 Begin as early as possible**

If you can, begin your internship/project/assignment as early as possible (before the official start date). Visit (as many time as you can) the company that will host you for 2-4 hours per visit every 2 to 3 weeks, provided this is in the town or vicinity where you live.

Begin your research. Surf the net, speak to those around you, interview your professors, who are specialists in the field if it is your major. In doing so, you will be 100% ready to officially begin your internship/project/assignment.

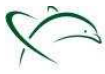
## **2 DURING YOUR INTERNSHIP/PROJECT/ASSIGNMENT**

### **2.1 At the beginning of your internship/project/assignment**

#### ***2.1.1 Introduce yourself and make yourself known.***

Introduce yourself to those around you. To avoid committing a faux pas, first meet your contact person and ask him how you should proceed.

When you introduce yourself, don't hesitate to repeat your name twice and specify the subject of your internship/project/assignment.



### **2.1.2 Act professionally**

Carefully respect the time.

Don't be the last to arrive or the first to leave.

Don't let yourself be embarrassed by things that can show your lack of professionalism.

Moreover, avoid:

- borrowing cigarettes or forgetting your wallet;
- to make complete and untimely judgments on situations or people;
- to receive or make personal phone calls (turn off your cell phone during working hours).

### **2.1.3 Organize and plan your internship/project/assignment**

***Divide your objective into sub-objectives, then under these sub-objectives, sub-sub-objectives.***

For each of these, set three target dates:

- an optimistic date;
- a realistic date;
- and a pessimistic date that you can in no circumstance go past.

Put your action plan on a micro-computer table, which will allow you to keep it up to date.

Present your project and action plan to your contact person to look at, confirm (or not), and finally approve.

## **2.2 During your internship/project/assignment**

### **2.2.1 Attitude/Behavior**

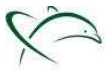
#### **2.2.1.1 Show an interest for everything**

People with curiosity are always appreciated. Rather than becoming like an inquisitor, ask questions and show that you have interest for everything that is shown to you (topics, practices, procedures, customs...). Whenever appropriate, take notes or make photocopies while making sure to receive permission beforehand.

It is possible that you will already know some things that are shown to you. It is wise to not show it and to let them know discreetly.

#### **2.2.1.2 Have a positive and constructive attitude**

Be open to suggestions. Put them immediately into practice. This will encourage your colleagues who will be happy to help you when the need arises.



**2.2.1.3 Give the impression of a serious person**

Be serious at all times but don't lose your sense of humour. It will serve you well to overcome transitional difficulties in the first weeks.

Keep your word. If you make a small promise, be sure that you will keep it (take note of it and confirm it in writing, if this seems appropriate to you).

On the day that you deliver what you have promised, be careful with how you speak. If for some reason, you had a problem, let your supervisor know and get advice from your contact person. Explain clearly the situation, all your excuses, and offering one or two alternative solutions.

**2.2.1.4 Take initiative**

You will be evaluated primarily on the initiatives that you take. Proceed with care.

At the beginning, only take small initiatives (without requesting prior agreement!) If these are successful, present the results to your contact person.

Then, when you have succeeded in building confidence and an opportunity arises, offer your services to pursue it.

**2.2.1.5 Don't measure or count your efforts**

Don't count your hours or the time that you have invested in certain tasks.

Don't forget that you are in the process of learning many things and that it will take time.

Be ready to offer your time and help in return.

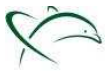
Some managers have a policy of answering "Yes" when one of their subordinates or colleagues asks them for a service. This practice has a corollary: be sure to answer them with "yes" when they ask you for a service or favour.

**2.2.1.6 Offer your time generously**

Many people will evaluate you on the basis of your respect for the time.

This is certainly not a perfect measure, but it certainly says a lot. Also avoid being late for a few minutes here and there to avoid being evaluated irrevocably.

Every day, arrive 5-10 minutes before. Avoid counting your hours at the end of the day (without making systematic additional hours)



## **2.2.2 Relationships with others**

### **2.2.2.1 Respect all personnel members**

Maintain good relations with every personnel member. Each has a useful role to play in running the organization. Remember that there is no big or small role. There are people who do big things and small things...

### **2.2.2.2 Meet as many people as possible**

Meet the maximum number of people during your internship/project/assignment. Don't ever forget to introduce yourself and to tell them your name and the objective of your internship/project/assignment.

Once you have returned to your desk, immediately write down the names and responsibilities of the persons that you have met as well as the subject of your discussions.

It is best to store all this information on your computer.

For example, make your objective to meet each week  $n$  ( $2 < N < 5$ ) people that you don't know in the company (at the cafeteria, the bar, going out...).

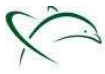
### **2.2.2.3 Listen carefully to what they tell you**

There are two groups of people:

- those who have nothing to say. They generally talk a lot;
- those who have something to say. They speak less and rarely repeat the same thing twice. They like to be heard and understood the first time. They can be very helpful.

In order to identify them and benefit from them, there are two techniques:

- ask the people around you about who to listen to in the organization;
- then, when you are in his or her presence, L.I.S.T.EN. to her or L.I.S.T.E.N. to him.



### **2.2.3 Work/Production/Organization**

#### **2.2.3.1 Always keep in mind your objective**

For example, post it under the glass pane of your desk, in your daily planner, on your bathroom mirror...

#### **2.2.3.2 Structure your work**

Have a daily planner on which to write your objectives, daily plans, your priorities, and attach post-it notes on which you write your to-do list. During the day, write down how much time it took for each task, ideally in increments of 15 minutes or for each hour, as lawyers do. At the end of the day, add up the times. Compare them with what you expected. Make corrective decisions based on them.

#### **2.2.3.3 Organize your workspace**

Specify the room or place where you are supposed to work and the desk that you have been assigned.

#### **2.2.3.4 Always remain in the context of your internship/project/assignment**

For each question or new task that you are given, ask yourself if it goes well with the context of your internship/project/assignment. This will prevent you from spreading yourself too thin.

If a service is requested of you, it is good to accept. If that is even a small problem (too important, political aspect of the project, source of possible conflicts), ask your contact person what he or she thinks.

#### **2.2.3.5 Analyze your deviations in relation to your work plan for the internship/project/assignment**

As you continue, make a point every day (or at least once a week) to analyze the gaps in relation to your plans.

If the difference becomes too great, immediately go meet with your contact person to ask for advice. Worst case scenario, re-examine your lower objectives and reformulate them on a written document on which you will make a "protocol."

#### **2.2.3.6 Give feedback**

Give feedback in return to people or friends that you have helped or advised.

Don't forget to do this verbally or in writing. Do this continually and not only when you have to. The effect would be less important and you would risk forgetting to do it.





**2.2.3.7 *Take notes continually and write your report as early as possible***

Take notes every day, write down again and always write. Enter all information into your computer. You will organize them later. Taking notes continually for two reasons:

- the tendency to forget is always strong when you enter into a new environment;
- the writing of your final report for your internship/project/assignment will be easier and more natural
- use a "Progress Report".

Type on an Excel spreadsheet:

- the tasks that have been given to you and their progress;
- the initiatives that you could take to improve in your working environment.

Update this document each week and give it to your manager at the beginning of every Monday afternoon (Monday morning is always very busy). Put this in paper and email format.

See the next page for an example of a "Progress report."



## Progress Report

**From** Insert your first name and last name

**Week Beginning:** 01.01.20XX

**To** Insert the first and last names of the recipient

1	Ongoing tasks and assignments	Date of the Request	Importance (1=Basse 4=Haute)	% Complete	Date Due	Comments/Notes
1.01	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	1	10%	01.01.20XX	Insert here your notes...
1.02	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	2	50%	01.01.20XX	Insert here your notes...
1.03	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	1	100%	Completed	Insert here your notes...
1.04	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	3	30%	01.01.20XX	Insert here your notes...
1.05	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	4	70%	01.01.20XX	Insert here your notes...
1.06	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	2	100%	Completed	Insert here your notes...
1.07	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	1	60%	01.01.20XX	Insert here your notes...
1.08	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	4	100%	Completed	Insert here your notes...
1.09	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	2	100%	Completed	Insert here your notes...
1.10	Insert here a task/assignment...	01.01.20XX	1	20%	01.01.20XX	Insert here your notes...

2	Other Ideas/Suggestions/Proposals	Comments/Notes
---	-----------------------------------	----------------

2.01	Insert here an idea/suggestion/proposal	Insert here your notes...
2.02	Insert here an idea/suggestion/proposal	Insert here your notes...
2.03	Insert here an idea/suggestion/proposal	Insert here your notes...
2.04	Insert here an idea/suggestion/proposal	Insert here your notes...
2.05	Insert here an idea/suggestion/proposal	Insert here your notes...



## **2.3 At the end of your internship/project/assignment**

### **2.3.1 Leave an excellent impression of yourself**

***Make sure to leave behind an excellent impression. If your paths crossed once, it is highly likely that they will cross again.***

Don't leave any open or pending file. Be sure to respond to all questions that have been asked of you and that have served you well in all the tasks that you have been given.

Make sure your desk is empty and clean and that your walls don't have any of your documents, photos, or graphics.

### **2.3.2 Thank every person that you have met.**

Ask to see every person that you have met and who have helped you in the course of your internship/project/assignment.

### **2.3.3 For each one, write a small note with a personal touch**

If they are absent or very busy, write them a small card that you will leave at the corner of their desk.

Present the draft of your report to the persons mentioned in your report. If you prepare a report or a dossier on the internship/project/assignment that you have been given, be very careful with your tone and your remarks.

Meet with your contact person:

- to review the drafting process of your document;
- to obtain his or her consent to the structure of your report, the information that you incorporate and the content of your recommendations.

Don't prepare the final version of your dossier/report until after having them approved by the people.

Avoid sharing information that you think is open and communal. They could have strategic importance that you underestimated or confidentiality that you ignored.

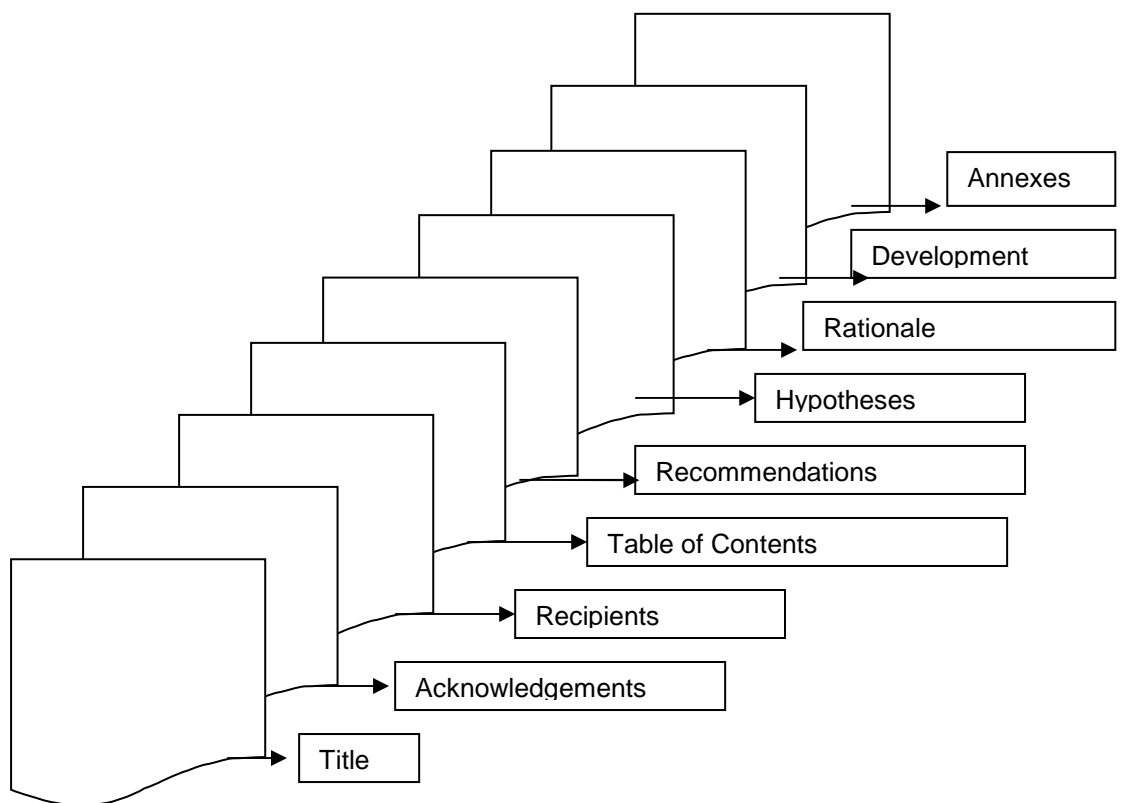


#### **2.3.4 Prepare your internship report and submit it**

The writing of the report/project will require intense and high-level work. Don't devalue it while neglecting your exit. In some companies and/or schools/universities/institutes, the structure of the report that you must produce is given.

If this is not the case, you can use the following presentation as a guide.

Take precautions when you turn in and/or expedite your internship report (certified mail) to ensure that your recipients receive it on time.





### **2.3.5 Make an inventory of everything that you have learned**

Every evening or each week you have documented in your planner or your logbook everything that you have learned.

Now make a summary. Based on your notes, go back and list the 2 or 3 thing that you have learned from your experience.

You can include them in your report or cite them if your report is the subject of an oral defence before a jury.

You can also communicate them to your contact person in recognition of what he or she has done for you.

## **3 AFTER YOUR INTERNSHIP/PROJECT/ASSIGNMENT**

### **3.1 Thank in writing everyone who has helped you**

As soon as your assignment is complete, thank in writing different people who have helped you during your time.

Do this preferably in writing (on paper rather than email), rather than by phone. You will leave a remarkable legacy.

Several formats are possible. You can use a small greeting card or an A4 sheet. Make sure your letter is something other than a polite form of address. Include one or two notes that specify how the recipient helped you. Make it "content" over "substance." You can address the letters to their workplace or their home.

### **3.2 Invite key people to the oral defense of your report**

If your report were to be the addressed in a formal presentation, invite your contact person and the people who have contributed to your work. Do this in a typed letter, email, or even a handwritten note.

### **3.3 Keep your promises**

If you are assigned to provide a service, keep your word. Don't only respect your commitments but also maintain your image.

### **3.4 Stay in touch with your contacts**

Later, be sure to stay in touch with people with whom you have established links. Contact them from time to time. Send them a photocopy of an article that could interest them. Write them on your greeting card list. Find the time to visit them or have a meal with them. This plays into the management of your career and upkeep of your "visibility".