It’s not too late to score a summer internship

By ERIKA PRAFDER

HAVEN’T yet secured a summer internship? The good news is: It’s not too late, according to industry experts.

“We have almost 3,000 internship postings in our database,” says Michelle Kyriakides, executive director of the Career Center at Hofstra University. “While some industries (such as accounting) recruit interns throughout the fall, particularly in advance of the following spring tax season, other industries realize they still have needs. It’s still a great idea for students who haven’t found one to continue looking.”

If you’ve applied to internship positions and continue to be rejected, visit your college career center, she says. “They can help with résumé writing, interviewing skills and pointing you in the direction of internal internship postings or industry-specific Web sites and last-chance job fairs to find out about summer opportunities,” says Kyriakides.

Networking is imperative now, too. “Who do you know in the field you’re interested in? Faculty? Family? Call them directly to find out if they have personal contacts at organizations within. Inquire about existing internship programs,” she says.

Forging your own opportunities from scratch is another option. “Look on LinkedIn. Try identifying folks you have something in common with, and ask such people out for informational interviews. Ask them how you would go about finding an internship at this point,” says Kyriakides. “Seek advice. Let them know they are in a position you’d like to gravitate toward. Perhaps they can introduce you to another person who can help you find an opportunity.”

InternQueen.com founder Lauren Berger says the most important step to take at this late stage is to “get organized. Know which internships you’ve already applied for and the dates you applied. It may be time for a follow-up,” she says.

Tips for last-minute internship hunting

Think philanthropically.

“You can intern at a local nonprofit that could dovetail into a career in that industry or pick up skills that set you apart for an internship later on in the career you’re aspiring toward,” says Kyriakides.

Think small.

At this late stage, “think about smaller companies. You might get better, more hands-on experience, too,” says Kyriakides.

Go above and beyond part-time.

“If you have a part-time job at Carvel, see if they need a social-media person. Extra duties like these just add to your portfolio of experience and can demonstrate to future employers that you’ve done something within your field of interest,” says Kyriakides.

Assess progress.

“If you haven’t heard back from a lot of employers, or are getting rejections but no solid offers, what’s the problem? Is there a trend here? Have your college career center review your résumé, cover letter and conduct a mock interview. If you’re sending generic cover letters, it could potentially be a reason you’re not getting further in the process,” says Berger.

Connect with other interns.

“Don’t underestimate the value of current interns. If a student you know is interning at your dream company, ask their advice. Maybe they can direct you to a hiring manager,” says Berger.

Hit up alumni.

“Your college alumni office is the best bet. LinkedIn has a feature through which you can search a company to see which people went to your college or university. Take advantage of these connections and ask whom they suggest you connect with at their organization. Put the ask out there,” says Berger.

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