

# INTERNAL AFFAIRS

**By Dr. Patrick Low Kim Cheng, Ph. D. & Chartered Marketer**

Read all about It... Here the faculty member who has helped to set up BCB Career Services Center in Feb 2004 speaks about internships.

## **Can I Enjoy the Experience?**

Some internships are like fairy tales. Interns enjoyed their stint and viewed it as a learning experience. They felt rewarded are paid and felt that their jobs are fantastic.

For example, one student described his temporary internship stint in a foreign bank in which he said he enjoyed the multicultural environment there. «I have decided to take up this internship rather than full time employment because I believe that there is much to be learnt here. This certainly adds to my work experiences".

One employer, who spoke to this writer, said that he likes to employ temporary workers or student interns. According to him, they are flexible and feel that everything is possible. He added that «employees who have been on the job for a while develop a certain 'fixed' pattern but interns do not come with the baggage of having worked in the industry. They see possibilities!"

## **Can I Learn From Hiccups?**

Yes. Turn hiccups into highlights! Don't let your internships sink! Take them as challenges and learn from them. Hiccups are always learning points for the interns. It is not the mistakes that count, but what you do or respond to the mistakes that count most!

## **Am I Being Exploited?**

«I am being made to do menial tasks such as making coffee or running errands.» «The work was humiliating!" «I have to do simple faxing of mass mail.» These are some of the common complaints I have heard from some students. To me, that's being hands-on. One learns better that way.

**Nonetheless, interns who are hired under their college's internship programs can seek help from their respective college's Employment Centers if they feel they are being mistreated. Normally, most firms want to be seen as treating their interns fairly. If no contract is signed, working conditions will depend on industry practice.**

To be fair, a certain amount of me-

nia work should be expected, even for full-time staff. In some small companies or even in big companies in hard times, there may be budget constraints. Whatever the reason, the right attitude to adopt is to know that everything has a purpose. Learn to see how the small tasks fit into the big picture.

## **Are Interns Supposed to Do Routine Work?**

You may ask: Am I supposed to do things like photocopying and filing? If you are employed as an intern, and you feel that you are doing too much of a certain task, you can always ask or discuss with your supervisor, the company's Human Resource Manager or Career counselor on how to make things more interesting or challenging.

True, you can wait for them to make suggestions. However, I believe that when you demonstrate your initiative, you in fact stand out and get noticed.

## **What Sort of Qualities Do Employers Look Out For When Hiring Interns?**

Employers ordinarily look out for the students' value system. What values do they hold?

When interviewing students for temporary jobs for companies, like employers, I want to know if they are prepared to work overtime, work long hours, or get their hands dirty on the job.

## **How Can I Capitalize On My Internships?**

Let your Campus staff, your faculty members and supervisors know about the company, your experiences and what benefits the internships bring to you. Write a report if it is required by your Career Services Center. Write to them while your memory is fresh. Better still, write articles and contribute them to your university's magazines and students' newsletters. In KIMEP, there is the KIMEP Times and besides, KIMEP students can also contribute to KIMEP's career services website.

**A behavioural consultant, Associate Dean Dr. Low is both a human resource and marketing professional, and he has various work experiences such as in the Civil Service (Ministry of Home Affairs HQ, Singapore), electronics (Texas Instruments), trade, financial industries (United Overseas Bank, Standard Chartered Bank) and the academia. Need any advice, talk or email Dr. Low at [patrick@kimep.kz](mailto:patrick@kimep.kz)**