

## SHOULD YOU FORGO A 'SURE THING' FOR A RISKY INTERNSHIP?

**Summary:** Should you take an internship job outside of your intended industry? Find out if the benefits outweigh the risks in this article.



**Question:** I have been working for a consumer loan finance company for two years, which allows me to work part-time and supplement my income to put me through college. I may have the opportunity to take a very privileged internship working with intellectual property this summer. Do I jump at the internship opportunity for new knowledge and experience or keep the job I have, which provides the money I need to get through school?

**Answer:** While only you can decide the level of risk you are willing to take, here are two considerations for your decision-making process.

Map out the benefits of accepting the internship. From the description provided, it sounds as if you truly are aching to move on and benefit from the new experience that the internship would provide. The opportunity to become involved in "a very privileged internship" working with intellectual property offers the potential to springboard into a new career path. In addition, you may be able to leverage the experience and new connections into a paid position with the sponsoring company or with another organization.

Prepare for the worst-case scenario losing your source of steady income. It is hard to let go of a sure thing when it comes to financial stability. In reality, however, most opportunities for growth and development result from taking a risk, plunging yourself into a new environment with novel demands, stretching out of a comfort zone, working through a hardship, or making a sacrifice. To minimize the risk, consider alternative arrangements or income sources before you exit your position. While it may seem an unlikely request, approach your employer for an unpaid leave over the summer with a guaranteed return in the fall, offering some availability to help out with your summer stand-in. In addition, start generating thoughts for creative options and scouting potential employers in case you are jobless in the fall. Work closely with your college career center to develop outstanding promotional materials for your candidacy.

In the grand scheme, you can make either side of the decision work for you. It is a matter of priorities and timing. Gather as much information as possible, weigh the opportunities and risks, then pull together support and resources to maximize your final call.

- See [What's the Best Way to Find a Paid Internship?](#) for more information.