

LET YOUR CONTACTS LEAD THE WAY TO AN INTERNSHIP

Summary: Find out how to find a summer internship when you are in an area where few companies come to recruit.



Question: I'm an M.B.A. student at the University of Montana. I worked for a small public accounting firm after obtaining my undergraduate degree, and I'm dabbling in Internet marketing. I'm looking for summer internships, but few companies come here to recruit. How do I get my foot in the door and build a personal brand?

Answer: Circle back to the firm you worked for and consider both employee and client contacts. These are potential sources of leads or openings in your new arena. And don't be shy about calling or writing to alumni for informal conversations that may help open some doors. Research and identify specific companies that hold the most promise so you can be specific in your requests for leads and information as you develop your network. Especially if you're trying to break into marketing, make sure all of your personal promotional materials are inviting to the eye and flawless.

To build a brand, you need first to decide what your brand is. What is your distinguishing feature? How would you like to be recognized and remembered? Once you have the image in mind that will best reflect your uniqueness, start building your reputation by delivering and following through on any project you touch.

To reinforce your brand, create a logo and tagline that communicate the essence of your brand. Include them both on your website and in e-mail correspondence. Develop a distinguished portfolio that reflects the best of your work and personality. Finally, jump at any opportunity to make presentations or write—inside or outside of the company. This type of visibility will spotlight your brand and enhance your credibility.

See **Personal Branding – 3 Tips that Will Advance Your Career Quickly** for more information.