

Here are a few important strategies to ensure that your internship experience will help you improve your long-term international job prospects. Adhering to only a few of the suggestions below will put you in a much better position to land a paying international job once you graduate. Try to score as many points as possible by using the strategies below.

- **Be bold in your job hunting tactics:** Most entry-level job offers are through the back door. Keep your eyes open for any potential jobs and take quick action when they arise.
  - **Be curious during your internship:** Make friends from other departments and organizations. Make networking contacts and try to attend conferences and meetings outside your department. Travel on short job hunting trips in your region of the world. Seek out managers and leaders in your field of interest. Track names and addresses of all international colleagues for future job networking. Maintain an old-fashioned address book.
  - **Work hard:** Internships are often viewed as testing periods for selecting permanent hires. Impress your employers. Go beyond your job description and volunteer with whoever needs you. Offer services that are in short supply: editing, translation, computer work, and online set-up.
  - **If a paying job opportunity arises, consider leaving your internship:** You need to be gracious and honourable when negotiating your departure. Your new employer should be flexible on the start-up date in order for you to give full consideration to your internship hosting organization.
  - **Score extra resume points during your internship:** While interning abroad, look at how you can build one or two other professional experiences. This way, you can score extra points on your resume: Teach a computer class at a local high school or for local NGOs. Produce a radio program on a development-related topic. Present a seminar to a professional group or college class on your area of expertise. Participate in organizing an event, any event, outside of your workplace. Write a quick-reference card on the cultural norms of your host country, then design and deliver an orientation program for new expatriates entering the country. Teach business English part-time. Edit a manuscript for a professional in your field of expertise. Over one weekend use Quicken software to design the accounting system for a small NGO. Any of these suggestions can be done fairly easily to score big career-building points on your resume.
  - **Continue traditional job hunting techniques while you are still abroad:** This is a very potent job hunting technique. There is nothing more impressive for an international employer than to receive a job application from an organized young intern based in another country. The Internet makes doing so easy. Whether you are applying to North American or international organizations, employers will take notice when they receive, for example, an application from an intern currently working in Taiwan. You are much more impressive if you are abroad and job hunting than if you are at home, jobless on your parents' couch, looking for international work!
  - **Plan for two internships while studying for a Master's degree:** Consider doing two international internships during your college studies: one after your undergraduate degree, the other during or after your Master's. The premise is that you will be completing a Master's degree to qualify for an international position.
  - **Find a short-term consulting contract abroad after your internship:** This is perhaps the most important advice in this whole document. There is nothing more important than trying to extend your stay as an intern abroad for an extra month to work in a professional job with another organization. With a one-month consultancy, you double the value of your professional international work experience on your resume.
  - **It will never be easier to get an international contract:** The key concept here is that you are abroad: you are able to make contacts and you are bathing in a soup called *the international job market*. There is no other more effective strategy in building your international resume than looking for international work while interning abroad. The task of finding international work will get much harder when you return home to North America; seize any opportunity to extend your stay after your internship to gain more international experience and build up your resume.
- **Go abroad with the express purpose of extending your stay:** You need this mindset to envision that you will be staying longer than your six-month internship. Remember, this is an important career move for you and you should realize the potency of your decision to extend your stay.
  - **Start with a clear job search plan that begins when you first arrive in your host country as an intern:** For a six-month internship broken into two-month phases: Phase One: work hard to impress your host organization. Phase Two: begin researching potential employers outside your workplace. Phase Three: begin a series of information-gathering interviews and network, network, network. Phase Four: actively approach potential employers.
  - **Who are the employers that can offer you a one- or two-month consulting contract?** Here is a list of possibilities: other NGOs, IGOs, or INGOs; embassies (not just your own); other international consultants who are always hanging out at the local high-end hotel; international firms operating in your country; your host organization could transpose your internship into a paying contract; field offices of all the above types of organizations located inside your host country or in nearby countries.
  - **Why would these employers be interested in you?** Firstly, you are already in the host country and know the ropes. In comparison to other international consultants, you cost very little in salary and travel costs. You know the geography of the city and the country, you probably have a smattering of local language skills, and you certainly have the cross-cultural experience to work in tandem with local staff. You can quickly respond to an employer's needs. You probably also have good contacts with other expats and their international employers. Moreover, you are skilled—educated with talent and enthusiasm. Bravo! What an irresistible combination for an employer with temporary staffing needs.
  - **Off-the-wall research techniques:** Have a resume ready—one clearly stating that you are looking for a short-term, one- or two-month contract at the end of your current internship. Post a small ad where expats hang out: embassies, expat clubs, local bars, etc. Have business cards printed to facilitate all manner of networking. Socialize at the spousal clubs that exist in most capitals—it is often easier to network through them than directly with their working spouses. Go to as many expat parties as you can. Offer to work for free and provide country orientation for incoming consultants—pick them up at the airport and hand them your resume while driving into town (this works). Speak to commercial officers at embassies and ask for private sector contacts from firms based in your home country and operating in your host country. Do your own freelance consulting—submit proposals directly to international organizations in your region. Offer to work as a low-paid assistant to busy international professionals living in the country—even in exchange for room and board, with the express purpose of building experience. Offer to be an administrative assistant (and driver) to an international consultant who is in town on a short mission. Find a second short-term internship with another organization.
  - **Other strategies to extend your stay abroad after an internship:** There are hundreds of ways to stay abroad and continue to build international experience. Here is a list of tactics, but don't stop here, use diplomatic prowess and entrepreneurial imagination to find more.
    - Consider teaching at a third world college or university for a semester if you have a Master's and like to teach.
    - Consider teaching English abroad as a stepping-stone to other jobs.
    - Consider doing international refugee or relief work.
    - Continue to travel, but make it a job hunting vacation. Show up on the doorsteps of international employers.
    - Extend your stay to learn a new language while job hunting.
    - Volunteer as an editor with non-English-speaking experts.
    - Keep up your correspondence with international colleagues.

Be bold! Be industrious! Get what you want and build experience.

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