

# WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THIS SUMMER?

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by Sarah Steenrod

As the academic year winds down, it is likely that college students around the world are being asked, “*What are your plans for this summer?*”

Interning at your dream company? Taking classes? Studying abroad? Feeling speechless because you have no idea?

If this question makes you cringe, it might mean that you don’t...yet...know what you’ll be up to this summer. The good news is you are in control of how you spend your time this summer and there is still time to make a plan to make the most of it!

**Conduct Informational Interviews** – Reach out to family, friends, or alumni from your university who work at a company/organization of interest to you and set up a time to talk with them about their work, their company, or their city. This is a great way to network and people love to talk about themselves. People also like to help college students because it gives them a chance to “pay it forward,” so do as much of this as you can while you’re still a student. LinkedIn is a great resource for expanding your network – [www.linkedin.com/alumni](http://www.linkedin.com/alumni)

**Get Experience** – While many students put pressure on themselves to get an internship as early as freshman or sophomore year, most companies target juniors for their internship programs. While you may not land an internship, there are so many opportunities to develop transferable skills through traditional summer jobs. For example, being a server in a restaurant may help you develop strong customer service or communication skills, and working as a camp counselor may help you develop teamwork or problem solving skills. It is important to value your experiences and be ready to tell potential employers how you can add value to their company based on your experience from previous employment.

**Develop a Skill** – Perhaps you’ve been meaning to learn some new Excel formulas, get familiar with a social media platform, or brush up on a foreign language. Summer is a great time to focus on the things you have been putting off.

**Be Strategic** – Many students want to work for large companies or organizations after graduation, but they don't always think of ways to get insights into the company. For example, if a student is interested in a career with L Brands, it could be very beneficial for them to get some in-store experience at Bath & Body Works. This would be a great way to show that you understand the company culture and the customers in an interview.

**Volunteer** – Approach volunteer opportunities as if you're applying for your dream job. Write a personalized cover letter and send it along with your resume to local organizations and offer your help. Even if you don't land a gig in the marketing department, you never know how much you may gain (both personally and professionally) from the experience of giving back.

**Do Something That Makes You Interesting** – What do you like to do for fun? What would you enjoy talking to people about in a casual setting? Training for a half-marathon, learning a new instrument, perfecting your cooking skills, or taking a cross country trip? The opportunities are endless, but you are the only person who can decide what makes you interesting.

**Read** – “The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.” ~Dr. Seuss

Best of luck making your summer a meaningful and memorable one. Hopefully when you head back to school in the fall and someone asks, “What did you do this summer?” you will have plenty to talk about!

*Sarah Steenrod is the Director, Undergraduate Career Consultation and Programs, Fisher College of Business, The Ohio State University.*

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