

Caroline Gregorie
Internship Feedback
1 August 2015

Interior Design Intern Report

Being raised by two parents who are involved in the furniture business heavily influenced my decision to seek out an interior design internship. My only criteria was that I had to have an internship in a big city, such as New York. I knew that after my five semesters at Sewanee, I needed to branch out and have a more fast paced experience. Starting in January, I reached out to copious amounts of family friends who lived in NYC asking for their advice on how to secure an internship. Finally I was given the email for an interior design company in Manhattan named Jenny Wolf Interiors, and I received a response within an hour asking me for a phone interview. Coincidentally, Jenny was a Sewanee graduate and from South Carolina as well, and her employees were from Georgia and Kentucky. Therefore I was immediately drawn to them because of their southern flavor. My interview was a great success and I was offered the job at the end of the phone call. I immediately accepted their offer for a summer internship and knew that I had made the best choice for me.

Although an internship in New York may seem oh so glamorous, it is far from that. On June 1, I walked into the 189 Franklin Street address with my perfectly tailored pencil skirt and my white silk blouse feeling very professional. However, I was already sweating bullets because my commute from uptown all the way downtown was rather treacherous. Not to mention I had left an hour earlier that day

to make sure I nailed the New York Subway system. Thus, I walked into the office and I first noticed that everyone is dressed extremely relaxed in jeans, tank tops and Converse. For a moment I thought that I had stepped into the wrong office because of my disbelief at their easygoing appearances. Within five minutes of being in the office Becca, one of my fellow employees, handed me a large list of errands to run throughout the city. The first on the list was to find a turquoise leather swatch for a client's sofa. They handed me a sample and wanted me to find the exact color for a lower price. I was to find this leather at the D&D building, which is located on the completely opposite side of town, on East 58th Street. This building is comprised of a multitude of showrooms that house fabrics, wood, furniture, tiles, and so on. After four hours of searching I finally found the correct fabric; then, I was given a description of a table that I was to find and take a picture. This seemed like an impossible task due to the fact that the building consisted of about 15 floors and 30 showrooms. I was at a loss and felt like the day was a complete fail. In utter desperation, I showed a woman in one of the showrooms the table and she knew the exact vendor and location of the table. After being out of the office for over five hours completing the list, there began a torrential downpour on my walk back. Needless to say it wasn't the perfect day, but I did learn a lot about time management and being able to navigate myself in the best possible way around the city.

When reflecting on this internship, I would say that I have developed a strong sense of product knowledge. Often times my boss would ask me to find something

like sconces or a Louis Philippe mirror online that would match with a certain theme and vibe of a room. She would not give me the names of websites to find any of these products; instead I was responsible for locating these on my own. Therefore, I really honed in my skills on that end and feel knowledgeable about brands and vendors. In addition, I sat in on daily meetings with clients and wrote notes about what they liked and disliked regarding the furniture pulls for their homes. Experiencing these meetings benefited me in many ways and it also allowed me to witness the financial aspects of the business. My boss brought in spreadsheets of the products and how much it would be to purchase, install, custom design etc. When previously thinking about an interior design job, I never associated it with the financials, or even how in a sense the designer serves as an architect. People would hire my boss to design kitchens and bathrooms, not just to decorate a house. Thus, sitting in on the meetings enabled me to see a lot of the behind the scenes work. Also, I was responsible for making daily calls to vendors and ordering samples. This may not have been the most exciting aspect of the job, but was good for me to learn to communicate with these vendors.

Looking back at my summer in New York City, I cannot be thankful enough for the opportunity to work under Jenny Wolf and her incredible team. I can honestly say that I learned something new everyday and am appreciative of their patience and guidance throughout last summer. They have left me with excitement for a successful future in this field. I hope to continue to pave my career toward interior design, hopefully permanently in the Big Apple!