

2016 Internship Report

For the past three months, I have had both the honor and the pleasure of interning at Maptote in Brooklyn, New York. My second summer in New York City, this internship offered me invaluable experience that has given me nothing but positive experiences to bring with me to the professional world upon graduation this coming May.

Maptote is a small retail company founded by husband-and-wife owners Michael and Rachel Berick. A former cartographer and stylist, the Berick's company got its start designing and selling environmentally-friendly canvas tote bags featuring a map of Brooklyn, the company's home base. In 2016, Maptote now sells tote bags featuring various maps, as well as clothing, accessories and gifts via ecommerce and through hundreds of brick and mortar stores both nationally and internationally. The company also works with many large, well-established companies such as J. Crew, Nordstrom, and Urban Outfitters, collaborating with the companies to co-design and sell products to their millions of customers. Many smaller, independent companies, labels, and clients also flock to Maptote to design custom and private-label products, all featuring Maptote's signature locale theme.

My internship responsibilities at Maptote fell primarily into two categories: marketing and sales. As far as marketing, my major role was maintaining marketing through various social media platforms.

There are very few, if any, companies one can work for today that do not have a social media component. Because of this fact, I felt that my input was very valuable in this area of Maptote; my bosses were constantly asking for my advice and opinion. Interestingly, my internship last summer, also in New York City and through Sewanee, heavily involved social media marketing, and thus this summer I was able to call upon many of the skills I gained last

summer to aid my experience at Maptote. In my opinion, this in many ways embodies the purpose of Sewanee's ACE internships, in the sense that I have gained and continue to cultivate a set of skills summer after summer which I am able to call upon to aid current job positions.

In the weeks leading up to the start of my internship at Maptote, I had several conversations with Rachel Berick. During one of the phone calls, Rachel explained to me that she and Michael wanted to mold this internship into one that would be most align with my professional interest. Impressed by her flexibility and genuine concern for what *I* wanted to gain from my time at Maptote, I told Rachel that, along with marketing, I wanted to gain exposure to sales. Outgoing by nature, I have always been interested in sales due to the personal aspect of the field; following my arrival at Maptote, in no time I was indeed working frequently in sales.

As a sales intern, many of my days were spent researching new stockists for Maptote products and contacting social media influencers whose aesthetics I perceived to be similar to Maptote's. I genuinely enjoyed being in contact with the various buyers and influencers, working one-on-one with them to decide which products would most closely fit their stores and personal styles. This task was, undoubtedly, my favorite of those that I was assigned while interning this summer.

Because of Rachel and Michael's generosity and flexibility, my summer at Maptote has provided me with invaluable insight: not only do I want to continue to pursue marketing post-graduation from Sewanee, but I also genuinely enjoy working in sales. Working with other brands and companies through sales is a job at which I believe I can excel in the future, and if it were not for my summer at Maptote, I would likely not have discovered this about myself and my capabilities.

Since the beginning of my college career, I have accepted and completed five unpaid internships. As an intern, it is unfortunately the case that, at times, one can feel unimportant and undervalued; however, at Maptote, I felt quite the opposite. Both Rachel and Michael as well as all of the other employees not only made me feel included, but they also made me feel as though my opinion and insights truly mattered. I did nothing that I considered “grunt work”, and truly feel as though all of my contributions were important to the overall success and progress of Maptote as a company.

I believe that the feeling of inclusion that I experienced throughout the summer at Maptote caused me to work harder as an intern. When one feels as though that are truly making a difference, one has more motivation to do a more thorough job. Perhaps the most important lesson that I learned while at Maptote was one about human interaction in general: the effect of mutual respect on the workplace. When bosses and employees alike treat one another with respect, the workplace is more pleasant and therefore, in my opinion, more efficient. Michael and Rachel Berick were excellent bosses who allowed me to gain exposure to new and exciting areas of business while simultaneously allowing me to take part in their growing company. I look forward to further pursuing these skills upon my graduation from Sewanee and entrance into the professional world.