

Maptote Internship

I spent this summer living in New York City after being offered an eight-week internship position at Maptote. Maptote is a small Brooklyn-based company that designs and manufactures tote bags, note cards, baby onesies and zip pouches. All of their products are made in the USA. They adorn their products with their unique and quirky vintage-style maps of various cities. Maptote began in 2006 with the concept of making reusable grocery bags decorated with fun schematic maps. They have received great feedback, and have grown their line to note cards, baby onesies, wines totes and zip pouches. Currently, they have fifty available locations printed on eight various styles of bags.

I began my internship testing the waters a bit and working in many different positions within the company. As my internship went on, I began to discover what I truly enjoyed doing: marketing. I then focused more deeply on the marketing side of the business. Though a typical day was never the same, some of my duties as an intern included: collecting, counting and packing inventory for retail and wholesale orders on a daily basis, sending sales emails to potential clients, organizing files around the office, preparing for and modeling in photo shoots, research for blog posts and managing Maptote's Pinterest page. It was very eye-opening to work on the wholesale side of the business because I have worked exclusively in small retailers. At these stores, I was involved in purchasing and receiving products to sell as opposed to receiving orders and packing inventory.

One other thing I got to do was take a tour of the factories, both in Brooklyn, in which our bags get sewn and screen printed. It was very insightful to have the opportunity to meet these people and learn how closely they work with one another.

The office was fairly small. I worked with the two owners, Rachel and Michael Berick, along with four other full-time employees (one of them a Sewanee alum) and one part-time employee. They were all very kind, smart people who welcomed me with open arms.

As I started focusing more on marketing, my tasks changed a bit. I really enjoyed going out into Brooklyn and collecting supplies for photo shoots, as well as assisting in setting up said photo shoots. I even had the opportunity to model in a few shoots! One of my other marketing responsibilities was organizing the company's big catalogue sent out before the trade show. I had to gather addresses and contact information to all of the proper stores in order to get our brand and products known. I realized that I definitely enjoy working with a smaller company like Maptote, however, I may want to try my hand at a larger company to truly get a sense of which I prefer.

I learned so much during my eight weeks in New York. I really got a sense of the organization it takes to run a company as well as the importance of proper

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communication. In order for everything to run smoothly, all of the employees must work as a team, the marketing people must work with the finance people who must work with the design people, etc. Living in New York City by myself helped me to learn independence and knowledge about where I might want to build my life post-Sewanee.

As I still I have two and a half weeks left in my internship, I'm excited to be attending the big trade show as my final task. I will have to prepare the set up and work for three days to familiarize potential clients with our products. This will be a wonderful way to see everything I have been working on come together.

Overall this was an incredible experience, I'm so thankful for this opportunity. I truly feel that I have gained the first hand insight that was essential to helping me learn how to move forward in my career path.