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THE ARTHUR J. KANIA SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Become A Super Intern

Fetching coffee in a single bound. Working tirelessly into the wee hours of the night. Coming to the rescue of colleagues in distress. A Super Intern's job is never done.

As you dash around the office, never forget you're under the microscope—being watched, judged, dissected. Although there are never any guarantees you'll snag a full-time offer, even if you perform up to task, there are some superhero maneuvers that will help you soar from intern to employee faster than your boss can say "Planet Krypton." ⁱ

1. Be on Time

It sounds simple, but punctuality speaks volumes about your professionalism.

2. Stay Positive

No one wants to work with a grouch. "The three most important attributes in getting or keeping a job are attitude, attitude, attitude," says Don Sutaria, founder and president of CareerQuest, a coaching company with offices in New York and New Jersey. If you maintain a can-do, positive attitude during your internship tenure, you'll be someone coworkers actually want to be around full time.

3. Be Modest

Don't thrust yourself in front of managers every time you do something right. Your superiors will be watching, so there's no need for you to point out your every accomplishment.

4. Go to Lunch

Once you start becoming friendly with the other full-timers, ask them to go to lunch, one-on-one. Ask how they got their current positions. They may reveal insight about what the company looks for in candidates, interview tips, and more.

5. Be Picky

It may sound harsh, it may sound Machiavellian, but the astute new associate never befriends the first people to seek him out. "There's a high probability they're desperately in need of instant allies," says a Wharton MBA who became a director of corporate relations at Penn State. Until you figure out who's in and who's out, be cordial and professional, but not chummy. If you find yourself the lunch pal of a guy who badmouths the managing directors, you become guilty by association.

6. You're Not Howard Stern

Stay on the safe side with your new colleagues. "Don't discuss religion, sexual orientation, or other private topics," says recruiting consultant Lisa Orrell, author of *Millennials Incorporated*.

7. Don't Be a Cling-On

It's good to make sure your internship supervisor knows what you're doing, but don't incessantly check in. For instance, there's no need to interrupt her and announce you're going to get coffee every time you make a run.

8. Good One

That trick of shooting off an email to a supervisor when working into the wee hours? Oldest one in the book. Don't use it more than twice.

9. Just Leave

It's okay to leave before other colleagues. But as you stroll out the door, never cheerily say, "Don't work too hard," or you'll be branded as the kind of jackass who says things like that.

10. Awkward...

Don't talk business in the bathroom. It puts people in the awkward position of having to agree with you because they don't want to prolong the conversation. Managers tend to resent being put on the spot. They're funny like that.

11. Act Like A Full-timer

Never think like a temp. Introduce yourself to as many people as possible and don't blow off an assignment you think you won't finish before your summer stint ends. If you have any interest in getting hired full-time, act like you're in it for the long haul.

12. Work Smart

OK, it's a no-brainer, but based on the experience of many disappointed employers, this advice needs to be emphasized. CareerQuest's Sutaria stresses that summer employees should "try to tackle summer assignments with all the intelligence and competence they can muster." And remember the little stuff counts too. If you're asked to do menial tasks like photocopying or filing, take them seriously. Otherwise, if you do a sloppy job photocopying documents, who will trust you with bigger assignments?

13. Lean On Me

Go out of your way to help others. Stay late and offer assistance when others at the company are overloaded with work. "It's never too early to act like you're already an indispensable part of the permanent workforce," says Margot Carmichael Lester, a career coach based in North Carolina.

14. Zip It!

Don't complain—about the company, your assignments, the cafeteria food—even to other interns. A positive outlook could make or break you in management's eyes.

15. Be In the Know

Show an interest in the company and learn as much as you can about the industry. Read trade magazines to gain even more knowledge.

16. Ask Questions...To The Right People

You might have a 3.9 GPA, but you still don't know it all—and, guess what? You aren't expected to. Most managers would rather answer 20 questions when you get the assignment than have to fill in holes after you turn it in. If you don't understand how to go about an assignment, ask your supervisor for clarification and what resources are available to you. Just be smart about whom you seek answers from and when. Don't collar the senior vice president at a cocktail party and ask her a dumb question about workflow.

17. Swallow Your Pride

You take a summer job assuming that everyone knows you're attending one of the country's top universities. But one uninformed jerk has the audacity to ask you to fax a lease to his landlord. This, experts say, is the one time you should suck it up. Don't utter the words "that's not in my job description," even if it isn't, 'cause it is.

18. Networking 101: Socialize

Everyone has rubbed elbows with the annoying brown-noser who spends more time trying to schmooze the higher-ups than doing work. It's even more frustrating when you see the ass-kisser heading out to play after-work racquetball with your department manager while you slave away in your cubicle. The lesson? Although getting the job done is of paramount importance, don't underestimate the importance of building a social connection with co-workers. Just do it with some class.

19. Networking 102: Find a Mentor

Building relationships and cultivating champions who can fight for you to get hired is key. That can be done in a number of ways, says Melinda Allen, executive director of leadership development programs at Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management. Network with other interns and employees, including those outside your functional area, to learn more about the people and roles throughout the organization. "Identify someone whom you trust and admire to mentor you and provide feedback," Allen says.

20. Speak Up

It's pretty safe to assume that most employers know you'd love to get an offer for a full-time job when the summer ends. But don't take that fact for granted. "As soon as you decide you love the company and those you're working with, make sure everyone knows you want to come back after graduation as a full-timer," says Carmichael Lester. That includes your boss, coworkers, and the support staffers—who often have the ear of the big guns.

21. Be Subtle About It

A hard sell won't necessarily lead to a hard offer. Don't pester your boss or senior management. Back off if you sense they're not yet confident in your abilities.

22. Be an Object of Desire

Okay, so the summer's done. Some of you might already have a full-time job offer in the bag before your departure date. But even if you don't want to work at the company, try to snag an offer anyway, advises Brian Drum, president and CEO of the New York-based executive search firm Drum Associates. "Keep in mind that when you go on other job interviews, they may ask you if you were offered a fulltime job following your internship." An offer will increase your perceived value in the job market.

23. Keep the Line Open

Even if you walk away without a job offer, continue your relationship. Send articles that might be of interest to your boss, and check on initiatives that you helped jump-start. "The trick is to maintain top-of-mind awareness without being a pest about it," says Carmichael Lester. "An occasional email containing relevant content will do the job." Although your employer will probably guess that you're keeping in touch because you'd love a fulltime offer, it's best to—gingerly—make that clear at some point during your follow-up.

24. Keep Coming Back

If you liked your junior year summer internship and want to work at the company post-graduation, try to continue interning during the school year. Offer to come in during your free mornings or afternoons or during winter break. A position could open up and you'll be top of mind.

25. Stay in Touch

There's another reason to stay in touch with your internship supervisor: Even if she didn't offer you a job, staying fresh in her mind will ensure you have a good reference when you start interviewing elsewhere.

Intern Kryptonite

Superman might have only one weakness, but there's a multitude of ways for an intern to crash and burn, destroying any chance of landing a fulltime gig. What follows is a list of seven ways to obliterate your job prospects with a single blunder. Read closely, and act carefully.

Drinking While Interning

No one will remember the great job you did on a project or the novel idea you came up with if there's a better memory of you drunkenly asking a co-worker "for a nightcap" or throwing up on your project manager. You have a right to a social life, including getting a drink with co-workers—as long as you're 21, of course. But proceed with caution wherever alcohol and work mix.

Chatterbox

Your co-workers might be dishing it out, but it's best to turn a deaf ear to gossip. You're new on the scene, and can't afford to get caught up in the crossfire of office politics.

Head in the Clouds

It's bad to get caught flat-footed by your professor, and even worse by your boss. Doodling or daydreaming during meetings will attract negative attention right off the bat. If you have to be brought back to reality during meetings, there's no way you'll be brought back after your internship.

Forward Motion

Mind your language and subject matter in emails to co-workers and supervisors. An email with the f-word to a fellow intern could get forwarded to the CEO. No matter how funny that forward from your uncle is, it's best to have a chuckle and then chuck it.

Clothes-Minded

Take note of what your officemates wear and make sure you're on par: Don't sport wedge sandals if the other women are wearing closed-toe heels every day. Even if you see supervisors taking business casual to new levels, wait for a formal go-ahead before you break out the muscle shirts. If you look the part, it'll be easier for management to picture you fitting in full time.

Digital Distractions

PDA use might be part of your regular assignments, but limit your use to professional duties. "I look at an internship as an audition," says Natalie Lundsteen, a doctoral candidate at University of Oxford researching internships. That means playing iPhone games or rudely texting while being given instructions could have your supervisor sending you the famous digital kiss-off, "kthnxbai."

Missing in Action

Chronic lateness or absence is a near-certain intern killer, especially if you don't provide notice. The way you notify your supervisors matters, too. Phone calls are the most forthright. Sending a text isn't typically appropriate. Even leaving a voicemail is kind of weaselly. And be mindful of background noise

when you call: Lundsteen tells the story of an intern who called to say he wouldn't be in while audible flight announcements in the background clued off he wasn't sick in bed.

¹ <http://www.internshipprograms.com/become-a-super-intern/>