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Two Things I Learned from My Internship

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The benefits of an internship are countless: applying classroom knowledge to hands-on situations, exploring career possibilities, developing new skills ... My first actuarial internship undoubtedly offered me all of the above; it also taught me the right attitude toward work and my co-workers.

Consulting firms serve their clients by providing expert advice. As an inexperienced intern, opportunities to work on projects for external clients may be rare. However, there are many ways in which an intern can add value to their firm. Internal projects are often ones that full-time employees do not have time to complete, and may consist of tasks such as data entry and data collection. While the work may not appear as exciting as work done directly for the firm's clients, it is meaningful and can not only lead to future projects, but also enhance a team's efficiency in those future projects. Internal projects also provide rich learning opportunities. The deadlines may not be as rigid as those set for client projects, allowing interns to gain a deeper understanding of their job and the inner workings of the firm. In some sense, my relationship with the analysts and consultants that I worked for is analogous to the client-firm relationship. If I do a good job on a project, my superiors will

come to me in the future with more rewarding and challenging tasks.

College students are primarily evaluated on their individual academic achievements, sometimes relative to the achievements of their peers. The professional workplace is a much more team-oriented environment. On most projects you will be working with other interns or analysts; working effectively with your colleagues is essential. Moreover, many projects span a period of time longer than the typical internship. Interns will work on and sometimes complete projects that were started long before they joined the firm. They will also start on or make contributions to projects that will be completed by future interns. Looking at the bigger picture, clients assess the performance of a firm by the overall quality of the service and cannot measure the individual contributions of the firm's employees.

I've found that holding an internship has been an invaluable experience as I've had the chance to work with some knowledgeable people who have shaped my future career as an actuary. I've had the chance to make an impact on the company by working on some projects that will only help my colleagues in the future. ☆