

5 Important Lessons My Internship at Walgreens Taught Me

Though it was ten short weeks, I learned lessons that will last me a lifetime.

This past summer, I spent my time at the corner of happy and healthy. On my first day at Walgreens as a Community Management Intern, I had no idea the knowledge and experiences that awaited me. I expected to learn about business matters like sales and inventory, but I ended up taking away more than just knowledge of the job. What it really came down to was the community and the company experience.

On a daily basis, the functions of management could include handling warehouse orders, vendor deliveries, or on shelf availability of products. Beyond this, I began to experience first-hand the importance of customer service and the impact it has on people. I saw how a little help went a long way, not only for the individual but also for the business. As I reflect on my internship, there are many memories of team members, peers, and customers that also serve as valuable lessons. I've narrowed my experience to the five most important things that I learned from my internship at Walgreens

Always treat others with kindness

There were many times when a helping hand or a smile changed the entire interaction with a customer. At the end of the day, nobody knows everything another person is going through. At times, if a customer was dissatisfied or upset, I made it clear that I was there to help them and find a solution. When someone is treated in a caring and considerate manner, it makes a difference. It reflects well on the business itself as well as your own reputation. Approaching individuals with excellent customer service reminded me of how being attentive to others' needs is an approach to be taken everywhere. Simply asking a thoughtful question, showing some interest, and understanding shows compassion that many want but do not ask for.

Don't be afraid to ask questions

My internship at Walgreens was my first hands-on retail management experience. I was immersed in responsibilities like receiving vendors, tracking weekly metrics, and learning the in-store systems. All of this was new to me,

and I was aware of how consistency impacted the store's success. Knowing this, I wasn't afraid to ask questions when I was unsure of how to do something the right way. At times, I thought my uncertainty might come across as a negative, but my desire to get things done the way they should mattered more. Whether it be during your career or in an academic setting, asking the right questions sets the record straight. You gain clarity about what actions to take and what knowledge to apply. So if you're unsure, ask questions, apply the answer, and do your best with the rest.

Make connections and network

During my time at Walgreens, I met so many friendly faces that I still keep in touch with. Regardless of where you go, it's important to connect with those who share similar interests and hold industry expertise. Many people have been in the shoes of a student who is just starting their career journey, and they are more than willing to offer their advice. With the power of social media, take advantage of platforms that connect you to others. Talk with others about how they got to where they are. Get to know the other career possibilities and departments within a company. Staying in touch with the people I met at Walgreens has led to many social and professional opportunities, and in this way, the benefits of my summer experience continue to grow.

Move forward with a positive attitude

We've all been there before – you're a month into a new job or a new school year, and you just want more sleep. It can be especially hard during the summer when the three months of warm weather are supposed to be your break from working hard. Despite this, having an optimistic outlook brightens your day and everyone else's. With an extra pep in my step, my work was more productive. I didn't look at my work as something I *had* to do because I believed it was something I *get* to do. Being grateful for what you have really is a life-changing perspective. So whenever I wanted to keep hitting that snooze button, I reminded myself of how fortunate I was for this opportunity.

Find the value in what you're doing

The beauty of working a short-term role is the chance to discover where you see yourself long-term. The best way to figure out your fit is through your own personal experience. When you witness yourself mastering a new task or enjoying a certain part of your day a little extra, take a mental note. Time flies by, and it's easy to mindlessly work on things when you're comfortable with the job. Instead, challenge yourself to stay aware. Notice where you excel and when others acknowledge you for a job well done. These are all great indicators of your strengths, and knowing what you do well can set you up for a profession you are passionate about.

All in all, my time spent at Walgreens is more than just another summer that went by too fast. The few months I worked left me with more experience and more friendships than I had before I started. What I gained from my internship has left me excited and hopeful for what's right around the corner!