

EPISODE 7 – Who’s doing it right

Buff: This is Starting Somewhere - a podcast from the University of Melbourne... all about internships - finding one, landing it, and making the most of the experience.

I’m Buffy Gorrilla, I was the first intern on my team and that had more positives than negatives...and now I’m host of this podcast.

Ben: I’m Ben Pawson, my internship led to a job, which led to a career, which led to me being co-host of this podcast.

Buff: So, we’re clearly the best people to help you start somewhere.

SFX: “The main quality we’re looking for when we interview engineering interns is: enthusiasm”...“We really want the interns to be curious and playful”...“we look for excitement and curiosity”...“interns should love computer science and building things, and are excited to learn more”...“it also helps if you’re passionate about Slack, if you’ve used our product”...“on your first day as a Google Intern you’re treated as a regular employee”... “don’t presume that just because you’re an intern you’re not part of the team”...“one expects as a new person to be at the bottom of the totem pole, but the fact that I’m not is an example of how much responsibility is given to interns across the board”...“as an intern, from the day I joined the team I did stuff that matters”...“and I think it’s really great that I got to work on something impactful. One thing that surprised me was how much ownership I got in my project. Being my first week alone, I wrote some code, and I’ve seen the code that I’ve written go live. I think that’s one of the really cool things about Facebook, even as interns we get to make a huge impact on the way Facebook works”.

Buff: Hello and welcome to episode 7 of Starting Somewhere. In this instalment of everything you wanted to know about internships, but didn’t know who to ask: our look into companies that are doing internships right. Like the mash up of companies you just heard, who took the time to make videos to sell you their internships!

Ben: This is probably the most subjective of all our episodes, but after chatting with interns, experts and companies we feel we are ready to walk you through some of the companies which are running some pretty good internships, to help you benchmark what to look for in the company where you choose to do yours.

Buffy: And hello to all of our company listeners - feel free to use some of this information to help craft your internship programs. And for listeners out there who are wondering: will Buffy and Ben ever talk about those tough topics they said they wouldn't shy away from - well, next episode. But we wanted to start somewhere positive.

Buffy: Over the past 6 episodes of starting somewhere, we have placed a lot of the internship responsibility on you - as the intern. It's up to you to find an internship, land it, make it through day one, look at your goals and your career path and how you can juggle school, work and your internship. But now sit back and relax - it's the company's turn to impress you. I like to say: friendship is a two way street - and internships are too. Organisations have to put in some of the work as well.

Buffy: Most of what we'll be talking about in this episode are internships you find yourself. I think you can reasonably assume if your Uni places you in a company, it's been vetted and should be okay. Plus you have someone to come back to if things turn out to be a bit exploitative. But - that's for episode 8. But the signs you are stumbling into a solid internship, start before you even make an application. Here's the Intern Queen, Lauren Berger.

Lauren Berger: I think the best companies out there have really structured programmes. They have very clear deadlines and dates in place from the application period all the way through the internships. You know, they know what date they're interviewing. They know what date they're putting out their offers. They know when the midway internships evaluations are. I think that's a great sign. Companies that provide feedback are very important and companies that just have a structured programme. Basically, companies that pay attention to their internship programme. That might sound silly, but so many companies just don't pay attention to it and they make the bottom priority.

Buffy: It's probably related to the investment that financial companies make in their staff and their interns, they certainly seem to occupy the top spot in several internship rankings. Coming in at number one on Internships Australia 2017 rankings, and number 3 in 2018 was ShineWing Australia, which is:

Pieta Spencer: An Australian owned accounting firm. We have about 35 partners nationally, and about 250 employees. And we are a full service accounting firm. We have an Audit division, Business Advisory and Business Services, Corporate Finance, Tax and some Private Clients and Wealth Management. We are also a part of an international network called ShineWing International, which includes China, which is the largest domestic accounting firm on mainland China.

Buffy: That's Pieta Spencer a People and Culture Advisor at ShineWing, Australia.

Pieta: We try to make our recruitment process really quick and efficient. That's how we work as a firm. And I think it keeps candidates more engaged. Generally we would start recruiting at the end of February, and we would close applications around Easter every year. And then, we like to get all of our offers out by the start of May.

Ben Pawson: Just to get an idea of the scale of the programme, how many interns do you take on each year?

Pieta: For our vacation programme, we probably take about 15 people, and then, as the cooperative programme, the nine month long internship programme, probably about five to 10 people, depending on the demand of the different divisions.

Ben: How do you see the role of interns at ShineWing?

Pieta: Yeah, the way I explain an internship, or more particularly, we have cooperatives, so people that work with us for nine months full-time. They take a gap between their penultimate and final year. And then we also have a six week vacation programme. And what's most important about both of those programmes, we describe it as a long interview. It's a long interview with an employer, and it's a long process for the employee, so the intern, to assess whether they're a good cultural fit for the firm. I think, a really important thing for employers at the moment, is getting the right cultural fit. And it's not something you can really assess overly well in a standard recruitment process. So it gives you the opportunity to say, "Does this person have a lot of potential? Can I see them kind of embracing the culture of this firm and doing really well?" And for the intern, can they say that, "Yeah, this is where I would like to start my career."

Ben: If we learn by doing, then what you do is important, and although interns can ask for stuff, what the organisation is prepared to offer matters. And if this is your first time in an office, then start basic, like Anders Furze - now a thriving cultural commentator, but even he started somewhere:

Buffy: Great name for a podcast.

Anders Furze: The great thing about that internship is that they gave us a project of our own. So, there were three interns. Kylie was the alumni relations and Charlotte was the other digital communication intern, and I. So the three of us. We were just given a project to work on ourselves. My God, it was so much fun. It was-

Buffy: What was it?

Anders: We had to basically come up with ... It sounds a bit ridiculous now, but I loved it. We had to come up with a hashtag for the alumni community, and then run a competition that encouraged students who were graduating, to sign up to the alumni community. To make them aware of the fact that their relationship with the university does not have to end when you graduate. That was sort of the goal, because a lot of people don't understand, don't know, that there's all this amazing stuff that's available, here, for you after you've graduated. Our task was to just get people thinking about this, really, in a simple way. We came up with the very functional hashtag, hashtag UoMAlumni.

Buffy: You really scraped the bottom of the creative barrel on that one, Anders.

Anders: I suggested hashtag Parkville Players, but we do have more campuses than just Parkville, so ...

Buffy: Oh, of course. That's very exclusive.

Anders: Anyway, we created this hashtag. Then we created this bookmark. I had to liaise with printers and another part of the university to create this bookmark. It sounds like such a simple thing, but I had never done any of this. I had no idea how to publish material like bookmarks or brochures and stuff like that, so it was really great, hands-on experience. In the end of it, we ran a very successful competition, all these people posting photos on Instagram to enrol in our competition, and we created this really cool bookmark, which I still have, as a token of my affection for that time in my life. It was just this awesome little thing, but through it, I learned so much.

Buffy: Do you remember seeing that hashtag around the University of Melbourne campus? Well, now you know who to thank for it - Anders Furze.

Ben: That is real work or some of that work integrated learning. And we are contractually obligated to drop that phrase in at least every other episode!

Buffy: It's true! But Anders' project really is perfect for an internship. Colin McLeod outlines why companies want to include interns in their day to day operations.

Colin McLeod: I think there are two main reasons for having interns. One is that almost any company you talk to, and I do a lot to of work with startups as well as with major companies, they all have that special project they haven't quite had time to get around to doing. When you talk to them about the quality of their students and also the quality of work that internships have produced before, they're sort of willing to give it a go. I think one of the great things about that process is, as you know, we have a lot of companies who offer internships time and time again because there's no shortage of special projects that they can lock people away on. They just focus on this thing for the length of the internship. And internships can also be quite flexible and the company can accommodate students. So I think that's the first thing. I think the second thing is I that there's a bit of "try before you buy." Everyone in the world is looking for smart people. We can actually have someone come into our

organisation and work in different areas and we can get to have a look at them before we actually formally offer them a job or put them through a formal interview process. They'd be my two principal reasons.

Ben: So there's a lot to gain for companies, and the more they give the more chance the interns can really achieve something they can be proud of, right Colin?

Colin: Oh, absolutely. I do think one of the things that we stress with both the company and with the interns is this isn't work experience. This isn't get the coffees, and organise the meetings and do the photocopying. This is an outcome, where a student in the future can point to that outcome and say, "I helped that. I ran that. I contributed to it. I facilitated it." Whatever their role might be. I think over the last couple of years, in particular, we've seen organisations doing things around innovation that our students have been able to contribute to. Of course, for most organisations there are things that students are really good at, that are just a black hole for organisations. I think about things like social media. We're gonna run a social media campaign. Should we be on Instagram, Facebook, and what have you? The students know those sorts of things. Of course, students in themselves, not just because they're students but because of their age group, are seen to be carriers of new ideas. So I think organisations often find it's a great chance to get a bit of sense of what's happening in the world and embrace those things.

Ben: Colin is the Academic Director of the Masters in Entrepreneurship and also a professor at the Melbourne Business School. He's also had a hand in several innovative companies.

Buffy: And really leaning into interns doing real work is Tony Tam, an actuarial analyst, with Finity - a company full of actuarial and insurance consultants. He started as an intern and one of the pluses of being on the intern team: getting your hands dirty from the get go.

Tony Tam: Pretty much. All their work that they do is all for the clients that we work for.

Ben: Right. How close to the clients do the interns get? Would an intern ever meet a client?

Tony: Yeah, possibly. So sometimes one of the staff might bring the intern to client meetings. And it's actually quite helpful because this would probably be the first exposure of interns to any sort of real life business situation. And the client actually doesn't know that they're an intern a lot of time, because at Finity, we don't have much of a structure. So at meetings, the intern would just get introduced as another colleague.

Ben: Did that happen with you in your internship?

Tony: It did, yeah. I got brought along to a few meetings.

Buffy: And remember when Julia Jansen from Germany - that would be from episode 5, talked about the importance of Excel skills, well Amanda Camilleri brought her Excel A-game to her Shinewing internship

Amanda Camilleri: As an intern, so we had a major client and we started to do reporting, so it was just a new client. So, I was able to create all the Excel reports for this client, and it was good as a grad coming back and seeing that we still use those reports, and I'm actually using them now. So that was one of the best and biggest projects I worked on as an intern.

Buffy: Nice legacy Amanda! So while interns can bring fresh eyes, and mad Excel skills, Cholena Orr, the Graduate and Generalist Banker Program Manager of ANZ bank, gives us another great real world project example, and then - reality check!

Cholena Orr: I had an intern who did a thorough review of our recruitment process, which was a fantastic opportunity for us because it gave us fresh eyes on a process that had only been viewed from an internal lens. A good meeting on a piece of work that allows them to bring their academic experience into the workforce is ideal. Sometimes an intern will come in and just have to do fairly administrative work. Let's face it, we all do administrative work as well. It doesn't matter what level you're at, at some point you've got to do the boring stuff.

Buffy: ————— Good internships aren't exclusive to innovative companies. There are resources who have done the research for you - rankings and happy intern surveys (that's my name for them). You'll hear from two top ranked organisations - Shinewing and Finity in this episode, but there are many more. Forward thinking organisations are applying for and receiving the National Fair Internship Pledge from Interns Australia - this is where you'll find Finity listed. Interns Australia is an organisation advocating for fairer internships. Here's Jack Kenchington-Evans, a director of the organisation, on how Internships Australia gives it's stamp of approval.

Jack Kenchington-Evans: So, the way that companies get involved is there's an application form on our website, and it's got a self-assessment that they complete before they send it back to us. What they need to send back to us is the completed form with a bunch of documents that let us review it. So, we get to have a look at whether the pay is all right, what the programme is in terms of supervision, what the programme is in terms of access to resources and support onsite, and then we've got an internal checklist matrix that we use to evaluate that, and first and foremost is that it's paid, and lawfully paid. We double check that, engage with some feedback with the company, and see if we can get them badged up and certified.

- Ben: So if the good features that The Fair Internship Pledge rewards are not present in an internship you are looking at, be aware, and make sure you can get what you need out of it. Which might be client exposure, like Tony Tam from Finity.
- Tony: One of the big values of our company is that it's not the biggest person in the room that gets heard. It's who has the best ideas. So sometimes even an intern might have a good idea that they might put forward, although I think it's hard for interns to have ground breaking ideas of course, because they're quite new to the business, or don't have much experience. But I would say probably the best examples I've seen is when an intern actually takes on a process and improves it substantially. And usually this is something quite technical which where people have been working for a while, they wouldn't have enough time to look in to. And because an intern will be stuck in the process, they usually find ways to do it better. I have seen that happen and I think I have done it as well during my intern days.
- Ben: Ahh, the halcyon internship days - Tony's days seem filled with concrete projects and fairness - and that's not always the case...Buffy and I have started to wonder:
- Buffy: Can a good internship be unfair?
- Jack: It's a tricky question. There are definitely people who get a leg up by doing an internship that might just be a CV stuffer, and for those people, we're really conscious that they're going to have a terrible time, and they're going to get ripped off, and they're probably a few thousand dollars underpaid, and that's horrible.
- Buffy: That's Jack Kenchington-Evans again, from Interns Australia. putting it better than we ever could have. But If you are getting great experience, class A contacts, does your internship need to be paid?
- Ben: For competitiveness and equality reasons, yes, which we'll get to in the next episode, but if you can swing it (financially, and if it's worth it you then we think yes, it can be. What choice do you have when everyone else is doing it, and employers expect it?
- Buffy: But what do you need to get out of it to make it worth working seven days a week or going into debt? This is where those goals come in.
- Ben: So if we take a lateral look at this idea of reward it can take on different interpretations depending on the company or organisation - what else can you get working for free at a good internship?

Charis Palmer: One great example from just the other day was one of our interns who actually came not from a journalism background, but a science background who pitched a really interesting article which was on white sneakers, and how unsustainable they are. It was the kind of thing that this is what people are wearing. I was like, I didn't even know that was a thing, and the sustainability of it is a whole other thing. He is working on the environmental energy desk so there was like an environmental bent to it. That article then got republished on the ABC and was phenomenally successful. I was talking to him just the other day. He said: "You know that article got 80,000 reads". I didn't even know that such a thing existed, like the idea of 80,000 reads. Because he has a blog so he sort of knows the idea of traffic now. 80,000 people read this article. I'm just amazed.

Buffy: I agree with what Charis Palmer from The Conversation just said. If the company only gives you a \$20 a day stipend, like The Conversation does, then what could be a payment-in-kind, kind of thing? Getting a byline on an article with 80,000 reads looks great on your CV - that's a quantifiable result. When I started my internship at Radio National, I remember the first time I was able to mark myself as a producer - it was such an amazing feeling. A bit different than money in the bank, but it was a sign that I had actually started somewhere.

Ben: Great name for a podcast! But real achievements only come from real experience, so what else did some of the interns that we've spoken to get up to?

Kate Mellot: During the internship, I worked through a lot of different projects. My line manager's great in getting me involved with the work and the team. Probably the most interesting project I worked on was, I got to go to the ANZ Tennis bank for the Australian Open. So it's just ANZ provides a service, so the players come in and collect their prize money. So I just got to, yeah, sit back, just have a look. That was more observing, but it was really interesting, because you don't think about that process, usually. That was really fun.

Ben: That's Kate Mellot, a Monash graduate who managed to convert an internship at ANZ bank into a place on their graduate program. I definitely had an image of her handing Rodger Federer a big stack of hundies.

Buffy: Or filling the Australian Open cup with specially printed ones - with pictures of his two sets of twins on each one. But sadly for me and maybe for Kate...

Kate: It was only the initial first few days of the Australian Open, so I didn't get to see any of the big names come in. Obviously, if you're giving them their prize money, they've exited the draw, so they're not the big names. But definitely, having a chat with them when they come in, really interesting.

Buffy: I love the Australian Open and this sounds so fun and a genius idea from ANZ to have interns involved in this way.

- Ben: But what other ways are there for interns to work? Mary Trumble, client services manager for LinkedIn Australia.
- Mary Trumble: the reality is with an internship it can be quite hard if they don't have a set programme in place, because it's kind of like, "What do we do with you?" But this is where it presents a great opportunity for anyone with initiative and anyone whose just willing to learn x, y, and z.
- Buffy: But if there isn't a formal internship agenda where you are thinking of interning that's not always a bad thing. Michelle Lau is an intern at Keep Left, a PR company in Melbourne's Southbank and she was okay with keeping it loose. We chatted to Michelle before her internship about what she thought she might get up to.
- Michelle Lau: They kept it quite vague, and I think that shows that I'll be actually doing a lot of different things. They just said I'm getting in touch with a lot of different companies and just helping out here and there.
- Ben: But once on the job, Michelle reflects on what actually happened in this diary entry and shows some of that initiative.
- Michelle: I realised that a lot of the work that I'm doing is very structured, and so, hopefully, in the future, whatever tasks I get or I try to request tasks that allows me to incorporate more of my creativity. So, that's definitely something I want to try and do, and really take initiative of what I want. Because, thinking about this, as an internship, obviously it's quite a mutual relationship. So, at the same time, obviously I have to help the company, whatever they want, whatever they need me to do, I have to be there. But also, at the same time, I want to make sure that I'm learning. And so far, I'm definitely learning a lot, but I definitely want to take more initiative and ask like special little tasks that I would want to do.
- Buffy: I just love these diary entries, you can almost hear the learning and personal growth. For anyone who saw the Owen Wilson, Vince Vaughn Oscar-winning classic *The Internship*, you'll be familiar with...
- Ben: Quick fact check: that movie NEVER actually won an Academy award.
- Buffy: It was robbed! Owen and Vince - we're on a first name basis - they were non-trad interns: older, but not necessarily wiser, and even non-trads or non traditionals want to intern. But does everything we have been saying apply to older interns as well?
- Rem Tzambazis: It does, it absolutely does. The way that we talk about the grad programme is more for those early in their career, whatever that career is.
- Buffy: This is Rem Tzambazis, Strategic Partners and Programs manager for NAB bank, he oversees their interns including...

Rem Tzambazis: An example from ... I think it was the 2017 programme cohort, and I hope I got that cohort right. There was a gentleman who spent his entire working life in manufacturing, and he was about early 50s and his role was made redundant. And he took it upon himself to re skill in technology, and we hired him as a technology grad and he joined our programme. He's gone on to continue being employed here.

Ben: Internships can work really well for career switchers, or people who are going to pivot their career. You've got a track record of experience some real skills, but are somehow considered new. But everyone has still got to get in the door. We walked you through the application process and interviews in episode three, but now we want to know what are the different ways of getting an internship at a company who we think is doing it right?

Buffy: And please remember this is not an exhaustive list.

Pieta Spencer: All right I'm going to do a bit of a plug here.

Ben Pawson: Go for it.

Pieta: So there is a fantastic website called Gradconnection, it has a majority share of where all employers will advertise anything to do with internships, work experience, graduate positions, everything. I would say if there's a student that isn't regularly looking on that website for what's coming up, they're definitely missing the mark, because that's where you're going to see every single opportunity.

Ben: Remember the bubbly Pieta Spencer, a People and Culture Advisor from ShineWing, Australia? They have a clear and straightforward application process, and treat the internships like extended job interviews. They confirm however that it's competitive, even after they have made an offer.

Pieta: Yeah, look, to be completely honest, in the graduate recruitment space, we as employers, are seeing a lot of candidates renege on offers. So we make offers and then a couple of months later they have accepted an offer somewhere else, which is quite disappointing as an employer. So at ShineWing Australia we implemented a 'keep in touch' programme. So we wanted to make sure that we were having regular contact with our candidates, 'cause it is a long time from when they accept through to when they start with us. So we want to make sure they stay engaged with the firm, understand what's going on, keep those relationships. So once every two months we catch up, we'll do something fun, have some drinks, go to Holey Moley. Do an escape rooms, just something that gives people the opportunity to keep that network together.

Buffy: And the hurdles for landing the best internships and keeping the best interns are that much higher. But even then, if you are out there making a name for yourself and are discoverable, sometimes they come to you! Grace Chen gives us a great reason a LinkedIn profile is a must.

Grace Chen: I interned for a Chinese company called Alibaba in my first to second year.

Buffy: Oh, wow. How did you find that? Was that through LinkedIn?

Grace: Oh, that was through a case competition. I did quite well for our case competition and they head-hunted me through my LinkedIn. In a way, it was quite connected as well.

Buffy: How did they reach out to you?

Grace: Oh, it was just through a quick message. Honestly, I thought it was a bit dodgy at first because I've never experienced something like that before. They were like, "Oh, can we have a quick coffee chat, and then, we'll see if you're a fit for the company." I nearly rejected them straight away because I was, like, "This is really dodgy. I don't know what this is for."

Buffy: What made you decide to actually respond to that request?

Grace: Talking to my friends who were older than me and more experienced, I would say "Is this normal to get something like this?". Generally, if you see that the company is quite legitimate, it's okay to go for a coffee catch-up. Once again, safety and privacy in the sense do it in a public area, but it's okay to do so.

Buffy: What responsibilities did you have working for Alibaba, and was that an unpaid internship?

Grace: That was generally an unpaid internship. They paid for the transport cost, but other than that, yes. The responsibilities, I was mainly doing their social, as well as events management. They had quite a lot of delegates coming from China so I translated a bit of that.

Buffy: How long did that last?

Grace: It lasted for seven to eight months.

Buffy: Oh, wow. That's quite a long time.

Grace: It was, yeah.

Ben: But not everyone is going to be lucky enough to use their networks or get approached on LinkedIn.

Buffy: The companies that were commended for having good internship programs did however have clear instructions on their websites, some even went a step further.

Buffy: Episode 3 has tonnes more advice on applications, but sometimes networking will allow you to bump into a great opportunity. Like Vivian Gleeson, a graduate of the University of Melbourne Master's of Biotechnology

who's currently working at the Burnet Medical Institute as a business development officer.

Vivian Gleeson: Well, I didn't go straight to the Burnet. So when I was at AusBioTech, I was basically just handing out my cards and talking to people about previous things that I'd done, previous things that I'd studied, and I came across a guy, Rob Scott. He runs China BlueSky consulting in Shanghai. And he just kind of jokingly said "Just come to Shanghai, and I'll get you in the office." And I kind of laughed about it, but he was being serious. Like properly serious. So I sent him an email a couple of days later, and I'm like "Do you really want someone to do this?" And he was like "Yeah. I wasn't joking." So within a week he sent me my business visa and I went off to Shanghai.

Buffy: Wow! That's amazing. How long were you in Shanghai?

Vivian: Only two months, because that was how long I could get my business visa for. But being there was absolutely amazing. Working on lots of different projects, seeing how different China is culturally within the healthcare system, within scientific innovation system, and then all of the trials and the hurdles that they have to go through were absolutely amazing. I've never worked in another country, so that was just amazing. And I still consult for China BlueSky partners now. It's kind of my second job, I guess, as well as working full time at the Burnet.

The last thing that I did while I was there was actually help Aus Biotech run an Australia-China invest seminar in Shanghai, over two days. And while I was there, I met David Anderson and Jeff Dunheim. And Jeff Dunheim is the COO of Burnet.

Ben: And companies network too, here's Pieta from Shinewing Australia again:

Pieta Spencer: A different way of how I've recruited people, most recently as well is: as an employer we kind of align ourselves with different student societies at universities, so more so the accounting student societies. They've got great talent in there, so we do a lot of kind of campus events, not so much the big careers fairs because being an accounting firm we don't see all of the students that we need to. But if I can go along to Melbourne University, the Accounting Student Association - I met a student there a couple of months ago. She was fantastic, she told me about what she was studying, she had this kind of dual degree that was fantastic. I kind of spoke to her about the firm, she'd never heard of us before. She's got a vacation position with us.

Ben: So how often do you go to these events?

Pieta: Yeah, so kind of during February, March is the peak period where employers will be engaging. So it's first few weeks back at university when employers are advertising their positions. So I make the most of those, I go along to maybe one or two events for each university, during the recruitment period and kind of meet some key students there. So that's a really great way if I regularly see them at different events as well, you kind of really create that

network. You're like, you're around a bit, and we've still got good conversation, I'm going to look out for your application when you apply. Maybe I'll even give my business card out and say, send me an email when you apply. So that's always a good sign.

Ben: I had business cards and I handed out a ton, and it led to some really interesting conversations and opportunities. But you need to be able to talk about yourself, and know what you want to ask a potential company for. But that company also needs the vision to value interns, if they do then any company can do internships right. We got in touch with Google and Facebook - who also have top-ranked intern programs, but they did not respond to our requests.

Buffy: Ben and I have hopefully given you a set of indicators and some guides. So you might know what a good internship would look like.

In the next episode of Starting Somewhere we'll show you what a terrible internship looks like. Stay tuned, it should help you get started at your right somewhere.