

Retail Report

STUDENTS PARTAKE IN POPULAR RETAILING INTERNSHIPS

By: Cecilia Schulz

Retailers across the country have grown internship training to interest students from all majors! With this support, the Retail Management Internship Program at UF continues to flourish with over 140 students experiencing opportunities with retailers for the summer. Internship training included management, buying, planning, human resources, IT, marketing and sales. Students have returned to the University for the fall semester. Many now share new insights into the industry and plan to return to retailing upon graduation. Go retailing and GO GATORS! ♦

THE BELK EXPERIENCE

By: John Disselkoen



The Gainesville Belk interns doing the Gator Chomp outside of Belk corporate headquarters. From left: Karina Alegria, Jaime Bailey, John Disselkoen and Maclayne Josselin.

"It's All About You," proclaims the Belk slogan, denoting the stance that the company takes toward customer service. From the first day of the internship at Belk, the store manager, Dan Mixson, made sure that all four of his interns understood Belk's commitment to providing customer service and emphasized this many times. We were required to work the registers and on the sales

floor in order to gain an appreciation for this. Having a strong foundation in customer service is a crucial element of a successful retail career, and having to work with customers on a daily basis helped build that strong foundation.

The major aspect of the internship at Belk was shadowing an area sales manager and assisting with all of his or her duties. I worked with the manager of the Belk home department. During my time with her, I was taught all of the aspects of properly merchandising the different areas within the department. There were many large sales events in which the home area had a significant number

of items as a main focus of the store. We were in charge of making sure that those items were presented in a way that would successfully promote a high volume of sales for the event.

One of the highlights of the internship was the visit to the corporate headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina. While we were in Charlotte, we were each assigned to a different buyer, and spent the day learning about the activities and responsibilities of the buyers. This gave us an interesting experience as we were able to see the behind the scenes actions that determine the merchandising activities of the store.

Overall, the Belk internship was enjoyable. It gave me a quality glimpse into the retail world while providing me with a good amount of hands-on experience. ♦

WALGREENS IS THE BEST COMPANY

By: Max Charleus



Max Charleus learns the management aspects of the Walgreens Store.

This summer break I made one of the best decisions I have made in a long time. I decided to seek an internship. I accepted the Walgreens internship based on the way they were represented at the Career Showcase, the growth of the company, and the potential for personal growth within the company. I have to say, it has been a great experience. I went from simply

shadowing a manager to hands on participation before the first week was over. As a BMI (business management intern) with Walgreens, I got to be involved in all the aspects of managing a Walgreens store. Part of the internship involved spending time in the pharmacy, photo lab, cosmetics and receiving departments and being exposed to the paperwork side of things. I was most pleased

with was the opportunity to spend time with different managers at different locations of the district. As it turned out, I ended up in a store without a lead beauty advisor; consequently, I was sent to spend a day at a store with the best beauty advisor in the district. The following week, I was sent to spend a day at the best

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HUGE OPPORTUNITY AT HESS

By: James Ansell

The Hess Internship was an amazing opportunity providing one of the best work experiences that I could have hoped for. The position gave me so much exposure and allowed me to meet people from all different parts of the company. Even just coming on board as an intern, they put a real interest in me and spent valuable time and resources into making my experience as good as it could possibly be. I got to



James Ansell was exposed to all aspects of management including blind taste tests to assure the customer the best tasting coffee.

travel to several different areas and participate in training classes. As part of my internship, I participated in a market study of 14 different stores to learn where extra costs are spent that effect the bottom line. I also participated in working a blind taste test to better understand what coffee and what brewing method was preferred by our customers.

Hess' focus on customer satisfaction is paramount.

My experience with Hess led me to the conclusion that the company really cares about its employees and its customers. It is a fairly large company operating in several different countries, but the one thing that has remained throughout the years is the family name. Hess is still run like a family company and not like a large corporation.

I would recommend the Hess Internship to other

Gators. If you think that you would like to be on an accelerated path in a growing company, Hess is the place for you. My internship experience ended with an offer of employment upon graduation. I think that Hess would be great for students who are willing to put in hard work to create a valuable and lasting experience. ♦

TRAINED AS MANAGER AT MACY'S

By: Alison Needleman



Alison Needleman learned from the talented staff in Macy's in order to manage two departments.

This past summer, I had the privilege of completing a management internship at Macy's in Coral Square Mall, in Coral Springs, Florida. As a management intern in the cosmetics and fragrances areas, I interacted and learned from associates, managers and vendors. Looking back, I find it astounding how much I learned in just 10 weeks. At Macy's, I was treated as an official manager, which meant I was highly accountable. There are approximately fifty associates in the

cosmetics and fragrances areas in Coral Square, making up the largest associate population in the store. As a result, a good portion of my time was spent talking to and taking care of associates' needs. During the third and fourth weeks of my internship, my sales manager went on vacation, which gave me the opportunity to independently oversee my two departments. These two weeks proved to be challenging and enabled me to further develop and cultivate my managerial skills.

My internship at Macy's was incredible. I had the pleasure of working with a wonderful sales manager and a tremendously talented and inspiring store manager. My passion for retail is strong, and I know that I belong in this fast-paced, ever-changing industry. I believe that management is a hit or miss, love it or hate it career, and I whole-heartedly love it! Macy's, Inc. is an extraordinary company with an incredibly bright future that I would like to be a part of post-graduation. ♦

BEALLS OFFERS A LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

By: Juanique Chadinha



Juanique Chadinha participated in Bealls Leadership program as well as learned the process of remodeling a store.

My junior year arrived and I was interested in doing a management internship. I attended the Career Showcase and met Pam Meyer and Phil Knuth of Bealls -- two of the most down-to-earth people I have ever met. Their passion and enthusiasm made this internship easy to accept.

The experience was huge! I began working with the Misses department and organizing merchandise for the customer. I soon moved to the Men's department and worked with a different manager to understand different management techniques. This opportunity taught me that there are many management styles and that no one is right or wrong. Throughout the internship, I continued to move to the different departments in the store and work with the management and the visual team.

During the internship, I had the opportunity to go to the corporate offices in Bradenton, FL to attend the Bealls Leadership Program. Here, I met managers from different areas and learned how they operate their

stores. This program exposed me to buying where I worked with the Misses buyer. After understanding what a buyer does, the advertising team gave an overview of the advertising strategies they use and what factors they take into account when deciding how much money to allocate to each type of media. Next, I was exposed to web design and development and the call center. I also had an overview of the planning and distribution from the distribution center. The product development team shared how they develop products for the company. After this encounter, I realized that managing a store counts as only a fraction of what it takes to make this company successful.

During my summer, I

participated in opening a remodeled store. Just seeing how a company works as a team to complete such an endeavor was amazing. During all of this, I was an active participant!

Bealls is an amazing company with endless opportunities for a career. Bealls encourages its employees to be open-minded. No suggestion is a silly one, as if it will help the company grow, they work diligently to make it happen. I saw that a single person can make a simple suggestion that has a huge impact on everyone involved. My internship was life altering and unbelievably enlightening and I hope to be an employee of Bealls Inc. in the near future. ♦

MANAGING ANIMALS AND PEOPLE AT PetSmart

By: Josh Webb



Josh Webb learned the process of management for PetSmart in order to be trusted as Manager on Duty.

My internship began with a solid week of PetSmart's industry-leading training. During this week, I was instructed on everything from the proper procedure to work with an unhappy customer all the way to how to hand feed a baby Quaker Parakeet. On top of all of that, I learned all of the loss prevention and security aspects of being a manager, plus became certified in the safe use of a forklift. My second and third weeks were in PetCare, where I assisted the PetCare Manager in all of her daily activities, including planning

associate schedules, ensuring all of the animals were properly taken care of, and that the aquarium system ran without a hitch. From weeks four to nine, I became a PetProducts manager, working with the stocking associates to ensure the store was properly presented for customers. During this time, I was, on several occasions, the Manager on Duty, responsible for any problems arising with customers and associates, as well as balancing the cash at the end of the day. I finished out my last week of the summer at PetSmart back in PetCare, learning more of the intimate care required of the animals. Overall, the training I received at PetSmart during the summer internship could not have been learned in a classroom. The practical knowledge and leadership experience gained over the past summer will be of huge value to me in any future endeavors I should enter. ♦

FIRESTONE COMPLETE AUTO CARE

By: Daniel Braugher



Daniel Braugher was able to apply his book knowledge from school to the retail world at Firestone.

This past summer, I interned with Firestone Complete Auto Care based out of Bloomingdale, IL. I began with an intense week of training in Atlanta, and then was transferred to a retail store in my hometown of Orlando. This summer's experience was amazing as I learned the daily

operations of how a Firestone store is managed. I estimated tickets, wrote work orders, and met customers' needs on a daily basis as I primarily learned the duties of a Sales Associate and the Store Manager. An internship showed me the line of work I was interested in, and how the "book knowledge" learned in college is applied to reality. For me, this internship created a focal point for the rest of my college career of what I need to get out of classes to be successful in the retail management work environment. Retail is not a monotonous desk job with a never ending pile of paperwork. It's a fast-paced work environment with a constant push to meet the end of a satisfied customer. I am happy I accepted this opportunity because of the exposure to the retail industry. ♦

WITH EXCELLENT TRAINING COMES EXCELLENT RESPONSIBILITY AT MATTRESS FIRM

By: *Melissa Samowitz*

This past summer was a summer I will never forget. Looking back, it's so hard to believe that I was hesitant to accept the offer to work for Mattress Firm, but there was something about the people I met from the company that got me really excited about the Mattress Firm. In the end, I knew there was a reason I decided to follow my original intuition and I'll never look back.

The internship started with regional trainers who flew to St. Petersburg, Florida from corporate headquarters in Texas to teach us at "Prep School." They gave us background information about the company and better prepared us for what to expect before we began working in the stores. We were assigned to a store manager to be our mentor for the next few weeks.

After a few weeks of in-store training, Mattress Firm flew all of the interns to Houston, Texas for IST training at company headquarters. There, we learned that the number one goal of Mattress Firm is have fun, and number two is be a great

place for great people to work. This told me a lot about the company because I think that corporate culture is very important.



Mackenzie McDonald and Amy Martin pose with Gator Melissa Samowitz (left) before they prepare for their final presentation of their internship with Mattress Firm.

In Texas, we learned about the buying process and how to work with customers. Vendors came in from various companies to talk about their products and to help us feel more comfortable on the sales floor.

Back in Florida, I worked in stores, rotating from each of the 13 stores on the Pinellas side of the market, in order to get experience

with different managers. After six weeks of store experience we were placed on commission for the remaining six weeks of the internship.

I was taking my own customers and writing up sales in my name, so there were great incentives to work hard. Eventually, I was opening and closing stores completely on my own. This was scary at first, but I soon realized what an opportunity this was! Every person that walked in was potentially my sale. I was actually managing my own stores a couple times a week,

so Mattress Firm was giving me a huge amount of responsibility. I was so well prepared, that it wasn't anything I could not handle.

"Flight School" was about personal development, setting goals and getting motivated at work and in our everyday lives. During this training, many people opened up about their families and told the group how Mattress Firm had helped them reach financial goals they never thought possible. I really enjoyed my time at "Flight School" because it gave everyone a chance to look at the bigger picture and identify what was truly important to them. When I went back to work I felt so motivated. I felt inspired to work harder in my life and at everything I do.

Overall, I felt that the Mattress Firm internship was extremely organized and full of great learning opportunities that I wouldn't have found anywhere else. I would not change this summer experience for anything. I hope more Gators will consider this growing opportunity. ♦

NOT A TYPICAL INTERNSHIP AT CITY FURNITURE

By: *Henry Avendano*



Henry Avendano is enthusiastic about the training, the culture and the opportunity at City Furniture.

Imagine a summer where your wallet does not close. It simply will not close. It will not fold, it will not hold anything else. It is simply TOO FULL OF MONEY! As I write this, I can assure you that no summer will ever compare to a summer working with City Furniture. My internship compares to no other experience in my life! You learn things in a classroom, but you will definitely never learn enough when it comes to sales. NOTHING compares to the

feeling of being out on the floor, psychologically analyzing a person, constantly qualifying them to get them what they want as fast as possible, while maintaining a smile on your face and helping as an expert in anything that is or ever has been furniture. I thought the internship would be just a regular internship. You know, the usual training, work, clock in and clock out routine. On the contrary, I woke up as soon as possible and got to work as soon as possible because I

knew that every minute that ticks by is another opportunity I could have had to sell! I'm going to be frank with you. In one day at work I sold about \$20,000 worth of furniture. I made about \$800 in one day!

Sure, you have some rough days where you work eight hours and not make a single penny. But trust me, the good days outweighed the bad.

See CITY FURNITURE on page 7...

INTERN SETTLES ON NOTHING BUT THE BEST AT SEARS

By: Brittani Cunningham

My parents have raised me to reach for the sky and to settle for nothing but the best! This is one of the reasons I chose the University of Florida for my academic career. I am a fourth year Business student from West Palm Beach, Florida. To build a firm foundation, I am majoring in Management, which I think requires great discipline, commitment, and interpersonal skills.

This summer, I was able to successfully complete a retail management internship program with Sears Holdings Corporation. I wanted to get a feel for the retail industry in a hands-on learning environment. While

learning about retail sales, customer service, merchandise-related and managerial inner workings, I was able to better understand what goes into a successful retail business and experience the culture of Sears. From selling divisions such as footwear and fine jewelry, to store operations and loss prevention, I was able to gain hands-on experience in all aspects of the store. Throughout the summer, I was able to work closely

with the store management team, while gaining their trust and respect. As each week went by, I gained further knowledge, and even more responsibility. I was trusted to execute daily tasks and responsibilities that were critical to the operation of the store. In addition to my daily tasks, I completed various projects and presentations such as a competitive analysis and operational analysis that I presented to my store management team. In July, I was

invited to visit Sears Holdings Corporation in Hoffman Estates, Illinois. There, I participated in an intern conference where I met other interns from various regions, and heard presentations from various top-executives in the company, including Aylwin B. Lewis who has been the Chief Executive Officer and President of Sears since September 2005. Working for Sears this summer was an amazing experience! It was rewarding to impact such a successful operation of a Sears store, and leave with an array of knowledge, skills, and an incredible fascination with the retail industry! ♦



Brittani Cunningham learned Sears' management by being hands on.

TARGET OFFERS A GREAT INTERN EXPERIENCE

By: Leilani Velazquez



Leilani Velazquez specialized in improving the consumables department of her Target store.

The summer I interned with Target as a store executive was the summer of change and development for me. It was my first experience in retail and was an unforgettable one. From my first day at the store for orientation in my red and khakis to the last week as I presented my project presentation, my personal growth was amazing.

As a part of the Target internship program I learned about

all aspects of a store's operations from food operations, logistics (including overnight), human resources, sales floor, and the exciting world of assets protection. Its Fast, Fun, and Friendly culture is lived everyday through great guest service and team huddles to help encourage team members to work together and be successful in maintaining the Target brand.

As a Target intern, I participated in all meetings and chats to develop my skills as a leader. I was always able to communicate my opinion with other executives without being judged. Questions were always welcomed and someone was always willing to help me with anything that came along.

My store project was to assess and improve all aspects of our consumables department and food operations. I paired up with the Food Operations Specialist for our Group and learned about many things that my store needed. By digging deep

into all operations of the department, I was able to pinpoint problem areas and work to improve them. Everyone was very supportive of my ideas and was very influential in the development of my project.

One of the most memorable experiences for me during this internship was witnessing Target's efforts to aid the community. I took part in a District wide community service project planting trees and shrubs in an Everglades refuge for wild animals that served as illegal pets that have been recovered. It was great to see so many Target team members and leaders working together for a great cause.

I believe that Target's mission is sincere and becoming more feasible by their commitment to diversity and the efforts of all in the company. Target "The Best Company Ever" for guests, team members, stockholders and the community. ♦

WALGREENS (from page 1...)

customer service store which also has the best photo tech in the district. All together, I spent time in five stores excluding where I worked. One of the stores the rest of the BMI's and I visited was in the process of being opened, and it so happened that it is located in Brunswick, Georgia which turned out to be a fun trip. I got to experience first hand what goes into opening a new store. In addition to spending time with several managers, I also got to spend a day with the district manager which was a great experience. Part of this included going over operating statements and store visits. I got to see his perspective on managing as well so I could compare to all earlier management styles. Walgreens is a great company to work for with great upside, and I recommend to anyone thinking of a career in retail to consider an internship with this company. ♦

LEARNING ABOUT RETAIL WITH CHICO'S

By: Lauren Antonucci and Amanda Chazal

Lauren Antonucci

The White House | Black Market internship was unique because it allowed me to spend a week in every functional area of the brand. I rotated through areas such as Merchandise Planning, Merchandise Allocation, Merchandise Buying, Visual Merchandising (Floor Set), Marketing, Quality and Technical Design, Production and Sourcing, Creative Design, Fabric, Trend and Design (product development). I had the opportunity to observe the entire process a garment goes through, from concept to market. The exposure to design, fabrics and trends were foreign to me coming from a business background. This experience exposed me to retail operations, the life cycle of merchandise, and much more. In addition, it provided direction for my future career choices.

During the internship, the

company presented the WHBM interns with the opportunity to create a woven top for the Spring 2008 delivery. We worked as a team to apply our experience to develop an actual product. When the top delivers to stores in the spring, I will be excited to tell people that I participated in the design.

Amanda Chazal

As part of the Chico's internship, I interned in product development working with a Director in Outerwear. I followed garments from concept through development, as well as production and promotion. A typical day started with meeting the merchants at order handoff. The

merchants provided me with an inspirational garment and discussed the potential of the piece for Chico's.



Amanda Chazal and Lauren Antonucci share a quick moment together on their internship in Ft. Myers, Florida.

I would contact the vendor with the production details of the new order and worked to maintain continuous communication with the

vendor. We would approve lab dips for color and bulk for hand-feel, pattern, and visual. We would fit the model and observe the garment fit for any changes. Only then could the garment be ready for delivery to the distribution center.

Working at Chico's provided a spontaneous work environment where everyday there was something different, yet contributing

to a growing project. The interaction with designers, product developments, merchants, and vendors gave me an appreciation for the business of a product from start to finish. The Chico's team took the time to parallel the experience to my educational needs.

While we both had individual experiences on the job, all interns came together for group activities, such as executive luncheons, classroom learning, a community service day, and other events. We were exposed to nationally known corporate leaders that gave us the exposure and the ability to network. The Chico's FAS, Inc. internship program allowed us to apply our classroom knowledge to a real world environment, not only by seeing the process but also by participating. These experiences, although unique to each brand, have prepared us for future careers in retail. ♦

DILLARD'S PROGRAM CONFIRMS DESIRE FOR RETAILING FOR STUDENT INTERN

By: Lisa Kvaternik



After being trained, Lisa Kvaternik accepted the challenge of managing the shoe department!

This past summer I completed a store management internship with Dillard's in Brandon, FL. The very first day of my internship just happened to fall on the same day as

the start of a huge floor move in the women's department. So I immediately learned how to merchandise, strengthen my visual abilities, and get to know the different brands that Dillard's carries. From that point on I spent each week with a different Area Sales Manager, and was truly able to gain hands-on experience on how to run the business in each of the different departments. Half-way through my internship the store began to prepare for inventory. I was placed in charge of prepping and running inventory in the lingerie and children's department. The majority of my

inventory planning was spent drawing maps of the department and designing the inventory assignments in a way that was easy for the associates to read and also extremely organized. So despite my initial worry over being able to successfully complete my first huge project, the actual night of inventory turned out to be the smoothest the store had ever had. During the last half of my internship I worked in the women's shoe department, and instead of shadowing the department manager, I was placed on the opposing schedule which meant that I was running the shoe department

completely on my own!

Another great aspect of Dillard's store internship program was that all of the interns from all across the state were given the opportunity to spend a day in the buying office. During the trip to the buying office, we were given a tour of the divisional office, spent time with the advertising team, and then I shadowed the women's contemporary buyer! I learned so much from this incredible experience and all of the amazing people that I met. My internship with Dillard's completely confirmed my desire to continue to pursue a career in retailing! ♦

A BEARY GOOD TIME AT BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP

By: Tanquen Nguyen



Tanquen Nguyen researched the birthday party market and received feedback from the Chief Executive Bear.

Be pawstive. This is one of the many “bearisms” that I learned while being a management intern at the local Build-A-Bear Workshop.

The concept of Build-A-Bear workshop is to create an experience for the customer while they are building their new stuffed animal. Build-A-Bear Workshop is a store where you can create your own stuffed animal by helping to stuff it and bringing it to life by personalizing it with sounds, clothes, shoes and accessories.

The Gainesville Build-A-Bear Workshop created an amazing experience for me as their management intern for the summer. After learning how to do the basic bearbuilder’s responsibilities such as learning how to use the stuffer, creating heart ceremonies, and being

the bear leader for birthday parties, I was treated and respected as one of the assistant managers of the store. I learned the in’s and out’s of the store from networking to floor leading to overall maintenance of the store. I was also able to interact with the Area Manager Wendy also known as the Bearitory Leader to learn more about the company and her experience and career.

I had a great relationship with my store manager or Chief Workshop Manager Michelle. She truly listened to a lot of my ideas and we often bounced ideas off of each other. She also gave me challenging responsibilities and tasks. Michelle

was also a big help for my internship project.

At the end of my internship, I was responsible for creating a presentation based on the birthday party market. After I submitted my project, I received positive feedback from many people at the corporate level such as the president or Chief Operating Bear. I was truly surprised at the quick responses. It made me realize how much the Build-A-Bear Workshop Corporation truly valued their individual employees. In the end, my internship was bearific and it made a pawstive impact on my career path and choices.

JCPENNEY'S INTERNSHIP OFFERED TRAINING FOR LEADERS

By: Michael Giudice

My name is Michael Giudice and I am a fourth year marketing major at the University of Florida. This summer I held a Store Management Internship at JCPenney in Gainesville, FL. JCPenney had a very unique training programming that gave me experiences on the sales floor, in the office and in the classroom. Throughout the 10-week program, I was exposed to customers, associates and other managers, and I was given the opportunity to become a leader in the store.

My biggest challenge came when the Sales Manager for my department decided to pursue an opportunity with another company in town. This gave me the chance to run the department’s day-to-day activities for about two weeks before a new manager started, and I was

able to see what it takes to be a manager in a large retail store.



Mike Giudice was trained to be a leader through experiencing the JCPenney management training internship.

The thing that I liked most about JCPenney’s internship program was the structure of the training. Through the assigned weekly activities and the bi-monthly live broadcasts, the interns are allowed to see many areas of the store’s operation that they wouldn’t

otherwise see. There are also special sessions where the interns can hear from executives of the company and are given a chance to learn about their own leadership styles and abilities. These sessions are also used to teach the interns many things about the company, and they make the interns feel like they are part of the management team.

My summer internship showed me all of the challenges that retail managers are faced with everyday. I got the opportunity to jump right in and do the work myself, and I was able to be a leader in the store as soon as I got there. This was an experience that told me a lot about myself, and the feeling of “Winning Together” is something that I won’t soon forget. ♦

CITY FURNITURE (from page 4...)

You are not making just \$10 an hour. You are making ridiculous money, my friend, and all the while meeting great people, having fun and honestly making relationships that last a lifetime. If you are an outgoing, friendly person that loves seeing people smile this is the internship for you. Best of all, the culture that is City Furniture is unbelievable. It’s young, it’s hip, it’s fresh. I know I sound like a true salesman, definitely outselling right now, talking too much about all the good and nothing about the bad, but there is simply nothing to say about the negative side of the internship! This internship is probably the best choice I’ve ever made in my life. Give it a try; you will most definitely LOVE it. Tell them I sent you. And if you need any furniture, just give me a call. I would love to help you out. ♦

