



# How to Make Your Summer Internship Count:

## Converting Your Legal Internship into a Job

Law students understand the critical importance of summer internships. These experiences serve as the gateway to securing post-graduation employment offers. However, the path from summer associate to full-time associate requires more than just showing up. Successful interns demonstrate a blend of professional competence, social intelligence, and strategic planning. Here's how to ensure your summer internship translates into a job offer.

### Demonstrate Professional Excellence

The foundation of any successful internship is exceptional work product. Employers evaluate summer associates primarily on their legal abilities. Approach each assignment with thoroughness and attention to detail. Proofread meticulously, follow citation formatting precisely, and ensure research is comprehensive. When receiving assignments, ask clarifying questions upfront rather than making assumptions. Submit work on time, and if deadlines might be missed, communicate this proactively with supervising attorneys.

### Build Meaningful Relationships

While work product matters tremendously, successful conversion also depends on relationship building. Make efforts to connect with attorneys at various levels within the firm. When attending social events, engage thoughtfully with partners and associates. Remember that these interactions, though seemingly casual, form part of your evaluation. Be authentic while maintaining professionalism. Follow up with attorneys after working on projects together, and seek feedback on your performance.

### Show Initiative Without Overstepping

Employers value summer associates who demonstrate initiative. Volunteer for challenging assignments when appropriate. If you complete work early, reach out to attorneys to take on additional projects. However, balance this enthusiasm with sensitivity to firm culture and hierarchy. Being eager is appreciated; being presumptuous is not. Read subtle cues about appropriate behavior from observing experienced associates.

CEB is a registered trademark of Continuing Education of the Bar - California (CEB). © The Regents of the University of California, 2025. All rights reserved.



1-800-232-3444



[www.ceb.com](http://www.ceb.com)

## Adapt to Firm Culture

Each legal employer has a unique culture. Some firms value intense dedication and long hours, while others emphasize work-life balance. Some maintain formal hierarchies, while others operate more collaboratively. Observe and adapt to these cultural norms. This doesn't mean compromising your values, but rather understanding the professional environment. Pay attention to communication styles, dress codes, and social expectations.

## Demonstrate Long-term Interest

Firms invest considerably in summer programs and seek associates who will remain with them long-term. Express genuine interest in the firm's practice areas and future.

When discussing post-graduation plans, be clear about your commitment to the employer's location and practice areas. If you're uncertain about particular aspects, frame your interests as aligning with the firm's strengths.

## Handle Feedback Constructively

How you respond to criticism significantly impacts hiring decisions. When receiving feedback, listen attentively, ask clarifying questions, and implement suggestions in future work. Avoid becoming defensive or making excuses. Show growth and adaptation throughout the summer, demonstrating your capacity for professional development.

## Maintain Consistent Performance

Consistency matters tremendously. While a single mistake rarely dooms an internship, patterns of behavior form lasting impressions. Maintain professional demeanor throughout the summer, even during social events. Remember that your evaluation continues during lunch outings, happy hours, and firm-sponsored activities.

By combining exceptional work quality, relationship building, cultural adaptation, and professional consistency, you position yourself optimally for a post-graduation offer. The summer internship represents both an extended interview and a valuable learning experience. Approach it with strategic intention, and you'll maximize your chances of converting this opportunity into the launching pad for your legal career.



---

**Your CEB AccessLaw™ Program membership gives you access to CEB's Practitioner™  
unlimited library - a \$650 monthly value - for free!**

---



1-800-232-3444



[www.ceb.com](http://www.ceb.com)

