

Final Assignment- My Experience as an Intern at Ford

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Ford Motor Company- Market Representation Intern

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Student Internships are a daunting topic, something that many people desire but little know how to attain. I became interested in this opportunity the moment I heard about my classmates' experiences while interning for a corporation in second year. However, after asking many questions, and subsequently hearing about the grueling application process, I quickly became intimidated and unsure of my abilities as a student intern. After a multitude of research, I discovered the Social Science Internship Program at Western, which eased the entire process of summer internships by providing necessary resources, and making me feel confident in my abilities to apply and work for a company such as Ford.

### Description of Work Experience

Ford Motor Company was founded in 1903 in the United States by Henry Ford, and later incorporated in Ontario in 1904 (Britannica, 2022). This company has since become the world's fifth largest manufacturer of cars, trucks and automotive accessories, with its corporate mission being "to help build a better world, where every person is free to move and pursue their dreams" (Ford of Canada, n.d). Ford of Canada is divided into a National Headquarters, where I was employed this past summer, three regional offices, vehicle assembly plants, parts distribution centers, Research and Development sites as well as Innovation centers. Within the National Headquarters, located in Oakville Ontario, there are many working departments that come together to manage the operations of Ford Canada as a whole; Finance, Marketing, Human Resources, Sales, Fleet, and Legal, to name a few.

Within my department, Market Representation, employees focus on not only Ford's general mission of offering products for sale, being automotives, but also specifically focus on offering services to Ford Dealerships in managing agreements, productivity, and sales. My internship, analogous to my department, involved duties chiefly related to dealer communication.

This major role and its related responsibilities connect to the overall function of the company as I aided employees within my department in delivering the services required to sustain Ford Dealerships around Canada; these services, in turn, ensure dealerships successfully operate and generate profit by selling the companies' products as forecasted. I was also able to learn about the inner workings of a large corporation and its many roles and responsibilities by participating in weekly meetings with employees from various departments.

My client communication-based responsibilities entailed communicating to dealerships around Canada on behalf of the corporation, updating and sending out performance reports and agreements for mid-year review, and coordinating with the regional managers in answering any questions a dealer may have directed to me. My responsibilities, enacted in a professional corporate environment such as Ford, ensured that each dealership was kept informed and was supported in its operations. Aside from direct communication, I also enacted a clean-and-clear process of all dealerships' files at Headquarters; which allowed me to learn about the history of dealer communications and the evolution of agreements within Ford starting from the 1950s.

In addition to the responsibilities given to me relating to dealer communication, my superiors were interested in further expanding my skills and knowledge of the French language, as I have completed the DELF examinations and am considered bilingual in Canada. Upon discovering this, my manager organized meetings for me to connect with the departments' regional manager of Quebec in order to refine my french skills. These interactions not only expanded my knowledge of the French language, but also expanded my skills of professionalism and addressing others in a corporate environment in both languages. This opportunity allowed me to expand my responsibilities in dealer communications to french-speaking dealerships in Quebec.

Aside from dealer communication, a substantial responsibility I was given entailed undertaking the position of lead evaluator in the departments' annual Sarbanes-Oxley MCRP audit, where I was responsible for reaching out to internal and external employees, updating and testing required financial and internal documents. Although this task was extremely tedious, the experience taught me about the importance of communicating with others in ensuring departmental procedures and audits were updated and effective. In relation to the MCRP, I also created a procedure manual for future interns when completing this audit in subsequent years. I noticed that this process was tedious and unclear, as I was responsible for learning the steps from various employees and did not have a clear outline for this large project. So, in hopes of streamlining the process for future interns, I was able to produce a step-by-step process book in which I thoroughly noted each step, contact and resource used to complete the procedure.

Aside from my responsibilities and projects throughout the internship, my department made sure that I received a true Ford experience, and planned many activities during the summer. I was able to participate in various intern events, department lunches, fleet test drives, networking opportunities with employees and lawyers who have careers aligned with my ambitions, and other enriching experiences. These additional opportunities truly made me feel part of a community, and supported by my superiors. The warm and welcoming corporate culture at Ford was the foundation of my experience as a summer intern, as it encouraged me to do my best and go the extra mile for my team.

### Expectations and Challenges

#### Examination of Learning Outcomes

When applying for summer internships in late December 2021, my main goal was to find a job that helped expand my theoretical knowledge of businesses and corporations that has

developed during my studies of Business Management at Western. I intended to learn about the inner workings of a company, and how different jobs are interconnected in ensuring the entire company operates effectively. A prominent learning outcome I intended to acquire from a summer position was the opportunity to learn how to step out of my comfort zone, and push myself to excel in areas I may not be experienced in. I was also specifically interested in developing stronger communication, teamwork and problem solving skills- as this experience, in my eyes, would teach me the most useful skills in preparation to enter the workforce.

Reflecting upon these intended learning outcomes, I can confidently validate that my experiences as a summer intern at Ford have not only enabled the achievement of my learning goals, but have also taught me various additional skills. I was able to expand my knowledge of business by gaining practical knowledge of how a Fortune 500 company operates at a micro level. Working for Ford, I was able to push myself to excel in areas I do not have much experience in, as I have never been very knowledgeable about cars; this reality sparked anxiety for me before I began working, as I felt unsure in my abilities to perform effectively. However, this experience has taught me that in order to continue learning, we must step out of our comfort zones, and take each opportunity to grow through experiences. Developing stronger communication and problem solving skills was accomplished through the numerous opportunities I was given to network with employees and provide updates on projects as well as any problems that I was responsible to resolve.

My desired learning outcome to enhance my teamwork skills changed throughout my internship; although I was given numerous opportunities for teamwork with my fellow intern partner, I found that by the end of my experience, I was able to take the lead on many projects and direct others on what needed to be done. This learning outcome exceeded my expectation,

and is the most positive effect from my experience as this is an extremely valuable asset for future professional endeavors.

### Examination of Work Experience

As aforementioned, I felt unsure of myself before starting my internship at Ford. Although I was eager to learn, I was nervous to work in a corporate environment for the first time as I did not know what to expect. This experience has truly shown me that on the other side of self doubt, there is growth; I feel so grateful to have been given the opportunity to expand my abilities, skills and knowledge, which transfer to numerous aspects of my life. Having completed my summer internship, I feel much more comfortable in the application and job process as a student. I am confident in my abilities and skills, which will continue to develop past this internship experience.

There were numerous instances over the course of my internship in which I succeeded and also many in which I was challenged in the workplace. I felt as though I succeeded in relation to my many work responsibilities; I made sure to ask questions when I was unsure of my task, I went out of my way to guarantee I was on the right track, and I managed my time effectively to ensure each task would be completed on time. By the end of the internship, I spoke to my manager who gave me feedback on my strengths throughout the summer; he believed that I was communicative, self-sufficient, confident and determined in completing tasks. This feedback reassured me that my successes stem from my strong desire to do my best and be thorough in my work.

There were also many instances in which I was challenged in the workplace; for example, I was given many responsibilities at once, and was expected to complete tasks independently. Practicing self-sufficiency and time management in a corporate environment was a challenging

adjustment as this required a great deal of professionalism and urgency. Specifically, there was a challenging situation in which one superior from my department expected a project to be done at the same time as another one of my tasks was due. Although I am very experienced with time management in a university setting, accommodating all parties in a corporate setting is vastly different as each employee was reliant on the completion of my tasks in order to complete their work responsibilities. This pressing reality of the need to work effectively and swiftly pushed me to overcome this challenge as I had no choice but to expand on these skills and manage my time in a way that ensured the completion of all my tasks within working hours. I also overcame this challenge by learning how to reach out and ask for help when I may have felt overwhelmed with my tasks. Additionally, at first I felt challenged in my ability to speak in french with the regional manager of Quebec, as I had not practiced these skills since my last year of highschool; I overcame this challenge by practicing outside of work hours and feeling confident in my ability to resurface these skills that I spent years perfecting. Overall, I found that having confidence in myself and in my work was the greatest asset when overcoming any challenges as an intern.

### Personal and Professional Development

#### Personal Development

During my time at Ford this summer, I learned many things about myself. As aforementioned, I uncovered how determined I am to go above and beyond when completing projects; this was realized through the lengths I went to in order to ensure my tasks were being completed as required, on time, and in the exact format desired, as well as through the feedback I received from my boss by the end of the summer. After introspectively learning this about myself, I aim to use this attribute in future practices, in and outside of professional environments, as I continue to help others and complete tasks to the best of my abilities. I have also uncovered

how this attribute may lead to overextending myself and taking on too many obligations in my personal life; I realized this when I found myself to be overwhelmed by the many tasks I offered to help others out with. In light of this learning, I strive to help out as much as I can while maintaining a healthy balance with my mental health, as I recognize how putting too much onto my plate affects my personal life.

### Professional Development

In relation to job-specific knowledge and skills in the workplace, working at Ford taught me tangible many skills such as the ability to conduct financial audits; this was learned throughout the entire MCRP process in leading the audit, as well as in formulating the procedure manual for the department in future years. This skill will impact future practices as the Sarbanes-Oxley audit requirements are relevant in all public corporations in North America; I will actively use the knowledge gained from this experience in future professional positions.

As aforementioned, working at Ford has also taught me skills in relation to communicating professionally in a corporate setting; this was learned throughout the process of emailing and speaking with numerous Ford employees in order to complete assigned tasks. This skill will impact future practices as communication skills are vital in professional occupations, and the ease at which I am able to connect with others in an open and confident manner will surely be transferred to my skill set in future professional positions.

I have also gained knowledge about company history and products during my time at Ford; this was learned through training, open discussions with Ford employees, filing of dealer correspondence and agreements, as well as several ride-and-drive opportunities. This has helped me grow in knowledge and experience, which will impact future practices in my personal and



professional life as I continue to push myself and learn new concepts, believing in my abilities to succeed in environments that I may not be as experienced in.

### Academic Development

I am currently in fourth year, studying an honors specialization in Business Management and Legal Studies, along with a major in Criminology. I selected this program as I am very interested in both business and law, and I feel as though this route allows me to explore both institutions in depth. As aforementioned, my internship with Ford allowed me to gain practical experience of the business world and expand my theoretical knowledge of business management.

During my time at Western, I have taken courses that have prepared me for this position such as contract law, organizational behavior, business law, and marketing. Throughout my internship, I learned about the importance and technicality of contracts through filing and updating dealer agreements. I also expanded on my knowledge of organizational behavior in learning the hierarchy when communicating to employees in a corporate setting, and understanding how employees are affected by corporate culture. Finally, I was able to learn more about marketing and business law through the many opportunities to connect with other departments and learn about the company as a whole; testing the cars, sitting in on marketing launch meetings, speaking with the companies corporate lawyer, and auditing my department all contributed to my ability to expand my theoretical knowledge of business law and marketing into practice.

This experience has truly allowed me to grow both professionally and personally. I have gained a multitude of skills and knowledge that will continue to positively impact my abilities in the professional environment. I am extremely grateful to have been given this opportunity, and feel much more confident in my strengths and abilities as a student intern. Although the

application process may seem intimidating at first, once you believe in your qualifications and communicate to companies with confidence, the daunting procedure will become more manageable and encouraging. Similarly to the application process, working in a corporate setting requires confidence in your abilities as a student in the professional environment. It is also vital to be open to learning new things, as this experience entails expanding the skill set and knowledge developed as a student. Finally, I believe that taking constructive criticism and feedback from your managers is extremely important during an internship; before this experience, I considered constructive criticism to be negative, and an opportunity to discuss my shortcomings and inabilities as an intern. I now feel as though receiving this kind of feedback is extremely beneficial, and helps to improve my skills in the workplace. Overall, when a student fully takes advantage of the Social Science Internship Program, the subsequent internship experience builds confidence in oneself, and provides numerous opportunities in expanding one's professional career.

Testimonial

I was given numerous opportunities for growth during my time at Ford. My department was extremely welcoming and supportive in providing me with a multitude of resources for personal and professional growth. My favorite experience this summer was the department and intern ride-and-drive (pictured on the left), where I was able to gain theoretical and practical knowledge of several Ford and Lincoln products in test driving the fleet cars; I drove cars such as the F-150, Mach-E, Bronco, and Lincoln Navigator and Aviator. This opportunity showed me what it truly means to work at Ford, and how each department's responsibilities come together in producing a final, safe and technologically advanced product. I also enjoyed the intern networking events (pictured on the right), where I was able to make meaningful connections with other interns and with managers from various departments. This opportunity allowed me to feel more comfortable when communicating with others in a corporate environment, and enabled me to network with successful business personnel.

## Sources

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