

Confessions of an Ad Agency Intern



Last summer I spent three months working as a strategist intern in one of Ireland's most successful creative ad agencies, Rothco.

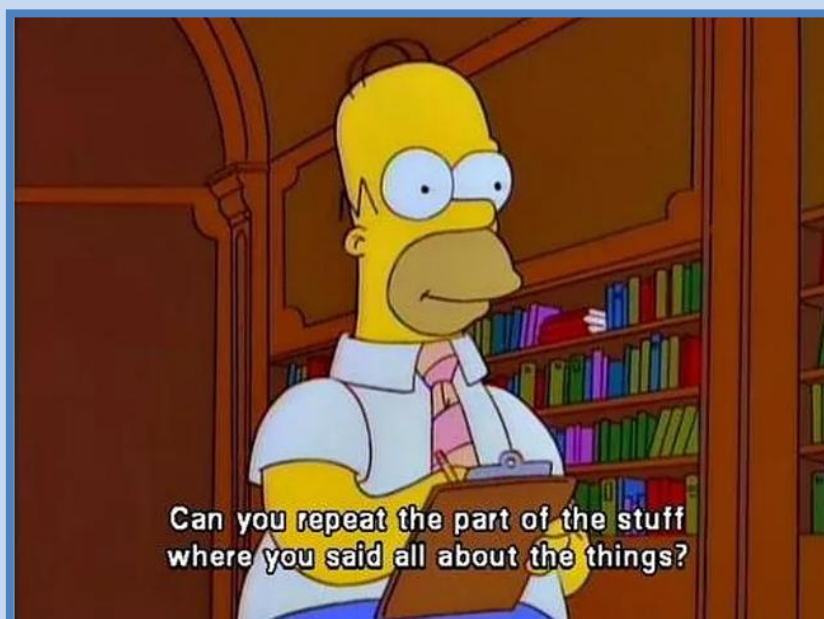
Here were some of my takeaways...

You'll have no clue what you're doing

The first steps you take into a new industry will always be a little shaky and uncertain.

Walking into my first few days in Rothco I was completely out of my depth. Every sentence was filled with anagrams, colloquialisms and made up terms that described a real life process that sounded like a totally different language to our marketing lecturers.

While it may be tempting to nod blankly and pretend it's all second nature to you, asking questions (no matter how silly they sound) will make you feel more comfortable and look more in tuned.



Don't be afraid to talk with people

Like any self respecting introvert there is nothing that I try to avoid more than awkward introductory small talk. But as an intern there is literally NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OFF!

People work with people, and the chances are that everyone in your workplace wants to be friendly and welcoming to the new people that arrive, particularly the interns.

Go for lunch with co-workers who you don't know yet, say yes to joining any events that interest you even if that means dusting off you football boots to join the 5-a-side team - show that you're a nice person



Watch others

Not in a way that's creepy or sinister but curious...

In Rothco I had the pleasure of working alongside some of the most talented creatives, strategists and account managers in the game. The way they approach and tackle problems was seriously impressive and inspiring.

Take mental notes around how they work, when they work and what content they consume to get them on top of their game.

Your approach is everything

Call me corny, but my approach going into Rothco was this; "No task is below me and no task is above me" - I think I read this on one of those clichéd Instagram Inspiration pages but it's always stuck in my head.

It's unavoidable that you'll be doing some jobs you don't really like or are inspired by, but by doing them with the right attitude you can show that you can handle more responsibility when it comes your way.



In the end I discovered that advertising is as really more about mastering a craft then applying a set of marketing principles.

Though I don't think it's for me, the stuff I learned about the craft, the culture and myself made it a very worthwhile internship.

What to look for in an internship?



Most of us will be an intern at some stage in our career. Although there is a misconception that all you do is take the coffee orders, the right internship can allow you to learn and grow within a learning environment. With all this in mind, what should one look for in *the perfect internship...*

1. Job suitability

This may seem obvious but you would not believe the amount of people who do not look into a job description before applying. They see the company name and presume the job will suit them. The rule of thumb is as follows: Go by the job spec not the company! Look into the exact role you are applying to and talk to a current intern within a similar role.

2. Location

It all seems great applying to different internships all around the country or even abroad but you need to be practical. There is little point applying to an internship that will take you two hours to get to in the morning. This is not your job it is a taste of the real working world, make it as easy as possible for yourself!

3. Contract

It is vital you sign a contract with all the necessary requirements. You may only be interning but you still should know your start/end dates and other details up front. This is your first point of call if you are working too many hours etc. so it is very important.

4. Mentoring

Intern at a company that will guide you in your duties and help you to grow. There is little point working night and day to not receive any feedback. If you are told what you do right or could improve on from the offset you will be getting far more out of the year.

5. Fun

It may be work but let's face it you want to enjoy yourself as well. They say that if you love a job you will never work a day in your life. This too can be said about interning. If you enjoy