



Top 10 Reasons to Hire Me for the Internship

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By Bill Alberta

It is difficult to conduct an effective search for an internship if you don't know what you want to do and why you are qualified to do it.

Before starting a search, you must have a good idea of what interests you, and you must be able to convince an employer of your merit. Knowing your "top 10" favorite qualities and skills can make the task much less difficult. It can be a big help in:

- exploring career possibilities, especially through information interviews;
- identifying suitable positions without worrying about job titles, i.e., you tell people the skills/qualities you wish to use and they suggest options;
- showing an employer you have a sense of career direction even though you may not yet have focused on a particular position;
- presenting your strengths to employers, whether in a resume, cover letter, or interview;
- gaining confidence — a key to successful information gathering and job searching.

Qualities relate to your personality, e.g., assertive, sincere, hard-working. Skills relate to your ability to deal with data, people, things, or ideas, e.g., editing publications, researching information, coordinating events. Both go into your top 10 list.

Guidelines for creating your top 10 list

- Choose a method for sifting through your brain and recording your favorite skills and qualities: Use the assessment tools available through your career center or brainstorm on your own or with the help of friends. Whichever method you choose, focus on the skills and qualities that you enjoy most, those in which you take pride. Don't limit yourself to those that are most developed. Also, draw from many experiences, not just paid positions, and focus on tasks or roles you particularly enjoyed.
- After each skill/quality, list one or more examples to back it up.
- Prioritize your list, recording the most important items first.
- Your top 10 can be a generic list that can guide your thinking or help you in an information interview. It can also be changed and targeted for use in a resume, letter, essay, or interview as you approach a particular employer for an internship or, later, for full-time employment or graduate school.
- When creating a list for a particular position, always include an item relating to your career interest and one that relates to your education and how it has prepared you for the internship.

- Remember that your list(s) should change over time, although some items may remain constant. Also, your skills and qualities are transferable — they can be applied to different positions and employers.
Adapted from "Top Ten Reasons to Hire Me," by Bill Alberta of the Career Development Office, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, with the permission of the Cornell ALS Career Development Office, copyright holder.

Example

Top 10 Reasons to Hire Me for the "Environmental Field Technician" Internship

1. **Career interest.** I love this field of work. For three years, I have planned to pursue environmental field study and assessment as a career.
2. **College preparation.** Junior in natural resources at Cornell University. Special courses include field biology, ichthyology, fishery management, and geographic information systems.
3. **Biology background.** Have completed 14 credits in biology with good grades.
4. **Field experience.** Spent six weeks in the Adirondacks assisting Professor Clearwater in her water quality studies. Completed additional field work through "Techniques in Fishery Science and Wetland Resources" course.
5. **Outdoor skills.** Avid hiker and backpacker. Have climbed 12 high peaks in Adirondacks. Own complete field gear.
6. **Mechanical skills.** Some experience operating boats, trucks, and tractors. Competent with minor repairs.
7. **Committed to environmental issues.** Active in National Wildlife Federation and Natural Resources Defense Council.
8. **Strong interpersonal skills.** Hold leadership role in my living unit. Completed a course in effective listening. Often described as friendly and a team player.
9. **High energy level.** Have worked summers since age 16. Covered 40 percent of college costs through summer and on-campus jobs. Can complete 12-hour hikes through rough terrain.
10. **Dependable.** Have never quit a job. Have received positive evaluations from all my employers.

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