

My name is Matt Fox and I am currently a graduating senior from Penn State University. I am writing this letter to reflect on my experience with College Works Painting. I was privileged enough to work for the company for two years as a branch manager and district manager.

I was originally exposed to the company when Zack Matush, a district manager, spoke in my accounting class my sophomore year. He spoke briefly about the company and I signed up for more information. I went to an information session and was asked to come back for an interview with the VP Lulu Deng. After a series of interviews with Lulu, I was hired as an intern with the company.

Initially, I had a couple questions and concerns about the internship. My parents were originally skeptical as well. My biggest concern was my belief that homeowners would not buy a paint job from a college student. My parents, who started their own roofing business over 20 years ago, were worried that I would not be able to turn a profit on my business. It took my parents, along with most other start-up businesses, years to turn a profit. In addition, there was a lot of start-up costs associated with starting the business. All those concerns were answered throughout the internship process. After running a branch that profited over \$15,000 each summer all the skepticism was answered.

My first year with College Works was quite the experience. My first month or so with the internship was less than stellar. In that time I was obtaining leads from potential clients and conducting estimates for those in need of a new paint job. I struggled to get leads during cold calling sessions and to make matters worse, I wasn't selling a single paint job. I went about 0 for 20 in my first estimates as an intern. I finally sold a paint job, but it later cancelled and I had to return the deposit. I could have easily given up on the internship, but with the help of my district manager and the belief that I could still succeed, I continued on. I finally found my niche and became a good seller. I researched more about paint technology and the services CWP provides. I followed the leads of the top sellers and incorporated my own style. Hard work, honesty, and a little bit of paint knowledge goes a far way. I finished up the school year and entered the summer with about \$25,000 worth of contracted business. My summer sales greatly increased as I became more comfortable with my selling techniques. Production also helped increase my sales. Once I saw first hand how to run a business and paint a house I became confident in the services I would be able to provide. However, to start, production was not the smoothest thing in the world. I was blessed by hiring a painter (one of my friends from high school) that ended up painting for me for two summers. On the other hand, the other painter I hired was really holding my production back. He delivered a lot less than he promised. He often was producing slower than I projected and wasn't completing the quality work that I wanted. Because of this, I had to put in a lot more hours during the day to make sure everything ran smoothly and efficiently. After a few weeks I found a couple more painters that put in quality work and did it relatively fast. I fired more than a couple painters along the way. Once production was running smoothly I climbed up the ranks to run one of the most successful branches in Pennsylvania. My quality work provided me with a lot of recommendations and extra business around the area. I finished the summer with a valuable experience and a lot of extra money.

Overall, my experience was difficult but one that I value and will never forget. The time I put into the internship was more than most other internships. The effort was second to none. The hardships faced were, at times, extremely difficult and challenging. However, as a whole, I have a much greater grasp on the "real world." I have no problem communicating with strangers (I was relatively shy before the internship). Also, I feel I can read people a lot easier and virtually sell anything to anyone. I am a lot more confident and knowledgeable in many subject areas. And I feel I can land any job I interview for. Ultimately, the money earned was great, but the experience is something I will always value.

That being said, this internship is not for everyone. As a district manager and returning branch manager last summer, I found out that many people don't get the same experience that I got. This is because of many reasons. Those who enter the internship expecting to sit at a desk and field coffee for 3 months do not belong in the program. In addition, those who are not ready to put in a lot of time in the spring, during the week and on weekends, are not meant for College Works. And lastly, those who have little drive or lack a strong work ethic, won't make it through the summer. College Works Painting produces a similar breed of people; those who are determined and ready to take on the world. After meeting with the top-earners in the company, along with the VPs, I found out that this holds true. The internship program produces leaders, mentors, and future CEOs. Those thinking about entering the program should be ready to put in time and effort or they will soon find themselves without a gained experience.

Ultimately, my College Works experience was something I greatly value. I am often asked if I had the opportunity to do it all over would I do it again. Simply put, yes I would.