480X Final Paper

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Internship: PGSN/The Plain

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Philip J. Runkel said "Action comes about if and only if we find a discrepancy between what we are experiencing and what we want to experience." In the spring semester of 2021, I applied to The Plain on LinkedIn. I landed the interview and was stoked to be working with this amazing startup company who is driven by trust and accessibility. They want to make vital public health information accessible to anyone by breaking barriers, opening doors, and disrupting systems. This sounded like an experience that was meant for me. Originally, I did not plan to receive credit for this internship, as I was only looking to gain more experience. I started off with a six month remote contract and was responsible for the social media and some graphic design content at the time, which was perfectly fine with me as I was still finishing up the semester. Towards the end of the semester however, I was given the opportunity to take on another internship with Pure Game Sports Network which was also deemed a remote internship. Pure game is committed to delivering customers a more expansive suite of software solutions to help them nurture and grow their tight-knit communities of members, fans, athletes, and coaches. The role I applied for was a graphic designer and I did not think twice about taking the opportunity because I believed that the more experience I can get, the better. I decided to receive credit for this internship but later found out that taking on another internship was not the best decision I made for myself. However, I do believe that even though it did not work out in the end, I still gained a lot of insight and communication skills throughout that experience which I will elaborate later on.

When I first started working for Pure Game Sports Network, I was very optimistic and looked forward to working solo as well as part of a team. Firstly, I frequently communicated with the members of the team which I think I have strongly developed from my first internship with Career Services at Bridgewater College because I had to contact many people and set up different meetings at different times. Normally I would take a bit of time to respond, but I believe I was swift and efficient when reaching out and replying to the members of Pure Game Sports Network. Not only that, but I made time to reach out to my professor to keep him updated on what has been happening. Secondly, I feel as the though one of the most important lessons that could be brought back to my classes, is conflict resolution. The communication on the other end was not what I expected it to be. I compare what I have seen in the interview, and I suppose they did not portray any kind of lack in communication. However, I became very frustrated with the members at the time because not only have they ghosted me once, but twice. I did not really know how to handle this at the time. I looked to my professor for advice on the matter because maybe I was overreacting or not being patient enough. Part of it might be my patience, however if no one was able to meet with me, I was not able to get my work done, start a project, or receive critical, yet useful, feedback. Unfortunately, as time went by, I became unhappy with the role I was playing and the lack of communication. Therefore, I reached out for help at the Career Services.

I let them know what was happening and they gave me some different options in order to make my experience better and still get the credits that I needed to pass the course. My decision was to bid farewell to Pure Game Sports Network and work toward getting credit with The Plain.

I have never had a problem with The Plain. To be honest, I am not sure why I did not just stick with The Plain in the first place. No matter though, the lesson I learned, and will never forget, is to ask for help. Asking for help does not always mean getting an immediate solution, but it does mean that you can gain knowledge from others in order to come up with a solution to a difficult problem. When it came to responding to the act of “ghosting” or writing my resignation letter from the internship, my professor did not do it for me. He guided me so that I can solve it on my own. This is an aspect of life that will never go away, but I, especially, can take away a lot of knowledge from it. As a graphic designer, I might have to work with others, and we may disagree. I may not be able to reach out to my professor, but I will have the memory of an experience that will help guide the next steps I take as a designer, team member, and a person. As for The Plain, I have had many positive experiences that has benefitted me greatly, such as creating graphics with Canva and Procreate for The Plain’s social media platforms, creating a short video using iMovie and Canva, featuring myself and my sisters, to promote The Plain, and investing in online courses to better my digital illustration in a means to create characters for some of the writers and feature those drawings in the weekly newsletter. Cecirahim told me that anything and everything that I created and will create, I need to put my name on it and tag my art account that way I can get recognition for my work. I always knew that I had to do that, however I do not think it really sunk in that I was putting my designs out there to be viewed by an audience. The first time that I had posted content I had created was a very new and different feeling. I was, and still am, excited when I post content that I made, and it brings me this sense of accomplishment that I have not felt in a while. One aspect of the internship with The Plain that I wish was implemented more often, was constructive criticism. I know in previous years; I would have told professors and peers that I receive too much. It only took for me to have little to no constructive feedback to make me long for it. It was confusing for me to feel this way, but I feel like every piece of constructive criticism I had received throughout my college career has helped me grow in ways I did not see nor understand until now. I did not see how it pushed me to do better and I did not understand the impact it had on my work overall. As The Plain expands their team, I think that they will create more opportunities for constructive criticism by holding more meetings and creating more teams to take on projects together instead of solo.

When I first began my internship with The Plain, I said that I would integrate my existing academic knowledge into my internship by understanding and communicating the design and goals of the company, use my design skills to stay consistent, and utilize my creativity in each project I take on. I would also utilize time management skills and planning skills that I have learned in my previous internship by planning times to work on the project and meet the deadlines given. I believe I have accomplished this goal with The Plain by utilizing Slack to communicate with the team members and having monthly video conferences that allowed for me to verbally display ideas that I had for the company. It also allowed me to make my own schedule which was amazing because I needed to work a part-time job at the same time. This meant that I had to manage my time wisely and make time to design, as well as take care of my myself mentally. My learning objectives or the knowledge, skills, and techniques I believed I would learn from completing this internship was collaboration on a larger scale, contributing and making a difference in the way a company is portrayed, and communication with a large group of people. The Plain has connected me with different members from around the world in which we work side by side, but in a different area of work. I was able to collaborate with these members and I continue to expand my connections as the company grows. I also believe that I had a great impact on The Plain because of my design work and the amount of people that have started to follow The Plain on the common social media platforms. I should mention at some points it did become a little difficult as I was only working with two other female interns who continued their journey elsewhere not long after I had joined the team. I did the best I could to manage the responsibilities on my own, and I think I was harder on myself than Cecirahim was towards me. I have been known to feel this way in the past, but in reality, I do appreciate how patient she was when I was going through this transition, as well as my transition into finding a new (part-time) job.

When applying and comparing this experience to my overall career goals, I can happily say that The Plain, and the members that make up The Plain, have helped me progress and achieve my career goals by providing an opportunity to grow and push myself as an artist. I have created projects that I am proud to say I accomplished on my own. I even ventured into videography on my own, which is not my area of expertise, but I accomplished the project that will soon make an appearance on The Plain’s website. I have explored different areas of digital design such as purchasing courses to better my digital illustration of characters in order to create content for The Plain and I was able to voice my opinions on what I think would be best (or the next steps) for the company. I am very grateful for this because my team members care about what I have to say and I feel like I am listened to. Any and all ideas were welcome and I have never felt more apart of a team than I did with The Plain. Overall, this internship made me feel successful, grateful, and appreciated. At the same time, it did make me more confident of my career goals, most definitely encouraged me to continue expanding my horizons, and learn as much as possible throughout my journey in college, future careers, and life in general. As I am concluding this story of experience, I am going to continue on with the experience and hopefully just write a new chapter. The journey was not easy, and at times I wanted to cave in and walk away from it all. However, I encourage my peers and the future students at Bridgewater College to continue on walking no matter how hard or impossible it might seem at the time. Everything works out in the end, but you have to trust the process and keep moving forward. Do not be afraid to ask for help and do not be afraid to ask questions. There are options and solutions to any and all problems that are faced. We as students are here to learn and thrive, and such as life, we have to take the good with the bad. If a great career opportunity arises, take it, and run with it. The mistakes I have made taught me more lessons than my achievements, and while we work towards achieving our goals, mistakes are reasons to grow, and we should not be afraid to do so.