According to this article [here](#), internships can help an undergraduate jump start their career before graduation. Internships are vital for anyone serious about the industry they are passionate about working in. One, two, even three internships can help you stand out from other applicants applying for the same job. Hundreds and hundreds of recent graduates will be applying for the same jobs around the same time of their graduation, so any relevant experience is one step closer to you landing that position. Internships leave you with not only real-world experience you would not otherwise have, but they also leave you with tangible communication and technical skills that you will be transfer to any job upon graduation.

Students in the Public Relations concentration can land jobs as Event Coordinators, Writers, Press Security, Account Executives, Communication Specialists, etc. Public Relations is a very competitive industry where experience is highly recommended before graduation. Below are five recent UNC-Charlotte Communication Public Relation majors who utilized the Communication Internship Program and got hands-on experience in their field. Some of these alums even landed their dream jobs, before even walking across the stage for graduation. These five UNC-Charlotte alums are now making names for themselves in this competitive industry.

**Seth Kingdon, May 2015 Graduate**  
**Current Job:** Account coordinator, Carolina PR/Chernoff Newman.  
**Ideal Career:** Communication for a local nonprofit in Charlotte.

**Where did you intern while being a student at UNC-Charlotte?**

I interned at Make-a-Wish of Central and Western North Carolina and SPARK Strategic Ideas during my senior year of college.

**How do you think these internships prepared you for your careers post-graduation?**

It gave me experience before I entered the day-to-day work world. I was able to hone my skills in different areas: social media, writing, media list making and media monitoring. I wouldn’t have
been able to learn these skills anywhere else.

**Why do you think internships are crucial for Communication majors?**

College classes are very helpful, but it’s only a glimpse into what full time work is like. If you have time to work an internship, I would highly recommend it.

**What was your favorite memory/part about being an intern at these companies?**

I got to help write wish stories for Make-a-Wish. I was given information about a child and had to piece together a memorable story about their wish being granted. It was a fun and beneficial experience for a first-time intern.

**What would you say to other students who are unsure if they should intern before they graduate?**

Step out of your comfort zone a little. You don’t have to commit a lot of time to an internship. Even ten hours a week is a good place to start. You may not receive pay, but you can’t put a price tag on experience.

**What is your biggest piece of advice for future UNC-Charlotte Communication Interns?**

Stay committed, be ready to learn, and have a great attitude.

**Is their something you wish you knew about internships before-hand?**

I didn’t start looking for an internship until my junior year of college. Looking back, I wish I would have started looking earlier. Internships in college are a great opportunity to gain experience without too much long-term commitment.

**How did your internships help you network with people already in the field?**

My supervisors at my internships encouraged me to go to networking events and other professional gatherings. And I’m glad I did. I met great people at these events, one of which hired me to work full time. You never know who you’ll meet at networking events!

- **If you would like to reach out to Seth Kingdon, you can email him at Kingdon.seth@gmail.com**

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**Kristyn Callaway, December 2015 Graduate**

**Current Job:** Media and Public Relations Specialist for Delhaize
America

Ideal Career: Vice President of Marketing in the retail sector.

Where did you intern while being a student at UNC-Charlotte?

Prior to beginning my full-time role with Delhaize America, I was the summer 2015 Public Relations Intern working primarily with the Food Lion banner.

How do you think these internships prepared you for your careers post-graduation?

This internship was crucial to my career post-graduation. As a student, I could not have asked for better professors at UNCC but there are so many things you learn working in a professional environment. This internship gave me the opportunity to apply the concepts I studied in class, add real-world experience to my resume, and expand my professional portfolio. I grew so much by working with seasoned PR and marketing professionals who set the bar high and allowed me to independently work on projects and assignments. Not only that, I was able to begin a full-time career at Delhaize America before I even graduated.

Why do you think internships are crucial for Communication majors?

Internships are extremely important for Communication majors. You get to truly live a day in the life of a communications professional, grow your resume, gain real-world experience, and make connections. Internships also provide an opportunity to learn what you really want to do. Some of my former classmates were able to quickly figure out where they did, and did not, want to work after they graduated, which saves a lot of time when you are job searching post-graduation.

What was your favorite memory/part about being an intern at these companies?

Delhaize America was the only internship I have had. Emotionally, my favorite memory was meeting members of our executive leadership and hearing how genuinely excited
they were to welcome and teach the 2015 summer interns. My favorite professional memory was working on press releases and media alerts as the primary media contact and actually seeing my stories gain placement among various media outlets.

**What would you say to other students who are unsure if they should intern before they graduate?**

Why not? You have nothing to lose except a great learning experience. Make those connections, build your resume, and have fun in the process.

**What is your biggest piece of advice for future UNC-Charlotte Communication Interns?**

Don't be afraid to put yourself out there. Organizations know you are a student, new in your field and you have questions. This is the time to ask the questions you think are silly without fear of judgment. Also, schedule time with the leaders of your organization. It may be thirty minutes or three hours, but get on their calendar. Learn how they got where they are and let them know who you are. And most importantly, don't forget you have influence. You were chosen as their intern for a reason. J

**Is there something you wish you knew about internships beforehand?**

I wish I would have known that (most) internships are not like the movies. I thought I would be on coffee runs and not get to work on anything interesting, but I was certainly wrong!

**How did your internships help you network with people already in the field?**

My internship helped me so much with making connections. I attended all of our department meetings, met leaders among the organization and was involved in professional groups like PRSA and the American Marketing Association.

**Food Lion has paid, professional internships every summer. The internship positions are usually posted in the fall and can be searched [here](#). Food Lion offers PR and marketing positions available as well as many others in other departments like IT, merchandising, pricing, etc.**

• **If you would like to reach out to Kristyn Callaway, you can email her at kristyn_callaway@yahoo.com.**

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**Meagan Speck, May 2016 Graduate**

**Current Job:** Account Executive at Beasley Media Group
Ideal Career: Event Production

Where did you intern while being a student at UNC-Charlotte?

I interned at Map Management, Red Bull, Top Drawer Soccer, and Live Nation.

How do you think these internships prepared you for your careers post-graduation?

My internships have all been so different and I’m glad they were. I got skills and knowledge in so many industries. I got to find out what I like and didn’t like. When I chose my career path, I knew I wanted to be involved in music and entertainment BECAUSE of my internship with Live Nation. With the internships, I also met so many contacts that helped me get to where I am now.

Why do you think internships are crucial for Communication majors?

Internships help you find yourself and prepare you with skills you can’t find in the classroom. You learn that it’s about what you know, but it’s also more about WHO you know.

What was your favorite memory/part about being an intern at these companies?

My favorite memory would have to be when I worked for Red Bull at the Carolina County Music Fest. I got to network with so many people and be the face of an incredible brand. You really can’t beat it!

What would you say to other students who are unsure if they should intern before they graduate?

Put yourself out there and don’t be scared - - an internship is not a job, but an opportunity to learn for the job down the road.

What is your biggest piece of advice for future UNC-Charlotte Communication Interns?
Be better than the other intern and set yourself apart in some way. Also, keep a good relationship with the company even if you don’t want to work with them down the road …you never know who they know!

**Is there something you wish you knew about internships beforehand?**

I would recommend keeping a portfolio and really saving any notable work you did while interning.

**How did your internships help you network with people already in the field?**

Every internship led me to a new connection and a new opportunity.

- **If you would like to reach out to Meagan Speck, you can email her at mbspeck94@gmail.com.**

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**Justin Taylor, 2014 Graduate**

**Current Job:** Community Engagement at Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont

**Ideal Career:** My ideal career would be to work in the corporate social responsibility space. I would work with corporations, small businesses, non-profit organizations, and individuals about the how they can make the greatest social impact in their community.

**Where did you intern while being a student at UNC-Charlotte?**

GIVE FIFTY ONE, a local nonprofit that helps provide children who are homeless with resources to be successful academically, personally and spiritually. *(Sidenote: Also while in school, I worked full-time at Chick-fil-A Charlotte as a digital marketing and social media manager.)*
How do you think these internships prepared you for your careers post-graduation?

My internship in the non-profit space allowed me to learn more about the social and economic issues that impacted the people we helped. I was able to bring my experiences to my current role at Goodwill.

Why do you think internships are crucial for Communication majors?

To be completely frank, employers valued experience more than education. It is crucial for communication majors to complete at least one internship to build their resume to showcase experience in the communication field. Students who haven't completed an internship or can’t show experience in their field of study will have a difficult time landing that first post-grad job.

What was your favorite memory/part about being an intern at these companies?

While interning at GIVE FIFTY ONE, I was able to interact with the children we helped. It was impactful to hear how GIVE FIFTY ONE has helped them be successful in their journey.

What would you say to other students who are unsure if they should intern before they graduate?

Do it! It is a valuable experience to learn from seasoned professionals. I knew I wanted to work in the non-profit sector, but it wasn't until I interned at a non-profit organization that I didn't know what it takes to be an effective communicator at a non-profit. The benefit of internships is an opportunity to figure out what you like and do not like as a career or job position.

What is your biggest piece of advice for future UNC-Charlotte Communication Interns?

Even though I completed only one internship while at UNCC, my advice for future Communication interns would be to complete multiple internships. Multiple internships in different industries would provide you with a lot of insight as you step into post-grad opportunities.

Is there something you wish you knew about internships beforehand?

I believe that Ms. Kuntzman's internship orientation successfully prepared me for my internship. The internship orientation was very informative and made me feel prepared as I entered into my internship.

How did your internships help you network with people already in the field?
My internship allowed me to network with some of the top non-profit leaders within the Charlotte community.

If you would like to reach out to Justin Taylor you can email him at justin.taylor@goodwillsp.org

Chloe Watson, 2015 Graduate
Current Job: Marketing Assistant at Moore & Van Allen
Ideal Career: Communications Specialist

Where did you intern while being a student at UNC-Charlotte?

J. Murrey Atkins Library, AmWINS Group, Inc., Make-A-Wish Central and Western NC and Relate PR.

How do you think these internships prepared you for your careers post-graduation?

Internships teach you a lot of things your classes don't and can't, like how to act in an office setting, respond to a professional email, prepare for a client meeting, etc. If you've never had an internship, these things can be quite overwhelming when you take your first position with a company.

Why do you think internships are crucial for Communication majors?

Internships are crucial for Communication majors because there are so many career paths you can take with a communication degree. I used my internships to help me figure out what I wanted to do with my degree and what I was looking for in an employer.

What was your favorite memory/part about being an intern at these companies?

My favorite part about being an intern at these companies was being around people who were passionate about communication and loved their jobs. It made me feel like I chose the right career path.

What would you say to other students who are unsure if they should intern before
they graduate?

You shouldn't be unsure. FIND AN INTERNSHIP. When you are applying for jobs employers want to see experience, especially when you are applying for a competitive position. Also, internships are a great way to network with people in your field.

**What is your biggest piece of advice for future UNC-Charlotte Communication Interns?**

Treat your internship like your first job. Make sure you are always on time and dressed appropriately. You always want to make a good impression at your internship because you never know when you might need a reference for a job.

**Is their something you wish you knew about internships beforehand?**

All internship experiences are not going to be great. If you feel like you are not learning enough, feel free to express this to your internship supervisor or create your own idea for projects and pitch it to them.

**How did your internships help you network with people already in the field?**

While you are an intern you meet a lot of people in your field. I always exchanged business cards with the people I met and made sure to add them on LinkedIn. Having their information was very helpful during my job search.

- **If you would like to reach out to Chloe Watson, you can email her at chloe_watson_21@yahoo.com**

It’s never too early to start researching and planning for an internship for next semester! UNC Charlotte is home to many resources for students such as The Career Center, Hire-A-Niner, and many Communication/Journalism teachers have connections to employers around the Charlotte community.

**Nichole’s Tip:** During internships, ALWAYS go the extra mile to make sure employers know you really want to be there and really want to learn. Nothing aggravates them more then having interns wait to be told what to do. Ask questions. Take initiative. Brainstorm ideas to benefit the company. Employers will go out of their way to help you with anything you need as long as they see you are putting 100% into the internship. Employers know when interns really care about their work or if they are simply doing it for class credit.