

Ankur Perry, HAVAS Just::



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I am currently completing a PhD in neuroscience, and wish to use my scientific knowledge in my future career. To follow this path, I looked for an internship within healthcare and life sciences, and found HAVAS Just::

The placement ticked was a great fit, as it offered the chance to learn about healthcare communications and play an active role in disseminating messages to doctors, patients, journalists and the general public.

I had the opportunity to get involved in a wide variety of projects. My role included public relations, medical education, media relations, and more traditional healthcare communications. For example, one of the first projects I was involved in was the 'Bears4Rare campaign' (see image) – a PR stunt using a pyramid of 1,000 teddy bears in Waterloo station to raise awareness for rare diseases, both in person and through encouraging media coverage of the event.



My biggest challenge was speaking to the public (especially as the client was present at the Bears4Rare event); I can be quite shy but being given that opportunity allowed me to step up and develop my confidence. It ended up being one of my favourite days at the agency, and I learnt on the job and enhanced my abilities.

I developed an understanding of the dynamics between big pharma and the public. I enhanced my ability to extract key points from reams of information, and to efficiently relay them on to colleagues to push the projects forward.

More generally I developed my soft skills within the office environment to foster an encouraging team relationship. I learnt that organising your time is never more important than when working in teams, and it's better to speak up if you're unsure. I also found that it is best to get involved whenever possible to make the most of your working day.

It became clear that consistency is crucial in a career; demonstrating and developing your skills can make you a 'go-to' person, which creates demand for your abilities and builds your assertiveness to push yourself further. I tried my best to be consistent and it paid off.

I am now quite sure that I would enjoy working within an office environment, within the private sector. I am also more convinced that I could fit within the field of pharmaceutical consulting. The Host Organisation was eager to stay in communication, and I have made more contacts with whom I may pursue opportunities upon completion of my PhD. Hence the placement was a very useful endeavour.

Find out more about Ankur's experience: <http://www.havasjust.com/just-about-my-internship-by-ankur-perry>

For more information please contact Ankur Perry directly: ankur.perry.10@ucl.ac.uk

Top Tips for other PhD students?

- If you are interested in a company but their website does not mention internships or you have a query, then calling them up is far better than sending emails. In my experience you can instantly build a rapport that aids a potential application, and you can also ask questions which you may not be confident to query through emails.