The Hydraquip Internship Experience

Interning at Hydraquip was a very successful experience largely due to the immense initiative I took to differentiate myself from the other eight to ten interns. I performed above the set internship standards as well as took on tasks that were not required of the internship. This motivation and initiative on my part can be attributed to the many influential relationships and experiences I have had throughout my college career with my professors, core courses and the internship staff.

Hydraquip is a distributor of various hydraulic or pneumatic machinery. The company sells everything from control levers to entire vessels that service oil rigs. Hydraquip is a 100% employee owned company, and is under a parent company called “Employee Owned Holdings Incorporated” or “EOHI”. EOHI has multiple companies under it including: Hydraquip, Hydraquip Custom Systems, Supreme Integrated Technology, and Gulf Coast Controls. Every single one of these companies are under the 100% employee owned umbrella.

Hydraquip’s advantage over their competition is largely due to its salesforce since it is more experienced and well trained than most of their competitors. Potential outside sales representatives for Hydraquip are not allowed into the sales force out of college due to the company’s 2-4 year “vetting” process where an individual learns extensive knowledge of company, products and an overview of the industry. In addition, every outside salesman is required to be fluid power certified and have the knowledge to work with AUTOCAD. This “vetting” process creates an outside sales force for Hydraquip that is a formidable competitor in the field. Also, Hydraquip, like most companies, is structured so outside sales representatives are supported by the other departments within the company, while reporting to the management. The sales representatives in this company give Hydraquip the cutting edge over their competition and they do a great job in their professional outside sales position.
The way the internship was structured was very effective at engaging my interest and talents while providing an intriguing and informative learning experience. The internship was rotational which allows an intern to work in every department of the company and experience how each department works in coordination with the company overall. This is very advantageous to the intern because it allows he or she to not only understand the sales aspect of Hydraquip but also explore other jobs and make comparisons to see what other careers that might be interesting to pursue.

The first rotation of the internship was working in the warehouse. This involved supply management as well as assisting in the shipping and receiving department. Since the company had just moved to a larger location the week before, all the interns were able to witness what kind of undertaking moving a huge corporation involved. Once the company had settled in, we were able to help figure out a new system for better storage and faster retrieval. My idea was actually used in creating the new system but most of the credit was given to a Hydraquip employee who actually developed the idea. From the warehouse, the next rotation for the internship was in the shop where we were able to build and test hydraulic pumps and motors. This was a very valuable experience because I knew very little about the technical side of this industry and the shop was a great learning experience. Also, I was asked to assist the shop foreman in presenting information and projections regarding the company’s shop productivity. The next rotation of the internship was the repair center which was at another location in Houston. This experience was even more in depth in regards to gaining technical knowledge. The combination of the shop and repair center has made me more knowledgeable about the industry, and more useful to the company.

After the repair center, our intern rotation was the purchasing department. This is where I embarked on a solo excel project and I was able to draw on AGEC 217 knowledge to complete the project in such a way that it exceeded expectations and received commendation. The project entailed compiling data from multiple of millions of dollars’ worth of purchases from many different
manufacturers. My mentor on this project left after the first day of my rotation leaving only instructions for the project. However, once I had moved onto the next intern rotation, he sought me out to tell me that I exceeded expectations and that the project was very helpful.

Following purchasing, the marketing department was the next rotation of the internship. In the marketing department, the other interns and I compiled a list of 3300 companies and their affiliations with the company. The purpose of this project was to understand how dependent the company was on each of these companies and try to figure out where we need to diversify in the market. I was selected to do market research on the shipbuilding industry for the Gulf, East, and West Coast. During the project, I checked to see trends of specific marine markets in and on each coast, and which companies were creating these ships. Some of the categories of ships that I was analyzing were: military and police vessels, petrol tankers, import/export carriers, service/repair ships, hydraulic/lift boats, personal vessels, and tug boats. Taking great care and confidence in this project, I compiled data for a presentation that I believed I was going to give to the head of the marketing department. However, I found myself in the executive conference room of the company headquarters delivering the presentation to the vice president of the company. After my presentation, he expressed how impressed he was with my research and presentation, and asked if he could use my exact presentation in his upcoming September meeting. Also, I made an observation that I saw a very specific trend in military crafts being built only in the East Coast. When I voiced this finding to the vice president, he was very intrigued and asked I could do further research on that finding, knowing there are two types of hydraulic units. These two types of units are civilian grade and military grade. He explained that it wouldn’t make much sense at this point to expand in these areas, because the company currently only services civilian units. He expressed that this was a very helpful finding, and that it would make the decision much easier. Thus, I confidently proceeded do a much more in depth analysis of the military shipbuilding market than what the vice president of marketing had requested. This was probably my proudest
moment of the internship overall, and the project took several weeks to accomplish due to all of the research and preparation. Without the knowledge I had gained from AGEC 105 and ECON 322 on how to accurately portray data and research on a graph, I would not have been able to accomplish this project to the professional standard I wanted to achieve. Also, AGEC 217 assisted on the technical side and understanding of the market analysis that I was doing.

Another marketing project that I undertook on my own initiative was to do research on how Hydraquip was doing as far as SEO (search engine optimization). I was able to draw on my AGEC 314 knowledge as well as interactions with Dr. Litz and his online resources for selling to complete this task. I created a short report for the vice president of sales and I was asked by him to meet and go over the entire project. After our meeting, he personally sent it to the marketing department to look over.

In both of these circumstances of presenting projects to the upper management of Hydraquip, I was quite capable of accomplishing these tasks due to my experience in ag economics and I am thankful present that both projects were received very well with accolades from company executives. And on a final note of my marketing department experience with Hydraquip, I gathered the courage to ask the president of EOHI if I could ask him a few short questions. To my surprise, he set up a meeting where he invited me to join him for lunch in his office for lunch as well as an interview. Thus, I was able to ask him questions and discussed interesting business matters for an hour and a half, a truly exciting situation.

Inside sales was the next department in the rotational internship. In this department, I assisted outside salesmen and worked with thousands of dollars in merchandise over the course of a few weeks. Also, I became ISO9001 certified. Inside sales was very interesting experience because I was able to work with other inside salespeople as part of a team. We figured out complex orders and worked with all types of customers in various situations. I was also trusted with a twenty six thousand dollar account for a very specific stainless steel pump for the marine industry.
From here, I was afforded the ability to be involved with the outside sales force and go on sales calls. Several of these calls included going to some of the largest research and development facilities for Shell, GE, and other major companies. Due to the “vetting” process that outside sales representatives are required to complete, each salesperson holds fluid power certification and is able to engage in very technical selling. I was able to witness this firsthand and realized that learning never stops and one must continue to learn about your industry and company products in order to be a competent salesman.

From working with Dr. Litz and taking the 314 marketing class, I was able to draw on my experience and make accurate comments before, during, and after these sales calls. The knowledge and experiences I have acquired from my major empowered my ability to gain recognition from customers as well as upper management executives.

One of the great aspects of a rotational internship is that my specific learning objectives were all able to be implemented at some point in the process. Marketing, branding and customer relations came with the sales, marketing, and inside sales rotations. Inventory and supply chain came with the operations, warehouse, foreman, and shipping rotations. Logistics and shipping were also covered by these rotations. General business practices for a mid-sized corporation were learned in the marketing, purchasing, and sale rotations. Inside and outside sales experience was accomplished in the inside and outside sales rotations. Finally, pricing using data and communication was greatly discussed and prevalent during the inside sales rotation. I was able to learn and gain experience in all of my preplanned learning objectives, as well as learn a good deal more about certain subjects that I wasn’t quite expecting.

As far as an overall appraisal for the internship, Hydraquip couldn’t have done a better job. The entire company is filled with friendly people who want to see you succeed as well as want to be a part of that success. The only way a student would not enjoy this experience would be if they had no interest in hydraulics, engineering, or the oil and gas industry. I walked in with little to no knowledge of the
industry and walked out with a much deeper understanding of not just the industry, but the product and the customer. The internship is highly paid which makes it worth doing, but it pales in comparison to the opportunity it presents interns for a continued career with the company. In fact, it will be pretty difficult for another company to sway me from Hydraquip. As far as career goals are concerned, Hydraquip offers a sales career that I have been looking for in many companies and I am deeply impressed by what that career has to offer. The kind of success I experienced in this internship would not have been attainable if not for some of the courses I have taken throughout my major. AGEC 217 and AGEC 105 provided a foundation that I deem to be incredibly helpful. As far as understanding graphs, data, trends, and being able to analyze all of these, these two classes are by far the most helpful. Other classes that I have taken include marketing 314 and Dr. Litz’s online sales classes. These two classes assisted my ability to surpass goals and show great initiative in my internship as well allowed for using the knowledge I gained in 217 and 314 in planning and implementation.

Being a driven AGEC major and after taking all these classes, I would highly recommend this internship. However, I would be sure to take Dr. Litz’s actual class. I also cannot stress enough that academics are only a part of the puzzle. I have kept my GPA relatively high, but I have also gotten myself involved in multiple organizations and leadership positions. These extracurricular activities are basically just important as your academics, however, they don’t mean much if your GPA is below average. I personally have every intention of revisiting this company, and I consider them a major contender in my decision for companies to work with after college. In addition to my current academics, I intend on becoming certified in fluid power. With this certification, I will be more qualified and useful to Hydraquip. Finally, I plan to take Dr. Litz’s class next semester as well as continue to participate in my extracurricular groups.

My advice to other students would be to enjoy your time at Texas A&M. It is important to make good grades and study hard, but it is also important to make memories, have fun, and grow as a person.
Participating in an internship is a good way to grow in your skills and abilities as well as to explore career opportunities. From my experience with the Hydraquip internship, I have learned that people in the workforce want to help college students succeed and are very supportive of their career path. Having strong relationships with your professors, in and outside of class, as well as making the most of your core courses, also adds to acquiring a successful career. All these things combined can lead a career seeking college student to great opportunities in any career field he or she may be pursuing.