

# How to Intern Successfully – Insights and Actions to Optimize Your Experience

Reviewed by Cessna Winslow

Laura O’Connell, *The Internship Companion: Guiding You Through Each Phase of Your Journey*. (2024). Kendall Hunt Publishing. ISBN: 979-8385127399. Print: \$44; Ebook: \$22, 99 pages. This book is also available on Amazon in a spiral-bound version.

In my role as both the internship course instructor and departmental internship coordinator, I’m often searching for a student-friendly text to support interns through their experience. *The Internship Companion* fills that gap beautifully. The books I previously assigned were solid, but they lost their effectiveness over time as students began recycling papers from past interns. In response, I tried piecing together a variety of articles and resources to help students prepare for the realities of the workplace. While that approach had its merits, it was also time-consuming and inconsistent. This book streamlines the process, offering comprehensive guidance in a format that’s both accessible and relatable.

Emphasizing communication as a foundational element in successful career exploration, this 99-page text provides a structured, practical roadmap for students preparing to enter the professional world. Organized into 11 concise chapters, the book offers thoughtful guidance and strategies to succeed in an internship. It addresses the common anxieties of first-time interns while encouraging self-reflection and personal growth. Whether the internship ends up being amazing or just “meh,” the advice here helps students find value and take charge of their own early career growth.

The book starts with explaining what an internship involves and reminds students that their internship is a learning experience, emphasizing that they are there to learn through observing, talking and working. Chapter 1 also highlights the value of personal and professional growth that interning provides and concludes with an exploration and reflection activity.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 instruct students on preparing for an internship addressing topics that include ways to find an internship, resume and cover letter writing, and how to prepare for an internship. While the advice and instruction have an elementary vibe,

the message is on-point and simple for any-level student (high school through college) to comprehend.

One of the book’s standout features is its attention to workplace culture and its candid discussion of the often-overlooked topic of sexual harassment. Through thoughtfully designed scenarios, students are encouraged to assess and respond to challenging situations, helping them recognize potential red flags and explore appropriate ways to handle them. Relatedly, there’s an entire chapter devoted to workplace conflict—an area past interns have admitted they felt unprepared to navigate.

O’Connell closes the book with practical advice on wrapping up an internship, offering thoughtful parting tips and a reflective final activity that prompts students to revisit and consider the key takeaways from each chapter.

While *The Internship Companion* delivers valuable insights and engaging activities, there are a few minor drawbacks worth mentioning. I appreciated the textbook’s concise, user-friendly approach, but I found myself wanting more depth—especially in the form of personal perspectives from former interns or internship supervisors. Including those voices could have added meaningful real-world context and made the material even more impactful. Additionally, the print edition is a lightweight, spiral-bound volume that feels more like a supplemental workbook than a textbook. Given these factors, the book’s price point feels somewhat high for what is essentially a practical guide.

Drawbacks aside, if your goal is to equip students with the tools they need to navigate their internships with confidence and professionalism, *The Internship Companion* delivers. It prepares students for real-world challenges while giving educators the flexibility to design discipline-specific assignments that align with their course objectives.

Dr. Cessna Winslow is an associate professor of public relations & social engagement at Tarleton State University where she also serves as the internship coordinator for the Department of Communication Studies. In addition to teaching internship courses, Cessna recruits and advises employers on creating positive internship experiences. Dr. Winslow can be reached at [cwinslow@tarleton.edu](mailto:cwinslow@tarleton.edu).

# Vulture Capital’s War on Journalism

Reviewed by Jon Bekken

Rick Goldsmith, *Stripped for Parts: American Journalism on the Brink*. Documentary film released by Kovno Communications, 2024. 88 minutes. Available from New Day Films or Kanopy.

“Stripped for Parts” tells the story of the looting of newspapers by vulture capital – or hedge funds, as they prefer to be known – and of journalists’ efforts to resist. The film focuses on Alden Global Capital, which now owns more than 200 newspapers including the *Chicago Tribune*, *Denver Post*, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, *New York Daily News*, *Detroit News* and *Orange County Register*, although other hedge funds are active in the industry as well.

This is filmmaker Rick Goldsmith’s third documentary dealing with journalism; previously he made “Tell the Truth and Run: George Seldes and the American Press” (1996) and “The Most Dangerous Man in America: Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers” (2009). Both were nominated for Academy Awards for Best Documentary Feature.

Hedge funds buy companies that are in crisis, typically paying rock-bottom prices. Some are flippers, restructuring companies so they can be sold as going concerns at a substantial profit, but many are looters – selling off the real estate, and making high-interest loans to the companies (which are legally distinct entities that can ultimately declare bankruptcy, leaving the hedge fund with the assets and the stripped shell of a company with the debts) to reimburse themselves for the purchase price.

Newspapers have proved particularly vulnerable to the hedge funds, as they typically own large buildings in the heart of the cities they serve and hold a near-monopoly over local advertising and news. Many were highly profitable until the Internet gutted classified advertising and online aggregators pirated

their news, leading to a collapse of both advertising and subscription revenue. But it is still possible to turn a profit by slashing pages, raising prices, and getting rid of most of the editors and reporters – requiring the survivors to churn out three or four stories a day to preserve the illusion of covering the news. In the short term, companies like Alden can often recoup their entire investment by selling the real estate and moving the gutted staff to smaller leased space in dying strip malls. The papers, sometimes staffed by a single journalist (the space between ads filled by copy from other Alden papers), continue to be published so long as they make money, and are shut down or merged with other Alden properties when the profits falter. While its newspapers are but a facade of their former selves, Alden finds this a lucrative business and is on the prowl for more newspapers (and even entire newspaper chains) to plunder.

“Stripped for Parts” tells the story of Alden’s insatiable greed, but also of the heavy costs it imposes on its newspapers’ workers (only a handful of whom survive the carnage) and the communities they served, if never quite as well as those interviewed believe. (Workers, immigrants and dissidents were always short-changed in the news columns, but as reporters’ ranks are decimated the survivors are often reduced to parroting official announcements.) On a more inspiring note, the film also tells a story of resistance – of journalists researching and reporting on their new overlords, even using the columns of their papers to let readers know what’s going on (until they are fired), organizing, looking for new owners who might