Cornell University Cooperative Education Job Summary

Name: Scott Lichtenthal
NetID: sll82
Major: Chemical Engineering
Employer: The Procter and Gamble Company, Cincinnati, Ohio
Term: Fall 2009 (Term 1)

Co-op Work Assignment

As an engineer at P&G I was a member of the general process community within the hair care division of P&G beauty and was based in Sharon Woods Innovation Center in Blue Ash, OH. My group was in charge of all process design and functions of P&G International for shampoo, which includes brands such as Head and Shoulders, Pantene, Herbal Essences, Rejoice, Wella, Fekkai, and numerous other smaller ones.

I was put on a high-priority project that involved a new initiative at plants. The value of the project I was put on was close to $20 million and involved cost reduction at numerous shampoo plants (focused in France and Thailand) by redesigning a process. I was in charge of determining the appropriate parameters for the new process without compromising the final product. My work may be rolled out internationally starting in 2010.

Training was in multiple parts. I was trained as if I was a new hire: this involves many readings including old presentations, operating procedures and safety protocols. I also had hands on training for general lab-work and pilot-plant use. I also had some technical training such as JMP training, surfactant trainings and fluid mechanics work. In addition to my beginning-of-term training (about one month) I had monthly trainings regarding different aspects of the company or safety items with other new hires.

I was assigned a mentor during my time at P&G but I often just went to my supervisor with everyday questions. The mentor was available for questions as were countless others at the organization.

Assessment of Learning and Development

A lot of the work that I did was directly related to what I have learned as a Chemical Engineer. Although a large portion of the work was general to all types of engineering, such as design of experiments, literature searching and data analysis, my project was very dependant on knowledge of fluid mechanics, physical chemistry and spectrophotometry, non-dimensional analysis and computer simulation. I also used a lot of Mathematica, which is a portion of the Chemical Engineering curriculum, and statistics. However, in any case, engineering is not the type of field where you can revert back to what you have learned in school. Rather, it requires you to use that knowledge that you have to recognize patterns and derive new theories every day.
The most important thing to know in engineering is that there are people around you that may know more than you and it is important to use them. It is this part of my experience that I really learned the most from and grew the most from. I learned the importance of having a network of people not only in your own field but also those in other fields; all fields at Procter and Gamble are in some way interconnected. I was able to establish a network of about one hundred people that I was always able to seek out for help at any time during my project, especially as my final presentation neared.

**Life Outside of Co-op**

P&G helped in finding housing but did not provide me with a location, but rather a stipend (over the summer they buy out a dorm at Xavier University for all of the interns). However, because I wanted a furnished apartment and would have to break the lease, these were all very expensive. I also considered staying in an extended stay hotel with the P&G discount which would be within walking distance from work, but I wanted to be closer to Clifton, by the University of Cincinnati. I ended up staying at the UC chapter of the fraternity I am in at Cornell (one of their brothers was abroad so I was able to live in his room). This worked out incredibly well because, although the commute was about a half hour each way, it provided me with an instant network of friends and a social network. However, it could be very hit-or-miss in that your personalities may not mesh well; for me they did. Furthermore, I would recommend that you take at least one night class at UC because this gives you all the perks of a student including access to events, the library, dining halls, athletic centers and countless other perks.

Public transportation is unheard of in Cincinnati. Although I did carpool with a friend of mine that I worked with that worked down the block, I would expect to drive alone; P&G will chip a car up for you if you are unable to drive.

P&G provided many opportunities for social and athletic activities but not nearly as many as I have heard exist over the summer. Most activities are dependant on those people that you meet whether at work (Cornellians, especially new hires, reached out to me and I was able to, through them, meet some really great people) or through where you live (UC and my fraternity in Clifton). I have met some really awesome people, both professionally and personally, that I cannot see myself in the future letting go of. I hope to come back to P&G in Cincinnati after I graduate and I look to be greeted by some really good friends.

**Evaluation**

It is so hard to pick out the best and worst features of this job. I feel like the best feature is that fact that I was treated like a new employee in an organization that is built in such a way that new employees may succeed. For example, although P&G is one of the largest companies in the world it operates as many smaller companies all of which work together and are integrated; hair care was its own company, as was process and research groups. I was also given a project that really matter; I was given responsibility and autonomy on such a large project.
The only negative part of the experience is the inability to travel. I was able to travel to different sites within Cincinnati, but needed to depend on the help of others in Cincinnati and e-mail to work with people from other countries such as Mexico, France, Thailand, Italy and Japan (the person in Kobe, Japan that I worked with graduated from Cornell). This inability to travel is understandable considering the associated liability.

Additional Info

If you are interested in a position at P&G in Cincinnati, I would recommend that you take a look at www.PGCincinnati.com and contact me if you have any questions. Also, I would recommend that you contact the head of the Cornell Association in Cincinnati; through him I was able to help recruit for Cornell Engineering (I also did some recruiting for P&G interns). Also, if you plan on accepting a job recognize that the headquarters for P&G are in Cincinnati and you might come back to the same region full time; build a network of friends and colleagues that most of them will be there years down the road. Finally, if you live in Clifton, learn where Over the Rhine is at learn to stay away from there.

Also, to give you a hint with the interview, this is what I have learned since coming here. P&G’s purpose reads “we will provide branded products and services of superior quality and value that improve the lives of the world’s consumers, now and for generations to come…” It has become clear since coming here that it is not hard to find a critical thinker to work for P&G, the key is that every employee’s personal purpose must, and generally does, align directly with the P&G purpose of “improving the lives of [others].”

Good luck and thank you Cornell and P&G for this opportunity.
Cornell University Cooperative Education Job Summary

Name: Scott Lichtenthal
NetID: sll82
Major: Chemical Engineering
Employer: The Procter & Gamble Company – Cincinnati, OH
Term: Summer 2010 (Term 2)

Co-op Work Assignment

After working in process last year I wanted a job that was more business related and less technical. The ideal place was products research (PR), which is the boundary between P&G’s technical and business functions. PR is responsible for driving the business from a technical end and translating business goals into actionable technical measures.

My project was Head and Shoulders (H&S) Market Research Capabilities and Strategy. Every year, H&S spends millions of dollars on market research alone just for technical work. I was working on developing a portfolio of suppliers that complemented each other and would help drive the H&S business in the future. A lot of my work was working with outside suppliers and then once I developed these portfolios, piloting them, for which I was given a budget of tens of thousands of dollars. I was then put in charge of analyzing the data for several of the studies (both quantitative and qualitative) and assessing future work.

Minimal training was provided because most of the training from last term carried over. However, I met with tons of people to just learn about what they do and also had some formal training sessions.

I was assigned a mentor during my time at P&G but like last time I often just went to my supervisor or one of the countless others in the organization that were willing to help me out.

Assessment of Learning and Development

Although I am a chemical engineer in the way I think and in my industry interests I am more interested in going to the business side at some point in the future; I have taken many business classes in the engineering school, at the Johnson School and at UC, and I plan on getting an MBA. This was a good location for me because it really did harness the business skills that I have gained but in a technical environment with a lot of chemical and technical focus. For example, I did a lot of statistical, theoretical math and modeling work. But I also worked a lot with outside suppliers and it was my breadth of knowledge that helped me communicate better with them. This is the position I plan on starting in if I start full time but in front end innovation; I will be working on projects for at least five years in the future.
Like last time, the key thing that I learned is to use those resources in the company. It is very easy to speak to a qualitative specialist or one of the many statisticians and skip over hours and hours of research work. I would not do anything differently.

**Life Outside of Co-op**

I did a thirteen week co-op (they ask for at least 12). For the first eleven weeks I lived in Xavier with other P&G interns, as well as GE interns. I would highly recommend this although it is not the cheapest alternative in town. I then for the last two weeks moved in with some of my friends from my last co-op and lived there for free. Most people just left the internship after Xavier closed or went into host housing.

Although not required, I would highly recommend a car; it is not that huge if you are living in Xavier but it is still nice to have. P&G will ship a car for you and provide a rental. It is also key for visiting other sites throughout Cincinnati.

Social activities arose from the fact that I was living in a dorm filled with interns. We did things such as weekly barbecues to volleyball, soccer and MMA events. There were also weekly larger events that were available such as trips to Reds games, skydiving, white water rafting, concerts and much more. There is a lot to do in Cincinnati; you just have to look for it a little bit. Some other events were community service events such as volunteering to paint houses throughout the city. I go into a bit more detail in my last summary.

**Evaluation**

The best feature of the job boils down to the fact that it was P&G again. I built very strong networks both within P&G and to suppliers around in an environment that helped me grow and a business I was proud of. I was given a large responsibility (my final project is posted on their internal website and others in the future will be presenting on my work) and could not have been happier with how it turned out.

My main negative is the Cornell connection. I was very active with Cornell alumni in Cincinnati and even had dinner at the CFO’s house with all of the interns. You enter the co-op, however, not knowing who any of the other interns are. Do your best to find out before the end of the school year and meet up then; that would’ve taken some of the shock out of meeting all eleven interns at the same time or chasing down the random person in the Lynah Faithful shirt.

**Additional Info**

First of all, read my additional info from last term; everything there still holds true. The other thing is make sure you leverage the Cornell name and be proud of it. Also, take part in the FAST program. This is a program where you do transfunctional consulting and end up presenting to the CEO of the company; it is a great opportunity to really get to understand the other functions and meet other interns from 18-year-old freshmen to 30-year-old MBA’s. Finally, do not leave the job summary essay for 5:00p on your last day.

And again, good luck and thank you Cornell and P&G for this opportunity.