

The Menards Management Internship Experience

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Background

Over the summer, I participated in the management internship program at Menards. Menards is a chain of home improvement stores founded in 1960 by John Menard and located in the Midwestern United States. A unique characteristic about this large chain is that it remains privately owned and maintains the original founder as their current CEO. The management internship position is intended to train the intern within 12 weeks to prepare them for a management position following the completion of the program. There are a variety of departments at Menards; Typically the management internship provides experience at various departments throughout the course of the program. However, I remained within the building materials and millwork department, as I was employed during their peak season in the largest department.

Image 1: The Menards Storefront



On The Job

During my time in the Menards management internship program, I worked in the building materials and millwork department. This department contained a vast array of materials ranging from gutters, shingles and siding to prefabricated buildings, fencing and lumber. This department was also responsible for the outside lumber yard and warehouse behind the main building.

Image 2: Pre-fab building samples found in the building materials department



The main responsibility required by building materials and millwork employees is writing up orders for contractors and customers that need a variety of materials from the department. This requires an extensive knowledge of the products held within the department as well as an operational understanding of the software, abbreviations and shortcuts required to successfully and efficiently create an order form. Beyond writing reports, responsibilities within building materials are similar to any retail position. These include stocking inventory and inventory management, sales floor maintenance,

alongside ensuring customer satisfaction, maintain the lumber yard and warehouse, and collaboration with other departments throughout the store.

Who Is This Job For?

This position was similar to other retail positions while incorporating occasional insights into managerial responsibilities required by retail managers. The Menards management internship program is not exceptionally mentally intensive. However, there are a variety of responsibilities that assisted in the development and expansion of my time management and multitasking abilities. Unfortunately, this position is not guaranteed to result in one's promotion to a management position. As is typical with any company there is a hierarchy of positions that require time and experience to move upwards.

Image 3: Building materials sales floor



Finding The Position

- Complications:
Unfortunately, due to the social and professional limitations of Covid-19, almost all companies where I inquired about Internship opportunities paused their internship programs for the time being. Fortunately, I was contacted by Menards in regard to my internship inquiry, and was offered the position following a brief, in-person interview.
- The application process was fairly simple and completed online. The response from Menards was not immediate but it was received in time to complete the program throughout the summer and apply the experience to my professional independent study.

Image 4: The lumber warehouse



Reflection

Ultimately, my experience in the Menards management internship was positive. The opportunity provided to me by the Menards company was certainly not taken for granted, especially in the time of a pandemic that has effected the availability of most internship opportunities. My experience at Menards was predominantly independent and similar to other retail positions. This position provided me insights into the home improvement and retail industry as well as a newfound appreciation for retail and service workers. I also gained an understanding as to the collaborative efforts required by a team to maintain organization and operation of a largescale retail environment. Additionally, the importance of effective leadership and its impact on teamwork and cohesion was undoubtedly emphasized through my experience at Menards.

