

My Step Experience – Marketing

Learning from experience with a smaller business – Kamile

Kamile, a Business and Marketing graduate from Sheffield Hallam University, walks us through her new graduate role as a Sales and Marketing Executive with Banner Box, a nationwide supplier of bespoke textile and fabric products.

While I've had various roles during and after university, it was only fairly recently that I stumbled across Step and the opportunities they provide for students and graduates. It was with great surprise that my first application with Step landed me the brilliant role I am currently enjoying.

The interview was one of the best meetings I've had with an employer. It lasted about an hour and a half and saw me answering a variety of questions, working through case studies using my marketing knowledge and completing a computer-based assessment. It sounds daunting but everyone was very friendly and they put me at ease by talking to me about more than just the job. I enjoyed the interview so much that I had no qualms in turning down another interview. I knew that this was where I wanted to work.

I greatly enjoy my role as a Sales and Marketing Executive as it is often varied and always interesting. My duties are mainly on the marketing side and involve: planning exhibitions, competitor research, writing blog articles, creating reports, social media, email and direct mail marketing, updating prices and more. On the sales side I answer calls and process orders.



Working at Banner Box has helped me to realise why employees are such a valuable asset to a company and how some employees can really give a company that edge over the competition. Each of my colleagues really is an inspiration to me. Whether it's the smooth talker building personal relationships with each customer he deals with or the sales pro with 20 years of experience. We have team members with excellent people skills that keep everyone motivated as well as other colleagues who have

encyclopaedic knowledge of the business. Everywhere you look there are people to learn from and it's a benefit to me personally as well as the company as a whole.

I will always be grateful for the support Step provided in helping me to secure this opportunity. For anyone currently looking for a job, while it may be tiring and stressful, don't give up! Keep applying for roles you want and you'll get the right one for you, in the end.

Emma, a Fashion Communication graduate from The University of the Creative Arts in Epsom, tells us about her 12 week internship as a Digital Marketing Assistant with Katy Sue Designs. She has since been taken on permanently in the role.

My Step Placement experience started when I stumbled across an advert for a Digital Marketing Assistant on Indeed. I had graduated a year previously with a BA Hons in Fashion Communication from the University of the Creative Arts in Epsom (that's just outside of London FYI). I'd moved back home to just outside of Newcastle because I missed my family and I'd found that London life just wasn't for me.

After being unemployed for a couple of months I found myself working in retail and before I knew it six months had passed! I'd given up on a graduate career without realising it. It was only when one of my friends from university asked me how my job search was going, I realised that I'd grown complacent.

So, back to the grind... Back to constantly applying for jobs and getting nowhere, like before. I'll start off slowly, I thought. I'll just see if there's anything at all relevant out there right now and see how it goes. You can probably tell that I wasn't very optimistic, but then lo and behold almost the first job advertisement I clicked on sounded perfect!

The role is with a company called Katy Sue Designs who manufacture craft and cake decorating products. I'd been brought up in a very crafty household, the sort with shelves teaming with paper, stencils, stamps and double sided sticky tape (it's invaluable, trust me!) We're also the sort of family that makes home-made cakes for special occasions (like birthdays and Fridays), and I've always preferred baking than cooking!

I know I was really lucky to get this placement. It was the first job I'd applied for in months so I went into the application process and interview stages with low expectations. I was excited just to have the experience of an interview again and I think this helped me to be less nervous!



Social media marketing is a big part of my work here at KSD. And I've been fortunate enough to be left in control of five accounts. I'm also re-launching the blog soon. It's all exciting stuff (well, to me, at least!) and because I have to research and schedule content ahead of time I actually get to read baking blogs and look at DIYs on Pinterest daily. Yes I get paid to do this... I couldn't be happier!

I also get on well with the whole team, and it's such a cliché to say "everyone is really nice" (which I have found myself saying repeatedly to family and friends) but it's true. I'm about half way through my placement now, the time has flown by. Fingers crossed I get to stay past my 12 weeks as I have lots of ideas and seemingly no time to implement them!

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Time flies when you're having fun – Charlie

Charlie, a Manchester Metropolitan University student studying Sport Marketing Management, tells us about the first few months of her Sports Marketing Sandwich Placement with PUMA UK.

Suddenly I am already two months into my placement, I think the famous phrase is 'Time flies when you're having fun!' So, where do I start?! I could bore you with the standard 'Day one – I'm so nervous!' talk but I want this blog to give you an insight into the nitty gritty of the Monday to Friday, 9-5 job – something that you can relate to in your placement.

It's natural to be nervous on the first day, and even overwhelmed by the end of the first week. It was certainly a case of information overload for me with all the inductions, four different log-in details, the names of about 50 staff, how to brief marketing artwork, how to process a product order, how to send out packages and parcels... to name a few. The one thing that has been the biggest helping hand for me throughout is my notepad. It goes everywhere with me. I am always noting things down, from product codes to artwork measurements, to contacts and 'to do' lists, get it down on paper! Similarly with a diary. With this placement in particular I have to attend several meetings, go on store visits or go to the offices in Manchester, Batley and even to offices abroad in Leusden lately, so a diary just makes it that much easier to organise my time around that.



After three or four weeks I was into the swing of things. I come into the office at 9am, load up the laptop and get cracking and can often just work independently throughout the day without having to ask many questions. Questions – don't be afraid to ask them! For a short time I found myself worrying that I was asking too many questions and distracting my supervisor and colleagues too much. I spoke to other interns and they seemed to be in the same boat so maybe you will be or are too, and when I spoke to other colleagues and close friends and family, the general feedback was 'Asking questions shows that you want to learn and that you are inquisitive and curious' and 'It's much easier to ask a question first rather than going in blind and making an error and having to correct it'.

Naturally during the last two months I have had ups and downs, thankfully less of the latter. It's always really pleasing and a massive boost of confidence when your supervisor or other colleagues give praise for a piece of work that you have done. But of course, the job brings its challenges.

PUMA UK is purely wholesale and therefore we communicate heavily with our key accounts. I process a large number of products orders and often we don't have this or that in stock that's been requested or we can't get product to a client in time according to the deadlines given so being able to deal with frustrated, disappointed and sometimes angry people and calmly solve the issue with them. I was quick to blame myself for not getting an order delivered on time but the reality was that I did the best I could within the circumstances, and that's what I had to communicate to the contact or client from our end.

In the placement I have seen first-hand the challenges that my colleagues in Marketing, and even Sales face with accounts to get our product into stores and online and to secure marketing opportunities to support the sell-through of product. It's certainly not easy competing with the giants in the market – Nike and Adidas. At times it's quite an eye opener, and something you would never 'learn' or get an idea of in a lecture theatre or in the depths of textbooks in the library so this placement has been extremely informative, educational and a valuable experience, even only two months in. I am extremely excited for what the next ten months bring.

I owe a huge thank you to Step. Throughout they have been extremely supportive with regular communication, updates and always checking in on how I am getting on in my placement. There is always someone at the end of the phone or an email that is willing to help and answer any questions or queries you have. I really recommend them to anyone looking for roles.