

White Cap Internship Program Feature: Caroline and Corrine



Caroline Syed had recently graduated from Kennesaw State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Marketing and was working for a construction consulting company. She enjoyed being out in the field and wanted to find a company in a similar industry that she could grow with.

That's when she stumbled across White Cap's Internship Program. She was familiar with White Cap, so it stood out to her.

"I appreciated that the company was already well established but transitioning into this new stage of its life – just like me," she said.

The Internship Program at White Cap is designed to create an inclusive career experience that will positively impact careers and develop interns' skills. It's perfect for near/newly graduated students looking to gain hands-on experience in their desired career path, with internships in both functional (corporate) and field (sales and branch) sectors of the business.

Caroline joined the program as Internal Communications Intern during the coronavirus pandemic. Because she worked remotely, her original expectations of a traditional internship program did not match the reality of the time.

But networking and engagement are a high priority for the program. Whether remote or in-person, interns work closely with stakeholders, cross-function teams and their peers within the program. Through these efforts, Caroline was immediately immersed in the White Cap culture, which turned out to be one of her favorite parts of the internship.

"I was not expecting such a large company to feel as warm and welcoming as it is," she said. "I began to learn that every associate here is so supportive and inclusive – like one big family."

One of these associates was fellow intern, Corrine Wolfe. Corrine had just graduated with a Master of Science degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga when she was offered a Talent Management/Organizational Development internship with White Cap.

Corrine had two previous internships under her belt, so she had an idea of what to expect. But White Cap's Internship Program greatly differed in the exposure interns had to executive leadership.

Throughout the course of the internship program, each intern works on a specific project to positively impact their department/region or the organization. These projects are conceptualized and executed by the intern and presented to executive leadership, providing a hands-on experience to enhance personal and professional growth and confidence.

One of the project goals Corrine worked toward during her internship was creating a focus group playbook for Human Resource partners to leverage in their client organizations as part of White Cap's broader listening strategy. At the end of the program, Corrine presented her work to executive leadership.

"It was nice to have that visibility of our president, CEO and Chief Human Resources Officer," Corrine said. "I feel like that's pretty atypical for a company of our size."

"White Cap leadership is very invested in the development of our associates," said Brooke Erickson (Manager, Learning). "They are involved in all of our talent programs and enjoy hearing their ideas and implementing them."

Caroline said that this type of exposure is what taught her to become a corporate professional, which was vastly different from the expectations that were placed on her in her previous role.

"It was a breath of fresh air, and I think it truly helped me when it came to establishing relationships with our clients and structure with my work processes," Caroline said. "This program allowed me to be hands-on in many projects occurring

throughout the company, which in return, made me more confident in my abilities.”

During her internship, Caroline pioneered new culture initiatives and planned and executed the White Cap TRUSTED Values campaign, an associate education and recognition program around the company’s core (TRUSTED) values. This was the project she presented to leadership.

White Cap’s standard of excellence is centered around knowledgeable associates, which aligns with the TRUSTED Value of Experienced. Continuous investment in learning and experience contributes to the growth of the company and associates, and enhances the promise of having the most knowledgeable associates in the industry.

A goal of the 2022 internship program is to continue to enhance the program and experience to support developing future talent within White Cap.

“White Cap truly values providing learning and development opportunities and the ability to build and promote from within,” Brooke said. Brooke led the internship program in 2021, when Caroline and Corrine were enrolled.

In the internship program, some of these learning and development opportunities include hands-on training in a range of fields, opportunities to network and formal mentorship.

Corrine said she noticed that her experience interning at White Cap specifically expanded her strategizing and relationship-building skills, and she noticed the most personal growth through the mentorship part of the program, where she was able to focus on career mapping and honing interview and time management skills.

Jamie Hillegass (Director, Organizational Effectiveness and Learning) said that through the years, the internship program has become more holistic with focuses on development of these skills, in addition to cross functional engagement. And this year’s intern class will be the largest yet.

“We truly see this as an entry point to our talent pipeline,” Jamie said.

White Cap is growing exponentially so there is ample opportunity to explore open positions in the company post-internship.

Both Caroline and Corrine joined the company full-time upon completion of their internships. Caroline is now Communications Coordinator, and Corrine is Organizational Development Specialist.

“Our program is a great opportunity to test the waters and to learn more about yourself and your career aspirations,” Caroline said. “Many of our well-established associates started as interns, so there is a high chance that other interns can establish themselves here too.”

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