Retail Report

Summer Internship Success
By: Cecilia Schulz

The David F. Miller Center for Retailing Education and Research is proud to share updates of our retail management internship program. This summer, the program worked with support from thirty six retailers for 2008! Participating retailers provided students with a variety of experiences in management, buying, planning, information technology, sales and marketing. Despite the differences in training programs, students were all challenged with the trials and tribulations of a career in the industry. Several students worked in merchandising where they partnered with merchandising teams to learn vendor relations, actual buys and the procedures necessary to follow products through the supply chain. Management interns were assigned retail store projects by working to analyze department sales goals and creating opportunities to grow the retail store projects by working to

- analyze department sales goals
- create opportunities to grow
- work with teams
- learn vendor relations, actual buys, and procedures
- follow products through supply chain
- work on retail store projects

By: Maclyne Josselin

Greasy oil stains silhouetted on my navy blue Dickie pants, remains of tire rubber underneath my freshly manicured nails and engine exhaust covering my shoes describes almost every single day of my internship with Firestone, a branch of Bridgestone Firestone Retail and Commercial Operations. Sounds scary, but I found myself having more fun learning about the insides of a vehicle than creating displays for a soft-line retailer. When I walked into the store the first day of my internship, I felt like a lamb in a den of lions. I was the only woman at my store. I had stepped foot into an industry dominated by 99.9% men, all I could think was, "What did I just get myself into?"

Before I was allowed to work in a store, Firestone flew me to Atlanta, GA for a week to attend a NTO (New Team Orientation) seminar. All of my expenses had been covered, the only thing required of me was a readiness to learn. In Atlanta, I got a chance to meet eight other Firestone interns from the Southeast Zone. There were interns from Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Alabama and Georgia. Not only was I trained on basic tire and vehicle knowledge, but also how to be a good teammate. After training, I was flown back to Miami and began my internship experience. Some of my daily responsibilities included creating work orders, distributing tickets to technicians, making bank deposits, paying bills to local auto part distributors, and keeping up with e-mails and faxes sent by my district manager that pointed out my store’s daily

See FIRESTONE page 2...

Strong Passion for Retailing at Dillard’s
By: Paul Maddalena

This summer I interned with Dillard’s in Lake Wales. Just as an overview, the first two weeks of the internship I was introduced to the store operations. I trained on the cash register so I could help associates if they had problems with transactions. During that time I worked on the dock and learned different behind-the-scenes activities.

The Dillard’s internship was very structured. From day one, my store manager sat down with me and gave me a plan that ensured me I would learn everything I needed to know to be successful in my internship.

The biggest trait that sets Dillard’s apart from other companies is the fact that as soon I stepped into the store, I got the vibe that this was more than a workplace. It felt more like a family, which is very inviting for someone new to come and work. After talking with fellow Dillard’s interns, it was apparent that it is this way throughout the company.

I considered retail for this summer, because I love working with people and in retail there will never be a day that you don’t encounter many different types of engaging people. When I started the internship, I had the fear that I would not be respected because of my age. I quickly learned that with hard work and the ability to learn, I could earn respect from people who have been in retail for many years.

Over the course of the internship I worked to help both employees and customers to make the shopping experience memorable for all. The most rewarding leadership opportunity presented itself when the department manager that I was shadowing left for a week on vacation. I was able to run the department and make decisions on floor moves!
Making Every Day Matter While Interning at JCPenney

By: Rachael Adams

This summer I held a store management internship with JCPenney in Tampa, Florida. JCPenney is a very well known retailer, so I was excited when presented with the opportunity to learn about their company first hand through a sales manager role. The 10 week internship was very well structured and allowed me to experience every aspect of the company. I was assigned to a different department each week and worked one-on-one with each department’s supervisor to learn their area and their specific job responsibilities. As an intern, I got the chance to learn about merchandise presentation, event planning, pricing and signing, floor replenishment, and especially about sales leadership. I helped with the set execution of our Dorm Life collection, as well as our new juniors’ line, Fabulosity by Kimora Lee Simmons. It was a lot of work, but well worth it when you saw how beautiful the new set looked on the sales floor.

Not only did I gain valuable experience by training with my store’s management staff, but I also got to interact with corporate executives and other JCPenney interns from across the nation. By providing training with my store’s management staff, but I also got to interact with corporate executives and other JCPenney interns from across the nation. By providing several televised satellite broadcasts, I had the perfect outlet to speak and ask questions to other interns and to the executives, which is something that I valued.

During my internship, I felt like a part of the management team. I attended the weekly store manager meetings, led many of the morning associate meetings, was a member of the store credit team and answered calls from associates on the sales floor. Halfway through my internship, I was added on to the Manager of the Day rotation where I was responsible for making sure all store operations were running smoothly during my shift.

My experience at JCPenney showed me that the retail industry can be challenging and fast-paced, but that it can also be very rewarding and fun. My internship with JCPenney exceeded my expectations and allowed me to learn essential leadership skills and experience that I will be able to use in the workplace and in life. Not only did I feel like a valuable component of our team, but I felt like a member of the JCPenney family. I am very grateful for being given this opportunity. I highly recommend this internship to anyone considering retail as a possible career choice. It will solidify your decision.

Firestone (continued from page 1)

rankings among other stores in the district.

Half-way through my internship, Firestone flew me along with other interns across the nation, to Chicago, IL for a chance to meet corporate executives of Bridgestone of Americas. I had the opportunity to speak with the CEO one-on-one; it was an amazing opportunity. I met the COO, public affairs director and especially about sales leadership. I helped with the set execution of our Dorm Life collection, as well as our new juniors’ line, Fabulosity by Kimora Lee Simmons. It was a lot of work, but well worth it when you saw how beautiful the new set looked on the sales floor.

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Dillard's (continued from page 1)

I would say that the classes in school that assisted me the most for my internship would be the financial courses. Being able to look at the numbers and knowing how to apply them to real world circumstances really came in handy. Despite that, the biggest ability that I felt helped me the most, was not what I have learned; but the knowledge that I have more to learn! One day I was able to travel to the buying office in St. Petersburg and learned so much about the corporate side of retail.

The most amazing part of the internship was that I learned more about myself. I have grown so much as a person. It was life altering to see that all my hard work in college was finally starting to pay off in ways I never expected. I loved retailing going into the internship and if anything, I have gained a stronger passion for retailing.
Walgreens is “The Pharmacy America Trusts.” I learned this not only from their slogan that they proudly place under their logo, but also from interning with the company this past summer. As a business management intern, I learned how to run the store as an assistant manager. I spent a week in each department, including pharmacy, cosmetics and the photo lab to learn how every section of the store operates. Following my basic store training I learned the management functions and was accepted as a member of the store’s management team. Throughout my internship I worked on various projects to improve different aspects of the store, one of which included creating a competition amongst store employees to improve sales. It was great to watch sales increase because of my efforts, knowing I was making a difference within the company.

After interning with the company I learned what truly sets Walgreens apart from other retailers. The element that sets Walgreens apart is their focus on ethics in everyday business. Every employee is familiar with what is known as a the Four-Way Test, which is a list of questions employees are asked to think about before making decisions. Another element that sets Walgreens apart from its competitors is their focus on customer service. The goal of the management team is to ensure that customers choose to shop at Walgreens because they are treated well and leave the store happy and willing to return. Management makes every effort to ensure this occurs with every customer who enters the store. I quickly learned this aspect of the company and enjoyed getting to know the regular customers by name.

Aside from learning a great deal about the retailing industry, the skill I improved the most during my internship was managing people. I believe one of the best things I got out of my internship was the experience in managing employees and learning how to motivate people towards a common goal. This experience helped me grow professionally and reassured my previous desire to go into a career where I work towards developing people. I was also given countless opportunities during my internship to prove my leadership skills, which I believe also improved during my internship.

I am glad I chose to spend my summer as a retail intern with Walgreens. The amount I learned and the growth I experienced during my internship reassured me of my decision to spend my summer working in the retail industry.

The Winn-Dixie Internship Experience
By: Bryan Cowen

When we first started at Winn-Dixie we weren’t sure what to expect, but from the moment we set foot in the building we felt part of this great company. From associates to executives, everyone treated us with respect and as colleagues. During our time at Winn-Dixie, we created a new internship program and a marketing campaign for recruitment. It’s rare that interns can make such an impact on a Fortune 500 company. We were very fortunate in that we had several opportunities to travel throughout our company’s footprint, from the Keys to New Orleans. We learned all sides of the business from the stores to the distribution centers to the corporate office. Our supervisors gave us the freedom to decide the focus of our marketing campaign and how the internships would be structured. They provided us with access to key leaders in all departments to gain important information needed to complete our projects. We were also given the opportunity to meet with managers in our individual areas of study to learn all aspects of their jobs, as well as guidance for our future careers. At the end we were able to present our final projects to the executive team and department heads. The Winn-Dixie internship was a great experience and the lessons we have learned will be vital towards our future success.

City Furniture offered me an experience unlike any other this summer, by honing my skills I have learned in the classroom and applying them immediately to real-world situations in a retail environment. Once you enter this company everyone involved with you, from your co-workers, the training staff all the way to the owner of the company, want to see you succeed - and the results are evident. This company is ready and willing to take raw talent, and turn it into results. Everything that I have learned throughout this experience will definitely keep me a step ahead once I graduate. As soon as you step into their offices, the value of “family” is shown throughout each and every person who steps through those doors, and it is nothing short of it. Having this sense of “family”, allows you to feel comfortable and willing to not only participate but exceed everyone’s expectations simply because you feel that you have an immediate impact and most importantly - the fact that you are doing it together as a family. What is also amazing about this program is that you are not just another employee - you are Tennison, you are Chelsea, you are Adam, you are Yainier - you are someone, and everyone makes note of your talents, attributes and personality in order to make you the best retailer you can be. Anyone who is willing to look above & beyond what they teach you in the classroom or what they teach you in textbooks, and see how it is to work as an individual in a strong family environment, I definitely recommend you consider City Furniture the internship if your college career. And tell them Tennison sent you, they’ll more than likely smile and give you a small bio on me, since they know me pretty well around there.

The Pharmacy America Trusts
By: Laura Hurst

Laura Hurst enjoyed leading employees toward store goals at Walgreens in Gainesville.

Family Values at City Furniture
By: Tennison Zuniga

Tennison Zuniga (center) congratulated by City Furniture executive Cheryl Young and Gene Lunger as he completes a successful internship.
Build-A-Bear Workshop

By: Tanquen Nguyen

Build-A-Bear Workshop is a one of a kind retail store. They are about creating a unique and memorable customer experience for each guest that comes into the store. The focus is more on “wowing” the guest during their process of building a new friend more so than what the guest is buying. This concept not only applies to the guests, but also to the employee experience that is gained from working at a Build-A-Bear Workshop. I have worked two internships at the Build-A-Bear Workshop in Gainesville.

After my internship last summer, I stayed at the Gainesville Build-A-Bear Workshop to continue my learning. My experience here is definitely one of a kind due to the relationship I have with my managers and fellow bear builders. I have a great relationship with my store manager, Michelle. Throughout the time I have been here, Michelle still asks me about my opinion on different issues relating to the store. She not only values my opinion, but she values the opinion of each bear builder that is a part of our team. I think this is the most valuable management lesson that I have learned working at Build-A-Bear Workshop. It is about the team!

I have also learned that building and maintaining relationships is very important to the success of a store. Since Michelle provides a fun and positive work experience, it is reflected on the bear builders. The bear builders are happy and enjoy work. They enjoy what they are doing so it is easy for them to provide a memorable and joyous customer experience for each guest. As a result, the guests continue to return to the store thus leading to a successful store.

Build-A-Bear Workshop has provided me with valuable real-world experience as well as lifetime friendships. I enjoy Build-A-Bear Workshops and I appreciate what I have learned.

Contributing to White House/Black Market Success

By: Jacob Weisberg

When I first entered the Chico’s Headquarters building I was like a deer in headlights. I met a few interns, who just happened to be all female, and started conversing. As more new interns arrived I realized I would be the only male!! As one could probably imagine, this was exciting and intimidating. Throughout the first few days of orientation I realized that I had absolutely no knowledge about women’s clothes -- go figure. Throughout the successive weeks, my familiarity with the product had blossomed into a true interest. I never thought that I could gain an appreciation for the production and sale of women’s clothing in just a few weeks. Every morning I got up and went to work, knowing that I am contributing to the success of the company.

My job at White House/Black Market was with the mailer and web creation. Along with my supervisor (Kelly Garrett), we worked to create the mailer that is sent out every month to approximately 1 million homes. I had several responsibilities within the mailer creation process. Perhaps the most important thing I did was to organize the product information from the merchants so it could be easily accessed. Once that information was collected I began writing the copy that is called the galleys. The galleys were an advanced finished copy of the mailer that is reviewed by editors and merchants. This can take several weeks to complete, because merchants continuously update their product information. Additionally, I organized the chosen outfits in excel spreadsheets as to communicate to the photographers the order in which the outfits were to be shot. The most amazing part of my job was seeing the finished mailer!

I could not ask for a better employer. The overall progressive goals and attitudes of this company were exactly what I was looking for in a profession. This experience sparked my interest in a career in the retail industry. Working with Kelly brought my organizational and multitasking skills to a new level. Our team is great and I could not have asked for a better internship experience.
My name is Melissa Vaglio and I completed an internship with Tires Plus. I enjoyed interning here because I felt that I was really part of a management team. I was responsible for opening and closing the store along with daily operational tasks. It was important that I was exposed to the store atmosphere because I think it strengthened my managing skills and taught me the right way to help customers.

I considered Tires Plus this summer because my first job was in retailing and I enjoyed it. I love working with customers. At Tires Plus, I worked directly with them everyday and it’s fun! It is unbelievable that I was hired with no automotive experience, but at Tires Plus, you are trained well to become knowledgeable and successful. I feel so confident now when I recommend services for people as I can explain everything. My coworkers and my manager were eager to teach me. I know more about cars than I ever thought I would know! I also know more about working with a team and managing a business.

This internship provided me with leadership skills as well. I know I have the ability to really grow at Tires Plus because the company guided me throughout the summer. I started from knowing nothing and now, combined with my training and motivation, nothing can stop me! I am a hard worker so this is really motivating because I know that my performance will make me successful. At Tires Plus you have to be really good at what you do because our customers count on us.

During my internship I was challenged to develop a marketing plan for a sales event. It was fun to use what I learned in my marketing and advertising classes to design the flyers and talk to potential customers. The event was successful and we gained many loyal customers! I also travelled to three different cities for additional training and to meet corporate executives. I think this internship was amazing. The fact that I was able to work with amazing people in an amazing company made this experience great. I am so glad that I took this internship over the summer. This has strengthened my love for retailing and really solidified my desire to work in this industry after I graduate.

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Working for Sears Holdings Company has been an amazing experience as I have been given the opportunity to truly make a difference in the company. I participated in the Buyer Internship program, where I supported the patio furniture business. My managers and co-workers created an extremely positive environment by encouraging me to share my opinions and to answer any and all questions. One of my big projects was to evaluate the patio furniture advertising and then make recommendations on how to make our ads more effective. Both Principles of Marketing and Introduction to Advertising gave me a basis of knowledge for this project!! Sears Holdings gave me the confidence to do a large project like this and to make recommendations that were taken seriously.

I think that Sears Holdings is one of the best retailers for an internship. They have a set program in which all interns are given the opportunity to take training classes and meet with top executives. They make sure that all managers give the interns a project to call their own, so that each intern can make an impact on the business. As a whole, Sears Holdings has a huge amount of opportunities for all associates. At the Home Office, there were always big events happening throughout the summer.

They hosted a banquet to support all of our associates overseas in the military and supported community service projects. They also offered different networks for associates to develop leadership skills.

Going back to school in the fall will be a big change. I learned so much, and was truly excited to be at Sears Holdings.

Sears Holdings has done a great job incorporating every intern into their huge family.

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Nothing Stops Intern from Growing with Tires Plus

By: Melissa Vaglio

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Student Intern Makes an Impact at Sears Holdings

By: Kathy Knicker

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Giant Experience at Brown Shoe Headquarters

By: Lauren Ericson

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Kohl's provides Challenge and Excitement for Gator Intern

By: Moises D. Mahecha

Kohl's has been an amazing experience for me since the first day. When I first began, all of the executives welcomed me and took me under their wing. They gave me a management training program that taught me about every position within a store. From shadowing executives and taking the responsibilities of an executive, I was challenged to use what I learned in college and apply it to the real life business situations. What I thought was interesting was that I could better understand case studies as I was living one! Also, I could see what kind of leader I could be.

Throughout the internship, I was given projects to work on and asked to bring in my own ideas for projects of my own. I motivated store teams to meet goals and enjoyed the camaraderie of the associates. In addition I made an impact with my analysis project which allowed me to analyze an entire department and then present my findings to district and regional executives.

Like retail across the globe, coming into the store was a different experience each day. I had to help with projects in the store. I assisted associates in their training, their shadowing and to guiding them to offer excellent customer service. Kohl’s has excellent training for interns as we communicated weekly on their web conferences. Kohl’s executives emailed constantly to make sure we stayed on the internship training program and we didn’t miss any training throughout the summer. Even though this is my first internship, I was trained so well and had so much fun. My learning was supported and I was made to be successful. I have since accepted a supervisor position the Kohl’s opening in Gainesville this fall. Additionally, I was asked to join their college recruiting team for the upcoming year. I would advise any student seeking an internship that is fast paced, challenging, and exciting to interview with Kohl’s. They are a company that really invests in interns and has shown amazing growth potential -- especially in Florida!

Focused, Fun and Fantastic at Beall’s

By: Amber Young

Amber Young saw Bealls as the perfect match because the company is focused, fun and fantastic!

My name is Amber Young and I participated in the Beall’s assistant Buyer Internship program at the corporate headquarters in Bradenton, Florida. This private company has fostered my love for learning through real world experience.

I chose to intern at Beall’s because our personalities matched. Their corporate culture is focused, fun and fantastic! Everyone one at Beall’s is more than happy to say hello or even give you a hand when you’re just stuck. Even the CEO Steve Knopik, takes the time to understand your thoughts about the company and current projects. My direct supervisor took the time to teach me her job and answer all my questions. She also told me about all the great places to go, events to attend, and places to eat in the area so I could feel more at home. I have been always curious of the inner workings of retail like how they determine what to buy, how much to buy, where to place it, and how to price. Bealls taught me all of this in a fun interactive environment.

I was nervous about graduation, but this internship showed me how I can be valued in retail. I was cross trained in multiple departments. I spent a week in a local store learning how to offer great customer service, set up ads, perform markdowns, and visually merchandise new shipments I spent one day in the distribution center understanding the different levels of processing. I also spoke to people in the advertising, e-commerce and product and development.

As an Intern, I participated in renaming the Junior’s and Young Men’s private brand Outlooks. Renaming the Brand involved evaluating the current assortment, in store experience, and marketing channels for the Young Men’s and Junior’s. School projects prepared me to stay organized and focused on the objectives for our project.

The most amazing part of my internship was that the professionals I work with respected me and cared about my educational growth with Bealls. I don’t think I could have spent my summer in a better way. I have been already planning where I will be living in Bradenton after I graduate. I have a great feeling I will stay here.

Belk (continued from page 4)

Danielle Zilo an intern who learned about creating a strong team and driving sales, stands with Dan Mixson, Store Manager of the Gainesville Belk Department store.

Once I stepped into the store, I never stopped moving. There were always a hundred things to do and people pulling you in every direction. In other words, it was fun. I was involved in every aspect of the store: unloading shipments, processing and displaying merchandise, remerchandising departments, attending staff meetings, viewing our store’s weekly progress reports and, above all else, giving outstanding customer service. Being a business major, it was really interesting to see the major impact that changing the layout of a department, cleaning it up, or moving departments entirely has on that particular department’s weekly sales.

Now that the internship is over, I feel like I am extremely prepared for any management position, whether it is in retail or elsewhere. The principles of management are very similar across all industries. The lessons I learned about producing numbers, creating a reliable team, being fair to your employees, being a motivational leader and an advocate for the customer are lessons that I will carry with me to which ever career path that I choose.

There is something to be said about a company and a management team that will do anything to please their customers and Belk is one of those companies. I hope that the next intern will learn as much as I did and have as much fun doing it.
Growing with Macy’s

By: Whitney Scott

My experience as a Macy’s Store Management Intern has been exceptional. All the managers, including the General Manager (GM) and Assistant Store Manager (ASM) have been incredibly supportive. When I present them with new ideas or suggestions they never tell me, “No”. Instead they look for an opportunity. They listen to my ideas and support my initiatives. It helps develop your self confidence when your ideas are respected while doing an internship.

Macy’s has a great company culture which promotes growth with goals. They hire motivated associates who are goal driven. I have found the Macy’s employees are very happy because the company cares about their well-being. I am lucky to work for a company that cares so much about my growth and potential opportunities.

During my internship I worked closely with the GM, ASM, and other store managers. I took on the role of a manager daily by analyzing department sales goals, resolving employee conflict and creating opportunity for growth within the departments. I worked with the visual team, human resources and worked along with other associates on the selling floor to help grow sales and motivate out team. Also, I was given the opportunity to present a project on employee motivation to the GM, ASM, and the head of recruiting for Macy’s. That was also a thrill.

Working for Macy’s has given me a new perspective on the retail environment. I learned the importance of motivating associates with a positive attitude and a willingness to listen. All of my ideas for growth and employee motivation may not have been perfect, but the managers always took the time to listen and help me to continue to develop more ideas for the company. I would highly recommend an internship with Macy’s because I was consistently challenged and motivated to create positive change.

Trained Manager for Petsmart

By: Martin Rosenberg

I found my internship with Petsmart at the career fair and after two interviews I was offered the position!! I had no prior experience in retail besides being a bagger a Publix when I was 15, but now I can open and close a store on my own and I am trained on how to work with pets. During my internship I have learned a variety of skills which will help me succeed in a career in retail.

In the first week alone I acquired three different certifications to work with pets and was trained the proper way to stock inventory and how to operate a forklift. Then I learned the daily tasks of a pet care manager and the proper way to handle animals. In order to effectively manage the team, managers are trained in each department and in my internship I trained in each for one week at a time. I learned the various tasks to be done for opening and closing the store such as counting the registers and safe. I also attended weekly managers meetings and learned how to make a schedule. Petsmart does not sell dogs or cats, but you can adopt one on the weekend from one of the many agencies we work with to help end euthanasia.

The most rewarding part of my job was helping pet parents when they needed advice and observing how satisfied customers returned through our Petperks card which is a free savings card we offer at Petsmart. Occasionally I would be the manager of duty and during this time I was responsible for the store and responded to all calls for a manger. Working at Petsmart is not like many other corporations. If you expect to work the same schedule from week to week then this job is not for you. This flexibility allowed me to be at the store when the truck arrived and other times to be at the store for closing. This change in schedule was a challenge at first, but after working it a couple times, it became easy.

Petsmart has an amazing training program and I really enjoyed my experience working as part of the team. This experience has increased my confidence as a leader and taught me the necessary skills required to communicate as an effective manager.

The Ball Python is one of the many animals we sell at Petsmart. The Ball Python is pleased to have been involved with the Macy’s culture of growth and opportunities as it gave her a renewed perspective for a retail career.

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students the confidence they need to finish school and take retail as a career. Additionally, all retailers taught students the importance of excellent customer service by involving them in customer interactions and helping students to understand its impact on sales. Students report to the Center that they have made “the best decision of their lives…”. Now that is an amazing testimonial!

During the internship, all interns were invited to attend the Annual Retailing Smarter Symposium in Orlando. Students heard from industry leaders during the presentations as well as engaged in additional company focus groups and gatherings to broaden their network of professionals. Students were able to share their internship experiences with each other to better understand the opportunities that are available to them after graduation.