

Kayla Tran (VU Co-Operative Student)

Working at Unified Healthcare 2009 in Co-op role, presented giving her experience of Interviews.

I initially thought about getting an accounting role within a large accounting firm but found that getting into the Big 4 firms is not the 'be all and end all' in regards to finding a co-op position. As I have now found I am gaining a wider set of skills at Unified Healthcare than some of my friends have gained in the large corporate organisations. Whilst the large accounting firms are obviously wonderful training grounds it is just that there are other options if they do not suit you or you are not successful in getting a 'look in'.

Therefore I would suggest you "Open your mind" to finding a placement outside of just larger organisations because it might surprise you where you will be and where you'll end up learning more. Not that working with a firm like KPMG or the others is a bad experience it just may not give you the same rounded set of skills. And if you are unsuccessful gaining a role in one of the larger organisations I am saying "do not despair"..

Let me give you my experience of the Interview process of a firm that I went to- 'Deloitte', where they require you to go to attend an assessment day where you and other people are 'vying' for the same placement to work together under different scenarios.

This alone was daunting and stressful as you have to perform for your potential employers and also your competitors. It can be really overwhelming as it was for me seeing my peers and feeling the competition and not feeling like an individual. So if this is not for you look outside of the large accounting firms and large corporate organisations.

Although your co-op coordinators may have excellent contacts, make an effort to find other co-op positions as well. So I am suggesting you do what I did and that is also to look for a role yourself and ask your coordinator to check that it is ok to use for Co-op or BIL.

Having an interview with Pam Winstanley, my Manager at Unified Healthcare assisted me with what I would be required to do. I really looked into the potential role that way and had a good understanding of how it suited me.

Presentation is always important and it gives employers an impression that you are serious in your quest to find a co-op position. Whilst Unified Healthcare is not corporate they did expect me to dress in corporate attire for the interview and that puts you in a comfortable position as you present in a professional manner and can adjust your attire once you work for the company. So dress in a suit and be professional at all times.

Letters or calls of rejections are frequent but do not let that deter you. Get feedback from them as they will give you points in what they are looking for or areas of improvement. It may not be what you want to hear but it is necessary. I got rejections and just kept trying and in the end looked at different options outside the accounting profession but within an accounting role and it opened up many more options and gave me this really great role at Unified Healthcare Group.

Try to make an effort in your resumes and cover letters to be written specifically for each employer rather than give a template of your resume.

Keep your contacts (e.g. your friends, people you meet at the expo, etc) because a recommendation is how I got my co-op placement at Unified Healthcare Group.

Most importantly never give up and keep looking for that role as you will find one and it could be the start of your career.