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### Internship Reflection

I had the great opportunity to work as an intern for JTEKT North America Corporation over the summer. My job was to create a database for the Purchasing Department with the help of Naik Shreyas, a manager in the Purchasing Department. Although my internship experience was valuable and enjoyable overall, there were a few experiences that negatively affected the internship, however I have come up with solutions to said problems that will help JTEKT's Purchasing Department with future interns.

I worked as an Intern for JTEKT North America's Purchasing Department from May 16th, 2022 to June 17th, 2022, and worked from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, everyday. Initially I was in the office every work day, but about halfway through the internship I was advised to work from home from Monday to Wednesday, and come into the office on Thursday and Friday. This change was due to my team only meeting on Thursdays and Fridays in the office, so my manager thought it was unnecessary for me to work in the office the rest of the week. The Purchasing Department's goal is to gather the parts necessary to build steering systems, driveline components, automotive pumps, ball, needle, and roller bearings, machine tools, and mechatronics so that they can be sold to car manufacturers such as Toyota, Mazda, Nissan, and GM (*JTEKT North America Corporation*). JTEKT North America has corporate locations in South

Carolina, Tennessee, and Mexico, and also has JTEKT JP employees stationed in all departments for each location. In my experience, I met two JTEKT JP employees that were managers in the Purchasing Department, three in the Engineering Department, and one in the Sales Department. Specifically, the JTEKT JP employees in the Purchasing Department, Fuji san and Oda san, were always extremely busy taking calls from Japan, but were always willing to help me when I had questions with both work and the Japanese language.

Every Monday morning the Purchasing Department's team members from South Carolina, Tennessee, and Mexico would all meet on Microsoft Teams to discuss the progress on current projects, quotas, etc, and the meetings were led by the Head of the Purchasing Department. Additionally, Purchasing members were in constant contact with members at the other North America locations to carry out projects, get quotes on parts, and exchange data via Microsoft Teams, phone calls, and email. The managers were in constant contact with JTEKT JP via email, but Fuji san and Oda san mostly handled that job via phone.

I was tasked with contacting Project Managers, managers in charge of organizing a group of employees to contact certain suppliers in order to launch, progress, and complete part projects, and compiling each project manager's data into a singular database for the entire department's use. For example, there were four buyers tasked with receiving quotes from different suppliers, and then the project manager compiled the data from the quotes into an excel file, which I extracted and implemented into a common database for all of the department's quotes and current projects. The goal of the database was to streamline the information and make it accessible to all members

of the department, not just the project managers. So, I divided the database by project and color coded the parts by buyer to make it easier to decipher the information. This approach would ensure that the database was both user friendly and effective at storing the information needed by the managers of the Purchasing Department. Finally, once I finished the database, I received resoundingly positive feedback on it from my manager, the other project managers, and even the Head of the Human Resources Department.

While I was able to effectively complete my task for the internship, there were some negative aspects that hindered my progress and performance. One such negative aspect was the department's communication. While yes the department did have weekly meetings and employees communicated well with each other, it was quite difficult for me, an intern, to get responses back from employees and especially project managers. One extreme example of this problem was a project manager taking over a week to meet with me after several emails and my manager setting up two separate meetings, the first of which the project manager did not attend. This experience in particular was quite disheartening because I was actively trying to work, but the project manager would not respond to me with work to complete until my manager got involved. However, the project managers had too many tasks to complete at once, and most of the time they just did not have enough time to work with me. Additionally, one project manager described their work as "running around like a bunch of chickens with their heads cut off," because they had so much to complete in such a short amount of time. A solution I developed to this problem would be that the manager of the intern makes a more concerted effort to introduce said intern to all of the project managers, and contacts the project managers ahead of time to inform them that an intern will be

requesting their assistance in the near future. This solution would have alleviated the communication issue because the project managers would have known of me from the beginning and would have most likely recognized my name in emails. Finally, if the project managers were notified of my project ahead of time, then they would have been able to have the data that I needed available to me faster.

A second negative aspect that I encountered during my internship was poor onboarding. When first starting the internship my overall task was unclear, because I was being approached by several employees and managers with a myriad of different tasks, and I did not know which ones, if any, I was supposed to actually do. It was not until about halfway through my internship that I had a clear understanding of the project that I was to complete, and an understanding of how to go about completing it. This problem was most likely due to two factors: my manager tested positive for COVID-19 the week that I started working, and I was the first intern that the Purchasing Department ever worked with. So, a solution to this problem would have been to have me shadow another manager until the one that I was assigned to came back to the office, and for the managers to provide me with a clear objective from the start, while working with me along the way when they had free time. This would have led to a better start to the internship, and would have helped me complete my job even more efficiently than I did.

In conclusion, I am grateful for the opportunity to experience the corporate world while also practicing my Japanese language skills. This internship helped me improve my communication skills and my Microsoft Excel skills. While there were negative aspects to the internship, I now have the knowledge and experience to hopefully avoid

or alleviate these issues at future jobs. Finally, if I could go back in time and be an intern again, I would be more forward with the management and ask them directly, instead of waiting for emails and Microsoft Teams meetings.

## List Of References

*JTEKT North America Corporation | LinkedIn.*

[www.linkedin.com/company/jtekt-corporation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/jtekt-corporation).