

FOREWORD

Note to Freshmen from someone who has been there...

Dear Reader:

As a senior who has been right where you are and had a very satisfying co-op experience, I want to share the one piece of advice that determined the success of my co-op experience. During my second co-op term, my boss told me that I needed to take control of my education. "This is your training, so make sure you get as much out of it as possible." So from then on I took my training into my own hands by asking to work on specific projects, working with new people and asking mountains of questions. No, it wasn't an open invitation to demand everything that I wanted, but it was the push I needed to realize that there is only one chance in my life where I can be JUST a learner and try as many different things that I can. So, during this co-op there will be a variety of experiences that you encounter or hear about, and I hope that this book can help you make the most of your work. But remember, you get out of it what you put in. Don't sit back and expect great things to happen, go search them out for yourself. You'll be surprised at what you find.

Best of luck!!

Kaleen Canevari

FOREWORD

Note to reader:

This book is not meant to be read in one sitting.

It was designed as a reference to help you make good decisions throughout your co-op experience.

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FINDING A CO-OP

FINDING A CO-OP

Resumes

"Build your leadership skills early. This experience will land you a position with a choice co-op employer." -Preston

"Keep it updated at all times!" -Casey

"Make your bullets parallel! Have at least three people proof your resume before you send it anywhere. Remember, the style and format is important, but do not overdo it. If your resume is longer than one page, make sure you are only including relevant information. Employers do not expect you to have a spectacular resume at 18, but make sure the information sells what you have to offer." -Stacy

"The one page resumes rule doesn't apply if you have outstanding information that is going to help you get a job that requires two pages." -Serena

"The resume is where you should let the flood gates loose on what makes you awesome."
-Alex

"Go over your resume with somebody you trust. I went over mine with my parents and with the instructor for the orientation class." -Kate

"Be sure to have your name at the top of the second page so that if it gets detached from the first page, the employer knows who it belongs to." -Monica

Professional Advice

"After you secure your job make sure that you continue to update it after every term. When you get ready to graduate you will have a difficult time going back to remember what you did freshman I term" -Jason

"Your resume is your personal advertising brochure. Make sure it is technically perfect and includes things that will compel an interviewer to ask about things YOU want to talk about." -Carmon

FINDING A CO-OP

Phone Interviews

"Stand up while talking. It makes you feel more powerful and sure of yourself." -Kaleen

"Have your resume and most impressive facts about yourself with you when you are on the phone for easy reference." -Serena

"Make sure you're alone in a comfortable environment. That way there won't be any distractions and you won't feel embarrassed to answer the questions with your friends or family staring at you." -Kate

"Do not talk fast, take your time to answer questions and don't feel rushed." -Casey

"Make sure you let your roommates and friends know about your interview before-hand so they do not bother you during the call. Also, have a cheat-sheet ready to go of questions you expect and answers so you are ready for anything. Do not forget to enunciate either!" -Bart

"You should know what they produce or research. Have questions ready to ask at the end of the interview. This shows that you are interested in the company." -Monica

Professional Advice

"Smile while answering questions." -Caron

"Find a quiet area. Nothing breaks up a good phone interview like a dog barking when someone comes to the door." -Jason

FINDING A CO-OP

Face-to-Face Interviews

"Before the interview, write down any leadership experiences, positive qualities, examples where you have failed but learned from your mistakes, etc. This will help you come up with examples when they ask you questions. Take a deep breath before you answer, and make sure your examples are relevant and answer their questions."
-Stacy

"Body language is everything. Sit up straight and don't cross your arms or slouch. Practice with a friend, preferably an upperclassmen since they've done this before, beforehand to relieve some of your nerves. Try to think of questions that you will be asked and practice appropriate answers. **Act like you're confident even if you're not. Smile and sell yourself.** Try to keep conversation about your best assets." -Claire

"Before any interview I would tell myself, '**You are awesome, and you are going to get this job.**' I got 8 job offers, I think my confidence played a big part in this." -Alex

"Wear something that makes you feel and look awesome, it will help boost your confidence during the interview." -Bart

"Remember that you are interviewing them as much as they're interviewing you. **Ask questions.**" -Casey

"Make sure to do your hair and keep it out of your face so that you aren't constantly fidgeting with it ." -Kate

"Have the confidence that you are the best choice and sell yourself in your words and actions during the interview."
-Serena

"Interviewers eat up words like "proactive" and "extroverted." The important thing is to be able to back these words up by giving examples."
-Alex

Professional Advice

"Always take time to research a company as thoroughly as possible before the interview so you take part as an already-informed consumer. Remember you have an obligation to yourself to interview the company." -Caron

"Eye contact, a great handshake, professional attire and RELAX." -Jason

FINDING A CO-OP

Follow-up

"Send a thank-you note. Spell their names correctly and get any titles or positions right!"
-Stacy

"Make sure to get your interviewers name and contact information. It is never too early to send a thank you after your interview." -Serena

"Always send a thank you email or letter to everyone you interviewed with. Get business cards or full names during the interview. Most people check their email several times per day, but don't always get snail mail or open it in a timely manner. Emails are perfectly acceptable forms of thanking your interviewers." -Kaleen

"If you don't hear back from a company within a few days, follow-up with that company. Sometimes companies may wait to see who follows-up if they have multiple candidates for the position because it shows who is interested enough to follow-up for the job."
-Monica

If they make an offer and you decide not to accept, make sure to let them know and be polite about it. -Stacy

Professional Advice

"Ask for a business card from each person you interview with and do a thank you letter."
-Caron

"Do it the same day as your interview. First, thank the interviewer(s) for their time. Second, restate your interest in working with the company. Finally, invite them to contact you for more information if needed and give thorough contact information."
-Carmon

"Ask the interviewer when a decision will be made and/or what the next steps in the process will be. Make sure you get a card from the interviewer so you can follow-up with them based on the timeline they give you." -Jason

FINDING A CO-OP

Interview Questions

Questions students have been asked during an interview:

Tell us about a time you failed at something.

What is one characteristic you think you need to improve on?

Name one leadership role you have held and describe what you learned from it.

What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?

What are your long term career goals?

Tell me five words that describe yourself.

Give an example of a time you had to convince people your idea was the best. How did you do it? Did it work?

Tell me about yourself.

Questions to ask your interviewer(s):

Will I be assigned a mentor?

Will I have different assignments or will every work term be the same?

If I have to relocate, will housing be provided?

What, if any, stipends or benefits are provided?

What type of person are you looking for to fill this position? How should they change from the beginning to the end? Are there any concerns you have regarding the position?

Will I get to rotate between different engineering-related departments?

What is the work environment like?

What kind of projects will I be working on?

-STUDENT COMPILATION

FINDING A CO-OP

The “Right” Company

“Keep an open mind about all companies until after you talk with them because you never know when the underdog is really the shining star.” -Serena

“Don’t settle for the first job that comes along or the one that sounds okay. Find the job you really want. Don’t wait for the job to come to you, you need to pursue it. Do your research.” -Kate

“Finding the right company is like finding a girlfriend. The process can be long and frustrating, you’ll have your heart broken a few times, but eventually you’ll find the right one and be there forever. If not, you’ll part ways, hopefully on good terms.” -Alex

“It’s better to accept a dream job for less pay than it is to accept a job you do not want for great pay. Though money is nice, in the long term, experience in a job you love will lead to a great paying career that you love.” -Stacy

“Try to find a company that fits your interests. Nothing will help you more than being able to show your interviewer that you are passionate about what they do. If that doesn’t work, try to make the most out of the other options and never give up.” -Mario

“Every company has their own advantages and disadvantages. You need to decide what is the ‘right’ company for you – not what is the ‘right’ company defined by your friends or parents. Choose a company where you think you will be happy and learn the most.” -Monica

Professional Advice

“The right company is one that will provide you with the best experience. Many will say it is about the money but it is only partially about that. Make sure it is a job where you will have the chance to grow and learn. Remember this is an opportunity to LEARN and may not be your lifelong career goal. You are looking for transferable skills that will help you in whichever career path you choose.” -Jason

“Every company has a personality just like every person. You will know if you are a good fit for the company’s culture by the time you leave the interview.” -Carmon

FINDING A CO-OP

Bringing in a New Company

"Don't hesitate to find a new co-op company! I found my first co-op by networking with friends and family. I got into a career I loved that I never would have THOUGHT about if I hadn't branched out. Make sure to explain the school's program and ensure that the company is willing to make the commitment to you for up to 4 ½ years. Utilize information available in the co-op office and on Kettering's website." -Stacy

"Go for it! There is nothing to lose by talking to new companies. If you do get the job, you can usually create your own co-op program." -Bart

"Sometimes you have a contact with a certain company and can convince them to start a Kettering co-op program. Use the co-op managers during this process because they are the ones that bring in new companies all the time. Remember, it's YOUR education, work as hard as you can to get the best experience possible." -Kaleen

Professional Advice

"Work closely with your co-op manager to make sure the company is a good Kettering fit." -Caron

"Work closely with your co-op manager. We're here to help and we're always on the lookout for new opportunities." -Carmon

"You can do research based on the area you live in or industry you may want to work. If you identify a company, go to their website and apply online if they have a co-op or intern program so your resume is on file. If you have a direct contact through networking, speak to your co-op manager to see how they would like to proceed on developing this company with you. Remember, we are here to assist you in the process." -Jason

THE FIRST DAY

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THE FIRST DAY

“Standard Operations”

“Bring two forms of ID, like your driver’s license and Social Security Card, as well as a blank check in case they set you up with automatic deposit. Write neatly on the paperwork. Talk with your parents beforehand about how to fill out the tax withholdings paperwork. As long as they claim you as a dependent, you should be able to claim all zeros.” -Stacy

“Make sure to bring all the appropriate documents with you. Don’t guess. If you don’t know something, ask your HR person what you should do. Either leave it blank or take it home to double check.” -Claire

“Expect to spend your first day filling out paperwork and going through boring orientation videos and presentations. Bring dollar bills for the vending machine. You may need the caffeine.” -Preston

“Be ready to take a drug test.” -Bart

“You will have a pile of this. Take your time going through it. It is important, no matter how boring it is. If you don’t understand something, ask questions. You don’t want to fill something out wrong.” -Kate

Professional Advice

“You will complete reams of paperwork. You will probably also get to read volumes of company operating manuals.”
-Carmon

“Check with supervisor and HR on this one. Don’t forget the supervisor and student evaluation forms you need for graduation requirements!” -Jason

THE FIRST DAY

Questions to ask before your First Day

What is the dress code? (ask for specific examples if you aren't sure)

Where do I park?

Where do I check in?

Who do I ask for at the check-in location?

What time do I need to arrive?

What documents do I need to bring?

What is my start date?

Contact information for anyone in your department in case something happens on the first day.

Will I need to take a drug test?

-STUDENT COMPILATION

How to properly pronounce the companies name is very important. I flubbed it all during my first end of the term presentation and people still bring it up every now and then.
-Alex

THE FIRST DAY

The Right Attitude

“**Smile**, be positive, and ask questions.” -Serena

“When you walk in make sure you’re **smiling!** When your supervisor comes to get you, shake hands and introduce yourself, or, if you already have met them, ask them how they are.” -Kate

“Be friendly, but not too much (no hugging your boss or anything like that!) Whenever you are introduced to somebody, repeat their name while looking them in the eyes. It is crucial in your career to remember names.” -Mario

“Positive mental attitude is KEY! Don’t feel like you have to know everything; just try to pick up what you can and try to have fun.” -Bart

“Soak up as much as you can, and do as much stuff as you can.” -Alex

“Be friendly, **smile** and walk with confidence – head up, **smile**, and looking people in the eye, not the floor.” -Claire

“Be overly polite. Understand that you may do ‘grunt work’ your first few weeks or months. Do your absolute best with this work, as you won’t get more responsibility and do important work by doing a poor job with ‘unimportant tasks.’” -Stacy

“Make it easy for your interviewer to show their co-workers why they hired you by being friendly, curious, and open to feedback.” -Kaleen

Professional Advice

“Be curious about everything.” -Carmon

THE FIRST DAY

Dealing with Jitters

"Take deep breaths and remind yourself that everyone realizes you are the new person and does not expect you to know everything right away." -Serena

"Take deep breaths. Smile and say 'hi,' as people will relax around you and be friendlier if you're friendly first." -Stacy

"I try to fly by the motto, '**Damn the torpedoes, full steam ahead!**' Jitters are inevitable, but you will make it through." -Bart

"Ask questions and accept advice kindly. It may be overwhelming, but after a couple days you will catch on." -Casey

"Laugh it off. Remember that time will go by and you'll look back on your first day and think of how far you've come." -Kaleen

"Make sure to get a good nights sleep the night before. Caffeine will only enhance your jitters so try and stay away from it. Take a deep breath before you go in and just have fun." -Kate

Professional Advice

"If you've done your 'homework,' jitters won't be an issue." -Carmon

"As with anything, the more you do it the better you become. Take time, ask questions and grow. Each day will be more successful." -Jason

THE FIRST DAY

Student Story: My First Term

Honestly, I hated my job my first term. I didn't feel like I had enough responsibility and I never had anything to do. When I asked for more work, the response was, "I have something, but I just need to get it ready for you to take over." I'd wait two weeks and still have nothing. I even got a, "Just go have a cup of coffee and hang out for awhile," once. In fact, on my first day, one of my co-workers told another co-op and I to go get settled at our new desks. I arrived there with a legal pad and a pen! How was I going to "get settled?!" What was I supposed to do for 8 hours? I was incredibly frustrated because there wasn't training for any of the programs that I was supposed to use and I didn't know anyone who I could ask for advice. I was paranoid every time someone would walk by my desk and see that I wasn't doing anything. I really wanted to quit.

I wallowed in self-pity for a month and then I decided that I needed to be more proactive about my experience. I started compiling some how-to documents and included my lessons learned for other new co-ops in the future. I decided to stick it out, and promised myself that it would only be for one more term and that I'd switch to a different department. My new department was a great fit for me and eventually led to an internship opportunity in Europe. Looking back as a senior, I am so glad that I stuck with it. Co-ops are on the bottom of the totem-pole and no one knows what you are capable of. You have to prove yourself through your work that you can handle more.

Keep in mind that every time you switch jobs, you're going to have to start completely over, not only with your personal relationships, but also with the quantity and quality of projects that they are going to give you at first. Yes, Kettering has a great co-op program, but that's just going to get you in the door. It really doesn't mean much to the people you will be working with. To them, you are just another college student that's going to disappear six months out of the year. You have to prove that you are more than that!

-Name withheld

THE FIRST DAY

Student Stories: The First Days

My first couple of days at my first job were interesting. I was an incoming freshman with limited work experience and no college education yet. My first day consisted of following my boss around to meetings, and then filling out necessary paperwork and being sent to a medical center to have my first drug and hearing test. The rest of the day was occupied with a OSHA/MIOSHA training session on plant safety. Pretty painless first day if you ask me.

My second day, however, was not at all what I expected it to be. I entered the plant like I would many times over the next three months and found my boss packing up his computer and tools. He explained that he was leaving for Buffalo in an hour to check out a new piece of equipment that we had just purchased and would be back in two weeks. What a shock! I was a freshman, I didn't know anyone and my boss was leaving me. What was I supposed to do? He kindly explained to me that the plant director and the plant manager were going to be giving me tasks to perform on the plant floor until he returned and strongly recommended I get to know the people around me because I was going to be working with them on a regular basis. Well, thinking this could be fun and they were going to have me work with some of the equipment or something, I was surprised to find out that my real projects included painting the floors and inputting data! Even though they weren't the best of jobs, someone had to do them. I really got acquainted with my co-workers, the people that would teach me valuable skills and pass on their invaluable advice.

-Jessica

For my first term as a co-op, I worked in the prototype department of our window regulator division. This meant that I was working with technicians to learn how to build the different types of regulators we built. I had it great because my mentor/supervisor was pretty much always with me and really helped me settle in to the work routine and learn about our products. I felt comfortable asking him questions and meeting new people through him. Now that I'm older, I realize just how lucky I was to have a mentor as good as him.

Well, one week, the three technicians that were in my department were all gone and we just happened to have to ship out three different sets of regulators at the last minute! Luckily, I had paid attention before and I could talk to my mentor over the phone because he was at the plant in Mexico so I got all of the shipments done by myself. Between assembly, tagging, doing a quality check, boxing them up, and doing the shipping paperwork, there was a lot to do in one week! My boss, who was busy and didn't have too much contact with me, came over and told me how impressed he was with my work. Because I stuck it out, handled the pressure from other departments to get their parts out and was willing to put in the overtime, he later requested me to intern on his team one summer in Germany!

-Kaleen

SOCIAL LIFE

SOCIAL LIFE

Making Friends

"Don't judge people based on your first assumption." -Serena

"See if HR has a list of other co-ops or interns. If they do, try and get one so you can send out a little email. Try getting a couple people to come over one night and hang out. It'll be a little housewarming party. Get involved. If your company has sports teams, join one. It doesn't matter if you're good or not, it's a fun way to go out and meet people. If you want friends outside of work, get involved in community activities like sports or art classes. You can call the local community center or go onto their website to see a list of classes offered." -Kate

"Smile and be friendly. Make eye contact in the hall and ask people about themselves and their lives." -Kaleen

"Be yourself, there are a lot more people in college than high school so you will find someone like you...here you get to pick new friends!" -Casey

"During a work term you'll spend approximately 440 hours at work. I would suggest making friends or else that 440 hours will go by really slowly." -Alex

"It's hard sometimes! Most of the time, people won't come to you, you're going to have to take the first step." -Claire

"Be friendly, smile, and **ask people questions as people love to talk about themselves.** Remember what they say and ask follow-up questions the next day. One important thing: it's great to have friends that you work with, but make sure to stay relatively professional outside of work when you're with coworkers. You'd be amazed how much is talked about 'around the water cooler.'" -Stacy

"Go out of your way to talk with people you haven't met. Many companies will have multiple co-ops on the same section, so get to know them. Some companies will have co-ops from schools other than Kettering as well." -Monica

SOCIAL LIFE

Relating to Older People

"If they're close in age to your parents, they'll probably treat you like one of their kids. Treat them with respect, listen to what they say even if you don't listen to your parents, and ask about their kids if they have them. Understand that they have a wealth of knowledge and you can learn more from them than you can from any manual." -Stacy

"Ask questions. If you let them give you advice they feel important and you let them know that you are there to learn." -Casey

"It is hard to relate to older people. Luckily sports, music, movies, and books transcend age." -Bart

"For my first few terms, everyone that I worked with was 30+ and male. At first, it was hard. I assumed we had absolutely nothing in common, **but as time went on, I learned the right questions to ask.** 'Oh, is that your daughter, she's so cute!' Maybe you guys reading this should stay away from that one... but, most people love talking about their kids or their spouses. The conversation will naturally lead to your life and your family. **I caught myself watching the last 30 minutes of SportsCenter so I could chime in on Monday discussions after 'the big game.'** Plus, I could add commentary on shows that I liked." -Claire

"Realize that you can gain a lot of knowledge from them and present yourself in a respectful way that encourages them to share their insights with you." -Serena

Professional Advice

"Youth and experience complement each other. Often older people become cynical because they know their jobs, they work hard and can feel nobody cares or even notices. This is a natural human progression in all relationships. But, if you show some genuine enthusiasm and a willingness to learn from their years of wisdom, they will quickly come out of their shells and offer to share their experience." -Carmon

SOCIAL LIFE

Conversation Starters

Hi! What are you working on? (make sure to smile when you say this!)

I noticed those photos on your desk- is that your family?

Sports!

How was your weekend?

What are your plans for the weekend?

Have a candy jar at your desk. People will come to you when you have food.

How is your day going?

Did you watch (TV show) last night?

Can you show me how to (assemble this part/run this equipment/fill out this form/do this on the computer)?

I'm working on (a report), do you have any advice for me? Do you have an example I can look at?

Did you work for any other companies besides (current company)? What was that like? Which do you like better? Why?

Can you believe what Britney Spears did last week?

I want to find some good (Mexican/Italian/Chinese/Sushi) food around here. Do you have any recommendations?

-STUDENT COMPILATION

SOCIAL LIFE

Drinking and Bars

"If you can manage, don't drink during the week. It's not a good thing to come in one morning hung over and have to go give a last minute presentation to the vice president of your company. If you're going to party on the weekends, take pictures, but don't post them on your Facebook or MySpace pages. Your boss doesn't want or need to see you doing a keg stand." -Kate

"A lot of people go to the bars after work. Make sure you don't do anything illegal because you are representing Kettering and your company. But by all means participate and have fun." -Kaleen

"Don't do anything you don't want to do and be smart." -Casey

"I am under 21 and I just do not talk about it. I will not avoid the topic, but I do not bring it up." -Bart

"If you are offered a drink and don't want one, reply with an appreciative, 'Thank you for the offer, but I have to drive home tonight. Maybe next time.' Co-workers will look at that as being responsible because you don't want to drive drunk." -Alex

"Be conscientious. If you're of age, it's okay to have one or two at the company Christmas party, but don't get out of control. **Work is a lot like high school. If you mess up, everyone will know.**" -Claire

"If you're under 21, grin and bear it. If you're over 21, again, remember what I said about the water cooler - people talk, so try to limit drinking with coworkers. Also, never drink and drive." -Stacy

Professional Advice

"Don't. Either on the job or in a social setting. For most co-ops it's illegal and really doesn't add to your charm if you over do it." -Carmon

SOCIAL LIFE

Fun Co-op Group Activities

Bowling

Weekly movie night

Weekly TV show night

Cook dinner for each other

Weekly sports games

Lunch-time knitting group

Lunch-time ultimate Frisbee

Golfing

Take new friends to a party at your friends'

Invite out-of-town Kettering friends over to meet work friends

Watch sports together

Go sledding

Group potluck

Weekly bar-night

Get-together for random holidays (Kentucky Derby party, Britney Spears' Birthday, etc)

Go to a movie

Train for a race

Go swimming

Go on a hike

Take dancing lessons

Volunteer for Meals on Wheels, tutoring, local animal shelter, community clean-up, etc.

-STUDENT COMPULATION

SOCIAL LIFE

Staying in touch with Friends from School

"Email and Facebook are great tools to keep in touch. Make sure Facebook is used in an appropriate manner since more than just your friends can see your profile." -Serena

"Try to stay in touch as much as possible. Give your friends a phone call once a week or every two weeks. Send a fun email. It can get lonely at times when you're far away from home and there aren't any familiar faces." -Kate

"Email, call, and meet up if you can as it's fun to share the stories (good or bad.)" -Casey

"Often times it is hard to stay in touch because in essence, you have two or three separate lives, and your school friends aren't a part of your work life. But, it's worth it to stay in touch and nurture your relationship over that distance because when you get back to school you can pick up where you left off. It would be sad to lose a good friend because you grew apart over work-term." -Kaleen

"It is hard to stay in touch when you might be many miles away, but dropping a note every now and then is well worth the effort. Also, remember that your friend might work at a supplier or customer of your company and can be a good resource for on the job questions." -Bart

"Make sure to ask around before going to work term. You'd be amazed how many people are less than 30 minutes away!" -Stacy

"Weekend get-togethers are well worth a drive of a few hours. Seeing your friends a couple of times per term is a great way to stay in touch and let off some steam with people that know you well and don't work with you." -Claire

HOUSING

HOUSING

Apartment Life

"If you haven't been to work before and need a roommate, ask your co-op manager for a list of other co-ops are working at your company or in your area. Then you can contact those students and see if they are interested in having a roommate." -Monica

"Ask your company if they know of any apartments that are close by where other co-ops have stayed." -Kate

"One of the hardest things to find is a short term lease, so alumni with extra rooms or students in the opposite section from you to share a lease are good resources." -Kaleen

"Sometimes there are co-workers who own houses just for co-ops as investment properties." -Claire

Cheap Furniture Ideas

Air mattress bed

Inflatable furniture

Camping chairs

Craigslist.com search for free stuff

An over-the-door shoe holder works great for lots of things like your cell phone charger, toiletries, keys, books, etc.

Cinder blocks and wood for shelves

Cardboard boxes

Moving totes for tables, night stands and TV stands

Salvation Army/Goodwill stores for things like silverware and cooking utensils

Try Marshalls or Ross for cheap bedding and household items

Wire-frame collapsible shelving

-STUDENT COMPILATION

If you have company provided housing, DON'T trash the apartment. Just because you are getting a free ride doesn't mean you can trash Kettering's reputation. You will make your fellow students angry and jeopardize the company's future with Kettering. Seriously, if you have that big of a problem with the company or are that careless, what are you doing here? -Kaleen

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION

Email

"Spell check is your friend, especially since engineers are notoriously bad spellers." -Alex

"Short and sweet is the key. Make your point and don't waste people's time." -Casey

"Using proper spelling and grammar goes a long way in earning people's trust and respect."
-Kaleen

"Just remember that your company can look at any of your emails at any time." -Kate

"Use the same writing guidelines you would if it was a paper being turned in. Make sure your topics are work-friendly and don't abuse your emailing privileges." -Serena

"In emails, break up your sentences into multiple paragraphs. If your question cannot be answered in less than 5 minutes, set up a meeting or speak to them in person instead. If there is a chance you may have to ask someone multiple questions in one day, consider consolidating the questions into one email as numerous emails can be annoying. Use bullet points to highlight important points and outline specific information you need." -Stacy

"DO NOT, for the love of pete, USE IM TYPE. L8r, oic, u, ur, etc., should be expunged from your typing dictionary. For some that will mean learning how to type again. Seriously. You'll be surprised how many of those will fly out of your fingers without even thinking about it.

Make sure you use spell check and proofread! And remember that your work can be forwarded to your boss or printed and kept in a file for years. E-mail is so dangerous because it's so easy. Make sure that you've thought through your answers and avoid sarcasm at all costs.

Ask yourself, Is this the right time to email? If you have a ton of questions, or questions that are contingent on the answers to a first round of questions, maybe it's better for a face-to-face visit or a phone call.-Claire

Professional Advice

"My VP says, 'Be brief, be bright and be gone.' It's a good rule to follow. Always include what the benefit is to the recipient in the first sentence." -Carmon

Written

"Be concise, but make sure you present your ideas thoroughly." -Claire

"Always keep your audience in mind and write to them." -Bart

"No one wants to read an essay when a few sentences will do. This isn't humanities- there is no target word count!" -Kaleen

"With any form of communication, make sure you always explain the problem you are approaching. It does wonders for getting everybody on the same page right off the bat." -Bart

COMMUNICATION

Presentations

"Review your material before-hand. Make sure that you have given yourself enough time to complete the task. Stay on topic. Use pictures and charts as opposed to tables and tables of data. Present the conclusion first, then how you arrived at it." -Claire

"Do something out of the ordinary to grab you audience's attention." -Preston

"I was going into my first end of the term presentation with some concerns about being outgoing and a few other areas. I decided I had one last chance to save face with my end of the term presentation. I practiced it for about 3 hours the night before the presentation. I **strategically added humor into several parts to lighten the mood**. Afterward everyone told me I did a great job, and my employer said that I should look into doing stand up." -Alex

"Use 'bite-sized' text blocks and information for the visual. Try to have your visuals complement your speaking and vice versa. Don't just read off of slides or put your speech into slides." -Bart

"Whatever you do, don't make things up. The people listening probably know more than you do." -Casey

"Do your presentations far in advance. That way you'll have plenty of time to practice and review the presentation." -Kate

"Remember to speak up. **Don't add too many animations in PowerPoint documents.**" -Monica

"Make your bullets parallel! Limit your bullets to six words per bullet, six bullets per slide. Provide an introduction and conclusion. Know what you are going to say on every slide. Speak clearly and slow down your speech if you get nervous. **Be prepared for questions.**" -Stacy

Don't read directly from your slides!
Face the audience and speak to them. -Kaleen

COMMUNICATION

Speaking

"Make sure your comments add value to the conversation and are well thought-out. Be prepared to support your ideas." -Stacy

"Think before you speak and use eye contact. Make sure your tone is not threatening and that you don't raise your voice if you are getting angry or excited." -Serena

"Don't let your emotions take hold of you. If things start to get heated or somebody doesn't understand what you're trying to say, take a breath and start over." -Kate

"Speak loudly, clearly, and concisely. Your idea will sound better if others can understand what you are trying to say." -Kaleen

"Just because you are a co-op doesn't mean you have to sit and observe. Use your voice." -Casey

"Read body language. If you can see you are losing your audience, try a different approach." -Bart

"Know your audience. If you are talking to people on the shop floor chances are you can drop the F-bomb and no one will really care. In a quiet office, though, some people may take notice." -Alex

"Remember, part of communication is listening. Pay attention to others when they speak and do not interrupt." -Mario

COMMUNICATION

Sample Weekly Report to Supervisor

Weeks 1&2

<p>Tasks Completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update term goals with C.A. Set priorities. • Tour of plant with R.M. • <u>Updating Project Matrix</u> • Contact Plant Liaisons regarding issues with parts at plants • Contact R.M. regarding warranty claims. Phone conference. • Create project part summary list to list problems in each category by part number (instead of program) • Contact R.I., L. S., E. S. about system testing #1, #2 • Acquire APIS program for FMEA and examine and add FMEA data to Project Matrix • Contact J.M. regarding program issues. • Acquire specific GM program DFMEA and DVP&R from BNA. • Complete skill matrix for C.A. • Begin 2x per week Spanish lessons • Review PRRs • Help sort seals • Observe manufacturing stations where X380/1/4, T345, Lambda are assembled. • Try to send parts to HQ (incomplete until following week)
<p>Lessons Learned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MANY new words in Spanish • New technical terms such as shy bolts/nuts and • Locations of office supplies, doors, test equipment, fixtures, programs in plant. • Functions of various assembly stations. • A little about assembly station design and poke yoke. • How to use scanner, plotter • How to create and freeze frames in Excel • Various warranty/production definitions (CPV, IPTV, MIS, etc.) • Differences between BNA and BMX! • <u>BASIC</u> APIS (FMEA program) • How to ship parts to BNA
<p>Questions/Suggestions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacation time? • Use also DVP&R
<p>Miscellaneous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travels: San Miguel de Allende, Queretaro, Mexico City (Soccer game!) • I love the food! It is spicier and much different than Mexican food in the US, and it tastes very good. • I learned how to drive a standard transmission car here (Thanks J!) so I can drive the pool cars, and I love it. • Overall the people here are so friendly, helpful, fun and relaxed.

LIFE AS AN EMPLOYEE

LIFE AS AN EMPLOYEE

LIFE AS AN EMPLOYEE

Appropriate use of Company Resources

Professional Advice

"Company resources are for carrying out company business. Period." -Carmon

"Whenever in question, ask before doing." -Caron

"Do not check your personal email at work. Remember that your IT department can see everything that you can. Most corporations have software that logs where you go on the internet and can categorize the types of sites you visit." -Preston

"There is a time and place for everything. Don't look at porn at work." -Alex

"Use your manners and work while you're at work." -Casey

As great as Gmail, Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, AIM, Trillian, MSN, and Google are, unless your company has a specific policy permitting these types of sites or you're legitimately using them for company purposes, it's best to stay away, or at least visit them as rarely as possible. If you're bored, ask for more responsibility! Ask your boss if there is something they've been putting off for a while, then ask if you can 'take a crack' at it. Not only will you show initiative, but you may potentially help out your boss and increase their trust in your abilities. -Stacy

LIFE AS AN EMPLOYEE

Networking

"While what you know is definitely important, who you know can sometimes matter almost as much. Make sure to never burn any bridges and keep in touch with former coworkers and bosses." -Stacy

"This is the key to success. Meet people and make contacts for the future." -Serena

"Networking is not scary. It is as simple as maintaining a friendly relationship with a co-worker, supervisor or other co-op. When you have a good friendship or working relationship, not only could you have a great friend, but maybe they can do something for you, like write a recommendation letter. Of course, it goes both ways." -Kaleen

"Networking is the key to life. It is not what you know it is whom you know. Always try to stay on good terms with people; you never know when it could come in handy. I have changed jobs a few times now but I know if I ever have a question having to do with what I was doing, I can email my old bosses or coworkers no problem and they will help me out." -Bart

"Connections are your greatest asset. Save your contacts and keep back-up copies." -Preston

Professional Advice

"If you have the ability to network through work in a social or professional setting, it is a good chance for you to meet people who may have a say in your career development down the road. Never burn bridges." -Jason

"You simply cannot ever have too many connections." -Carmon

LIFE AS AN EMPLOYEE

Handling Confidential Information

"Keep it confidential. Being trustworthy instills further trust." -Stacy

"Be very mindful of what you repeat to others. You may hear SENSITIVE information in meetings and not be explicitly told so." -Preston

"It is cool to know stuff before everyone else, but unfortunately you cannot tell other people this cool stuff." -Alex

"Confidential means don't tell... no exceptions." -Casey

"If it says confidential on it, it's confidential. That means you can't tell your mom, dad or significant other about it, no matter how cool it is or even if you swear them to secrecy. There are rules on your company's website that should outline what to do when you come across something confidential." -Kate

Sick Days

"Use them if you need to, don't abuse them." -Stacy

"Usually in your first year you won't be paid for them, **but if you're truly sick, there's generally not an issue with you taking a day off.**" -Claire

"Make sure you know your supervisor's phone number so you can call them when you are sick. Most people are pretty relaxed when it comes to an occasional sick day." -Kaleen

"If you are sick once in a while, they will understand. You shouldn't be sick once a week."
-Monica

LIFE AS AN EMPLOYEE

Integrity

"Do everything you can to keep your integrity - it seems to be more fleeting in the world these days, so people appreciate it when they see it. Besides, life gets kind of hard when you can't look yourself in the mirror." -Stacy

"Don't compromise yours or you will never be the same." -Casey

"Your integrity is your most valuable asset. Remember a network works both ways, and bad reputations spread just as fast, if not faster, than good reputations." -Bart

"Your integrity is really the only thing you have." -Alex

"Even if you mess up, fess up. Your co-workers and boss will respect you for taking responsibility, and that only increases their trust in you and your abilities. The more honest you are with them as far as your actions and abilities, the more comfortable they will feel working with you and giving you cool assignments. Of course, this goes the other way and can protect you from attempting things you aren't ready to do (yes, that is a good thing sometimes!)" -Kaleen

Professional Advice

"You represent yourself but also the entire student body at Kettering and what that could mean upon graduation." -Jason

"May cause short-term disappointment, but, in the end, your actions will come back to haunt you be they good or bad." -Carmon

LIFE AS AN EMPLOYEE

Basic Expectations of an Employer

Some advice from our employer partners...

"Fill your bag of tricks every chance you get - it'll pay off in the future. There's not an endless supply of positions available, and in the real world it can be 'survival of the fittest' as the more abilities you possess the more useful you can be. Find ways to enjoy your work and make it challenging. If you're not challenged you'll quickly become bored and complacent. Most of all - GO FOR IT, don't hold back - set goals that seem out of reach, you'll be amazed at what can get accomplished." -Dan, Brose North America

"The most important things I look for in a co-op student are a good attitude and that they work hard. It is helpful if they are an independent worker but ask questions when they need assistance. One piece of advice I would give a co-op student is learn all you can but more importantly create relationships with other employees because they will be there to help you in the future." -Alicia, Zimmer

"Ask a lot of questions. Don't be afraid to ask us to slow down. We want you to learn. Don't be afraid to make mistakes because we all do." -Curtis, Brose North America

Previous co-ops have raised the bar really high so it's important for a new co-op to be energetic, stay focused on their assignment, and try to learn from the projects and tasks that are assigned. Always, always ask questions, be curious, and give input. Company engineers are glad to have you around and your opinion matters. No one expects the co-op to be a battle hardened pro, so if something is new or unfamiliar to you speak up and ask for training.
-Dan, Brose North America

LIFE AS AN EMPLOYEE

Suggestions & Continuous Improvement Ideas

"If you have free time, do research on topics related to your work. Especially anything that has potential to save the company money! Discuss your research with your supervisors. This will help gain their trust in you not to waste time on the computer." -Preston

"People will listen to good ideas, even if you are just a lowly co-op. If you make suggestions, it shows you are paying attention and want to improve." -Bart

"Do it. Worst case scenario they don't use your advice, best case you impress them." -Casey

"Don't be afraid to speak up and ask the obvious question. Sometimes you have the best view of things because you are new and don't have a lot of work experience. Many times others don't bring something up because they either assume it has already been discussed and turned down, or that it is supposed to be like that and they never even think about it in the first place." -Kaleen

"Understand that **you will only be as valuable as you make yourself be**. You decide your present and your future, so make sure your decisions put you on the right path. Enjoy the now, but don't forget that the future will come whether you like it or not. Don't forget, you're only young once, so don't let opportunities pass you by." -Stacy

Professional Advice

"You can learn a lot by asking 'Why don't we do it this way instead?' Don't become embittered if your boss 'steals' your ideas and takes the credit. Your day will come." -Carmon

"Make suggestions to supervisors but don't overstep your bounds. They have hired you for new ideas but remember that they have the experience." -Jason

LIFE AS AN EMPLOYEE

Kettering Co-op Evaluations

"To prevent from having lackluster evaluations, hold a few meetings during the term with your supervisor or fellow workers. Ask for feedback on what you are doing and give them feedback on the work you are doing." -Alex

"Take these seriously. They can come in useful when asking for more responsibility or asking for a raise." -Stacy

"This is your chance to give your opinion about your overall experience. You should feel safe making comments since your employer will only read them if you choose." -Serena

"Make sure your supervisor does them. **Go over the evaluation with your supervisor when he or she is done with it.** Be honest with your answers. If you give a good evaluation and it is a really crappy job, you're not going to be able to complain to your co-op manager." -Kate

"Take them seriously and be honest. Employers like it when you let them know how you felt and why. These evaluations are your chance to try to change your job for the better so use it! Also, try to really listen to what your supervisor tells you and take it to heart. It can be painful to the ego but will help in the end." -Bart

My first co-op evaluation wasn't the best. So, I decided from that point forward I would work on the areas that they said I should improve on. Now I receive really good evaluations, and if there is something that they say I should improve on I make that my top priority the next term. -Alex

Professional Advice

"Always review them with your evaluator and use this time to set expectations for your next work-term. Maintain a journal with at least weekly entries and take it with you to your evaluation." -Carmon

"Keep copies for yourself." -Caron

Student Story: An Almost Fatal Mistake

During one of my work terms I experienced what others might call a fatal mistake. Some of my co-workers decided it was a good and simple idea to move a very large piece of equipment with floor jacks. Any plant safety guy would faint upon hearing this as it is so dangerous! Industrial size as they were, the employees neglected to consider changes in floor height with cement. They managed to move the equipment a good 50 feet when the floor dipped too low and one of the jacks rolled right out from under the machine! As top-heavy as that particular machine was, it quickly began to lean and eventually fell.

Fortunately, no one was hurt, but three weeks worth of product were oil stained and/or smashed by the weight of the press. Also damaged in the fall was a rack of raw material, the equivalent of one month's worth of production, and the electrical panel control to the machine. So then we had no parts to ship, a machine that had accumulated 12 hours worth of work, and very limited raw materials to build new parts with for our customer. Roughly 60 to 70 thousand dollars were lost in a matter of moments and our customer was at risk.

This taught me to ALWAYS think about the little things as well as the big things before making a decision. One false step and the floor was no longer there to support the weight of the machine, which threw tons of money, time, and hard work out the window.

-Jessica

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Supervisor

"If you play golf, bring your clubs. A game of golf is often a great way to get to know your supervisors in a relaxed environment." -Preston

"My first supervisor was horrible, but in some ways he taught me the most. He would do things to purposely make me angry, and I had to hold back that anger at work. After having him as a supervisor I think I can handle anyone now." -Alex

"Get to know them and try to learn a little about their background. Many have diverse backgrounds and know a lot. Also, remember that should you change jobs or groups, having an old supervisor in your network of contacts can be very useful." -Bart

"Respect your supervisor. It doesn't matter if you like them or not, you need to respect them." -Kate

"Don't complain, and always ask for more work when you are done. I always get complimented for asking for more work as soon as I'm done." -Kaleen

"These are your supervisors, they are not meant to be your best friends. Remember that you should get along with your supervisor but don't forget that they have a job to do. Don't take offense when they give you items to improve on." -Monica

"Ask them for words of wisdom and lessons learned, as well as tips on how to supervise others as you will eventually need all the knowledge you can get." -Stacy

Professional Advice

"A supervisor wants to see someone who has initiative and drive. This is a successful employee. Also, no job is beneath you. If something needs to be done and they ask you to do it, then do it." -Jason

"Ask if you don't understand. Make your boss look good." -Carmon

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Other Co-ops

"The co-ops where I work used to all get together for meals and each person would take turns cooking. It was a great way to get to know each other, pass the time, and keep from packing on the pounds from fast food!" -Claire

"Make an effort to be friendly because it is great to have someone more your age to talk to and/or hang out with." -Bart

"Learn from their mistakes!" -Casey

"Be friends with fellow co-ops, but don't be too friendly in the office. You can go say hi to them, but don't sit at their desk for an hour discussing the weekend. It's unprofessional and inappropriate for the workplace." -Kate

"You still need to be professional when talking with the other co-ops at work. Don't tell stories at work if they are unprofessional such as how drunk you were the weekend before, your bad driving record, etc." -Monica

"Make friends with as many co-ops as possible. It's always great to extend your friend base, and you may end up having classes with them in the future." -Stacy

Student Story: My Three Lives

Kettering's unique program makes students manage not just one life, but sometimes up to three or four. Personally, I have three completely separate lives, and depending where I am, I am a completely different person. At school, I am a social, motivated learner who likes to help out around campus and hang out with the girls. My schedule is random and I never have the same activities two days in a row.

At work, I am the curious, helpful and friendly person who gets work done fast and well. However, my schedule is structured and I fall easily into a routine. I am slightly more mature over work term, as being around adults instead of students encourages that outlook.

At home, I'm almost the same girl that left for college three years ago. No one at home understands what I'm like at school or work, like what I do or what my thoughts are anymore because I'm not around them all the time. In some ways, it is hard to balance all three, but mostly I'm lucky to have specific outlets for all sides of my personality. There is something to learn from each experience, and luckily Kettering enables its students to mature much more quickly than the average college student.

-Kaleen

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Kettering Co-op Manager

"Keeping a relationship with your co-op manager is a great idea. If you keep them up to date with how you are doing, they will help you a lot more. I have always tried to keep my manager up to date and that made my decision for reassignment so much easier for both of us since we were on the same page." -Bart

"Don't be afraid to use them - they are here to help you!" -Casey

"Trust your co-op manager. Keep them in the loop. If they know what you are thinking and expecting they can work with you to follow the rules and get the best experience possible. **The worst thing to do is assume they can't help and not ask questions or share concerns.** Also, don't expect them to break university policy!" -Kaleen

"Keep them informed of any issues you have. Understand that they may have dozens of students for whom they're trying to find jobs, so make sure they know your face, what you're looking for in a job, and what you have to offer potential co-ops. When a great opportunity arises, you want your name to pop into their mind first!" -Stacy

MESSAGES FROM THE CO-OP MANAGERS...

"Keep in contact with your Co-op Manager throughout your time at Kettering and after. We are here to help not only in the search process but also when you are at your co-op site. Stop in and see us when you're back on campus to say hi and tell us about your work term. If you are ever having difficulties in your assignment or at school call us immediately to discuss it and we can work with you to resolve them the best way possible." -Jason

"Your co-op manager is here to help. We are not just an employment agency but educators, and our primary job is to teach professional arts and practices as part of your Kettering education." -Carmon

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Diversity in the Workplace

"Keep an open mind and understand that those different than you have a wealth of knowledge to share. Also, stereotypes are wrong more often than right, so don't judge too quickly." -Stacy

"Office gossip is the worst. Try to avoid it at all costs. If someone says something to you that is offensive or disrespectful, speak up and say you aren't comfortable with what they just said. If you can't do that, acknowledge that you heard them but don't agree or disagree. Then, change the subject. It is hard to not get caught up in, but whether you do or not really affects how people look at you." -Kaleen

"You're at the bottom of the food chain, so don't tick people off as it could come back to haunt you. Try to be easy to work with." -Casey

"I work with people from Germany and other European countries because my company is a German based company. It is great to hear their perspective on different topics." -Alex

"It shouldn't come as a big surprise to you that the workplace is diverse. Make sure you are respectful to everybody and learn from those people with different backgrounds." -Mario

You will come into contact with people from all walks of life during your co-op and your career. Many people get caught up in stereotypes, and sadly, they are limiting their knowledge, creativity and reputation. You will encounter men and women who have their high school diploma, as well as those who have a PhD. You will work with Chinese, Germans, Mexicans, African-Americans, Christians, Jews, Atheists, and so on. Some people even judge based on the jobs they do at work or whether someone has children or not. What is important is that you respect your differences and learn from them. There is something to learn from EVERYONE, so don't limit yourself! -Kaleen

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Getting Help

"Companies always have a wealth of resources available. Between your boss, your mentor, other coworkers, other co-ops, and the HR department, they should be able to answer any questions you have. However, don't hesitate to reach out to your co-op manager, your professors, or anyone else you've built a relationship with who may be able to help."
-Stacy

"It is better to ask and do something correctly than to assume and have to do it over."
-Serena

"If you need help, ask! Don't try and complete an assignment if you don't understand the task. If you get stuck during an assignment, be sure to ask for help. Employers don't expect you to know everything, but they do expect you to ask for help when you need it instead of delaying an assignment or completing it incorrectly." -Monica

"Don't be afraid to ask anyone for help. Smile, and ask if they have time to show you how to do something. Always say thank you. If they don't have time, ask when they do."
-Kaleen

"If you have a question about a project, ask your supervisor or somebody else that would know the answer. They'll be more than happy to help you out. Just make sure you don't go to them for everything. You need to stand on your own two feet." -Kate

"Ask and thou shall receive." -Bart

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

What to do When You Don't Have Any Work

Ask for more!

Shadow a co-worker in a department that interests you.

Talk to people in testing or on the line to understand the process better and make friends.

Go to another team, with your boss's permission, to help.

Ask a co-worker if they need help. If they don't, ask if you can observe.

Brainstorm projects of your own to improve processes, make things easier, or improve products.

Do research online about your company, its competitors, and recent industry advancements.

Talk to your mentor to see what kind of opportunities are available for full-time employees to continue their training and see if you can get them as a co-op.

Organize your work so when you leave it will be easy for others to access.

Write down specific questions you have about work in general and specifically to bring up the next time you meet with your mentor or boss.

Ask for a tour of the facility with an explanation of the processes going on.

Think of ways for your company to improve their co-op program and show them the benefits for them of implementing your suggestions.

Work on your end-of-term presentation.

Ask if there are any meetings you can sit in on and observe.

Check out page 26 for some conversation starters.

-STUDENT COMPILATION

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Disagreeing with Someone

"If there is time, present the situation to someone whose judgment you trust and who is impartial. An outsider's perspective can help bring clarity. If the situation must be handled immediately, stay calm, LISTEN to them, try to explain your perspective, avoid raising your voice or getting angry and be willing to compromise, if possible." -Stacy

"Truly listen to their side and don't start to just defend yourself. Think before you speak and don't be afraid to admit you were wrong." -Serena

"Always be respectful – don't ever get into a shouting match at work." -Monica

"Try to understand the points the other person is making before constructing your counter-argument. The more respect you give their opinion, the more yours will receive as well. You might also realize they are right!" -Bart

"Think about how you would like to be treated if you were presenting an idea, and act accordingly. Think about what you can say and how to phrase it so you don't come off as a know-it-all, but rather as someone who is making a suggestion they truly believe could help and would benefit everyone. Be sincere and honest. If you can show how it will make their job easier, or how it will make them look better, chances are it will go over well." -Kaleen

Professional Advice

"Listen to their ideas. They may have a better approach. If your way must be followed because of company policy explain why it must be done that way." -Carmon

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Student Story: A Long Shift

One of the worst but best days I have ever had as a co-op student was the day that I worked 20 hours straight. It didn't start off that way, however. I had been scheduled for a 9-hour day, which was nothing out of the ordinary, and I was scheduled to run my 4 hours of production from 8pm to midnight. Again nothing out of the ordinary for where I worked. I arrived for work at about 3pm and began work as usual building things, cleaning, and shipping. When 8pm rolled around, I began my production time with our sorter and did my usual routine of checking parts, verifying color change times, and updating myself on the day's downtime issues. Well time passed and 10pm rolled around. The manager of the sorter came to me to verify my shut-down time. We had planned on running until around 1 or 2am, but his concern was that no one would be there with the sorter after midnight. According to state law this is not allowed. So I volunteered to stick around until 4am when my next teammate was scheduled to be in. This would put me at 13 hours straight of work.

The machine that night made a record number of parts without stopping. But my teammate that was scheduled for 4am never showed! I was stuck. The machine was making parts, we were the only ones there and I was well in to hour 13. Then, all of the sudden, the machine stopped. One of the dies failed! Now most people probably would have gone home at this point. Not me! The only thing I could imagine doing was pulling the die apart- so I did. Three hours later, a teammate showed up. I was exhausted and working really slowly but fighting through to make sure we could make production as soon as possible. He came over and helped me finish fixing the equipment. It took us nearly the rest of the morning to finish the die together before I was finally dismissed for the day. This experience gave me a lot of insight on how important it is to be reliable, what is sometimes required of us as employees, and what is necessary of a team in order for no one person to pick up the slack from others.

-Jessica

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Working Abroad

"Working abroad is one of the best things I have done in my life. Not only do you get to live with a completely different culture and see how they work, but you make valuable contacts for future endeavors." -Kaleen

"Employers are very interested in finding people with well rounded qualities like international study abroad experience." -Serena

"Even though this might not sound immediately appealing to everybody, I would highly recommend you pursue it for several reasons. First of all, it is an amazing opportunity. Not only to learn about a different culture or learn to speak a language (which, trust me, both are big benefits,) but mostly learning to adapt to different working environments. One of the main things employers look is for people that adapt easily and that are able to work with a diverse group of people." -Mario

Student Story: Working in Mexico

Working in Mexico was amazing! I knew Spanish before and had even vacationed in Cancun, but I never imagined I could actually fall in love with a country! For my manufacturing rotation at Brose, I was able to work at the Queretaro facility near Mexico City. I went to work on a specific project we started at our headquarters in Auburn Hills, MI, so I was flown down to Mexico and put in an apartment with a German intern and a woman who taught German at a local university. Not only was it really different working at the plant (guys putting up shelving with no safety requirements at all, nine hour work days, Friday lunches at a co-worker's "bar," going to a company-wide bullfight and "Carne Asada," and a more social atmosphere, to name a few,) but I improved my Spanish, got to drive in the crazy traffic every day, traveled all over, and most importantly, met and developed relationships with some amazing people.

While working in Mexico provided me with some great contacts, great projects and some new work-related experiences, meeting the people and learning what life is like in a different country was the best part. I learned so much about myself and the world that I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. I would go back in a heartbeat if given the chance, and plan on spending time there to teach English in the future.

There is such a difference between vacationing, travelling, and actually living in a different country, I highly recommend doing everything that you can. The worst that could happen is you have some crazy stories to tell later! My outlook on life changed dramatically because of this opportunity to live in another country, and only for the better. I can't wait to study abroad in Germany next!

-Kaleen

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Supervising

“Act confident, but NEVER overconfident or arrogant. It’s very difficult for some 50 year olds to be supervised by 19 year olds, so make sure that you acknowledge the years of experience they have and respect their opinion. However, also know that you are in a position where you are the supervisor and must make tough decisions.” -Stacy

“Show your people respect and listen to those who have more experience than you.” -Serena

“This is a great way to improve your people skills. Also, this is good to experience because you can understand what the people think when you bring in new machinery – what their concerns are, what they like and don’t like, etc.” -Monica

“No job is beneath you. Don’t expect to go out and work with engineers the first term. Some of the best and most valuable work experience I gained was working with technicians. Plus, they keep you grounded.” -Kaleen

“Do learn the rules and follow them. Don’t pretend that you’re better than your employees. **They can teach you things you can’t learn from books.**” -Casey

Professional Advice

“The primary purpose of any successful supervisor is to provide support and resources, and then to become progressively unnecessary.” -Carmon

Don’t act like you know everything. If you act like you know everything and that you are better than the people on the floor just because you are going to college, they will give you a hard time. Remember that they have been working on these machines for years and their knowledge about the machines is much more extensive than what yours will be. Look to learn as much as possible from the people on the floor – how a machine works, the process flow, how to fix common errors on a machine, etc. -Monica

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Little Things That Go a Long Way

"Make sure that your supervisor knows which projects you liked the most, and gasp, which ones, not so much. When you return, I think you'll be pleasantly surprised with the kind of work you get. Employers are smart, they know that you'll be more productive if you like what you're doing." -Claire

"Send your supervisor, mentor, and maybe HR person a weekly or biweekly email detailing the tasks you have accomplished, goals you have for the next weeks, lessons you have learned and questions you have. It is a great thing to have at the end of the term for your co-op evaluations and to simply keep everyone you work with up to date on your accomplishments." -Kaleen

"Sleep. Friends. Chinese food. Ramen noodles. Getting to know people in your classes. Going Greek. Getting to know the people in Student Activities, Financial Aid, the co-op office, your professors." -Stacy

"If you finish an assignment earlier than expected, ask your supervisor for something else to do. Don't wait for them to come to you with a new project. The supervisors are usually impressed with the co-ops that ask for more to do." -Monica

"Thank people! Do as much legwork as you can by yourself. If you do those two things, coworkers will be far more likely to help you out." -Bart

"People at work sometimes bring in chocolate or other goodies, this really helps boost morale at work." -Alex

TIP: Email your HR person and supervisor during your school term to give them an update on what classes you are taking, how they are going, and confirm your start date for the next work-term. Don't forget to ask how they are doing or how a project you worked on is progressing! Even if they don't reply, it's nice to let people you work with know you are alive and still excited about work.

Hand out little thank you notes at the end of each term to the people who worked with you, helped you, and connected with you. They will appreciate that you appreciate them.
-Kaleen

CAREER DECISIONS

CAREER DECISIONS

Help! This isn't what I want to do for the rest of my life!

"Ask yourself if it's your current job or the career path itself. No job is perfect, though you should like your job more than you dislike it. If you're completely miserable in a specific industry or career, talk with your professors to see what other options may be available, as well as your co-op advisor and older students." -Stacy

"Will this experience help you get into another job? Does your company offer good training opportunities? Maybe it's a completely different industry, but that might be a good thing because you will approach the industry you want to be in with a completely different view. Plus, transferable skills are awesome." -Kaleen

"That's ok, no worries...if you don't change co-ops just soak up as much information as you can. Most things you learn are more than just engineering and will apply to future jobs." -Casey

"Remember you are not 'locked in' by any means to this job for after graduation. Try to learn what you can from the job and figure out what you really want to be doing. Then when you graduate, find that job." -Bart

"The time period that you are at your co-op job amounts for a very small part of your life. During this 2.5 years of co-op experience you are learning, developing people skills, and padding your resume. You graduate Kettering with this experience and can take that experience to different sectors, or in some cases an entirely different field. A Kettering engineering degree can lead you down many of future paths. If you truly feel that engineering is not right for you, you can jump into many different professional schools ranging from Law, to Medicine, to Business, or become a professor." -Alex

"Think about if it will help you get where you want to be at the end. We all have to do tedious jobs, but consider them learning opportunities and make the most of your working experience as a whole!" -Mario

CAREER DECISIONS

Changing Jobs

"Often the best thing to do is look to other students for support. My brother goes to Kettering so when I had hard times at work I would give him a call and explain problems at work. Often times he would say, 'Well that's nothing I had to paint floors my first work term.' No matter what, there is always someone out there that has it worse than you." -Alex

"Relax, give it time, and if you're still unhappy, call your co-op manager and decide what you want to do." -Casey

"If you really do not like your job you should talk to your supervisor and co-op manager. You might be able to switch groups within the company to find something you like, or you might need to change companies. Make sure that during this process you are honest with both parties, let the company know what your objections are and your co-op manager know what you are looking for." -Bart

"Sometimes you might not like your job now, but the work you are doing will really help you in the next few years or at your next job." -Kaleen

"The first question to ask: is it the tasks you're currently performing or the company as a whole? The first two terms may not be ideal, but if you prove your ability to handle mundane tasks, you can increase your boss's trust in you, build your levels of responsibility and 'get into the good stuff.' If the career itself seems wrong for you, like the work performed by more experienced personnel doesn't interest you, look at other areas of the company to see if there might be a better fit for you. If not, talk with your co-op manager and ask about your options." -Stacy

To be very honest, most first term co-ops don't like their jobs. It takes a while to get into the groove. For the first term, your focus should be to learn about the products and different information systems that your company uses. After all, the first 3 months of a full-time person's career is just getting up to speed. You might feel like they aren't giving you enough work or enough responsibility. If that's the case, ask them if you can sit in on meetings to pass some time, and when they get on a topic you know you can do, perk up and let them know! If you know you'll need help, and it's a project you're interested in, a simple, "I'd like to help with that," will do. Most of the time the engineer leading the project will love it!

Unless you have a major issue like discrimination, sexual harassment, or switching majors, I would advise sticking with any co-op for at least two terms before looking for a new one. -Claire

CAREER DECISIONS

Sample Company Co-op Rotation Plan

Freshman I	Manufacturing/Prototype Lean assembly techniques and familiarize with function of product
Freshman II	Testing Learn failure modes, test setups and requirements to validate product
Sophomore I	Quality Work with warranty parts and help validate assembly processes
Sophomore II	Design Obtain exposure to design process and CAD techniques
Junior I	Customer Team Learn about customer relationships and marketing of product
Junior II	Student Choice Allow student to get more in-depth with area of interest
Senior I	International/External Location Assignment Location and group determined by availability and student interest
Senior II	Thesis To be decided based on company needs and student interests
Senior III	Thesis Complete thesis project

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Voting

"Vote or shut up. You can only complain if you participated in the process." -Stacy

"Make sure that you vote! If you're away from home apply for an absentee ballot. Make sure to apply for the application early so it arrives on time. There are applications available at your local election offices." -Kate

"It is the constitutional right for all Americans to vote, so do your part." -Alex

"Two words: Absentee ballots!" -Kaleen

Taxes

"Make sure to claim your Hope Learning deduction if you're an independent. It allows you to get the most of your money back. If you're a dependent make sure your parents do... then you'll have to ask them for it." -Claire

"Taxes are a bummer. Try to learn how to do them though, because it is useful to know and the more you know the bigger your chances are of getting more money back in the end." -Bart

"Be aware that if you live in one state and work in another, taxes take a lot longer to complete because you have so many additional forms! You have to file in the state you reside in and the state you work in. However, if you work in the same state that you are a resident, it's easy to do them yourself or cheap to hire someone." -Kaleen

The first week of a co-op is usually the most expensive because you'll have to put deposits down on your housing and often your utilities. So plan for that over school term before you find yourself up a creek without a paddle.-Claire

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Things to do in Your Town

JoAnn's sewing and craft classes

Mentor middle school students

Go to the bar

Work a 2nd job

Go to the library to read, use the internet, check out movies, read magazines and see what community events are going on

Sign up for a gym membership

Go to the beach

Go golfing

Have races with various vehicles (trikes, golf carts, bikes, roller blades, etc.)

Build an awesome Halloween costume

Learn how to cook

Get involved with extracurricular groups through work

Go to the movies

Work on your car

Go to the YMCA

Ask for the summer student rate even if it isn't the summer

Sign up to coach a sports team

Play on a sports team

Go horseback riding

Volunteer at a farm, nursing home, school, animal shelter, museum, etc.

If you are interested in medicine, go see an autopsy or shadow a surgery

-STUDENT COMPILATION

THESIS

THESIS

Advisors

"Ask a professor you enjoy working with if they will be willing to be your advisor." -Serena

"If you would like to request a specific professor to be your advisor, I would recommend sending them an email asking them if they would be willing to be your advisor before you turn in your PTA requesting them as your faculty advisor." -Monica

"Pick either someone you like, someone who's an expert on your thesis topic, or both." -Stacy

Writing

"Use other co-ops as references on how to go about writing and formatting." -Serena

"Don't leave all the writing for the end and expect to finish it in a week. It is a very involved document and it will take time to write all the details about your project." -Monica

"If you have any questions at any time, talk with the Thesis Coordinator at Kettering. They can be a great resource to make sure that you are following exactly the right format so when it comes time to get your work approved there won't be any hiccups." -Kaleen

Sample Timeline

JUNIOR II, SCHOOL	Attend informational meeting and start thinking about Thesis
JUNIOR II, WORK	Submit Proposed Thesis Assignment (PTA)
SENIOR I, SCHOOL	Select and contact Faculty Advisor
SENIOR I, WORK	Conduct research, experimentation, design work and investigation
SENIOR II, SCHOOL	Chapter 1 due to Faculty Advisor
SENIOR II, WORK	Submit preliminary thesis to employer for editing Submit employer-approved preliminary thesis to Faculty Advisor
SENIOR III, SCHOOL	Get preliminary Thesis approved
SENIOR III, WORK	Final Thesis approved by employer Final Thesis approved by Thesis Coordinator and Faculty Advisor

Don't get off your timeline. Remember that for every term after your thesis two term, you will be charged an extension fee. Also, if your employer has a time frame that they would like the project completed by, be sure to finish within that timeline. -Monica

AFTER GRADUATION

AFTER GRADUATION

Transition to Full Time

"Make sure you're excited about starting your new career. Don't accept a job if you're not, otherwise it will always be a job, and the rest of your life will be less than what it could be."

-Stacy

"A lot of students are expecting their company to offer them a job when they graduate and then are unprepared when that offer doesn't come or isn't what they expected. Make sure you talk with your HR reps and/or boss to see what their plans are for you, and be prepared to search out other employment opportunities. Sometimes companies will fight and bargain with you if you show interest and get an offer from another company."

-Kaleen

Grad School

"Getting a masters degree instantly boosts your wage a bit." -Alex

"Decisions, decisions. Take the time to plan your future and research these decisions."

-Casey

"Some employers will pay for your graduate school tuition. If you are interested in going to graduate school but want to work full-time as well, research what companies pay or help pay for your masters degree." -Monica

"As Bachelor's Degrees are this generation's 'high school diploma,' you should at least consider continuing your education." -Stacy

"Most grad schools LOVE Kettering students because of our great academic preparation for grad school combined with our real world experience. Go for it! You'll be surprised at the options available to you." -Kaleen

AFTER GRADUATION

Mentors: The Key to Success

"The key to a successful co-op experience is to find a mentor to guide you through specific tasks, office politics, and career decisions. Having one person as your go-to person can be a lifesaver in stormy waters." -Kaleen

"My co-op does not assign mentors, but over the years, I had two people that I personally defined as such. For me, it wasn't that I set out on the first day to find someone that would be a good mentor. Instead, I found myself a few terms down the road aspiring to be like certain people because of their presentation skills and their relationships with others within the company. Some people are just naturally at ease with leadership and organization. They know how to introduce you to the power players in your company and they can keep a good rep with everyone because of their passion and devotion to their job. Obviously, these are the types of people that you want to surround yourself with. Not only will their skills rub off on you, but if you find yourself in a pinch for help or a letter of recommendation, these types will usually bend over backwards to help you out." -Claire

My mentor probably had the biggest influence on my career development. The first two or three terms of co-op determine the pace of your training and paint your portrait for others to see what kind of worker you are. Because of my mentor, I learned what company culture was like, where the office politics were, and how to search out new opportunities. When there were tough situations, he helped me through them. Even when I left his department after my first term, I still included him in my bi-weekly review sessions and went to him for advice. He not only gave me great advice that led to my growth and education at work, but I consider him a good friend... even after I switched jobs to a new company! -Kaleen

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

If you have only 5 minutes, here's the bare minimum...

Be confident in yourself, give examples of your great leadership skills, and don't forget to write thank you notes after an interview!

It isn't hard to relate to older people. Ask lots of questions about their lives and the job at hand, and don't be a know-it-all. Be more interested in them than sharing your life story.

Prove you are responsible and capable through your actions, not your words.

Be friendly, smile, and ask lots of questions about work, family, and what to do in the town.

The more open and approachable you are, the more people will like you.

Don't be afraid to ask questions.

Show respect for anyone you encounter no matter what their background. Everyone has something to teach you.

Keep a close relationship with your co-op manager both during the job search and throughout your co-op career.

You get out of it what you put into it.

There are a lot of little things that go a long way, like thank you notes, asking questions, asking for more work when you are done with a task, and even bringing in food.

Make sure you know what your supervisor expects of you, and make sure he or she knows what you want to get out of your work experience, too. If you aren't sure what your goals should be, ask.

Speak clearly, concisely, and calmly. It is easier to be taken seriously if you act professionally.

CONTRIBUTORS

This project would not have been a success without the generous contributions and support of the following people:



Kaleen Canevari, 2009

Major: Mechanical Engineering, bioengineering concentration

Co-op: Brose North America, Zimmer

Activities: Student Ambassador, Alpha Phi Fraternity, Student Instructor for Orientation 101, Soccer Club, Phi Eta Sigma, Kappa Mu Epsilon, Tau Beta Sigma, Pi Tau Sigma.

Memorable Achievement: Travelling and making new friends all over the world.



Alex Brushaber, 2009

Major: Mechanical Engineering, bioengineering concentration

Co-op: Brose North America

Activities: Student Ambassador, Academics Council, Phi Delta Theta fraternity, IFC.

Memorable Achievement: Winning Brose's Halloween Costume Contest.



Claire Utrecht, 2009

Major: Mechanical Engineering, polymers concentration

Co-op: Emerson Climate Technologies

Activities: Panhellenic Council President, Engineers Without Borders President, Alpha Phi Fraternity, Phi Eta Sigma, Robot Society.

Memorable Achievement: Securing funding for Engineers Without Borders Mexico Project through co-op.



Kate Sonderegger, 2010

Major: Mechanical Engineering, bioengineering concentration

Co-op: Ford Motor Company, Zimmer

Activities: Alpha Phi Fraternity, Engineers Without Borders.

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Preston Lux, 2009

Major: Mechanical Engineering, Management Minor

Co-op: Fleetwood Motor Homes of PA, Inc.

Activities: Formula SAE Team Sponsorship Coordinator.

Memorable Achievement: Coordinating installation of water recycling and deluge leak testing systems at both my plant and our Riverside, CA facility.



Mario Flores, 2008

Major: Mechanical Engineering, Management and International Studies Minors

Co-op: Ventura Manufacturing, Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems

Activities: Diversity Week co-chair, International Club, Engineers Without Borders founding president, Director of Operations Council, Yearbook 2007-08. APSAC, Robot Society, SHPE, Tau Beta Pi, Pi Tau Sigma.



Stacy Gardner, 2006

Major: Computer Science, Management Minor

Co-op: Shook, Hardy, and Bacon, LLC, Avalution Consulting

Activities: Student Senate, Alpha Phi, Engineers Without Borders, SWE, LEADERS, APSAC.



Serena Lynch, 2008

Major: Mechanical Engineering, bioengineering concentration

Co-op: General Motors Powertrain

Activities: Robot Society, Alpha Phi Fraternity, Society of Women Engineers, Panhellenic Council, COMPASS Crew, Up Til' Dawn, Associate Provost's Student Advisory Committee, Bay Arenac Engineering Drafting Advisory Committee, and GM AGW. Memorable Achievement: Having my hard work and dedication be recognized through my induction into Kettering's Robot Society.

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Monica Denis, 2008

Major: Industrial Engineering & Mechanical Engineering

Co-op: General Motors Powertrain

Activities: FIRST Robotics team Metal Muscle #1506, Society of Women Engineers, Student Alumni Council, Student Ambassador, FIRST Ambassador Program Team Leader, Residential Advisor (RA), Residential Life Student Coordinator (RLSC), Institute of Industrial Engineers, Kamp Kettering Mentor, studied abroad in Australia.



Jessica Hildreth, 2008

Major: Mechanical Engineering, polymers concentration

Co-op: Cascade Engineering, Current Company Private

Activities: Student Ambassadors, SADT, Dance Club, Society of Plastics Engineers, Orientation 101 Student Instructor.



Casey Cramer, 2009

Major: Mechanical Engineering, Management Minor

Co-op: General Motors, Mansfield Metal Lab

Activities: LEADERS, Campus Tour Guide, Society of Women Engineers, Student Ambassador.

Memorable Achievement: Surviving 3 months of supervising 5 press systems and 30 UAW employees.



Bart Buessler, 2010

Major: Mechanical Engineering, Fuel Cell and Pre-Law Minors

Co-op: Freightliner LLC, Nevada Automotive Test Center, Delphi Corporation

Activities: Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, Student Ambassador, Cliffhangers Club.

Memorable Achievement: Learning how to step outside of my comfort zone and try new things.

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Prototype Coordinator
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