

On The Job: Alyssa Fontana '24

Alyssa Fontana '24, discusses her experiences as an intern with Colours, Inc., Wilkes-Barre. Fontana, an operations management major experienced a blend of on-site observation, remote analysis and collaborative projects.



As an intern for Colours, Inc., in Wilkes-Barre, Alyssa Fontana '24 experienced a blend of on-site observation, remote analysis and collaborative projects.

Fontana, of Douglassville, Pennsylvania, is an operations management major with a minor in business analytics. She discusses the summer internship experience that led to a part-time position during her senior year.

Describe a typical day at work.

"A typical day during my internship was a dynamic blend of on-site observation, remote analysis and collaborative projects. I would start by either visiting the warehouse or store locations and closely observing their operations.

After the site visits, I would return home to compile my observations and insights into a detailed report. This report served as a valuable tool for identifying areas of success and areas of improvement, further streamlining processes within the company.

In the final month of my internship, I worked on an exciting supply chain routing project. Alongside fellow intern and Scranton alumni Peter Amicucci, currently on a Fulbright Scholarship in Finland, we were tasked with optimizing the supply chain routing for our newly acquired stores in Illinois."

What are some skills you have learned?

"The holistic perspective I gained by observing both the warehouse and stores during my internship provided me with extremely valuable insights into supply chains. This knowledge not only enriched my academic curriculum, but also played a pivotal role in my success in the National Leadership Competition this summer in which I competed in topics such as Retail Management and Management Analysis & Decision Making.

Some key skills I acquired include:

- * analyzing and evaluating supply chain operations,
- * developing a proficiency in collecting, organizing, and interpreting data to extract critical insights,
- * effectively communicating through executive presentations and interactions with managers and employees,
- * project management and efficient time management in a remote work setting,
- * a deeper understanding of logistics,
- * enhanced attention to detail, and
- * problem-solving abilities to innovate and enhance daily processes for greater efficiency."

What do you enjoy most about your job?

"I really enjoyed meeting and talking to employees from different locations and learning from their insights about the daily processes involved in warehouse and store operations. I've always had a strong inclination toward attention to detail and process planning, and this job provided me with an opportunity to really hone my analytical and problem-solving skills to suggest solutions for streamlining operations.

Presenting my findings to headquarters and gaining insight from them was an incredible experience that has helped prepare me for my professional career. I am extremely thankful to Ali Mahalak and the team at Colours for providing me with real-world experience."

Did your expectations going into the job match the reality?

"Dr. David Mahalak has played a crucial role as my mentor throughout my college journey. From teaching my OIM 351 and Statistics classes, to being a passionate supporter of both the Operations & Analytics Club and Future Business Leaders of America, his dedication to inspiring students and preparing them for the real world sparked my interest in two clubs. I wouldn't have even known about them, let alone held a board position in one.

During our club meetings, we explore topics such as Six Sigma certification and even have Python nights. They may extend beyond our curriculum, but are nonetheless essential for gaining a valuable edge upon graduation. In May, I earned my Six Sigma Yellow Belt and was able to apply many of the concepts I learned during my internship in process improvement.

I share all of this because I knew that this internship would be an incredibly valuable experience for me. I genuinely learned a great deal about supply chain operations firsthand, which has exceeded my expectations. I am profoundly grateful for teachers like him who have made a significant impact on the education of students."

How do you feel that this job has prepared you for the real world?

"I am immensely grateful for the team at Colours for providing me with this opportunity. The knowledge I acquired from observing supply chain operations during this summer internship has enabled me to grasp the broader perspective in Operations Management. I firmly believe that experience is the catalyst for building confidence, and this internship has significantly boosted my self-assurance in various aspects, particularly in honing my analytical and public-speaking skills.

Before this internship, I was uncertain about my specialization in operations management. However, the experience has sparked a genuine interest in process improvement and logistics management."