Launch Collective Internship Report

This summer I worked as an intern for Launch Collective, a business management firm based in New York City that works with a diverse group of fashion and lifestyle companies. They provide strategic and operational support for entrepreneurs trying to start and grow a new brand. They offer an extensive amount of services towards this end, including advisory and management on seeking funding, retail development, production management, brand extensions, internal growth, international expansion and operational optimization. Launch Collective exists because the fashion industry often seems closed off, archaic or just plain confusing to budding companies. Thus, their wealth of knowledge on best practices, industry expertise and numerous relationships proves invaluable to their clients.

I worked in the marketing department of Launch, specifically as a digital strategist. This meant I was responsible for content creation, strategic planning and writing monthly reports, as well as updating clients' websites and daily fashion news updates. Over the course of the summer though, responsibilities grew to include many non-digital strategy related tasks, including picking up and delivering samples, attending photo shoots, scouting locations for fashion presentations and sitting in on meetings. This was partly because two of the marketing department’s employees left while I was there, so I helped to pick up the slack. While I was sorry to see them go, I think it ended up making my time at Launch more valuable because I ended up getting more experience than if they had stayed. This is because it meant I really had to work on developing the skills I needed for my job, but also exposed me to work and projects I wouldn’t have gotten to do otherwise.
In terms of the skills I developed this summer, I worked a lot with Adobe Photoshop to crop and edit press photos in order to upload them to our client’s websites. This also involved planning and executing posting schedules for one of our clients by coming up with captions and hashtags to accompany the images. In order to upload the images on the other clients’ websites, I also taught myself how to code in HTML5 and CSS3. I also spent a lot of time scouring the internet to develop a catalogue of images for clients to post on their social media profiles, brainstorming ideas for guerilla marketing campaigns and working on coming up with captions for clients to post with their own images. I also got to sit in on client meetings, attend meetings between clients and public relations firms, as well as review some of the client’s contracts. I learned how to use the social media sites Instagram and Pinterest and I learned why these sites had become important in the online marketing world. The rest of my daily tasks tended to differ quite a bit from day to day, but often included making deliveries and doing odd jobs around the office whenever I could.

When it comes to more specific projects, I worked with one of our clients, JVDF, to develop a deck of mood board images for his website, walked around with the designer to take photographs around the city for his social media profiles and website and helped him brainstorm ideas for a video project he is working on in the future. For another client, Novis, I scouted out locations for her fall fashion presentation, helped out at her photo shoot and maintained her Facebook page by posting articles and press releases of celebrities in her clothes. Towards the end of the summer I worked with another client, YSA, to develop, with the help of my fellow Sewanee intern Maggie Stanford, what is called a consumer profile. A consumer profile is a
realization of who YSA wants to target with their product, from the most devoted follower of the brand to the one time or future buyers. YSA told us what their most loyal customer, or Super User, would be like, including their age, sex, income, profession, favorite hobbies, favorite drink and much more. We then used this information to develop two Aspirational Users, that want to start following the brand and will be future Super Users, and two Peripheral Users, who only buy an occasional product from the brand. All five had unique life stories and their own deck of images so that the client could not only conceptualize, but visualize their target clientele. This also helps Launch Collective make sure they are in tune with their client’s desires and the look and feel of the brand. We then presented to the clients and they were very happy with what we had produced.

I had one other important project that was also one of the most informative. I had to take three designers of my choosing and look at some of the marketing activations they used in the recent past. We then took our favorite one from each designer and made a case for why it could be successfully done by one of Launch Collective’s clients. I worked on this project over the course of the summer and got a lot of feedback on my ideas and presentation skills. In the end I had come up with good ideas and made good arguments, but learned I needed to think a little bit more about the logistics of my ideas. I also could have taken the extra step on designing the presentation as well as slow down when speaking. In speaking with my employers further about my performance during the summer, I learned I needed to work on following through with projects and take time to compile my questions and ask them in an organized way instead of asking them as they came to me. I also learned that I could effectively operate and succeed in a
high stress environment, I could come through when the pressure was on and that I enjoyed working in marketing and a creative industry.

I thought a lot about what I wanted to get out of this internship at the beginning of the summer and what I had gotten out of it in the end. Now that it’s over, I can say I got much more than I had hoped. This summer gave me countless invaluable experiences, from the workplace to the city I lived and worked in. I learned I wouldn’t mind working in fashion when before I hadn’t even considered it. I want my career to involve some sort of creative element and that I want the industry I work in to be energized, competitive and fun. Most importantly, I learned that while the future might be uncertain, I am going to be okay on my own starting my career, wherever it may be.