

Sriyaa Shah
Ecenter internship at Cuseum
June 5th to August 11th

Week 1

June 5th to June 9th.

This was the first week at the Cuseum, so this blog will mainly focus on my initial interactions with my supervisor, the company culture and the goals I have send for myself to accomplish over the course of 10 weeks.

For Summer 2017, I will be interning for a small startup company called Cuseum in Boston. My supervisor is the founder and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the company, Brendan Ciecko. Before the internship began, my supervisor had given me a list of responsibilities, which gave me a general idea of what was expected out of me. His past interns have done an exceptional job of assisting their team of three, and stayed back often after their eight hours scheduled to complete more work; it is typically in their company to do that. This gave me an impression that the bar of expectations was set high. He precisely mentioned that he encourages questions, especially for the first few weeks, although over the course of time he wants to see me more independent. Regardless, he wanted me to feel comfortable to approach him or any other team member when I feel like I am stuck. I was not directly able to express my expectations of him because I was nervous about how he would take the message or if it was appropriate for an intern to ask for something on the first day. I implicitly mentioned that I would like for him to check my work, and give me feedback at regular intervals so I can keep making my work better and also monitor my writing progress. Since this is a startup company, there are plenty of things that need to be done, and one way I could show my commitment to the company is by asking for tasks instead of waiting around till someone approaches me. Another way to stay engaged could be by actively participating in our daily “Stand-up”, “lunch time talk” and weekly “Retrospective”, traditions that are set up to inform others about one’s progress and create a friendly environment encouraging transparency, team reliable and bonding.

What kinds of skills, experiences, and activities do you think you will do well in over the course of your internship? Why?

I have been preparing blogs and social media content over the course of the past week. From the work that I have done so far, and the tasks that have been assigned to

me for the next week, it seems like I will be utilizing my writing, creativity, organization and research skills more than other skills. Creativity is mainly used in producing small advertisements, posters and in thinking about blog topics. Research primarily consumes my time since I do not know a lot about the industry or the product.

Which areas do you think will present more of a challenge or which skills, tasks, or assignments do you think might be more difficult for you? Why?

I think I might struggle with writing, despite the fact that both my majors (psychology and communication) are writing intensive. Over the course of the past week, I had a rather hard time writing for social media and blogs since the format and voice of writing seems very distinct in compared to academic writing. The first week, I spend time constructing drafts for social media content (like tweets and LinkedIn articles) and blogs getting them checked. My boss was very resourceful to me, he gave me some really helpful guidelines, tutorials and informative pieces on how to write successfully. He also set aside separate time every 2 days to check on my personal progress and talk about my writing.

Two overarching goals

My two overarching goals or the areas that I wish to learn and grow in being a content creation and to handle social media accounts, including making the graphic images and advertisements. I think more experience in these two fields could help me in my future career in communication marketing.

Week 2

June 12th to 16th.

I believe my summer internship, during this semester is crucially important because this is the last opportunity to learn before I gain a full-time position. When I spoke to my supervisor about different opportunities for growth, he suggested working on some kind of blog series that would be published every week. After further research, I have decided to write my series on "Consumer Experience Enhancement" in Museum technology. The primary purpose of this blog is to reach out to our current customers to help them make the most out of their museum, by integrating different technology that would save time and resources for them. I would also like to reach to out to potential customers, and help them understand that Cuseum would be a better service provider than other companies; we provide them with constant support and opportunities to grow even once the contracts are signed. My supervisor has been taking our team to many

networking events where I had the opportunity to talk to several museum experts and had a chance to learn more about the industry. These conversations sparked many ideas for potential blog topics, by understanding the needs of the industry and also gave me an understanding of the voice needed to talk how to talk to my target audience.

With this project, there is also a potential to attract new customer by letting them know how flexible our services are and how different software/hardwares can easily be integrated easily in our application. This benefits not only the company in retaining more clients, but also to general public by letting them know how to leverage different applications and technology when they visit a museums or public attraction spot. Like I mentioned last week, I have yet to master the art of writing for a social crowd or on social media but me and my supervisor truly believe that this is an essential skill and will help me in career in marketing/communication. Along with this, I will also be working on another weekly project on content editing for our clients for our clients. This involves me running the admin dashboard panel, and editing the content our clients have written to keep up the quality. This is again a small weekly project that runs its course until the last week of work. I will talk more about this project in my next week's assignment as I will be focusing on technology and softwares that I use.

I think editing the content is going to be an overall easier task, as I do not need to have a deep understanding of the business but rather an understanding of academic formal writing. On the other hand, I believe I have more to learn from writing blogs since it includes creativity, research and writing, which are essential skills for anyone studying in the communication field. My supervisor believes the best way for him to evaluate me is by sitting down with me after every blog post and discussing my strengths and weakness of that post. Also, another way to evaluate my content could be by seeing how many people opened the link to the blog and/or shared it on social media.

Week 3

June 19th to 23rd









This week I will be focusing on the key software I have been using at my internship. It is a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform, and it is called Cuseum Connects (CC). Cuseum creates applications for mobile phones and sometimes websites for our customers and CC gives us the ability to control the app displays of each customer, the content that they can see, view the statistical analysis, add or subtract features and options that are available within the app, etc. As a communication major, I think understanding consumer needs is essential and it is also important to understand how to communicate, in this case send out the correct message in the most optimal way possible, which is elegant but yet comprehensible to people from different ethnic groups, ages and countries. My role and interaction with this software is mainly providing and editing the material. IT starts with me providing them a rough template online to fill out, once they are done filling in the content, I review the material for them, and

verify if the content to check if it is grammatically correct, if it is understandable by a layman or someone who is not an expert in history/art and sometimes I also help them make their content more interesting to read. I also have the opportunity to pull out important information from the text and write short summaries about them, so they can include it in the description of the gallery. I also review their virtual tours and help them in areas that they could work on, which includes picture quality, sound quality and context.

When everything is ready I add the content onto their apps by using the CRM, and they have the chance to view it on the website and suggest changes that they would like to make. Screenshot 1 is an example of what our homepage looks like, we have the ability to look to find any application of our customer and modify it. Screenshot 2 focuses on one type of app that we control. Screenshot 3 looks at the administrators (in this case my) view of all the objects or pieces of work that are available in that museum. Screenshot 4 looks at the content of each individual object.

Screenshot 1



	Organization Name	Organ
	Shell App	-
	MIT List	1
	UBS Art Collection	2
	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	3
	Neue Galerie	4
	TestMuseum	5
	Boston Athenaeum	6
	Vizcaya Museum & Gardens	7


Screenshot 2

Dashboard MIT List

Total Impressions

2080

Most Popular Art Piece



Emilie Flöge wearing a re...
Probably by Emma Bach...

Attendance Summary

App Downloads

-

Donations













-

Most Popular Day of Week


Most Popular Tour

Screenshot 3

CUSEUM **Objects** + Add Object

	Grape Cluster	Yes	-
	Shabti of Men	Yes	-
	Nefertiti Bust	Yes	-
	Offering to the Aton	Yes	-
	Faience Tiles	Yes	-
	Step Pyramid Replica	Yes	-
	Sekhmet Statue	Yes	-
	Beer Jar	Yes	-
	Faience Ball	Yes	-   

1 2 3 4 5 Next > Last >



Screenshot 4

Editing Shabti of Men SAVE CHANGES

Work date: 1549-1069 BCE You can edit those in Object Details tab

Audio/Video Module

File: 37_Shabti_of_Men.mp3
Title: Media title

Upload Media Supported file types: MP4, AVI, MOV, M4V, MP3, OGG, WAV

Text Module

B I ¶ **A** ≡ ≡ 🔗

This artifact dates from the New Kingdom and is made of limestone and pigment. Men was the father of the sculptor Thutmose, perhaps the most famous sculptor in all of Egyptian history. The famous bust of Nefertiti, a replica of which you just saw, was found in Thutmose's atelier or workshop. Men was probably the chief sculptor who worked on the statue of Sekhmet in the previous gallery, as that was made for Imhotep III, the king under whose reign he primarily worked.

attachment/file/14919/37_Shabti_of_Men.mp3?timestamp=20170615194412

June 26th - 30th

Week 4

This week I spoke to my supervisor, Brendan, who was preoccupied with our quarterly reports hence, our schedules and duties were denser this week than usual. Brendan has been a great mentor so far and we had a longer conversation than usual in our 1 on 1 meeting. He was very detailed in giving me my midterm report and also gave me encouraging words to do more of what I was doing right. He was very professional and gentle in giving back constructive criticism; he said Cuseum (the Company) was looking for an intern “who has the will to get it, the desire to want it and the skills to acquire it”.

He told me that I continuously wanted to be more involved which displayed my will to “get it”. I would regularly check in with Brendan, the PR and sales team to inquire if I could help them with anything. He really admired my effort to help the company and the efforts that I had made to continuously support my team. He reassured me that when it came to “the want it” I had also fulfilled that criteria. I would complete the task, even if it required for me to stay back from my 9 to 5 job to do so. This displayed my desire to learn more and by asking the “why” behind things and being curious for what was the reason to have caused it. The one point of constructive criticism that he gave me was

that I needed to improve my marketing blog writing skills. He reiterated himself by mentioning that academic writing was different than marketing/social media communication and even though I had made a significant progress in my writing since I began the internship, I still had a long way to go. He told me that it would be helpful for me by enrolling into a marketing writing course which the company would sponsor and I could do it while my working hours.

Although my working hours are longer than the traditional timings, I am willing to stay back and take the course in order to make the most of this valuable internship. This will not only make me a specialist writer in the field of marketing/social media but also help the company expedite its operation and all value to its portfolio. The past month has been very challenging as I have been learning something new every single day while keeping in mind the deadlines that the company has to meet. I have been learning new concepts on the fly and also finishing my delegated tasks by the clock, and this is pushing me out of my comfort zone where I am learning the most. Although I thought it was important for me to mention that sometimes I had been assigned some tasks that did not necessarily require high-functioning cognitive abilities and were merely just time-consuming. Brendan took this on a serious note and asked me for a more transparent communication in the future and also said that he would try his best to give me a task that was capable of my abilities.

July 3rd to 7th

Week 5

This week I had the opportunity to have an interview with my supervisor and CEO of the Company, Brendan Ciecko. Brendan is an important person, not just at Cuseum but in the Art- technology world as well. Cuseum is one of the first mobile application softwares that integrates different technology (such as Beacons and Augmented Reality) with the classic tour guiding and video app. Even though it seems like an easy concept, there was no prior software/application that fulfilled this need and Brendan was on the front lines of attention in the Museum industry. I thought it would be wise to interview Brendan since He has been recognized for his talents and achievements by many media sources including the New York Times. The Boston Herald and “Thirty under Thirty” by Techin 15’ to name a few. I thought it would be appropriate and advantageous to interview Brendan because of his experience with start-ups. Before Cuseum, he started other start-up at the age of 14, which was designed websites for celebrities from the music industry and used by famous stars such as Van Morrison, Lenny Kravitz, Katy Perry, New Kids on the Block. He is clearly a dedicated man and very passionate about what he does. With experience like that, I believe he has interesting insight to share about how to lead a company and start the momentum to get things in order. My questions to him mainly revolved around the topics of customer relations, marketing, communication strategies and creation of a strong company.

My first question was about how did he create a momentum to get the company running efficiently for more than 3 years. He said one needs to pay key attention to the demand of the product. It is essential to the process that one goes beyond the understanding of the product and get to know the alpha players or social butterflies in the field. These individuals possess the power to get other professionals in the field to get interested in the product and raise awareness about the product, which is a “huge deal for a start-up”. Raising brand awareness about the company through word of mouth marketing is often considered as a legitimate source. These alpha players/social butterflies have information about the industry which is not easily found on the internet or second hand research. Also, even though it could be hectic it is important to attend field related events in the area every week and physically present yourself at such occasions.

My second question was about customer service/public relation; I was curious to learn how he had managed to stay connected with a larger and growing client list. He said each company needs to strategically manage their customers and sometimes asking them to go through a generic “contact us” email could make customers feel like they are not being heard or their concerns are not being replied in a timely manner. A start-up should try to outsource most of their responsibilities like accounting, so they waste a lot of in house resources on that, but when it comes to sales and customer relations, one should try doing it in house because such things require a deep understanding of the company along with the passion to dedicated more than 8 hours per day; and that is why Cuseum has a position called “Partner Happiness Coordinator. It is also important to have a smart Customer Relationship Management (CRM) toolkit/software. This ensures that clients are having being hers and by completing it with other technology such as Process Street one can effortlessly send out check in emails every month.

Another reply that really struck out to be was his answer to the question that how was he able to create a bona fide relationship between team members. He gently relied that it was because he was overly conscious about hiring anyone, because once they were invited to the team, they were a part of the family. He also created smaller traditions that give us a chance to learn about the company and also a way to hold all the members accountable for their duties. For example: every morning we have our daily “stand-up” sessions when each of us tell the team what we had accomplished the day before and our goals/tasks for today. Also, we all sit together for lunch and we usually talk about non-work related things to get to know each other as a regular people. We also take advantage of apps such as Trello, which keeps a record of all our tasks and which stage each task is in.

June 10th to June 14th

Week 6

When my internship started, I had two individualized projects in mind, the first one being a blog series that focuses on consumer experience enhancement. This project has been going particular slow, my aim was to write one blog piece a week and unfortunately, I have only been able to write 2 posts in 4 months. The first 2 weeks of the month, I was able to stay on schedule; produce 1 blog per week. I found inspiration to write the blogs from the questions that I received from our customers. I compiled their concerns and trying to address multiple questions in a single blog. In one

of our blogs called “Your App Might Be Too Big”, I addressed the concerns regarding low download rates, if they should incorporate technology like Augmented Reality in their apps.

Although, I was derailed from the mission because of a recent governmental budget passed by Trump. This proposed that he wants to significantly cut the budget for National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities which are the leading organizations that financially support most of our clients. If the new budget passes as proposed, there is a serious chance many of our clients would not be able to afford us, which could result in a mass loss of clients overnight. This resulted in all the members of the team to contribute towards retaining our current clients and working on raising awareness within the community to inspire a movement. This gave birth to “Operation Sailor”, which was a project that was targeted to send a strong message to the White House and creating unity within all the arts (visual, and performing). We reached out to art/humanities professionals, institutions, universities etc., who are invested in the arts and humanities. We have researched work addresses of over 2000 professionals and we will be sending them customized tattoos and stickers which say slogans like “The Arts Fight Back” and “The Arts are Our Anchor”, and postcards explaining the situation and what are the preventive measures that can be taken. As operation sailor comes to an end this weekend, I should hopefully be able to go back to my schedule.

My other project that I had taken on for this summer was to work with our clients through the Customer Relationship Platform (CRM). This project has been running successfully and we have been able to launch 3 customer apps in the last month, and this included clients like Planet Hollywood, so it was a huge success for us. I think it was a smart decision to take on two projects so I always have something to work on, and if one fails or is put on halt, I can still truly dedicate myself to something. I think the results are on track so far and my supervisor is content with my work. He is very open when he thinks I am not producing at my best and asks me to correct it when needed.

Another prompt that I worked on was distilling my project report into a 30-second with all the essential points. When I shared it with a few people, the primary theme I found in the feedback I gained was that I should not be afraid to mention my failures. When I pondered more on this I realized that my initial speech only consisted how the project was and how mentioning a failure would further help my case, so I made a template. The first 10 seconds I describe the project, I talked about how the blog would essentially address important questions and concerns that our customers have. This would reduce the burden on our customer service team who have to personally answer all the same questions every time. The next 7 seconds I focused on a problem I encountered. In this, I addressed the delay in the project and not being able to understand the museum technology industry. The final part was the most important part of my elevator pitch, which focused on the solutions and how I dealt with my problem. Here I mentioned that I went to events where I met other museum tech professionals and asked them about the industry and gained insight. Taking the extra effort helped me overcome the hurdles along the way. I also looked at the FAQ section of our competitors and tried pulling themes from their questions as well. I think if I were to practice this pitch a few times, I would be comfortable to deliver this to a recruiter.

Week 7

While I was going over the expectations that I had set for myself and my supervisor on my first day, I was glad to know most of the expectations have been fulfilled. My supervisor expected me to be involved in the company and speak up. This would mean not only focus on my tasks but also actively give feedback or comments when someone communicates on how they are dealing with a project. I have been actively participating in those activities but sometimes I find myself shying away from an opportunity to speak up because I think I am stating the obvious or my knowledge is not good enough. Everyone in my company is older than me and it is often intimidating because I do not want to embarrass myself. One expectation that I think I lacked on was writing. Like mentioned before, this was an area that I struggled in. Recently I have not had a chance to write a lot because we were focused on contacting people for "Operation Sailor" which was mainly focused on market research and customer research.

Initially (and even now) I am nervous to talk to Brendan, my supervisor, about the what I expect from him because I do not want to think of me as a demanding intern or as if I was offending him. Although, now I do wish I had asked him to give me more writing assignments and control over social media. Within my first week of working at Cusuem I released that I was better at research and creativity than writing so I had to put in extra effort in the area where I was lagging. The online marketing course that my boss suggested defiantly helped but I am not at a stage where I am able to post my writing on our blog actively without 5 drafts. Overall, I spend most of my time here as I predicted it to be, but sometimes I thought I wasn't been given tasks that were appropriate to my potential.

Overall I have a very positive impression of marketing and communication. I think I would enjoy working with people and writing. I think I can see myself in a position where I am actively trying to promote my company to get their message across and maintaining a good relationship with our clients. In addition, I would love to work with a startup since you have an empty slate to begin with and one has the opportunity to paint their own picture on how things should be done. I discovered that I would not like to work for a museum related field because most of the members are of older age and have very orthodox way of communicating and there is less space for creativity. I think a better fit for me would be a company that is more relevant to modern day society and something I could relate with. Even though I have an interest in Museum, I feel like I do not care for them as much as rest of my team members. I think this internship, gives me unique insight into an industry and a marketing perspective, but it also makes it clear for me that I would not like to spend the next few years in this field.

I think the team has really good internal interpersonal communication. Our CEO laces high importance on the amount and quality of communication we have with each other. This is why we have company traditions like "stand ups" and "weekly retrospective which influences us to talk about our experiences. This helps us keep a track of what is happening talk about our achievements and compilations on a daily and weekly basis. Usually we utilize the app called "Slack" which is extremely helpful to clear up quick doubts or ask someone's a question via instant messaging. Our language (body and verbal) to each other is always maintained as very kind and respectful no matter

how scary or urgent the situation is. This helps building respect for one another on the team and form trust.

We have regular check in's with our customers on a monthly basis to ensure they are gaining the results they wished for and consulting them on how to improve their services to their customers and out services to them. Our organization provides basic training for a software/website/application known as process street so an intern is able to handle the basic questions. Although later into the process we have to create our own "sheet" which would help us better communicate with our clients

Week 8

June 24th - June 28th

This week I will be writing about the job description that could be used as a guideline for a fellow UNH students, if they are interested in Cuseum as a job. Cuseum is a great place where you can challenge yourself and learn something new. There is an intersectionality between fields of education, art, tourism and technology; so, one has the opportunity to get exposure of multiple fields together. Since it is a small team, you will find yourself doing a range of things, and getting your feet wet in PR, sales, customer relationship etc, which is a perfect position for someone who isn't sure what they want to with their Communication/Marketing degree.

I personally believe this job has high levels of transparency which clear internal communication which helps the intern learn a lot about business and the industry. We have various traditions in the office which I believe makes us unique form others. Every morning we have a "stand-up", where each member of the team describes what we did yesterday and what are their tasks for today. With this each member of the team is held responsible for their tasks and if you like what the other person is saying you can always offer your help in it. Every Friday, we reflect upon the week and see how could we have done something better and what went according to plan; this is also documented for reference in the future and improvements. In additions, the CEO of the company has plenty connections in Boston, and offers an invitation to everyone on the team to go to several events, which are a great opportunity for networking.

One thing that I noticed was that they gave me less writing work after the first month. Brendan who is the CEO of the company and my supervisor is an excellent writer, so to please him with writing skills one has to write a few too many drafts before presenting it to him. Even a graduate student who wrote blogs with me faced the same issue. If you decide to work for Cuseum, one must come prepared with a lot of professional marketing writing skills, because the CEO is going to debate you over a one choice of word until you have the right answer. Also since this is a start-up, like a lot of another start-ups, it's the company norm to stay back after 5 even 6 sometimes, and arrive slightly earlier than 9 to accomplish the tasks for the days. This might sound stressful but it is certainly one way to learn more about time management and getting ready for a real job. In Cuseum as a one-time intern, it's easy to end up with meaningless tasks and get an undesirable job, like positing letters, but Brendan is always open to suggestions and if you find yourself doing something you do not enjoy, you can always ask him to pair you up with people who are performing tasks related to your interests. The key is to speak up and let your supervisor know that you would like more challenging work along with what you are already performing.

My supervisor would have said he would love to have interns in the fall, spring and summer. Although, this position is not a paid position at the moment, so I would highly recommend the prospective student to discuss the pay before taking up the job.

August 1st to 4th

Week 9

This week I will be focusing on my entire experience with Cuseum. Like I have mentioned before the team is amazing and my supervisor is a well connected man. Brendan, has had a lot of experience with startups and he gives great advice to the team. Although, recently in the past 3 weeks, he has been assigning me meaningless tasks like printing multiple copies and adding contents to an envelope to be shipped. While other interns who are being paid by Cuseum, have been receiving more important and meaningful tasks which would help them professionally. I spoke to Brendan about his, and told him I was ready for some more serious work. I also backed my statements by saying that I took multiple online courses through

Hubspot to gain better understanding of Hubspot. He said if there is anything he will let me know. I am really hoping this week I will be focusing more on writing and inbound marketing.

August 7th to 11th

Week 10

This week was mainly a huge wrap up, and finishing many of the projects that I was working on. I focused on mainly on shipping the remaining orders that I had, which as described earlier was printing several envelopes and putting postcards in them with tattoos. This was the least exciting, more accurately least favourite part of my job which i tried to avoid. I finished my a lot of client and competitor research that I was doing.

I believe this week was very exciting as I had the opportunity to finish and review all the projects that I was working on. In addition to this, Cuseum team went on a offsite trip. We had the chance to meet few of our clients and visit a museum who works with our app (Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA). We also had some down time, which gave us the opportunity to go for sailing and get to know the team members outside a professional setting.

I am really glad I had the opportunity to do this internship, and have included more about the internship in the summary section.