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Interning at Splunk

Splunk is on the verge of becoming the world leader in data analytics software. It caters to 90% of the fortune 500 companies and has established a strong market share in more than 25 global markets. Many people assume Splunk to be an old-school bureaucratic IT company, so did I and was more than happy to be wrong. After a rigorous process of applying, interviewing and shortlisting, I decided to intern at Splunk, I decided to be a 'Splunktern'. It all started when I enrolled for Mr. Gregory Greenstreet's (Senior Director of Engineering at Splunk-Boulder) class on Big Data Architecture in the Spring of 2019. This was not an ordinary class, instead, it was more like a series of tutorials/workshops conducted by industry experts from Splunk, Twitter, etc. The students were exposed to industry standards, tools, and practices. We were introduced to tools and technologies like the Cloud platform, Machine Learning models and Web Applications that had changed the world for good. Everything just made more sense than usual in this class, I would go home and read further on each topic. I felt the urge to learn more, dive deeper and get a first-hand experience working with these tools. When Mr. Greenstreet announced that his office is looking for Summer Interns, I was probably the first one to apply.

One of the two major factors that propelled me towards interning for Splunk was the innovative and revolutionary product: Splunk, after which they named the company. This tool is used to find, extract and visualize the data gems hidden in the gigantic mines of machine logs in the fastest way possible. The other major factor is the staff: a family of Innovative, Passionate, Disruptive, Open and Fun people who created this product. Just as the saying goes, "If you think you are the most talented musician in a Jazz band, it's time to change the band". The Splunk employees also referred to as Splunkers, are one of the most talented bunch of Engineers, Administrators, Salesmen, and Managers. Yes, I chose Splunk because I wanted to be a part of a vibrant and diverse community that is fueled by innovative technology, ideas, and processes.

I have been working on High-Performance Computing and Big Data Architecture projects with supported publications for a couple of years now. I have also taken a few advanced level classes as a part of my Master's degree. However, I had always felt a need to step into the 'real world' and see how these sub-domains of Computer Science are affecting millions of people directly. Classroom education is the right way to go for developing the foundations of a course. This internship has been a catalyst for the transformation of my fundamentals into application-level knowledge and expertise. I am a part of the Data Analytics Team at Splunk-Boulder and feel proud to be working with highly talented engineers, who exceed my expectations in all directions. These mentors have directed me towards following the best practices to progress my skills and knowledge in both Software Engineering and Data Engineering. For instance, there are higher code quality requirements when you are supposed to build software for a client against building it for an academic project. It is only possible to experience the correct workflow and follow the latest development practices by stepping into the real world and working for a company in hyper-growth - especially a company like Splunk, which is driven by high-quality standards. In the future, I aim to see myself working for the R&D department of a company that is fueled and driven by innovation. This internship is the foundation step towards achieving a long-term career goal.

Since the start of my internship, I have had the opportunity to work on two different projects. The first project aims at building a mechanism that deploys checks on the client's data on the company database. These checks are validation tests that shall be scanning the database for anomalies/bugs and report them to the engineering team. The idea is to ensure that these checks are automated and run multiple times a week, thus serving as a data quality check framework. In order to build, test and deploy the project, I have been working on the latest tech stack that includes Python 3.7, Docker-Containers and AWS tools. For the other project, I was required to use Splunk. To learn Splunk, I enrolled for an online E-course offered by the company and passed the basic and advanced certification exams. Using my newly developed skills and tips from one of my mentors, I was able to add a new report and visualization to the company's current monitoring dashboard. This addition to the dashboard shall alert the engineering team about errors specific to a given client, significantly cutting the time spent on diagnosing.

So far, I have had an amazing time at Splunk-Boulder. When I think about the surprises that awaited me before I joined the team, I feel surprised by the very thought of it. In the very first week, the interns were flown to the head office in San Fransico, CA for a fun-filled orientation. The next week,

there was the annual Crayfish bowl meant for employee appreciation, for yet another successful quarter. Following that week, we attended a rooftop party as a farewell to the retiring founders where Mr. Greenstreet bought the interns *Martinis*. Finally, there was a Hackathon last week for all the employees where I saw some great ideas turn into working prototypes. The company really values for its people and binds them together as a second family. The staff appreciates the work-life balance that the company has strived to maintain since the beginning of their days. Splunk believes that each individual has their own “million data points” that define them, their ideas, practices, beliefs, and orientations. The idea is to embrace the uniqueness of each employee and build a workforce that stands for unity in diversity.

My advice to the future Splunkerns would be to take risks, make mistakes and learn from failures. Communication is the key. Reach out to anyone for help, interact with everyone from all departments. All the employees have great stories to tell and we have a lot to learn from these stories. I would also advise the future Splunkterns to keep learning and growing their skillset. IT industry is one of the most fast-paced and dynamic industry, and constantly evolving is essential for achieving your goals. The primary goal of the internship program is to attract and retain the brightest graduates. If you are passionate about what you do, this stage will take you places in your career paths. Cheers!