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My Salesforce and Tektronix Internship Experience – Leadership (Application)

I was always the student who got all A's in class but wasn't much involved in extracurricular activities back in my high school days. In 10th grade, there was even a semester where I scored a perfect 1100/1100 overall. But then in 11th grade, I wanted to find something that would make me stand out from the other "book nerds," and that's when I realized I needed to be active outside of academics. I joined our Science and Technology Club, eventually becoming Chair.

The fact that I realized this before starting college helped me build balance between academics and real-world experience. The first thing I focused on was building my resume. My first role was with the URC RAP program, which boosted my resume and helped me land a Research Assistant position at Thin Films Technology (TFT). I worked there for almost two years as a part-time research assistant, sometimes even going in person to their North Mankato office. From there, along with other experiences, I was able to land a summer internship at Tektronix, a well-known test and measurement company mainly recognized for its oscilloscopes.

I first came across the name Tektronix on our lab oscilloscopes and thought, why not apply to this company, the sky is the limit? I went on LinkedIn, searched for the name, and looked for open positions. I saw they had an opening for an Application Engineer Intern on the Mainstream Engineering Team. I decided to take my shot, and soon after, I got a first-round interview with my recruiter. It was chill, I introduced myself, went over my resume and experience, and she asked a few follow-up questions. After passing that round, I had another interview with my manager, Brandon. It was a nice conversation; he asked some technical questions, and for the behavioral side I talked about my NASA L'Space experience and my Research Assistant position at TFT. He was impressed with how much I had

achieved as just a first-semester sophomore. I got a signed offer in November and felt a huge relief knowing I didn't have to worry about my summer plans.

I flew to Beaverton, Oregon, a city 25 minutes away from Portland and three hours from Seattle, home to major sportswear companies like Nike and Columbia. I moved in with an intern friend, just a five-minute walk from the Tektronix campus. The company was huge, with its own soccer fields and multiple buildings. The first day was orientation, where we learned about the history of the company and how dominant Tektronix was in the 1980s. Tektronix was founded in 1946 by Howard Vollum, Jack Murdock, Miles Tippery, and accountant Glenn McDowell. The company was initially named Tekrad but changed to Tektronix later that same year. They even took us to their VintageTEK museum, where I got to see and touch several of Tektronix's Emmy Awards, recognizing their leadership in television test, measurement, and monitoring technology, especially the 1976 and 1984 awards for contributions to the television industry.

We played some games, networked with other interns, and finally met our managers in person. The first two weeks were mainly training and reading documentation. During that time, I also started having my 1:1 meeting with my manager, and after two weeks I was paired with a mentor named Anthony. I also set up a weekly sync-up meeting with him. Even though our desks were next to each other, I often went to him whenever I needed help. He was also an intern converted to a full-time engineer, which made him a great resource.

I was then assigned two projects. The first was doing a product performance analysis using the 5 Series oscilloscope on my bench and a demo board, a buck and boost converter power lab, where I measured performance and presented results for customers. The second was writing scripts to automate measurements using SCPI commands and PyVISA, so that instead of touching knobs, all the

measurements could be done programmatically. After completing my training, I got started on these projects.

Around that time, I also met Keith (through my teammate Greg), who became a big mentor to me. Keith wanted to build an AI assistant waveform generator project and was looking for an intern in addition to his team. I volunteered, which increased my project load to three. I struggled a bit to manage all of them at the same time, but I prioritized the assignments from my manager and worked on the others when I hit roadblocks. This strategy helped me make progress across all of them.

I finished the power analysis and then lived inside 2,000+ pages of SCPI docs for the automation work. To make it doable, I set up a tiny test plan: list the exact measurements I needed, try one command at a time, log the response, and save every working snippet. When a command didn't behave, I'd isolate just that function on the scope, compare outputs, and rename each script with the instrument state baked in so it was reproducible. It was slow at first, but the notebook of "what worked/why" turned into a clean PyVISA script and README I pushed to our GitHub. Later my mentor told me 100+ customers had used it. I stopped guessing and started testing systematically. I keep a running "decision log" and ship examples with plain-English comments so others can use my work fast.

I hadn't taken ML/NLP or done DSP in Python, so I asked Keith to co-shape a ramp plan: one intro text, a weekend to stand up LM Studio locally, and a tiny "hello-waveform" prototype before anything fancy. I met twice a week to demo increments (even ugly ones). That cadence made feedback normal, not scary, and let me adjust early. We ended with a live demo for multiple teams and my group.

What changed: I used to think leaders "figure it out alone." Now I see leadership as asking early, scoping small, and iterating in public. **Now what:** For new tech, I'll always start with a 1-page ramp plan + weekly demos.

The AI assistant project (TekPulse) took most of my time since I hadn't taken ML/NLP or done DSP in Python, so I asked Keith to co-shape a ramp plan: one intro text, a weekend to stand up LM Studio locally, and a tiny "hello-waveform" prototype before anything fancy. I met twice a week to demo increments (even ugly ones). That cadence made feedback normal, not scary, and let me adjust early. This project pushed me outside my comfort zone and showed me the importance of asking for help, using resources wisely, and adapting fast to new technologies. In the end, I built a solid project, did a live demo presentation with him, and also presented it to two additional teams. I presented again for my own team in addition to my final presentation. That gave me a spotlight opportunity to meet several managers from different teams as well as vice presidents.

In addition to my projects, I also shadowed my team and helped them set up their annual event, AEU Week, where all Application Engineers from across the country and the world came together. That gave me the chance to meet coworkers from India in person for the first time. We went to several team lunches, and my manager even bought me a podcast series (I forgot the name) that basically taught me how corporate America works and the habits I needed to develop as a new hire. Outside of work, I had a really fun time, karaoke night, Top Golf, a soccer game, and other activities during my stay. I also got the chance to explore Oregon with other interns, visiting Cannon Beach, Multnomah Falls, and a few hiking trails.

I did face some challenges, especially when my manager went on paternity leave after my 8th week. My mentor Anthony and my teammate Greg stepped up, checking in on me and helping me prepare for my final presentation. The presentation went well I spoke on a call with more than 200 people, alongside the other 15 interns. I was a little nervous since I presented third, but thanks to all the dry runs and previous presentations I had done, it went smoothly. To top it off, I got a farewell dinner with our VP of the org, and they gave me a signed picture from everyone as a keepsake. I learned

storytelling is part of engineering leadership; clarity creates trust. I'm currently building a personal template for tech talks (story, one demo, one metric) and using it in senior design.

With my Tektronix experience on my resume and my junior design smart glasses project, I knew I had a good chance to land at an even bigger tech company that everyone recognizes, and I did. The next summer, I landed at Salesforce. Unlike Tektronix, this internship had more rounds of interviews and a hectic process. I first did an online assessment, passed to the next stage, and then was told that the team I was assigned to was under a hiring freeze. My recruiter, Vincent, encouraged me to stay in touch while I looked at other opportunities.

During that time, I had some other offers and interviews, but my heart was still with Salesforce. Then, one day in November, I got an email from Vincent saying he had found a team for me and wanted to move forward if I was still interested. I immediately said yes and was scheduled for a "super day" two back-to-back one-hour interviews, one technical and one technical/behavioral with my future manager, Jay. I did well but still felt nervous about the outcome. Then, the day before Christmas, Vincent emailed me saying he had a Christmas gift for me: I got the offer.

I had a few more interviews with other companies around that time, but I withdrew from them after accepting Salesforce, it was my dream company. Also, unlike Tektronix, Salesforce offered more preparation. We had two recruiter-led sessions to get ready for the internship, and I had two or three check-in meetings with my manager to get to know him better. He also introduced me to Mahak, a former intern who had converted to a full-time engineer, and she became a big help to me over the summer.

In mid-May, I flew to Seattle for my second summer in the Pacific Northwest, and I was really excited. For onboarding, all interns were invited to fly to the San Francisco headquarters, where we spent around four days in the tallest tower in the city. I even got to see the famous Salesforce Park. This

was my second time in San Francisco, after going there earlier for my IEEE award. I networked, got my laptop, and then flew back to Seattle.

Similar to Tektronix, the first two weeks were mainly documentation and learning the tech stack. Salesforce has its own learning platform called Trailhead, so I started taking courses and collecting badges and points. I was assigned a big summer project with two phases. I completed the first phase during the first six weeks and received my midterm evaluation. I got a “successful” rating, one level below the highest. My manager told me I needed to be more proactive in standup meetings and team calls, especially in asking questions.

At first, this feedback stung because I thought my work should “speak for itself.” But I realized that leadership isn’t just about output, it’s about visibility and communication. To improve, I started preparing one update and one question the night before every standup. That way, I didn’t freeze or wait for someone else to speak first. Over time, I noticed teammates responding more to my updates, and I even sparked follow-up discussions that helped unblock the team. This small change built my confidence and showed me that speaking up can be as valuable as writing code.

To grow further, I also set a goal of doing more than 30 coffee chats with team members, both in person and remote, including architects, senior engineers, managers, and VPs. Instead of just collecting contacts, I prepared specific questions before each chat: How did you grow into leadership? What habits helped you succeed here? What mistakes do you wish you avoided? Writing their answers in a notebook helped me start forming my own leadership philosophy. I learned that storytelling and influence often matter just as much as technical skill.

I also stayed active in intern events. We went to a women’s basketball game (Indiana Fever, a team Salesforce sponsors, was playing Seattle’s team) and had VIP box seats and dinners. I joined a plant workshop, an AI Odyssey workshop, and also participated in a 48-hour Agentforce Hackathon with four

other teammates. The time pressure was overwhelming at first five people, one weekend, no clear roadmap. To keep us on track, I suggested we split roles fast and do two check-ins per day. I took the lead on designing the Command Center UI but also helped another teammate debug an integration issue. The check-ins helped us adjust quickly, and by the second night we had a working prototype. We made it to the finals, and I realized that in high-pressure situations, structure plus flexibility can make a team much stronger than raw talent alone.

I also made a short video sharing my top five learnings from my time at Salesforce and won a Kindle for being one of the winners. Back to my project, the first phase was less hectic, but the second phase was harder. I had to deal with API whitelisting issues, Tableau Desktop problems, and long approval processes where every change request had to go through three levels of managers. Early on, I grew frustrated by the waiting time. Instead of just waiting, I started building shadow progress by mocking up dashboards with fake data and writing drafts of approval forms. So, when approvals finally came, I could move fast. This taught me that leadership means finding momentum even when bureaucracy slows you down.

By the end, I had built an ETL pipeline that automated CrowdStrike data collection and delivered a working Tableau dashboard, saving my team 15–20 minutes daily. My final presentation felt smoother than my Tektronix one, partly because I practiced storytelling more. I framed the demo not just as “what I built” but as “what problem it solved,” and several team members later told me that was what made it memorable. This showed me that impact comes from clarity, not just code.

One of the biggest challenges was that almost all my team members were remote, except for a few. I meet my manager and mentor once a week in person, and on other days I had the option of working from the Seattle office close to my summer house, the Bellevue office, or from home. I

preferred going to the offices since I was more productive there. This taught me how to stay responsible and accountable even without being micromanaged.

Another highlight of the summer was visiting my manager's house. He lived in what I would call a mansion, far from the office, which explained why he only came in once a week. I finally met his famous 150-lb dog, Charlie, who I had only seen on team calls. We had a nice lunch, networked with about 10 other people, and I learned that even those who seem strict at work are regular people outside the office chill, fun, and easy to talk to.

After all the roadblocks and fun events, final presentation time arrived. I did a 30-minute demo for my teammates, got feedback, polished my slides and recording, and then gave my final presentation. This time, it was much smoother around 40 people joined the call, which felt way more manageable compared to my previous internship's 200+. I had my final evaluation with my manager, and this time I got the highest rating an intern can achieve a "very successful." I also had a closing meeting with my recruiter, who told me I was ranked in the top 10% of interns. Now I'm waiting for my full-time return offer decision. To wrap things up, we had a boat tour for the end-of-intern celebration, which was my second time on a cruise (the first was during Seafair the week before).

Overall, during these two summer internships I didn't just collect projects, I changed how I work. I document, I ask early, I make progress visible, and I tell the story of the impact. I'm mentoring five underclassmen this year using my weekly plan, and I'm applying these habits to senior design: small prototypes, clear updates, one brave question every meeting. That's the leader I'm becoming curious, systematic, and generous with what I learn.