

Using one or more
extra-curricular
curricular activities
you have been
involved w...

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



To survive and compete in today's competitive job market, one has to stand out from the rest and reflect multiple skills that draw employer's attention. These unique set of skills have to be developed throughout a person's life by learning either through experience or through book reading. Nowadays, one has to indulge in various co-curricular activities in secondary or even primary education to be able to present him/herself in front of employers in the future. I, myself have participated in numerous extra-curricular activities throughout my A' levels and after, especially after observing the 2009 job market debacle which had left countless number of graduates jobless (CBS News, 2009). I've loved learning from a young age and believed that taking part in extra-curricular activities would help me become a successful adult in the future. I had always been an active member of the sports department in my school. From the 2nd year of my O' levels in 2006 to the final year of my A' levels in 2009, I had been a part of the college cricket team. It was an honour to be a part of the college team as I studied in the largest school of the city with over 300 students competing for the cricket team trials. In 2007, I also did an internship for 2 months in a local packaging company called ' MacPak'. During my A' levels, a group of us 6 friends organized a concert in which I was responsible for distributing flyers, putting up posters, advertising online on social networks and selling tickets. Additionally, during my gap year from 2009-2010, I did an internship for 6 months at Deutsche Bank. Being involved in such activities helped me further develop and refine my existing skill set and enabled me to move along the sequential learning process (Fitts and Possner, 1967) from the Cognitive to the Associative

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phase. For instance, working as an intern at Deutsche Bank gave me the opportunity to improve my communication, teamwork and mentoring and coaching skills by allowing me to get practice and feedback in a practical setting. One of the most important skills I learnt during my internship at Deutsche Bank was 'Communication'. According to 'Merriam Webster' (2011) communication is defined as "The exchange of ideas, opinions and information through written or spoken words, symbols or actions." In a business environment, I believe communication is one of the most important aspects required in smooth running of a work place'. Working as an intern in the Banking and Cash Operations (BCO) department of the bank involved daily communication with my seniors in and out of the department, my managers, bank's customers, clerical staff as well as other interns. With different groups I had a different style of communicating e. g. I always spoke formally with my senior managers and relatively informal with other interns. As the months passed by, I could see the confidence in me growing day by day, refining my day to day communication. Communicating with other banks and customers through letters and emails helped me improve my written communication skills too. After about three months there, I was left with much more responsibilities than what I had started with. Dealing with clients at the counter was something new to me but through proper training from my seniors I learnt how to deal with customers properly. I was surprised how such minor things like the way of greeting and face expressions can have an impact on the customer. The experience taught me methods to avoid barriers in communication practically. The use of feedback in the

workplace and understanding the importance of it practically was a whole new experience. Also, during my fifth month I was told to prepare a report on one of the clients and then present it in front of my department. That 7 minute presentation really gave a boost to my verbal communication skills and confidence in presenting. By the end of my internship, these communication skills were all captivated in me and delivering them in the workplace seemed natural to me. By this I could tell how extremely helpful this whole experience was in acquiring communication skills. Although I had studied Communication theoretically in my primary and secondary school, what I learnt from this experience was exceptional and incomparable to the book knowledge. Another skill acquired through my past experiences is 'Teamwork'. Although I had been an active member of my school cricket team and taken part in many team sports before that, working in a professional environment polished my team working skills even further. Teamwork is defined as "A group of people, contributing their individual knowledge and skills but working together to achieve a common goal/task" (Derek Stockley, 2008). My past experiences have helped me develop some of the qualities essential for smooth teamwork. It has taught me, to respect others contributions, techniques of communicating with other members of team, to compromise in team and to resolve conflicts in a team. I attained these qualities during the same internship at Deutsche Bank by engaging in a number of activities there. When I had joined the bank, there were two interns already in my department. I started from pretty basic projects working with them. These small projects mostly required us to research on

client's past record, produce reports using bank's internal facilities or entering of large amounts of data in the computers. This gave me the initial confidence I needed to be able to participate in bigger teamwork setups. We were a team of three interns supervised by one of the senior managers of the department. In the first few projects I hardly contributed any important ideas or contradicted with any of the other member's ideas. I just did the work I was told to but through time and experience I realized the importance of being an active team member, providing your opinions in a team and keeping an element of equality in teams. I remember, in one of the projects, we had to consolidate three highly detailed excel files into one within a short deadline. For that I devised a few techniques and executed them in the project which accelerated the process. I contributed many ideas and suggestions which were implemented in that task and we managed to complete the task well before time. In the last two months of my internship at Deutsche Bank I was given much more responsibility than before. The jobs were no more different than some of my seniors did and I was now treated more like a full employee rather than an intern in the department. Now, I had to work with two of the senior employees in the department in some of the projects. Although I was at a much junior level than other team members, I was never reluctant to share my ideas with them. I even had to work late at the office with them to get the work done before deadlines. Working in a team with seniors taught me how to work under a team leader and the mannerism to work with them as an equal member but still respect them as seniors. It made me realize that when you're working in a team, your

performance is interdependent with other members giving rise to a whole new level of responsibility than working independent. With practice, I was able to handle the increased pressure much better and work under a senior team member more comfortably. Although I had learnt some basics of team-working skills during my primary and secondary education but working in a professional environment provided me with a whole new experience about teamwork. As mentioned earlier, in the last two months of my internship, I was given a whole new level of responsibility and tasks were much more serious. During that I had to train a new intern who had just joined our department. This helped me develop 'Mentoring and Coaching' skills. I was to train her as my seniors had trained me in my starting days. 'Coaching and Mentoring can inspire and empower employees, build commitment, increase productivity, grow talent and promote success (Olivier Serrat, 2009).' It was an honour to be handed over such duty as no other intern had ever had the opportunity to do this before me and due to my performance; I was being treated much more like an employee there. I started off with giving her small priority and brief tasks to assess her strengths and weaknesses. I realized that she wasn't a fast learner so I kept the learning curve gradual. Responsibility on my shoulders had further increased as now I not only had to do my work but double check on hers too and train her. After three weeks I started giving her normal tasks and data entering workload. I had to stay late to double check her work before submitting it forward to my seniors as her work was my responsibility now. I always remained open to advise and help as only a few months earlier I had gone through the same

difficulties she was facing. In the starting weeks of mentoring I faced a lot of problems as it was hard for me to handle so much workload but my seniors were always ready to help and advise me for that. As weeks passed by, I was able to split some of my workload with her. I could tell that her performance was improving day by day and my guidance was working well. By the end of my internship, she was able to do various tasks without my supervision. I was acknowledged for the way I had trained her and my managers were delighted with my performance and being able to handle such responsibility. Though I've not mastered this skill but it has moved far from basic level after this experience.