

Insider Perspective: Summer in the Real World

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Here we are in September, and I'm still wondering whether summer even happened? The season flew by – accelerated by the fact that this was my first summer in the real world. And it was an adjustment! For the past sixteen years of my life as a scholar, summer has meant a break from school and a break from reality. This year, summer meant...work (with a little sunshine on the side). Now, summer's over and students everywhere have returned to the classroom. All the [back-to-school](#) hoopla has me reminiscing about where I was a year ago today.

In September of 2014, I'd just finished my internship with Alliance Data. Not long after that, I received a full-time job offer from the company, which totally changed my senior year of college. While most of my classmates were hunting for jobs, I was able to relax and enjoy my final year with no adult responsibilities. By the time graduation came around, I was ready to dive into my new role at Alliance Data, which I officially started in July. As expected, beginning my career has been overwhelming at times, especially since I'm in a brand new city. However, my transition's been a little easier because of [Alliance Data's Initial Career Experience \(ICE\) program](#).

As an ICE participant, I have the opportunity to experience two different roles in the company. I have three months to learn each role, discovering my strengths and exploring my interests along the way. Basically, I get six months to learn as much as possible about Alliance Data, while meeting as many people as I can. It's a unique chance to build my business acumen and start to establish a professional network. My first two months in ICE have been a whirlwind, in the best way.

So sure, I do miss my summer break a little – but who doesn't? I'm happy to be in the real world. I'm soaking this experience in. Every day, I'm accomplishing new tasks and overcoming new challenges (most recently – signing up for a 401K). There are a lot of good things happening at Alliance Data, and I'm thankful to be part of it all. I can't wait to see where the next year takes me!

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