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## Supply Chain Management Internship – J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc.

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**Supply Chain Management Internship – J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc.**

**By:**

**Garrett Locknar**

**Advisor: Dr. Brian S. Fugate**

**An Experiential Report for the degree Bachelor of Science in Business Administration  
in Supply Chain Management.**

**Sam M. Walton College of Business  
University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, Arkansas**

**May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

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## **Introduction and Company Background**

### ***Introduction***

The transportation industry touches every facet of business: research and development, final mile services, raw material procurement, even technology innovation and application design. Without transportation of goods, people, and services, each business as we know would fall apart. The greater supply chain itself relies heavily on the presence and precision of transportation to create value for each specific company's operations. Beginning in the summer of 2022, I have had the privilege of interning at J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc., one of the world's largest logistics and transportation companies, which has opened my eyes to the sheer impact of transportation on each level of business operation. In my time as an Intermodal Appointment Intern with J.B. Hunt, I have gained experiential knowledge of the transportation industry overall and specifically intermodal rail operations by working alongside rail operations professionals and working with customers to ensure On Time Delivery and drive value for each organization.

### ***Background and Company Overview***

J.B. Hunt began as a rice hull operation near Little Rock, Arkansas in 1961, started by Johnnie Bryan, who was working as a commercial truck driver at the time, and his wife, Johnelle Hunt. Just a few years later, the company purchased five trucks and seven trailers, and the company grew exponentially under the leadership of the Hunt family, gaining the business of Walmart Inc. to haul their merchandise. The unique and creative innovations by J.B. Hunt in the trucking industry accelerated the company into becoming the largest publicly held trucking company in America and a leader in the transportation industry, offering services in Mexico and Canada as well. While the company started small, it has grown to now offer Dedicated, Truckload, Intermodal, and Final Mile services to customers all across North America. Additionally, J.B. Hunt is a leader in technology and safety innovations for all truck shipments, and their continuous efforts to provide the best and most efficient services to their customers has been the pivotal key to their success. Despite the changes that the company has made over the years, one thing has stayed the same: their commitment to their workers.

### ***Company Culture***

J.B. Hunt's core ideals are people, technology, and capacity. Throughout my process of onboarding and regularly through my internship experience, I was reminded that at J.B. Hunt, people are what drive the company's success. The company culture puts its employees and their families first, ensuring that each person has an opportunity to maximize their potential, express themselves, and be heard regardless of their ethnic, religious, or military background. In fact, J.B. Hunt ensures to value diversity and inclusion in their corporate structure in order to reflect the broader culture of respect for all individuals inside and outside of the company. Through employee resource groups such as AAMERG (African American Employee Resource Group) and GROW (Growing and Retaining Outstanding Women), the company maintains a diverse and welcoming environment for all employees and their families.

## Personal Learning Objectives

This section summarizes my learning objectives for my internship. These objectives are to:

- Gain Understanding of Intermodal Transportation and the transportation industry
- Develop Soft Skills for Business and Proficiency in Microsoft Office
- Discern Career Path – be exposed to Supply Chain-related fields
- Establish Professional Experience and Presence

### *Gain Understanding of Intermodal Transportation*

My primary goal of this internship was to corroborate my experiences in college courses in the Walton College of Business with real-world applications in a corporate setting. Through this, I intended to increase my baseline knowledge of intermodal rail transportation that had been established through my courses and expand into real-world scenarios. As the idiom states, “experience is the best teacher.” While my courses have been impactful in my educational and professional development, the most important growth mechanism is to spend time in the industry itself. In my experience with J.B. Hunt, I expect to be exposed to the innerworkings of the intermodal industry that could not have been simply taught in a class, including company-specific software management, customer service, co-worker relations, company culture, and industry jargon.

### *Soft Skill Development and Proficiency in Microsoft Office*

As an intermodal appointment intern, my primary responsibilities involve contacting customers and dispatchers to coordinate delivery appointments via phone call or email. However, this can often met with many challenges including scheduling conflicts, available drivers to deliver each load, and cooperation with each receiver. Often, each individual intermodal load is vulnerable to delays or changes due to service issues or sheer volume, which can result in multiple reschedules or accruing storage charges for the customer. Since no one likes to fork over extra money in any situation, this can regularly involve upset customers, which would be my responsibility to deescalate. Perhaps the most important soft skill that I intend to develop while working with J.B. Hunt is direct and honest communication, as well as emotional intelligence and empathy. When customers inevitably become upset due to a service errors or failed execution of the original delivery, it is very important to communicate clearly and honestly to resolve the conflict as soon as possible, which maintains the relationship between the companies as well as the value of that shipment for both parties. The reliance on emails and other applications such as Excel and Word in Microsoft Office will expose me to new functions within these applications, which will carry over to all other jobs I could have in the future.

### *Discern Career Path*

In my experience with J.B. Hunt, I intend to develop a clearer picture regarding careers that could be a good fit for me upon graduation. By exposing myself to the transportation industry with an internship at J.B. Hunt, I will have experience in this section of supply chain careers useful for my decision to focus my energies elsewhere or not. While I expect to enjoy my internship and garner substantial experience, I believe the most important aspect of my internship will be insights into a

career with J.B. Hunt as well. The company has clearly been a popular destination for University of Arkansas graduates, so I would like to consider this for my future as well.

*Establish Professional Experience and Presence*

Another primary goal of my internship is to develop a more professional presence and add experience to my resume. While I have had other work experience, most has not been applicable to a career in supply chain management. Through my internship with J.B. Hunt, I expect to be exposed to a corporate environment that will likely house my future career and understand the expected norms and engagement of a corporation. While this is not the most important goal in my opinion, it is nonetheless very relevant to my development as a valued employee in the supply chain field.

## **Project/Assignments/Responsibilities Details**

My primary responsibilities as an Intermodal Appointment Intern involve coordinating delivery appointments with receivers based on information from our rail operations teams. Often, this involves reaching out to customers many days in advance of the containers arriving at the final rail destination for delivery. To provide an ETA for this delivery, J.B. Hunt uses previous rail data to predict the eventual arrival of these containers to schedule them in advance. Additionally, this would require coordination with our customer experience teams to access the delivery information sensitive to this load, such as the Purchase Order number, Ship ID, and contents of the container. My role specifically involved more frequent email and phone conversations with receivers than other divisions in the company, which meant managing multiple different conversations at once and maintaining a stream of communication among many departments to ensure valid charges were appropriated and relationships were kept with these customers. This would often include emails with service managers, account managers, accessorial teams, or other appointment clerks to ensure that all employees and the customer alike were on the same page.

While I was not assigned a specific project during my internship with J.B. Hunt, my normal duties still provided great experiential learning opportunities for me to familiarize myself with the processes and industry norms surrounding intermodal transportation and professional communication.

## **Analysis/Implications for the Company**

### Business Problem

The business problem that we are looking to mitigate and solve is driving value for our customers through efficiency and connected streams of communication. Since the appointments division itself is responsible for managing most of the scheduling with receivers, we must communicate with the customer as well as internal teams to ensure a smooth delivery of goods. Many of the issues that we encounter with scheduling appointments are caused by a lack of information available to internal teams or the customer. One of the ways that we mitigate these issues is to ensure that our accessorial or Dwell team is notified if a load has potential to receive charges for storage. We leave clear and concise comments on each appointment stating the name of the person we scheduled with, the method that the appointment was scheduled with (email, call, etc), the date that we reached out to schedule, and the date that we requested to deliver. This creates a traceable paper trail to track down any potential issues or confusion and creates a clear stream of internal and external communications alike.

### Potential Value

The value potential of ensuring mainstream communication practices is very significant.

- I. **\$0.35** on average per mile for each intermodal shipment, which is about half the cost of a truckload shipment.
- II. **\$100-200** per diem of detention charges for each shipment that is not picked up from the rail yard, which is passed to the customer.
- III. **Average detention charges** indicate that accessorial charges are added regularly
- IV. **Grand total of \$240 to \$340** per shipment for fuel and detention charges alone.

Intermodal transportation on average travels just over 400 miles for each shipment, as that is when rail movements begin to cost less than over-the-road shipments. While fuel costs cannot be mitigated more than intermodal already offers, the detention charges can be reduced by avid communication and clarified streams of information. By increasing the knowledge of all teams involved in the shipment of the container, better preparations can be made to avoid excess charges such as detention, creating more valuable shipments for the receiver at a lower cost.

When supporting intermodal rail transportation as opposed to over-the-road (OTR) shipments, price is often the most important factor to consider. However, many of these benefits are harmed by potential accessorial fees. To prevent this, our team has worked diligently to provide a basis of communication that ensures all parties involved are on the same page and we work to avoid these charges, as mentioned earlier. The efficiency of our operation is supported by the lower costs of fuel for intermodal shipments, and the communication is supported by the employees, which is why J.B. Hunt values each employee greatly. By creating uniform streams of communication and a structure surrounding them, we marginally cut down on costs of accessorial fees and ensure that the customer is receiving the lowest cost delivery possible.



## **Conclusion and Personal Evaluation**

After my internship with J.B. Hunt, I have a much deeper understanding of the innerworkings and cost structure of intermodal transportation and the greater supply chain. Through experiential learning, I have gained a greater understanding of the importance of on time delivery, bargaining power of suppliers and carriers, as well as the necessity of knowledgeable and committed employees.

A very impactful experience I had during my internship was with a customer, who we will call Customer X. Each day over summer, I would call this customer to schedule a delivery, and he would always have an optimistic tone and be excited to hear from the company. When he would call in to our intern office, he would always ask to speak with me, and we built a good relationship over our love of college football. Even though he wasn't a Razorback fan, we would talk extensively about upcoming games or notable transfers in the SEC. Because of our relationship, we built an open and honest communication channel that was beneficial for both companies. While our conversations often became informal, we were able to trust each other more due to that relationship with more formal information, such as load delays or delivery changes. This experience demonstrated the importance of relationship building and its pertinence to success in the supply chain field.

Perhaps the most valuable lesson I learned while working for J.B. Hunt is the critical value of information to the supply chain. As we are taught in college courses, the supply chain consists of a flow of goods and information from the raw materials all the way to the end consumer. While I only worked in a small section of the supply chain, I gained an appreciation for the difficulties communication can present and the delicacy of information to make decisions. Sometimes, we would struggle to get all the information necessary to schedule a delivery in advance of its arrival to the rail yard, or the customer would prove difficult to work with at times. Because of these experiences, my personal skillset was put to the test, and I feel more comfortable expressing honest communication and empathy in a professional setting.

Another very important lesson I learned was that the transportation industry might not be the best fit for my future career. While I enjoyed the fast-paced environment that my internship offered me, I felt as though my talents would be best suited elsewhere in the supply chain, such as bargaining with procurement or merchandising in individual retail stores. This is because I struggle at times with multi-tasking and focusing on many different objectives at once. However, I would not have gained this knowledge without the experiences that I had in my internship, which I am very grateful for.

Finally, my internship provided a foundation for my professional career, as this was my first experience in a supply-chain related field. Because of my exposure to a corporate environment, I have now established a more professional presence and grown to understand the norms and practices common in a corporate setting. Further, I have gained valuable experience that will translate over to success in other occupations, regardless of what direction I choose for my career.

My experiences with J.B. Hunt have provided me with better knowledge of myself and my skills, as well as the development of others necessary for success in a supply chain career. I am very grateful to have received this opportunity, and I look forward to the next step in my academic and professional career!

## Addendum

### *5 Supply Chain Course Lessons Corroborated by My Experience As an Intern*

Tim Sanders, former CEO of Deeper Media and prominent author and speaker, perfectly captures the essence of education in his quote: "Education without application is just entertainment." As a student in the Walton College and the J.B. Hunt Transport Supply Chain Department, I am privileged to receive an application-based education that translates directly to my efforts as an intern. Here are 5 lessons that I have learned throughout my time in class at the University of Arkansas that have carried over to the workplace.

#### Relationships, Relationships, Relationships

In my current position as an Intermodal Intern with J.B. Hunt, I work directly with receivers and other teams within the company such as Operations to provide the most efficient and committed service in the industry of intermodal deliveries. I interact with many customers via email, phone, or websites daily to schedule appointments that will fulfill their needs. Because of this, I communicate with many of the same people over time and have thus learned the importance of building relationships and rapport with individuals inside and outside of the company. Regular communication and visibility provide a degree of trust between J.B. Hunt and the receiver, which creates lasting relationships that are mutually beneficial.

#### Information Exchange is Necessary for Success

The supply chain connects the flow of goods and services from the raw materials used in production all the way to the end consumer, but perhaps the most important item exchanged throughout is information. While it is true that the supply chain cannot operate without goods and services provided, open and honest communication creates an environment where every party is on the same page. This visibility is not only beneficial, but necessary to create a sustainable environment of trust and service execution. When we commit to providing quality and timely service, acknowledge our strengths and weaknesses, and cooperate as efficiently as possible, an entirely new level of service execution is established. Consequently, relationships are formed and carry on beyond just the workplace, benefitting each party involved.

#### One Size Does Not Fit All

Each customer and service provider has different needs that must be met in order to provide the best solution available. For instance, some receivers may require more information than others; this could come in the form of delivery confirmations, purchase order verification, or even the method through which they desire to receive communication. While there are certainly similarities among the procedures for each customer, not every situation can be approached the same. There is no universal solution to best fit the needs of every party or group involved in the supply chain. You must be open and cooperative in order to achieve the goals you have laid out, which creates personalized services to best suit the customers and maintain those relationships over time.

## Do Your Homework

As mundane and simple as it sounds, staying up to date on the issues facing the supply chain and carrying out service to best accompany the changes you might encounter is ever-necessary. The preparation it takes to provide the best service possible is not one you simply gain in industry or classroom experience; there is a certain level of individual study and effort that must take place in order to excel. As my parents would tell me growing up, "it's better to have it and not need it, than need it and not have it." The transportation industry is one of the most dynamic and challenging industries in the world. The challenges faced daily, or even hourly sometimes, by all parties involved cannot be ignored. It can only be mitigated by your own efforts as part of the supply chain. Referring back to the quote I cited at the beginning, applying the knowledge you gain will only provide benefits as you progress both academically and professionally.

## Welcome Change and Flexibility

As I mentioned previously, the transportation industry is dynamic by nature. Opening yourself up to change, not only individually but in the broader scope of your company, will prove beneficial and necessary for success. In my specific position, this can take the form of changes in ETAs we receive from our partner rail companies due to congestion, late arrivals, or service failures. While it may not be ideal to change a delivery appointment, it is a necessary and relevant component of our daily activities. In a broader sense, this can also refer to changes in my personal knowledge or beliefs. I may not always have the right answer, and being open to this fact has already proved to be advantageous as I continue my career. Flexibility makes each person easier to work with and grow alongside. Never fear change, but embrace it, as that is what it takes to succeed.

Overall, the education I have received in the classroom does not end there. It carries over directly into the work that I do as an intern in the industry. I consider myself blessed to gain real workplace experience and individual growth through my internship, as well as practical education through my coursework at the University of Arkansas. I am excited to see where else I can grow and am confident that my experiences will have a direct and substantial impact on my academic and professional future!

## *Railroad Efficiency: Is the Future of the Rail Industry in Jeopardy?*

The total accumulation of transportation services contributed to approximately 5.6% of the United States' GDP in 2021, and this percentage only looks to increase in years to come. Spanning across nearly 140,000 route miles of tracks, the U.S. rail market is composed of three types of railroads: Class 1 railroads, short lines, and regional lines. There are only seven Class 1 railroads in the United States, yet they account for about 90% of total market revenue from rail transportation. Therefore, the actions by each Class 1 railroad have lasting effects on the nearly \$80 billion rail freight industry, and they share an inherent responsibility for the growth of this sector. Intermodal transportation specifically provides many benefits to the supply chain, ranging from cost savings to reduced emissions. With an increased effort to create economies of scale and improve efficiency of transportation, more and more logistics companies are turning to railroads to drive future profits. Deregulation of rail transportation over the past 50 years has created an environment of positive growth, but has also ushered in new issues regarding safety and efficiency regulations. The current strategies of these rail companies are that of any business: to maximize profit and ensure prevalence in the market. These actions have generated many costs and benefits for the transportation industry as a whole.

Rail transportation certainly comes with its own unique set of drawbacks. Recent headlines of derailments in Ohio, Texas, and South Carolina have brought about reasonable concerns regarding the safety of rail transportation, causing some to question the legitimacy of using railroads compared to standard truck shipments. An anecdote from the [Kansas City Star](#) shows the dangers that rural residents may face at railroad crossings with little to no safety indicators such as flashing lights or gates. These railroads can be very dangerous to the citizens who live there, which show the increased need for safety regulations regarding rail transportation. A general lack of safety regulation is a growing concern in the rail industry, which is sometimes discounted in pursuit of higher profits.

Additionally, in an effort to reduce the costs of labor in the rail industry, Class 1 rail companies laid off or furloughed many of their workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused higher rates of unemployment. This led to less flexibility when disruptions did occur, simply because the rail companies did not have enough employees to create an effective solution. The service levels of rail companies drastically decreased, which damaged the reputation of intermodal transportation and affected multiple different sectors of the American economy. This directly impacts the ability of companies like J.B. Hunt to meet service expectations for their customers, reducing reliability and causing the industry to suffer, which I have experienced firsthand.

Another issue facing the expansion of intermodal is the increased length of individual rail shipments. Some trains can carry well over 200 rail cars, and each rail car can carry up to 10 containers, depending on their size. While this increases the efficiency of the trains, it disrupts the towns travelled through by increasing wait times to use daily roads and conflicts with the travel of many citizens.

However, the efforts of railroad companies have contributed significantly to the growth of the rail transportation industry. Martin Oberman, Chair of the Surface Transportation Board in the U.S. House of Representatives, has stated that 30% to 40% of the American economy relies on rail transportation in some capacity. According to [globalnewswire.com](http://globalnewswire.com), intermodal transportation is projected to experience a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.27% between 2021 and 2026, proving that the dependence on rail transport will substantially increase over the next 3 years. The aggressive actions by powerful rail companies to improve these railroads via regular maintenance and investments have correlated to positive growth in the realms of safety and efficiency for rail shipments across the United States. As the [American Association of Railroads](#) states, the industry as a whole invests "well above \$20 billion a year on capital expenditures and maintenance expenses." Additionally, by transporting even more containers on each individual train, the efficiency of the network increases substantially, allowing for more bulk shipments to be carried across greater distances all at once. This expansion of the rail network creates better economies of scale, meaning that the rail companies are able to capitalize on the sheer volume they experience to drive more cost savings.

The allure of intermodal transportation applies outside of just profits alone; a preferred side effect of rail transportation is the economic savings surrounding fuel efficiency. A standard shipment via intermodal rail transportation costs about half as much per mile as a standard over-the-road truck would cost, primarily due to fuel charges. Emissions are reduced significantly when utilizing intermodal shipping. Thus, a greener and more sustainable supply chain is created thanks to rail carriers.

Overall, the profit-seeking actions of these rail companies have created record growth in the rail industry and have created a strong economy of prosperity in the transportation industry. However, there are certainly aspects that can be improved, such as safety and worker satisfaction. Necessary actions must be taken to address this, even if that means sacrificing profit from time to time. Despite this, the financial impacts of profit-seeking actions have created a sustainable, profitable, and successful market surrounding transportation of which consumers will continue to benefit from and rely on. More regulations of train length or railroad crossing safety measures throughout the United States might be necessary to usher in these changes. There is still much work to be done

as intermodal transportation continues to grow substantially, but through investments in maintenance and other proactive efforts to mitigate disruptions, the rail transportation industry will flourish with a motivated effort to improve the safety, profitability, and efficiency of rail transportation.

### *3 Key Qualities for All Supply Chain Employees*

The supply chain industry presents many challenges, spanning across all facets of business. No matter your occupation, the supply chain industry has a substantial impact on routine actions throughout your day, ranging from the semi truck and trailer you pass on the highway or the ability to find toilet paper on the shelves of the local supermarket. Therefore, managers of this industry have a lot at stake and must consider this with every step they take or plan they implement. In my experience as an intern with J.B. Hunt and a student in the Walton College of Business, I have worked alongside many different people from many different backgrounds. It's no secret that some people are easier to work with than others --that is simply a fact of life. However, certain qualities are guaranteed to make separate yourself, driving efficiency and profitability for your company. In this article, I will discuss the 3 most important qualities for quantifiable success in the supply chain industry and how they relate to my experience as an intern.

#### Communication

Strong communication skills are important in any industry, especially one as dynamic and unpredictable as the supply chain industry. Concise, precise, and honest communication saves time and energy for all parties involved and increases productivity in the workplace. Beating around the bush will get you nowhere; frustration simply grows and creates strife among everyone involved. Communicate clearly and succinctly in all professional circumstances to avoid unnecessary detail and encourage the same in return.

Additionally, communication is a two-way street. The ability to express your own thoughts as well as consider the ideas of others creates a relationship and encourages cooperation. Listening to your partners and customers is just as, if not more, important than communicating clearly upfront. For information to flow properly, it must travel both upstream and downstream. Therefore, listening and understanding the other person's position is very relevant for success in the supply chain industry.

In my internship with J.B. Hunt, I have encountered many difficulties due to poor communication, both internally and externally. Sometimes, our initial reaction might be to respond out of anger or frustration, leaving a passive-aggressive note for the recipient of a strong-worded email. However, it is critical to remember that we are all human and we will make mistakes. We are all on the same team, trying to deliver the best quality service we can for our customers.



## Adaptability

As Albert Einstein stated in a famous quote, "The measure of intelligence is the ability to change." In a previous post, I had mentioned the importance of flexibility as it relates to success as an intern specifically. A flexible employee can shift their time and efforts to different projects when necessary and can respond when an issue arises. However, I believe that adaptability encompasses a much more specific quality: the ability to experience disruption *and* maintain a change because of it. The primary distinction here is an intentional effort to remember the circumstances that caused a change and the response that was carried out. Flexibility suggests a temporary status, an ability to respond to changes until business-as-usual can continue, whereas adaptability requires a complete change in strategy and the approach to the industry. Gather the evidence of what was learned by the disruption and change the processes that allowed the disruption to occur, creating more versatile and resilient supply chains.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many flaws and vulnerabilities in our supply chains were exposed: dependence on imports, labor and compensation issues, resistance to disruptions, etc. Because of this, supply chain managers were forced to adapt, taking into consideration all of the issues they had encountered to create a more resilient and versatile supply chain via omnichannel importation and distribution. The built-in contingency plans from flexible operations contributed to some short-term relief, but the ability to adapt proved to be substantially more important.

Specific to individual employees, adaptability remains a highly sought after skill. Through a combination of unique problem solving capabilities and considerable self-awareness, adaptable employees drive value for the company by learning from their own mistakes and the mistakes of others to mitigate future issues. In my internship, I am responsible for managing relationships with plenty of customers that bring value to J.B. Hunt. By interacting with customers and seeking advice from full-time team members, I can understand ways to improve our processes and reflect on my own talents.

## Open-mindedness

Hand-in-hand with both communication and adaptability, an open mind is a powerful quality when applied to the supply chain industry. An open-minded person can create more meaningful relationships inside and outside of the workplace, as they are more cooperative in general and welcome differing ideas or beliefs. Relationships are critical to success in this industry, and approaching any negotiation or transaction with an open mind contributes in large part to the success of that deal. Another instance of benefits from open-mindedness could be an expansion of one's industry knowledge through

other fields of study. As an Economics major, I have received lessons in market strength, demand forecasting, and optimization of outputs beyond what could be taught in the supply chain industry alone. Because of this, I would be able to apply cross-functional ideas across multiple circumstances and increase my breadth of knowledge. However, there is a limited amount of knowledge one can gain in a classroom setting; learning from other departments and employees within the company is crucial to individual success.

Overall, a combination of these qualities produces a productive and qualified employee in the supply chain industry. Identifying areas one can grow, learning how to do so, and communicating these changes effectively allows for individual improvement and increased value placed on one's talents. Employees drive the success of a business, and the individual qualities one has contribute to the total effectiveness of that employee in the industry as a whole.

### *What comes next after finishing a supply chain internship?*

As we approach the end of the semester, and eventually graduation, many students are ending their current internships and beginning the prospective search for employment. While I still have another year to continue my education at the University of Arkansas, I believe it is necessary to consider the inevitable fact that I will not remain an intern forever. After researching expert tips, speaking with my current managers at J.B. Hunt, and considering my own opportunities and desires for my career, I have compiled a few tips for all students exiting their internships in the coming months to prepare for the transition into full-time employment or a new role as intern elsewhere.

#### **Maintain Connections**

Perhaps the most important step of exiting an internship role is ending on good terms with your employer. Whether you transition into a full-time position in the same company in a different department or start anew somewhere else, ensuring that you maintain the relationships you created in your previous position is vital to future success. Companies invest time, energy, and money into developing intelligent and experienced individuals, and managers want to see their former interns succeed regardless of their future endeavors. Employers often ask for references during the hiring process, and this is a great way to secure a praiseworthy and positive reference letter.

Not only is it vital to remain in touch with former managers and team leads, but it is also very important to stay connected with your past coworkers and fellow interns. Expanding your network can prove very beneficial, as you can have connections with multiple companies if you ever decide to seek employment elsewhere.

#### **Apply for Many Roles, Even Outside Your Current Department**

I recently skimmed through a book called *The Secret to Getting a Job after College: Marketing Tactics to Turn Degrees into Dollars* by Larry Chiagourus, where he proposes many different tactics for starting a career after graduation. One of these ideas is to step outside of your current department and explore other career opportunities. While you may feel more comfortable requesting a full-time position from your current manager, there are often many other roles that are open throughout the company. Additionally, many companies prefer to hire internally, as the turnover rate is much lower among internal hires and onboarding processes are nearly cut in half, optimizing efficiency for the company.

The beauty of a degree in Supply Chain Management specifically is the versatility that the education offers. Supply Chain employees affect every facet of business, ranging from the procurement of goods and services to delivery of the final product, and everything in between. Therefore, the likelihood of succeeding in a role outside of a standard transportation or customer management position, as many internships in the supply chain field are, increases substantially. Stepping outside of your departmental experiences can be very beneficial to you professionally and individually as well as for the company you working for, as your diverse skill set proves beneficial all around.

### **Update Your Resume with Your Achievements and Experiences**

Keeping track of your achievements and projects throughout your internship via a journal or notes sheet is also relevant and necessary. The hard work that you put in during your internship should be documented and presented to your future employers when applying for a new position. The creative and unique projects that you played a part in provide a context for your capabilities of expression and strengths as an employee. For instance, my current project in my internship role is to provide J.B. Hunt with an improvement that I see fit within my position. Essentially, being critical yet constructive of areas I believe the company can improve gives presence to my voice and demonstrates a commitment to improve the company overall. Keeping your resume up to date with your experiences and achievements provides more context to your development as an employee and future leader within the company. Therefore, this is a necessary step in the process of moving forward from your internship.

### **Seek Constructive Criticism from Your Managers**

As mentioned earlier, intern managers are committed to improving your overall knowledge and experience in the field of supply chain and want to see you succeed. In the words of Norman Vincent Peale, "The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism." Our internal biases prevent us from seeing some of the things we aren't excellent at, and understanding your weaknesses will set you apart from others. Understanding your strengths and weaknesses from the lens of someone contributing to your development is paramount to your success. Ensure that you are open to receiving praise and criticism alike from your managers so that you may open up new opportunities for personal and professional growth.

### **Use Your Internship as a Launchpad**

Internships prepare you for the next step in your career. Personal and professional growth are attainable no matter the position you hold in your current role. Remain open

to new experiences in your role and constantly expand your knowledge within it. Learning to hold onto those experiences and combining them with dedication translates directly to industry success. Rely on and promote your experiences as an intern whenever you apply elsewhere after it ends. Stand on your experience and let that propel you towards a career. Internships, especially in supply chain, provide crucial knowledge that you might now gain in the classroom, and being able to appreciate and quantify that knowledge will accelerate you into a new role successfully.

Overall, internships create many opportunities for students to enter the workforce directly after graduation, and in a dynamic industry like supply chain, experience is even more relevant for success. Following these tips will prepare you for what is to come so that you may jumpstart your professional career and start your career successfully.

## SWOT Analysis of J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc.



*Screenshot of video regarding my internship at the J.B. Hunt On the Hill Intern Office, partnered with classmates and coworkers Kendall Benson and Parker Shearon*



## *J.B. Hunt Internship Reflection*

Transportation is a critical piece of the greater supply chain puzzle, and a necessary component of every division of the business. Without the pivotal key of transportation, the greater supply chain would fall apart as we know it because all aspects rely on the transfer of goods, services, and information throughout. In my time as an Intermodal Appointment Intern, I have gained unique and valuable insights regarding the intricacies and drawbacks of rail transportation by working alongside operations professionals in the field, communicating with customers, and ensuring value-driven results through on time delivery for all parties involved.

### Background and Company Overview

J.B. Hunt began over 60 years ago, just outside of Little Rock, Arkansas as a rice hull operation, started by Johnnie Bryan Hunt and his wife, Johnelle. After purchasing five trucks and seven trailers, the company grew exponentially and eventually shifted to their current headquarters in Lowell, Arkansas. The unique and creative leadership of J.B. Hunt in the trucking industry led them to gain the business of Walmart Inc. and accelerated the company to unprecedented growth, becoming the largest publicly traded transportation company in America. Despite its humble beginnings, the company has grown to now offer solutions in Dedicated, Truckload, Intermodal, and Final Mile services all over North America. Additionally, the company is an industry leader in safety and technology innovations, and their continued efforts to create the most efficient transportation network in the United States has been met with great success. Regardless of the changes the company has experienced in the past six decades, one thing has remained constant: their dedication to workers.

### **Company Culture**

J.B. Hunt's core ideals are people, technology, and capacity. During my onboarding and regularly during my time as an intern with the company, I was reminded that people are what drive the company's success. The company culture puts its employees and their families before everything else, ensuring that their needs are met regardless of their background. In fact, J.B. Hunt demonstrates the value they place on diversity and inclusion in their own corporate structure to reflect a broader culture of respect for all individuals regardless of their connection to the company. Through employee resources groups such as GROW and AAMERG, the company maintains this welcoming and encouraging environment throughout the entire community.



## Personal Learning Objectives

My personal learning objectives for this internship with J.B. Hunt were established at the beginning of my employment. My primary goals I looked to achieve while working for J.B. Hunt were as follows:

### *Gain Understanding of Intermodal Transportation*

First and foremost, my major goal of this internship was to gain a better understanding of intermodal transportation and its relation to the greater supply chain. Through this, I intended to corroborate my experiences with coursework in the Walton College of Business to experience in a corporate setting. As the local idiom states, "experience is the best teacher." I initially intended to grow knowledge of intermodal rail transportation that had already been established via my courses. While college classes have been very impactful for my academic and professional development, the best education I could receive would come from workplace experience. This includes customer service, co-worker relations, company culture, specific software, and industry jargon and norms.

### *Soft Skill Development and Proficiency in Microsoft Office*

Second, I learned that soft skills such as communication and empathy were necessary aspects of a successful employee in the supply chain field. My primary responsibilities as an intermodal appointment intern involve contacting customers and dispatchers to coordinate delivery appointments via phone call or email. However, this is often met with challenges such as the availability of drivers, scheduling issues, and cooperation with receivers. Since intermodal shipments are vulnerable to delays due to sheer volume and service issues, often appointments would need rescheduled due to these issues, which can result in rescheduling or accrual of storage fees. Because of this, customers would often get upset with our teams, and it would be our responsibility to deescalate the issue and find a resolution. From these experiences, I learned the importance of direct and honest communication in addition to emotional intelligence and empathy. It is best to respond to these issues quickly and find a solution so that all parties involved are able to maintain their relationships. Additionally, many communications were carried out via email and other applications in Microsoft Office. These experiences have led me to better understand different functions within these applications, which is relevant experience regardless of where my career might lead.

### *Discern Career Path*

At the beginning of my internship, I planned to develop a clearer picture regarding careers to pursue beyond graduation. By gaining experience with J.B. Hunt in the

transportation industry, I would receive valuable knowledge regarding the best fit for me in the supply chain field, whether at J.B. Hunt or elsewhere. I originally intended to get a feel for a career with J.B. Hunt, especially since it is a popular destination among University of Arkansas graduates.

### *Establish Professional Experience and Presence*

Finally, I hoped initially to develop a more professional presence and add relevant experience to my resume through my internship at J.B. Hunt, as most of my previous work experience would not be considered applicable to a career in supply chain management. Through exposure to a corporate environment that will likely be home to my future career, regardless of which company I work for, I hoped to understand the expected norms of a corporate setting. While this was not the primary reason I pursued my internship, it is nonetheless relevant to my professional development as an employee in the supply chain.

### Responsibilities Details

As previously mentioned, my primary responsibilities as an Intermodal Appointment Intern involve the coordination of delivery appointments with customers based on information available from our rail operations teams. This typically involved reaching out many days before the containers were set to arrive at the final rail destination to ensure each party could schedule in advance. The ETAs of these containers were predicted by previous rail data in that specific region, based on their vulnerabilities of delays, potential service issues, and volume at the ramps. Additionally, I regularly needed to coordinate with members of our customer experience teams in order to gather information sensitive to each load, including container number, purchase order number, or unique shipment ID. Intermodal Appointment teams more frequently communicated with receivers than other divisions via phone calls, emails, and websites, which meant that many conversations must be managed at once. This required a consistent stream of communication between departments and customers alike to ensure valid charges were appropriated and each customer's needs were met. Through this, I often played a pivotal role in maintaining good relations with customers. The process of scheduling delivery appointments frequently involved conversations with account and service managers, accessorial teams, and other appointment clerks to ensure that all parties were on the same page.

While I was not specifically assigned to a certain project during my internship, I had many opportunities to familiarize myself with industry norms surrounding transportation and

professional communication. Further, I was provided ample experiential learning opportunities, which met all of my primary learning objectives.

### Analysis/Implications for the Company

Perhaps the most prominent business problem we looked to solve on the intermodal appointment team was smooth communication and initial accuracy of delivery appointments. Since this division of the company is primarily responsible for managing scheduling with receivers, communication with customers and internal teams is necessary for a valuable experience with the company. Nearly all issues regarding appointments revolve around a lack of communication between departments and customers. To mitigate this, we began to ensure that our Dwell team was notified of all delays that could cause charges for storage. Additionally, we created a more structured sequence for setting appointments by standardizing the comments left on each load to include the person with whom the appointment was scheduled, the method used to schedule (email, phone call, website, etc.), the initial date we requested to deliver, and the date that we reached out. This created a paper trail that was concise and efficient for a clear stream of external and internal communications.

Intermodal shipments on average travel just over 400 miles for each shipment, as that is when rail movements begin to cost less than over-the-road shipments. While fuel costs cannot be mitigated more than intermodal already offers, the detention charges can be reduced by avid communication and clarified streams of information. By increasing the knowledge of all teams involved in the shipment of the container, better preparations can be made to avoid excess charges such as detention, creating more valuable shipments for the receiver at a lower cost.

When supporting intermodal rail transportation as opposed to over-the-road (OTR) shipments, price is often the most important factor to consider. However, many of these benefits are harmed by potential accessorial fees. To prevent this, our team has worked diligently to provide a basis of communication that ensures all parties involved are on the same page and we work to avoid these charges, as mentioned earlier. The efficiency of our operation is supported by the lower costs of fuel for intermodal shipments, and communication is supported by the employees, which is why J.B. Hunt values each employee greatly. By creating uniform streams of communication and a structure surrounding them, we marginally cut down on costs of accessorial fees and ensure that the customer is receiving the lowest cost delivery possible.

## Conclusion and Personal Evaluation

Now that my internship with J.B. Hunt is coming to an end, I have a much better understanding of intermodal transportation and the cost structures surrounding it. Through this experience, I have learned the importance of bargaining power of suppliers and carriers, the necessity of uniform communication processes, and the pertinent need for information transfer throughout the greater supply chain to create an efficient network globally.

The most valuable lesson I learned in my time with J.B. Hunt is the importance of streamlined communication, its effects on the flow of information throughout the supply chain, and the need for strong relationships for company success. In my coursework, I have been taught that the supply chain is the flow of goods and information connecting raw materials to the end consumer of the finished product, and everything in between. Despite only working in a small section of the supply chain, I gained an appreciation for the difficulties of communication and the flow of information. Often, our team would struggle to obtain all necessary information relevant to schedule a shipment, which impacted our ability to deliver value to the customers. However, this could be mitigated by improved forms of communication and better coordination among internal teams. Despite these issues, relationship building still proved to be a very necessary component of company success. For instance, a customer would call in regularly over summer to check on the shipments coming to their facility, who we will refer as Customer X. Customer X would always have an upbeat tone and be willing to talk, no matter who he was speaking with. Regularly, he would call in asking for me, and we would talk about his appointments, then discuss college football for a short while. Because of the rapport that we had built, we knew that there was an open and honest stream of communication occurring between us, which maintained the relationship between the two companies. From this experience, I discovered the value of relationship building between companies and its pertinence to success in the greater supply chain, as well as the necessity of soft skills such as honest, direct communication and empathy.

Additionally, I learned through my internship that the transportation industry may not be the best fit for my career path. Despite generally enjoying the fast-paced environment my internship offered, my talents might be best suited for another division within the supply chain, such as procurement or analytics. However, I would not have gained this valuable insight without my experience at J.B. Hunt, and I am very grateful for that.

Finally, my experience with J.B. Hunt has provided a great foundation for my career, as this was my first professional experience in a supply-chain field. From my experiences within a corporate environment, my professional presence has improved, and I have

gained a better understanding of the common practices and norms of a corporate setting. In addition, my skills have been honed for a diversified career path, as I have learned many relevant qualities necessary for success, regardless of the occupation I choose to pursue.

Overall, my internship experience with J.B. Hunt has given me a better understanding of myself, my own skills, and the things I must improve for future success. I am very grateful for this opportunity, and I look forward to the next step in my professional and academic career!