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Target Internship During the COVID Pandemic

by

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Advisor: Tim Riley

**An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of
Science in Business Administration in Finance**

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

May 14, 2022

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Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic has triggered both social and economic changes around the world. Retail companies have been at the forefront of these changes due to widespread supply chain disruptions and supply shortages. Companies have struggled to meet the challenges caused by the pandemic including supply shortages and social distancing. Target Corporation is the eighth largest big box retail chain in the United States (Tanha, 2022). It has faced the challenges with innovation and implementation of new programs this year. During the summer of 2021, I had the pleasure to intern at Target and witness firsthand how this large corporation embraced these unique hurdles.

This thesis examines Target from an intern's perspective by examining four distinctive departments within the company to determine how they were able to withstand the problems created by the pandemic and pivot to meet the needs of a changing customer. The four fields of focus will include: service and engagement, specialty sales, general merchandise, and human resources. Through the internship, I will demonstrate how the company operates all four areas to create a guest friendly experience, provide various products to satisfy guests' needs, remain profitable while implementing new and innovative programs such as curbside pickup, and maintain service with a staffing shortage. The experience and education gained during the internship will be analyzed to determine how the interactions within these four areas combine to impact the overall operations of the organization. Examples and results from the internship will be explored. From the internship and research, I discovered what makes Target successful; they are well lead, efficient in problem solving and implementing solutions, and innovative in providing a safe and guest friendly experience. Target was named Retailer of the Year for 2020 by Retail Dive Awards. Target's aggressive business strategies allow them to grow and innovate even during a pandemic and this sets them apart from many other retail chains.

Introduction

Target began as Dayton Dry Good Company in 1902 by George Draper Dayton. The first actual Target was founded in 1962 and since then, a Target store has been built in all fifty states (Nolen, 2019). Target's purpose and history page listed that in 2020, Target had a total revenue of \$93.6 billion, 1,926 stores in the United States, 48 supply chain facilities and over 350,000 team members. In addition, 5% of all profits go back into the communities they serve. Target has become a powerful retail company that continues to grow, innovate, and adapt quickly to the ever-changing and challenging times.

Target continues to honor the guiding principles of Mr. Dayton for his stores were "known for dependable merchandise, fair business practices and a generous spirit of giving", according to Target's website. Valuing the guest and being a steward to the community set Target apart from other retailers. Target has a variety of acronyms, slogan, and mottos that reflects the commitment the company has to its guests. According to Target's corporate website, in 1994 Target's slogan was "Expect More. Pay Less." The Target purpose is "to help all families discover the joy of everyday life" and Target's mission statement is "to make Target the preferred shopping destination for our guests by delivering outstanding value, continuous innovation, and exceptional guest experience by consistently fulfilling our Expect More. Pay Less. Brand Promise" (Posts, 2021).

An exceptional guest experience is central to Target's daily operations. GUEST stands for Greet, Understand, Engage, Solve, and Thank. One of the first lessons I learned in my training was that we call our shoppers, guests, not customers because it presents as a friendlier

more welcoming environment. Target focused on the fact that the guest is always correct, and the team member should always go above and beyond to make their experience at Target a positive one so to encourage them to continue shopping with Target. Known for their enjoyable shopping experience, there are nine reasons for Target trips and most of them include the shopper leaving the store with more than they anticipated buying. The nine reasons for a Target trip include: replenish, seasonal, out stop, discovery, deal finder, life event, occasion shopping, major purchase, and treat yourself trip. As an intern, I learned how the organization promotes each of these areas.

During Covid-19, Target was able to take a new approach to how guests can access and shop at Target with the implementation of drive up or curb side pickup, ordering online/shipping and Target's partnership with outside companies and apps such as Shipt. Target made a shift in staffing by increasing the number of store fulfillment team members to meet this growing consumer need. Shipt, Instacart, and other similar apps allow consumers to have their groceries picked out, bought, and delivered by a third party. These systems were used extensively while I was an intern. It is an easy process for those customers who wanted to avoid in-person shopping and close social contact. Team members would select the products and check them out through an app on a device specifically for this new implementation. This is a company that has great potential to make shopping more accessible and welcoming to all for years to come.

Over the summer of 2021, I had the privilege to intern at the Target store T1891 in Conway, Arkansas. During my eight weeks, I was able to better understand the processes within the four departments of service and engagement, specialty sales, general merchandise, and human resources; and discover exactly what needs to happen to give guests this welcoming environment in which they seem to spend hours. I was able to shadow four Executive Team Leads (ETLs) and T1891's Store Director (SD) to learn and implement the processes and eventually lead the different departments and teams.

Weekly Reviews

Throughout the eight-week Store Executive Internships with Target, T1891, I was required to have weekly progress meetings with my mentor and every other week with the store director. My mentor meetings were conducted by the human resources executive team lead (HR ETL), Hannah C. and SD, Shaun E. In my weekly reviews with Hannah and biweekly reviews with Shaun, I would provide explanations and ratings based on how I felt I preformed the previous week, and we would compare our opinions and set new goals for following week, discuss the next week's agenda, and set new challenges or projects. Each weekly review was compartmentalized into three main takeaways and had sections for my strengths, my opportunities, and setting goals. Finally, the last page was a rating scale from exceeding expectations, meeting expectations, underperforming expectations.

Week 2 Status- Intern Summary	
Share highlights/what you've enjoyed most during the first 2 week: •	Share challenges/what you didn't enjoy: •
What are two strengths you've showcased since starting: • Strength • Strength	What are two areas of focus or things you can improve upon? • Opportunity • Opportunity

Share your goals/what you're hoping to accomplish/develop/learn from this summer's experience: •	
Week 2 Status- Manager Summary	
Recognition •	
What are two strengths you've seen showcased since the interns started: •	What do you feel could be possible areas to develop based on observation/leadership team feedback? •
Discuss how the Intern can leverage strengths in future weeks: •	Discuss how Intern can develop in future weeks: •
Expectations for Intern 2 weeks into the program: •	
Indicate focus areas and priorities for the remainder of the program: •	
Developmental Summary	
During status, Intern and Manager should both rate Intern's performance on the blow job attributes and discuss any differences/similarities in ratings. Take time to discuss how ratings may have changes since previous statuses and reason for any change. 1- Unsatisfactory performance 2- Needs development 3- Neutral 4- Meeting expectations 5- Exceeding expectations	
Intern	Manager
Took initiative to learn how to be a Target leader by seeking out opportunities for growth and development 1 2 3 4 5	Took initiative to learn how to be a Target leader by seeking out opportunities for growth and development 1 2 3 4 5
Contributed to ideas and solutions to resolve business or team opportunities for growth and development 1 2 3 4 5	Contributed to ideas and solutions to resolve business or team opportunities for growth and development 1 2 3 4 5
Took initiative to seek out opportunities for growth and development 1 2 3 4 5	Took initiative to seek out opportunities for growth and development 1 2 3 4 5
Demonstrated willingness to take risks; stepped out of comfort zone, and took on new assignments 1 2 3 4 5	Demonstrated willingness to take risks; stepped out of comfort zone, and took on new assignments 1 2 3 4 5

Strived to gain an understanding of all business areas and develop business acumen					Strived to gain an understanding of all business areas and develop business acumen				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Actively participated in the internship program training activities, developmental opportunities, and events					Actively participated in the internship program training activities, developmental opportunities, and events				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
STORES ONLY: Helped deliver exceptional guest experience by ensuring team members are knowledgeable and empowered to support guests					STORES ONLY: Helped deliver exceptional guest experience by ensuring team members are knowledgeable and empowered to support guests				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Additional resources needed for future weeks:									
•									
Where is additional support/training needed?									
•									
Overall Intern feedback on experience?									
•									
Week 1-2 Summary of Intern performance					Notes:				
<input type="radio"/> Meeting Expectations <input type="radio"/> Not Meeting Expectations									

Prior to my internship starting, I was given the following schedule of events so there were clear expectations for the activities planned for the week. I was also given my work schedule for the eight weeks, so I knew my early and late shifts.

Table 1: Overview of Internship, Weekly Focus Activities

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>AREA</u>	<u>FOCUS</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>6/6-6/12</u>	Whole Store	-Store Tour -HR overview -AP Overview -S&E Overview -GM Overview -Volunteer at Foodbank
<u>2</u>	<u>6/13-6/19</u>	Service & Engagement	-Front End Routines -GUEST -Loyalty Programs -S&E Metrics -Talent Development -Shadow TMs -Status w/Hannah & Shaun -HR/S&E Partnership

<u>3</u>	<u>6/20-6/26</u>	General Merchandise, Fulfillment, & Food Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Opening Leader Basics -AD Set -Fulfillment Basics -Unload/Trailer Sort -Modernization -POG/Pricing -DBO Routines -Leader Shadow -TM Development -Status w/Hannah
<u>4</u>	<u>6/27-7/3</u>	General Merchandise, Fulfillment, & Food Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Closing Leader Routine -Food Safety -Starbucks Standards -TM/TL Expectations -GUEST Experience -F&B Signing Standards -Vendor Partnership -Leader Shadow -Ecolab Walk -Status w/Hannah & Shaun
<u>5</u>	<u>7/4-7/10</u>	Specialty Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Style expectations -Style Basics -VM Basics -Style POG/Pricing -Opening Leader Routines -Style Truck Process (Salesfloor push) -Style Backroom Processes -AA Unload/Sort -VM Routines/Partnerships -Volunteer at Foodbank -Status w/Hannah
<u>6</u>	<u>7/11-7/17</u>	Specialty Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Beauty Expectations -Beauty Basics -Workload Planning -Talent Management -Reporting (Spec Sales) -Tech -Closing Leader Routines -Status w/Hannah & Shaun

<u>7</u>	<u>7/18-7/24</u>	Human Resources	-Closing Leader Routines -HR Routines -Staffing/Recruiting Schedule Planning -Interviews -Business Unit Reviews -Training -D&I -Volunteer Planning -Culture -Status w/Hannah
<u>8</u>	<u>7/25-7/31</u>	Focus Area: Service and Engagement	-Focus Area (S&E) -Run Front of Store Reward Program Focus -Mock Walk -Run Store -Grad Walk -Final Review Status w/Hannah & Shaun

Internship Weekly Recap

My primary duties during my internship were to pull metrics for the area I was working in for that week, make plans for the week on what needed improvement, partner with team leads and team members on how processes are going and what could go better, and lastly offer assistance to my executive team leader for the week. The first week I rotated through every area of the store and received a brief overview of what I would be learning and what is crucial to that area to contribute to the successful running of a Target store. I ended week one by volunteering for a day at the Arkansas Foodbank. I enjoyed this experience, and it was clear there was a well-established relationship between the people at the foodbank and the Target team members. The Target values of giving back to the communities were realized in these activities of sorting and bagging food.

I began week two in the Service and Engagement area (S&E). I learned how to do returns and exchanges, drive up and pick up routines, check lane, self-checkout (SCO), and line busting (LB) routines. Line busting is the process of directing the guests to the best checkout lane and moving everyone through as quickly as possible. It also involves selecting guests with large items and checking them out with a handheld scanner to help the checkout process move along smoothly. I was dreading working the register but ended up enjoying it since I had direct contact with the guests and could ask them about their shopping experience. I also spent time learning the process for cash office and checking out the zebras. Zebras are hand-held devices that help you locate items in the store. I created a board so team member could check out and return the devices and be held accountable for their devices since lost and uncharged devices had been a problem. During this week, I also spent time with the Asset Protection (AP) ETL. He gave me an overview of the camera and security system. He also shared with me his experiences dealing with shoplifters. On my last day in S&E, I was given the opportunity to lead the front of the store and make sure all team members were efficiently doing their tasks and handling rush hours properly, checking metrics, and finding those areas we need to focus our efforts. Out of the eight

weeks working in all the departments, this area of the store seemed to be the best fit for my leadership style, my interests, and opportunities.

Week three and four I spent my time in General Merchandise (GM). I began with learning the process and procedures for unloading the truck for the day and pushing the product onto the floor. My Target store in Conway is a high-volume store that needs to be replenished more often and therefore receives seven regular distribution center trucks (RDC) a week and four food distribution center trucks (FDC) a week. With this heavier workload the employees “on the line”, those receiving and sorting the packages as they come off the truck, must be efficient, organized, and hard working. I saw firsthand how time consuming and exhausting unloading a truck at six in the morning can be, especially when it is required seven days a week. By physically taking part in the unloading of the trucks, I learned how important the loading of the trucks at the distribution center is. If the trucks are overloaded and poorly stacked from distribution, the unloading process is even more difficult and time consuming for the store team members. As the merchandise is unloaded from the truck, it is sorted by department and organized into uboats and flats. These are then taken to the various departments in the store to fill the shelves. Replenishing the store occurs from 6am to 8am when the store opens. The uboats and flats are to be off the sales floor before the store opens to guests. Each employee has a specific area that is strictly their area, and they are referred to as a Designated Business Owner (DBO). Each area is responsible for pushing their product to the sales floor, zoning the area by straightening the shelves and removing any items that do not belong in the area. They are also responsible for changing prices, shifting fixtures based on corporate’s designs, back-stocking, and filling products, and setting POGs (planograms). General merchandise owns the largest percentage of the store with market, home, and all other hardlines. While in GM, I helped run metrics, check on the status of the truck and push for the day, made sure the DBOs were getting their pulls done for the day, and checking on fulfillment. Fulfillment is one of the most essential and chaotic sections of our Target store. Since Conway is a high-volume store, we have a high volume of order pickups (OPUs) and ship from store (SFS) orders. Most days our store had over 300+ items in the SFS que and it all needed to be picked from the floor or backroom and packed to be ready to ship out by 4:30pm each day. Our OPUs was another high-volume area with a tight time frame. Orders had to be picked and placed in a location ready for the guest to pick up within two hours of the guest placing the order. General merchandise was a difficult section because all the other areas of the store depend on the truck being unloaded quickly so the products can be pushed and guests can shop. The goal is to have the truck unloaded and merchandise on the shelf by 8am when the doors open, but Covid made this extremely difficult due to early morning call-offs due to sick or exposed team members and the large volume trucks with two thousand items or more.

Week five and six focused on specialty sales which includes technology, beauty products, and clothing. In specialty sales, I was given the opportunity to work alongside both technology and beauty employees to get a better look at the team member side of the operations. I was involved in helping with new sets that were to be planned, mapped out on the floor plan, and set merchandise. I spent time with the visual merchandiser (VM) to see how and why the store is set up in the way it is, along with discovering the importance of mannequins and their outfits. Corporate sends out planograms that are to be followed as closely as possible in all areas of the store, so all Target stores look the same and are easy for the guest to shop. On July 12, 2021, at 6 AM, I assisted in setting the men’s new Levi set and saw all the planning of fixture locations come into play and the importance of planning the design and layout of the floorplan in advance

of a huge set such as Levi's. This new set required five team members and 6 hours to complete. During my second week of specialty sales, I was given the opportunity to lead the area by checking metrics, checking in with the team members to make sure the department was being zoned, products being pushed on time, pulls were being done, and the area's appearance met standards. I enjoyed specialty sales and learned so much about the preparation involved in making changes to the floorplans including merchandise, fixtures, and staffing. It's about location and presentation of products.

Human Resources was the focus for a very busy week seven. The responsibilities of the HR team are extensive, and the pandemic added complications to this already complex area. Duties HR conducts on a day-to-day basis includes: the hiring process, coaching, termination, scheduling, delegating tasks, and staying in communication with the other executive team leads and store director. While in the human resource rotation I was shown the opening leader on duty (LOD) responsibilities, mid-leader on duty objectives, and the closing shift operations. I learned that most Target stores no longer have an opening, middle, and closing leader on duty. Conway however has kept this system due to their store volume. I found it to be extremely effective and it created more interaction between the leaders each day. It improved the communication on what was expected each day, opportunities and strengths of the store, and what objectives need to be met. The early LOD opens the doors for the first shift of employees at 6 am and takes calls from employees who are not able to make their shift. Early LOD opens the store for guests, supervises the truck unloading process, fulfillment team picking and packing on time, and any other issues that arise. At 11 am, the early LOD hands off store responsibilities and communicates store needs to the mid LOD who walks the store with the early LOD. Together, they identify any issues and set expectations for the remainder of the day. Lastly, the closing LOD takes over at 3pm and handles all situations and closing the store which is at 10pm on a weeknight and 11 pm on the weekends. Human resources was a complicated area but also one with the most behind the scenes tasks. They dealt with employee situations including employee complaints, tardiness, callouts, interviews, and areas with slow operations. Human resources was particularly challenging during my internship with the number of team members who would become ill with Covid. Entire teams would become infected one after another once one member had contracted it. HR would spend a lot of time finding coverage for areas hardest hit by callouts. I participated in screening interviews and training of new team members.

Finally, my last week was considered my focus week where I decided based on my experience in all the departments which one I would like to spend my final week and put my new skills to the test. I chose to return to Service and Engagement for my focus week. I found S&G to have the most interaction with the guests, the ability to save a guest from having a bad experience and opportunities to engage with the team. I enjoyed this area the most since it was busy, exciting, and always had something that needed to be done. I enjoyed interacting with the guest and helping them move quickly through check out by line busting. I enjoy being busy and service and engagement gave me a sense of accomplishment by dealing with multiple areas. While spending more time in service and engagement for my focus week, I realized my hands on leadership style is very effective in this fast-paced environment. It also allowed me to jump out of my comfort zone and resolve guest and employee issues. I took every opportunity available and ran the front end of the store to the best of my abilities by checking in with the workers, assisting during rush times, and pulling metrics to stay ahead of issues. I responded to net promoter score (NPS) survey complaints and compliments, dealt with upset guests within the

store, interviewed candidates, and discussed the service and engagement portion at the Executive Team Lead meeting with the store director.

One of my focus projects during the week was to increase the number of guests participating in Target's reward programs. Target Circle and RedCard are the two ways to join Target rewards program and receive benefits from shopping at Target. Both programs can be used for in-store and online purchases.

Target Circle is a loyalty program where you can earn 1% in Target Circle earnings rewards every time you make an eligible purchase with non-RedCard payment. Benefits include earning 1% when you shop to redeem at Target later, access to deals and offers just for you, a celebratory 5% off on a shopping trip for your birthday, and every time you shop with Target Circle you earn a vote ("Target Circle", n.d.). Votes can be cast to help direct where Target gives back to your community. Target Circle can be used for in store purchases by either entering your phone number in the keypad by checkout or scanning your Target Circle barcode found in your Wallet in the Target app on your phone.

According to Target's website the RedCard program is used by signing up to receive either a debit or credit card of your choice. RedCards allow the guest to save 5% when you pay with RedCard instead of earning only 1% with Target Circle. Both Target Circle and the RedCard can be used together on every purchase and stack the benefits at checkout. RedCard also allows for additional benefits such as an additional 30 days for returns and exchanges, free shipping on more items, and more special and exclusive deals including 5% off at any in-store Starbucks, top deals, clearance, and specialty gift cards ("RedCard", n.d.). Target also used the incentive of \$40 off a future qualifying purchase over \$40 when approved for a credit of debit RedCard. In the stores these two programs are pushed heavily at both checkout lanes and self-checkout in order to create and keep loyal customer and incentivize them to come shop with Target time and time again. During my week in service and engagement, by focusing our efforts on these programs, we were able to increase applications by 20% over the previous week, boosting all metrics into the green for day and week to date.

- Reward Program

Metric:	Increase Over Previous Week	
Target Circle %	55%	(goal is 40%)
RedCard %	100%	(goal is 100%)

Week 1: June 7th – June 12th, 2021

Main Takeaways

- **Takeaway #1:** Orientation for Target Team Members: Fundamentals - Care, Grow, Win Together
 - "We care by showing up for each other and treating one another with respect; we grow by investing in our people, their development and opportunities to reach their fullest potential; and we win together by leaning into our collective power to accomplish more, striving to make things better for each other and our guests."
 - "Joining Target means promoting a culture of mutual care and respect and striving to make the most meaningful and positive impact. Our purpose of helping all families discover the joy of everyday life is ingrained in who we are – it's how we care, grow, and win together as one Target team."

- Value: how we bring our purpose to life. Our value represent how we present ourselves to the world as Target team members. These values stand out at Target as the elements that make us distinctly who we are. They are deeply ingrained principles that guide our actions and decisions.
 - Inclusivity: valuing diverse voices and approaches, being authentic and respectful and creating equitable experiences.
 - Connection: building trusted relationships, collaborating across business functions and recognizing and celebrating progress.
 - Drive: doing what's right for Target, our team and our guest(s), delivering results that matter, choosing progress over perfection and continually learning.
- **Takeaway #2: Community Outreach**
 - Target is a company that has a legacy of volunteerism by donating time and talent in the communities where they do business. Arkansas Food Bank was where T1891 donated their time and effort monthly.

Week 1 Reflection

After my first week at T1891 I knew that the next few weeks were going to be a great learning experience of how a successful team and store run from open to close. I learned the overall layout of the different departments and was ready to jump into my first rotation with Service and Engagement the next week. I enjoyed my time volunteering at the food bank and appreciated the importance that Target as an organization put on giving back to the community.

Week 2: June 13th – June 19th, 2021

Main Takeaways

- **Takeaway #1: Front End Routines**
 - This week I walked through the opening and closing of the front of the store, the daily routines and procedures for running the check lanes, self-checkout, exchange/returns desk, Starbucks, and drive-up fulfillments.
 - The front end is crucial to have fully staffed and organized in placing team members in spots they thrive and interact well with guests. It is also a fast-paced area where team members are held accountable and team leaders have to be ready to jump in to help and distribute and position people based on the activity of that time of the day.
- **Takeaway #2: Service and Engagement Metrics**
 - I shadowed S&E ETL, Brooke S., and was able to dive into the metrics side of service and engagement.
 - I was able to analyze the metrics on an annual, monthly, weekly, and daily basis year to date and look at predictions and forecasts.
 - Service and Engagement Metric Goals/Expectations:

Metric:	Goal:
Net Promoter Score	80
Save the Sale	25 Transactions
Line Busting	\$40,000
Target Circle %	40%
RedCard %	100%
OPU Wait Time	Less than 2 Minutes
Skip %	Less than 5%
Manual %	Less than 15%
Grocery Wait Time	Less than 2 Minutes
Return to Stock	100%
SRP %	Greater than 2.5%

Week 2 Reflection

I took an immediate interest in Service and Engagement because of the fast-paced environment at the front of the store. This is where SCO, OPU, LB, P&L, and all the metrics came together to drive results over the next few weeks. Service and Engagement partnered with Asset Protection ETL to track P&L. I was taught procedures for safety of certain products; electronics are expensive and have high theft rate, therefore video games, computers, and other high-ticket items are locked up or tagged. I took notice of how theft, stockout, overstock, and perishables play into the metric. Based on how accurate forecasts are for the period predicts the P&L rate. In Service and Engagement, I loved running the team because we had check lanes, line busting, pick up orders, returns, and exchanges, and on top of everything else we had to maintain a green NPS. NPS stands for Net Promoter Score, this score is based on surveys guests can fill out based on their overall experience in the store. NPS ranges from 0-10, 10 being the best and aims for an 80% or above each day. The front end became my focus area in week eight because the environment was intoxicating with the rush hours, non-stop work, and different divisions to manage at once.

Week 3: June 20th – June 26th, 2021

Main Takeaways

- **Takeaway #1:** General Merchandise Metrics and Lingo
 - General Merchandise ran by ETL Brad M. was a busy week learning processes that included: unloading and sorting RDC and FDC trucks, setting POGs, and fulfilling orders.
 - General Merchandise Metrics and seasonal fluctuations.
- **Takeaway #2:** Designated Business Owners
 - DBOs are experts in their areas and know the products better than any other team member or leader in the store.
 - Their tasks are to clean and prep their areas before opening, assess the area and fill areas of vacancy, work the truck and find products that they need, keeping their area shoppable and assisting guests any chance they can.

Week 3 Reflection

General Merchandise is a difficult department in the store to lead because all the areas of the store depend on how efficiently the truck is unloaded. It is the starting place for merchandise and drives how the store looks and what is available to the guests. Adding stress to working in this area is the expectation for most of this to be completed prior to the doors opening to the guests at 8 AM. I was amazed at how large the truck loads were and how effective the team members were at unloading, sorting, and filling the shelves. I was also impressed at the knowledge and pride the DBOs had when it came to their areas and products.

Week 4: June 27th – July 3rd, 2021

Main Takeaways

- **Takeaway #1: Seasonal Sets**
 - Summer set
 - Focused on pool gear and accessories, luggage for travel, outdoor furniture, and grilling gear.
 - Back to school set
 - This set was worked on for a week straight with overnight setting of the frames, products, pricing labels, signage, and more.
 - Back to college set, mini seasonal display, larger furniture, and appliances.
- **Takeaway #2: Fulfillment**
 - Pick and pack productivity metrics both with a goal of 100%
 - Item Not Found (INF) metric needs to be kept as low as possible. Substituting products is a great way to handle this issue but to a certain extent.
 - Ship From Store (SFS) or ship on time, is used to make sure we have picked and packed the products within two hours of receiving the guest's order.

Week 4 Reflection

General Merchandise runs most of the store from the back room, trucks, food and beverage aisles, seasonal area, and toys. I loved getting hands-on experience in this department and to gain a better understanding of how manually demanding the work was but also how large an impact it had on the entire store. It gave me a “big picture” view of the processes. This week I was able to learn about the importance of signage in the store but specifically in Food and Beverage (F&B). I learned how to check prices, create endcaps with clear appealing signs, and market products appropriately. I was also given the task to supervise fulfillment. Fulfillment has become a major revenue for T1891 with packing orders to SFS or OPU by the guest at curb side.

Week 5: July 4th – July 10th, 2021

Main Takeaways

- **Takeaway #1: VM, Visual Merchandiser**
 - The VM at T1891 is responsible for floor layout in the soft lines area. She is given maps, planograms, and floorplans for how each section of the store should be arranged. This includes what merchandise should hang on which fixture type, how many shelving units are in an area, and what clothes the mannequins need to be wearing.

- While shadowing the VM, it was evident the planning and precision from corporate to have each Target store set up in the same way to improve the guests experience and focus attention on the new merchandise.
- **Takeaway #2: Floorplan and Sets**
 - Levi set for men
 - The Levi set was my first large project in Specialty Sales with ETL Sarah S. Preparation and planning before a large set are crucial to its success.
 - Each set must be planned out by the VM, approved by the ETL and team leader (TL), and then run by the DBO. The shelving units are moved into position and other products are shifted around to meet requirements of three feet in between racks. The product arrives on the truck and is sorted out to its DBO and finally able to be laid out, signage hung, and approved by the SD.

Week 5 Reflection

During week five of the internship, I was shown the vision for the store and how layouts, signage, and new product launches come about. Corporate plays a larger part in the individual stores than any guest or intern would have imagined. Working with the VM was an incredible experience as I helped her make room for new sets, change out departments as the season or as holidays came and went. Most of all I was intrigued at the visual planning on paper and visual design apps before even moving a single shelving unit on the floor. I also appreciate all of the signs and graphics that hang from the ceiling even more now that I know the effort it takes to install them in the correct locations.

Week 6: July 11th – July 17th, 2021

Main Takeaways

- **Takeaway #1: Specialty Sales Metrics and Comps**
 - Out of stock, one for ones, truck size, DBO save the sale (STS), NPS.
 - 2020 the comps were different then they normally present because of the pandemic. This summer, 2021, when COVID-19 slowed there was a reversal in comps and swimwear, accessories, and cosmetics/beauty came back out on top. Guests were finally traveling again and not wearing masks so they need to replenish their makeup supplies and were ready for new clothes.
- **Takeaway #2: Closing LOD, Leader on Duty**
 - At T1891 there are three types of LOD, early, mid, and late LOD. The early LOD opens the store and makes sure all team members (TM) and TLs are on time and where they are supposed to be. Mid LOD makes sure the store is on schedule and handling the noon rush of guests. Finally, the late LOD of closing leader finishes all last-minute assignments such as picking and packing products, closing check lanes, checks that the trucks are secured for the night, and checking the building for guests and employees strangling behind.

Week 6 Reflection

In my last week of Specialty Sales with ETL Sarah S. I was presented with the metrics and sale percentage increases for the areas within Specialty Sales. The areas within Specialty Sales include beauty and cosmetics, electronics, and clothing and accessories. During the pandemic, there have been major changes in the top and bottom performers in Specialty Sales.

During a typical year, beauty and women's swimwear are the top performers, however, due to the pandemic more people were working from home therefore loungewear became the top selling area.

Week 7: July 18th – July 24th, 2021

Main Takeaways

- **Takeaway #1: Team Voice Survey**
 - The Team Voice Survey for T1891 for 2021 reflects the team members' opinions on different areas within the store and company. The responses to areas of interest include:
 - Leaders at Target are ethical and possess integrity- 75%
 - Target cares about my overall well-being- 58%
 - I have an opportunity to work on things that excite me- 63%
 - Overall, I feel like my career goals can be met at Target- 51%
 - I can see a clear link between my work and Target's strategy- 70%
- **Takeaway #1: HR Staffing**
 - HR ETL oversees scheduling applicant interview, continuing their application process if passed by the respected ETL onto the SD, and handling their on-boarding process if hired and accepted.
 - Each area interviews for their own departments and has various scenario questions, STAR(situation, task, action, result) based response questions, and questions to determine their level of knowledge over their potential area. This is to see if they would be a knowledgeable DBO.

Week 7 Reflection

During my time in the HR department, I gained experience by being on the other side of the interview situation and I was interviewing candidates for positions. Although the respective ETL for the department sat in on the interview, I conducted the process from start to finish. At the end I was able to share my opinion and reasoning with the ETL and come to a decision on the candidate. I enjoyed my time the HR department trying to put out fires, accommodate team member scheduling needs, and offer recognition for jobs well done. However, I found that I did not enjoy creating the schedules or not having a team.

Week 8: July 25th – July 31st, 2021

Main Takeaways

- **Takeaway #1: Final Walk/ Grad Walk**
 - Performed the Graduation Walk with District Store Director (DSD), Christopher B.
- **Takeaway #2: Final Evaluation**
 - Strength during the internship- communication, leadership, adaptability, willingness to learn, and positive attitude.
 - Opportunities during the internship- continuously stepping out of my comfort zone. Target was unable to extend an offer since I would not be available to start in June due to my acceptance into the Accelerated MBA program. I was encouraged to follow-up after graduation.

- **Takeaway #3: Final Projects/Implementations**
 - Save the Sale (STS) and Service and Engagement metric board
 - Zebra Project
 - Rewards Program

Week 8 Final Reflection

The Store Executive Team Leader Intern program was a time to learn how to lead, motivate and influence a store team, including the opportunity to lead departments. It's one's leadership that guides the team to achieve sales goals and maintain budget controls. Target supported me through the extensive training to help me grow as a strong executive team leader Intern ready to take on the Grad walk my final week. I was given the opportunity to walk Christopher B. and Sarah P. throughout the different departments and explain the work I provided, lessons I learned, projects I managed, and report metrics for each area. My internship was an incredible experience and allowed me to gain major insight into the world of retail. I was also made aware of my passion for leading teams, overseeing projects, and analyzing metrics.

3 Learning Objectives

My first learning objective was to understand the importance of people and how training the team impacts customer service. My action plan was to observe team interaction with the guests and how it impacts the company. Throughout the internship, I was able to watch guests as they moved throughout the store. I had direct contact in the service and engagement and technology areas. Service and Engagement has Net Promoter Score (NPS) which helps better measure the guest service the store is providing. At the bottom of all receipts is a note and website address encouraging guests to fill out a survey about their experience while shopping at the store. The NPS metric is a very important way to track guest satisfaction. Guests rank the experience on a scale of 1 to 10 with ten being the best score. One bad survey can negatively impact the overall score for the entire day especially if there are few surveys submitted for the day. I was able to track the NPS score throughout my eight weeks. The goal of NPS is to have a score of 80% or better for all measurements, year, month, week and day to date. I also established a competition to see who could receive the most positive mentions in the surveys. I was impressed at how many employees not in technology or check lanes were mentioned for their hospitality and assistance. This showed me the importance of cross training employees so they could be helpful in all areas. I noticed how every ETL was able to answer questions that pertained to other areas of the store and not just their own department. I observed as leaders leaned on each other for advice and assisted each other in all types of projects. This assistance traveled down to team members being able to shift from area to area when short staffed or guests needed help, they knew the area just as well as the designated business owner of that area. Training and cross-training of the team certainly impacts guest service, and it was reflected greatly in NPS.

The second learning objective was to understand how goals and plans were communicated across departments and shifts. I was purposeful in my internship and my desire to learn what was happening each day, but I wondered how the average team member knew what the plan was for the day and how they were included. Communication is difficult in most organizations, but I could understand how difficult it would be across departments and shifts. There was no daily email going out to team members, and I soon learned that verbal communication was driving the efforts of the team. The Monday store director meeting was how the ETLs learned what was most important for the week. Each Monday, the store director would

meet with the executive team leads and discuss a wide range of issues including team member issues, department opportunities, and new planogram sets. It was then the ETLs job to share this information with their team. Information was also communicated across departments on the morning walks before the store opened. The ETLs walk all departments together and make a list of all the opportunities in the store.

Third learning objective is to discover the advancements in e-commerce, in store pick, and curb side pickup availabilities in meeting guest demands. The action plan was to go through the different departments and examine how these new implementations to the business have impacted the store to provide these alternate forms of shopping at Target as well as see how it impacts the finances. In my second and third weeks of the internship, I was able to watch the process of the fulfillment team filling the orders and either packing and shipping the orders or placing the orders up front for the guests to drive up or walk in to receive their orders. On the device I carry every day I can see the number of orders in locations ready for pick up, the number of products needing to be picked for the day to ship off or placed in a pickup location, and the sales for the day based on the area. I have seen through this internship how crucial these new implementations are for Target and their sales. I have noticed the amount of extra work that goes into providing these services for the guests. With the addition of the curb side, in store pickup, and another service called Shipt, there are more employees needed for picking the products off the floor and backroom, employees to pack the orders, more employees to run the orders out to the curb side pickup, and more metrics to keep in the green. With these new additions there are more sales, more loyal guests, and easier faster ways to shop at Target.

5 Recommendations for Future Interns

Throughout my internship I thought about information I wish I had known going into the program that would have allowed me to be better prepared and receive more out of my internship. Therefore, I have identified 5 recommendations for future Target Store Executive Interns. I hope these suggestions help the next intern get the most out of their quick eight-week internship.

1. Network and shadow as many ETLs and TLs as possible. The store is full of knowledgeable and talented team members.

Each individual you spend time with has something of value they can teach you. As an intern, ask questions and network at every given opportunity. Coming into the internship this was a goal of mine. I wanted to reach out and make new connections that could help me discover the best position for me if I decided to stay with Target after the internship. I also wanted to learn about their career paths and how they got to Target. I was successful in making connections with members of the team, but my greatest connection was with an ETL who had actually interned a few years before me. She shared with me her experience and guided me to help me avoid some of the mistakes she had made and was available when I had questions or needed advice. I also networked at the volunteer events at the Arkansas Food Bank. At these events, I could talk to interns and ETLs from other Target stores. We could compare and share our experiences. The volunteer events also gave me time to meet with the Food Bank team and learn about their processes. Target has various types of leaders to learn from, and they all offered to help me learn the company processes. They took pride in sharing their knowledge and specific skill sets with me. Interns should take advantage of all these different opportunities to network with team

members and leaders. They should reach out and make new connections, ask questions, and build working relationships.

2. Communicate effectively and ask questions.

Communication is key for most positions, but when you are an intern, everything is new from the people, the facility, processes, and even the acronyms. I carried a journal around and would write down acronyms and definitions. You need to speak the same language to communicate effectively, so it is important to understand the acronyms and terminology used in the retail environment. Target has an acronym for almost every function. An intern can be lost in a meeting if they do not know the terminology and they also need to use it correctly. I also found it helpful to write down people's names and positions. The team is meeting one intern, but the intern is meeting an entire team so take notes and refer back to them. Finally, communicate clearly to your team lead on expectations and goals for the week. An intern cannot accomplish a goal if they do not understand the plan and expectation for the week. Communication is one of my strong suits but there were still times I found myself following instructions and just going through the process instead of asking them to slow down and explain why we do things a certain way or how this benefits this department or the guests. I would recommend to future interns to learn more than the processes and stop and ask questions and have a better understanding of the whys. Ask questions when something has not been clearly explained to you. Interns need to learn quickly how to communicate with professionals of all levels to understand their position, responsibilities, and goals.

3. Do not be afraid to lead and drive results.

Use the internship as an opportunity to develop your leadership style. Observe the leaders around you and see what approaches are successful. Find out what works for you in your roles. Be confident in your skills and communicate to your team to drive results. I watched other ETLs throughout my eight-weeks and copied different characteristics of the way they lead others and made it part of my own leadership style. I also gained more confidence with each task I completed, each interview I ran, and every meeting I contributed towards. During my internship I found myself being a leader who was approachable, great at communicating what needed to be done, and actively listened to what was being said to me.

At first most people shadow, watch, take notes, and follow instructions, however at some point to stand out and excel at the position you must break out what is comfortable and take charge of the project, team, or area. In my first week on the internship, I shadowed ETLs and learned the processes and overview of the four departments, but I soon became confident enough to handle tasks on my own, point out strengths and opportunities of the store in morning meetings, and run the metrics for each department to report at meetings with our SD. The eight-week program goes by fast, so you must push yourself to take charge and show your abilities and leadership style. They hired you for the internship because they saw your potential. Show them you are ready for more responsibility.

4. Work in every area.

It's one thing to watch someone stock a shelf or look for an item, but you understand the process completely when you are the one unloading the truck and moving the merchandise from backroom to shelf. Ask questions, show up early or stay late when given the chance, and do not be afraid to make mistakes along the way. I would also recommend to a new intern to learn how

to read the metrics on Targets databases for all departments, learn to work the scheduler for truck inbounds, and learn the tactics for hiring new members. The University of Arkansas provides great resources to prepare students for the real working world, but no classroom resource compares to hands-on experience in the field

5. Evaluate your experience.

Ask yourself the important questions. What did you enjoy most about the internship? Is this something you would enjoy pursuing as your career? Do you have the right skill set to be successful in this environment? The eight-week summer internship allows you to deep dive into a field and not only learn about that area, but about yourself. I would recommend taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity to explore options, learn in a hands-on environment and discover what you enjoy doing.

Conclusion

I consider my time as a Store Executive Team Lead Intern at store T1891 time well spent. It was an incredible experience that provided a wealth of information in a short impactful time. I gained so much big box retail experience. I was able to work in each department of the store and learn the various processes which drive a successful Target. Most importantly, this experience allowed me to development my own leadership skills. I had never worked retail before my internship, but throughout my eight weeks I was able to learn and lead all four departments and successfully filled any role when called upon. My time as a Store Executive Team Lead Intern truly shaped me into the confident young professional that I am. Over the eight weeks, I learned to network and ask questions. I made connections with Target members at all levels of the store and gained valuable knowledge from each person I encountered. I also think I made a positive impact on the team and the guest experience.

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Appendix:
Glossary: Key Terms, Names, and Acronyms

AP – Asset Protection

Brad M. – Executive Team Leader for General Merchandise. He specifically handles food and beverage, vendors, truck load and unload processes.

Brian Cornell- Current CEO of Target.

Brooke S.– Executive Team Leader for Service and Engagement. She is in charge for the check lanes, self-checkout, Starbucks, and café, returns and exchange desk, and drive up and in-store pickup.

BUTR- Business Unit Team Review

Christopher B. – District Store Director of the whole state of Arkansas.

COVID-19 – An infectious disease that impacted supply chain and all realms of retail.

DBO – Designated Business Owner

DSD – District Store Director

ETL – Executive Team Lead

F&B – Food & Beverage

FDC – Food Distribution Center Trucks

Floorplan – The visual layout of the store designed by the visual merchandiser based on the company's overall vision for each store.

GM – General Merchandise

Hannah C. – Executive Team Leader for Human Resources. She oversees creating the schedules for opening, mid, and closing teams for all ETLs, TLs, and TMs. She handled call outs, COVID-19 related issues, and vacations. She was also my assigned mentor for the duration of my internship.

INF – Item Not Found

LB – Line Busting

LOD – Leader on Duty

NPS – Net Promoter Score

Out of Stocks – This is when team members come in and replenish the item from the backroom after it has been completely wiped from the shelves. A process that takes place in the morning and at closing.

OPU – Order Pick Up

P&L – Profit and loss statement. Used to summarize revenue, costs, and expenses incurred during a specific period.

POG - Planogram

RDC – Regular Distribution Center Trucks

RedCard – Loyalty program in the form of a credit or debit card.

Sarah P. – Human Resources Business Partner.

Sarah S. – Executive Team Leader for Specialty Sales which oversees all clothing and accessor areas, beauty, and technology.

SCO – Self Checkout

SD – Store Director

S&E – Service & Engagement

SFS – Ship from Store

Shaun E. – The store director for the Target in Conway, Arkansas, store T1891. Store director oversees the four different ETLs - service and engagement, general merchandise, specialty sales, and human resources.

Shipt – Third party app for customers to order from Target and other companies and have others shop and deliver to them.

STAR – Situation, task, action, result. A type of interview question that allows interviewees to give responses using real life experiences.

STS – Save The Sale

T1891 – The store number of where my internship took place, located in Conway, AR.

Target Circle – Loyalty Program, 1% in earnings.

Team Voice Survey – Yearly survey given to all team members to see where the store and team are based on appreciation, inclusion, growth, empowerment, strategy, ethics, engagement.

TL – Team Lead

TM – Team Member

VM – Visual Merchandiser

1 for 1s – Another way to stock items. When one item is bought one is pulled from the backroom to replace the one that was bought.