

Fidelity Next

Stand Out: How to Land your Next Co-op Role at Fidelity

Udbhav Bhardwaj, Fourth Year

Nam Pham, Fourth Year

Alex Willan, Fourth Year

Crawford Stricker, Host

Fid Next Student Stand Out:

Voiceover: Hello and welcome to Fidelity Next – a Fidelity Investments Canada podcast.

Fidelity Next is a podcast for post-secondary students, where we'll provide you with the tools you need to navigate your impending careers successfully in today's landscape.

Today we're pleased to present the first of two episodes planned and recorded by our Summer 2022 co-op students. If you're interested in landing a co-op or internship at Fidelity Canada, today's panel will share their experiences of working at Fidelity and offer advice that you can act on including networking and interviewing.

Leading the discussion is Crawford Stricker, recent grad of Dalhousie University. Crawford is joined by Alexandra Willan - George Brown College, Nam Pham - University of Toronto, and Udbhav (You-dee) Bhardwaj - Wilfrid Laurier University.

We'll turn things over to Crawford to get us started, but first - The views and opinions expressed on this podcast are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect those of Fidelity Investments Canada ULC or its affiliates. The podcast is for informational purposes only, and should not be construed as investment, tax, or legal advice. It is not an offer to sell or buy, or an endorsement, recommendation, or sponsorship of any entity or security cited. Read a fund's prospectus before investing. Funds are not guaranteed. Their values change frequently, and past performance may not be repeated. Fees, expenses, and commissions are all associated with fund investments.

[00:01:29]

Crawford Stricker: Hello. Thank you for taking the time. My name's Crawford. I'm the host for today's show and I'm a recent graduate of Dalhousie University. I've been with Fidelity since my second year, and I've had the pleasure of experiencing four different co-op terms with Fidelity. Fidelity has one of the best co-op programs for university students. They offer roles for all interests and educational backgrounds. Fidelity really invests in the learning and build of their students. I personally call it my second university experience.

[00:01:55]

Alongside me today are the following members of the co-op program: Nam, Alex and Udi. Nam is a fourth-year finance student and is a student analyst on the data analytics team. Alex is a fourth-year university student studying human resources at George Brown College and is in her third co-op position at Fidelity on the talent and acquisition team within the HR Department. Lastly, Udi is a fourth-year university student from Wilfrid Laurier who's previously done an internship on the internal audit team at Fidelity and is currently interning with the talent management team within the HR department. Today we will be speaking on the following topics: the importance of summer internships, how to network for co-op roles, tips for the interview process, why a co-op at Fidelity and lastly, networking within your role.

[00:02:42]

Welcome, everyone. Happy to have you today. Our first topic: the importance of summer internships. The question regarding this is what is the most valuable skill you've learned during your co-op term that you may not have otherwise developed during your school courses? How has your summer internship impacted your future career path? First off, Nam's going to answer this question.

[00:03:04]

Nam Pham: Hey, Crawford. Thanks everyone for coming. It's great to be here. To answer your first question, I would say that the most valuable thing that I learned at Fidelity is being very practical and learning how to be creative and compromise. I recently worked on a project. It was to just find a way to store weighted graphs data. I figured out very soon that we have to find solutions with the tools that we currently have. Initially, I wanted to adopt an entirely new system that would be managing this type of data but adopting a new system has a lot of risk factors; a lot of time will be spent managing the system, so it wasn't really a feasible solution. In that manner I have to wind back to find solutions with some of the tools that we have. After that, it's about relaying the knowledge that I've learned throughout that process back to the team so if they have any sort of similar issues, these are some of the approaches that they can [audio cuts out].

[00:04:03]

Now, in terms of the impact that it has on my future career path, initially I wanted to get into investment management. That was before I got into this role. In the data analytics team I was exposed to a lot of different projects that reach all areas of the business. You have risk management; you have redemption modelling, automation, database management, statistical analysis, etc., a lot of stuff. Going forward, I really want to go into this direction. I want to get a role that could reach all areas of the business working in data analytics.

[00:04:37]

Crawford Stricker: That's amazing, Nam. I wish you the best of luck in data analytics. Alex, what are your thoughts on this?

[00:04:42]

Alex Willan: Thank you, Crawford. To answer your first question, I feel that the most valuable skill that I learned during my recent term at Fidelity and my previous terms as well -all encompassed into one skill- would probably be communication, both written and verbal communication. Most specifically with my recent role with Fidelity, there is a lot of talking with candidates and new hires and just employees in general and so I had to learn how to communicate with everybody in different ways via telephone, email; just having in-person conversations over the phone, over Zoom calls. I feel like that's really strengthened my communication skills.

[00:05:34]

To answer your second question in terms of how the term has impacted my future career, I would say that it's given me a really good, solid idea of what's involved within the HR department. All the things that are involved in general, with payroll, compensation, talent acquisition, recruitment and selection... all those things involved that are within the HR department is really giving me a good understanding of what HR is all about. I feel like that's what I learned this term and that will help me understand my many roles, hopefully, in the future within the HR department. company.

[00:06:14]

Crawford Stricker: That's amazing, Alex. I wish you the best of luck in the HR department.

[00:06:17]

Alex Willan: Thank you.

[00:06:18]

Crawford Stricker: Udi, do you want to share your thoughts on this?

[00:06:21]

Udbhav Bhardwaj: Yeah, for sure. To add on to what my fellow guests said as well, I would say one of the most important skills I have learned at my time at Fidelity is the importance of being professional. Now, being professional is the way you carry yourself. It's your attitude and the ways you communicate with others and how you do it as well. I would say in university you do learn about the meaning of being professional, but when you're actually put in the workplace, that's when you actually understand what it means. At the end of the day, it's really helped me see how being professional can lead to a positive first impression with your co-workers. It's shown me how you can have successful interpersonal relationships as well. At the end of the day, it also has taught me how to have a lasting relationship within the organization I'm working in and the industry as well.

[00:07:03]

Crawford Stricker: Thank you so much for that, Udi. How has that impacted your future career path?

[00:07:08]

Udbhav Bhardwaj: I would say for me it's really helped me understand the importance of how to be around others, especially in this very specific work, especially in the corporate world. A very big part of working in an industry, in any organization, is the way others perceive you as well. Professionalism, that in itself impacts every single role, every single department and everyone you do work with. I would say that's how that has impacted my future career path.

[00:07:33]

Crawford Stricker: That's truly an important lesson. Thank you so much for that, Udi. Our next topic is how to network for co-op roles. First off Nam, do you want to explain a little bit about where you began looking to expand your network, maybe some of the different platforms you used?

[00:07:47]

Nam Pham: Yeah, for sure. I would say that the thing about networking is that you have to really start with yourself. You need to sit down and say what your goal is for networking. Then you go through some of the channels and then we continue from there. For me, I remember being my first and second year, it was a very difficult process landing that first job. To be honest with you I didn't really have an idea of what I was going to do. That was my networking goal, just to reach out and find out what career and what type of jobs; what type of projects are out there in the market for me to participate in. I would say that your school is a great place to start. Upper year students and my investment club has guided me very well through the networking process, what courses to take, where to head your career.

[00:08:39]

The next thing that I would do is to top your school. Usually, the school would have a very large alumni network and I think that this is a pretty good leverage that you can use. People are pretty willing to connect, or at least connect better with you if you have something in common with them. The next thing that I would say –this is probably the most important thing– is that you need to sign up for any sort of company-related networking events. Not only will you meet industry professionals or people who are working full-time at the company, they will also most likely walk you through some of the interviewing process. Afterwards, having all of that knowledge accumulated you know what your goal is, then you can start looking at some of the platforms. I would say LinkedIn, cold calling works as well, but for me, I feel like people generally respond better when you have some sort of mutual [audio cuts out] between the two of you.

[00:09:35]

Crawford Stricker: Thank you so much for that piece of insight, Nam. Next, Udi, how do you leverage your network to connect with potential employers on LinkedIn?

[00:09:43]

Udbhav Bhardwaj: Crawford, I think that the best way to actually connect with people is to talk to them. By setting up coffee chats with your connections and learning more about the company and the roles that you're interested in, it allows you to get your foot in the door. On one hand, you might have never actually worked in said company or said role, but people are talking about you because of those precious interpersonal relationships you've made through coffee chats. That in itself is a huge benefit because people in a company you've never worked at, for example, are talking about you, they know of you.

[00:10:12]

Another thing I'd like to add is that in my experience, one coffee chat can lead to so many more. You can always ask people you're talking to if they know anyone else who they think would be a very valuable connection to you. From there, the world's your oyster. You can talk to as many people as you can, as many potential employers and learn about whatever you want in any company.

[00:10:30]

Crawford Stricker: Thank you so much for that piece of insight. I truly know that I've used it. Whenever I've met with people, having that opportunity to figure out who else they might know is truly something beneficial. Thank you again for that. Alex, once you've secured a coffee chat, what strategies do you use to ensure to make a great first impression?

[00:10:47]

Alex Willan: In terms of making a great first impression, I would say one of the biggest strategies that I use –especially with an employee or with someone within the company– to do a coffee chat or just a one-on-one conversation just to get to know them better. The main strategy that Udi just mentioned that I was myself and to make sure that I was acting like myself and to not be too nervous or to worried about what I was trying to say or what I was trying to be. A good first impression is you want to make people think about you after they leave the conversation, after they leave the room with you. You want people to think “oh, she'll be good for this role” or “she'll be good for that role; they'd be good in this department or that team”. There's so many different opportunities.

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The other strategy that kind of goes into acting like myself is to make sure that you listen; to actively listen to what the person is telling you because that actively listening and then asking questions, asking follow-up questions, shows that you really care about what the person has to say, for what they're talking about in terms of maybe it's their university experience or how they came to work at the job that they're in. In a lot of cases, you might learn that people didn't end up at Fidelity because they were in a different career at the time when they came in university. It's all kinds of things and you can learn so many things, but I would just say actively listening and follow-up questions are probably the main strategy that I would use, and also just making sure that you're yourself in that conversation.

[00:12:39]

Crawford Stricker: Thank you so much for that, Alex. I completely agree. Actively listening and asking relevant questions clearly shows that you care about their time and what they have to offer. Next on, we're going to talk about tips for the interview process. First off, Nam, do you want to address how do you differentiate yourself from other candidates in an interview? What strategies have you employed to be successful in interviews in the past?

[00:13:03]

Nam Pham: Thanks, Crawford. Thinking back about the first interview that I had of Fidelity, I would say it's two things. I'll start with the first one. The second one is a little bit more interesting, in my opinion. The first one was I had a lot of preparation. After I got the interview offer it was two or three days before my interview. What I did was that I read up on the job description and I met up with some of the students that have previously worked on the role, not to know more about the interview process but more so to learn about what the team does and the sort of projects that they expect from their students. The thing that I gathered from this was that my first term was as a financial analyst supporting the advisor sales team. I knew that there was a lot of ad hoc fund performance. You are expected to pivot sales insight weekly. There's a lot of knowledge that you have to have in the macroeconomic space. Knowing this, I did read up on some of these things to prepare and then I look at my previous experience to see if I have any existing experience that are related to some of the things that these students have told me. When it comes into the interview, I try my best to make sure that these points come through; that I do have what they are looking for.

[00:14:19]

The second point is genuinity. I don't want to sell them lies and I think that one of the key differentiator for me during the interview was that I was ready to admit where I genuinely do not know something, but I will tell them that I will make an effort to take a stab at it... as of right now, I don't have concrete, 100% correct answer for them.

[00:14:41]

Crawford Stricker: Thank you so much for that, Nam. I completely agree. Preparing and figuring out how you connect to the role in a genuine and authentic way is so important. Alex, do you have any thoughts you'd like to add to this question?

[00:14:51]

Alex Willan: In terms of interviews, thinking back to my first interview I remember being so nervous. But I think one of the biggest things was going back to my first strategy is just being myself and just, again, actively listening to the questions. I would say on top of listening to the questions, my main strategy was I prepared an idea of what kinds of possible questions I would get asked. For every question that I came up with, I had three different answers, so that I can show

different variety of my experiences because I've had lots of experiences. I wanted to show every experience because let's say you have two questions, but you're using the same experience to answer both of them, that's not really showing a wide variety of your experiences. That's why it's a good idea to come up with possible answers for every possible question that you can come up with. Two or three is a good number; no more than that, obviously, but that was my strategy for interviews.

[00:15:59]

Crawford Stricker: I completely agree. Thank you so much for that. Lastly, Udi, do you have anything you'd like to add in terms of tips for the interview process?

[00:16:05]

Udbhav Bhardwaj: Yeah, for sure. To add on to what my fellow guests said as well, one thing I think is really something that can differentiate someone in an interview is really going in-depth and learning about the company for which you're interviewing just for a specific role. What that does, in my opinion –and I've seen it be very useful as well– it shows interviewers that at the end of the day you're not here for just a role; you also want to hear more about the company. You want to be the one with the company if I can say so myself. I feel like that in itself does leave a lasting impression with them. It shows that this one person who's here for an interview for this specific role read outside of the team and learned about the entire organization. He or she did what they could to learn more about us and I feel like that is appreciated and does set someone apart from others during an interview process.

[00:16:49]

Crawford Stricker: Thank you so much for that tip on how to set yourself apart. I really appreciate that, Udi. Our next topic is why co-op at Fidelity? We've had three students that have all chosen to return, so there's something they enjoy. I'd love to hear you, Udi, what set the Fidelity co-op program apart from other companies and why you returned.

[0017:05]

Udbhav Bhardwaj: For me, the one thing that sets Fidelity's co-op program apart is the opportunity to learn about a variety of different departments while working in just one specific team. As a student, most people don't exactly know what their career path is going to look like after graduation. Trust me, I was in the same boat as well a year ago. But by being able to talk to Fidelity employees from different departments, at events for the co-op program that Fidelity has, it's not only let me grow my network on one hand, but also learn about what kind of roles I would like to see myself doing after I graduate from university as well. I feel like that really –for me, at least– sets the Fidelity co-op program apart. It's just that exposure and opportunity to meet a lot of people and learn about them and from them as well.

[00:17:44]

Crawford Stricker: I completely agree. The chance to interact with so many different people really helps highlight areas that you would never have considered, so thank you for that. Next, Alex, how has your summer co-op term at Fidelity prepared you to be successful in future jobs and, again, why did you return to Fidelity?

[00:18:00]

Alex Willan: Thanks for that question, Crawford. I would say, for me, I keep coming back to Fidelity just because it has a really great organizational culture and really great work dynamic [audio cuts out] ...currently now and I will, hopefully, be working with in the future. It just has a really strong working dynamic with everybody and then a really strong

organizational culture. I believe that Fidelity is the kind of [indecipherable] you have tons of exposure to all different kinds of departments, all different kinds of teams and processes and policies, all kinds of things. I would say you ask questions and you're likely to get what you want. Employers are very willing to give you that kind of information that you're looking for even if it's outside of your department and they're willing to help you with all kinds of things. I think that's why Fidelity is a really good company to work for.

[00:19:06]

Crawford Stricker: I couldn't agree more, Alex. That all-encompassing exposure really helps highlight everything and prepares you for the future. What is a common misconception about working in the corporate world that you've learned while at Fidelity and, again, why return to Fidelity?

[00:19:20]

Nam Pham: Thanks, Crawford. The biggest misconception I had about Fidelity –or just the corporate world in general– is that it's investment firm; it's down on Bay Street. Everyone is so serious, they probably have a no-questions-asked culture as well. But let me just tell you, that's very far from the truth. Everyone is not always serious. They're very approachable. The culture is exactly what Udi and Alex said. A testimony to that and to my personal experience is that they promote learning. You're a new hire; you are always expected to ask a lot of questions. For my team, just personally, we have a scrum meeting that we do every week in which we share a lot of new topics, any new knowledge on data analytics. One of my most memorable session from that was we had a meeting where we looked at how the first image of the black hole was captured and some of the practical application that it has for our business. I think it was pretty cool.

[00:20:23]

Crawford Stricker: I completely agree. Every time you get the chance to learn about something new and figure out how really Fidelity is not all these misconceptions because it's this awesome place to learn and everybody loves questions and just wants to help you learn. It really makes it a welcoming place and makes you want to return. So, thank you for that. Our next topic is networking within your role. The question specific is, networking doesn't stop once you get to your new role. Can you please tell us about how you continue to build your network while at Fidelity and why it's important to network with others within your company. First off, Nam, do you want to give us your answer?

[00:20:58]

Nam Pham: Of course. Mine's a little bit of a weird one, but I believe that for networking it's important for you to maintain your existing relationships. For me, I took a year off from working just so that I could do school, but in that one year I went through a lot of changes: a lot of changes in where I live, my specialization. I actually relied a lot on my maintaining existing contacts at Fidelity to guide me through this process. It's very important. People at Fidelity, no matter if you work for them or not, they love to see you grow; they love mentoring you. I know at the end of the day if I'm lost anywhere in life, I can just call up my previous manager or some of the colleagues that I worked with; they would be able to give me some very good advice and guide me through any kind of storm that I'm in.

[00:21:51]

Crawford Stricker: Oh, I completely agree. I know I'm still in contact with my first manager as well as the others I've had. Whenever I have a major life decision or just some things I'm trying to work out, I'll always give them a call and run it by them. I really appreciate those relationships and they love to see me grow and it's just truly a great place to be around. Thank you for that. Next, Alex, do you want to give us your thoughts?

[00:22:13]

Alex Willan: I believe networking is really important just in general because it gives you –what I said before– it gives you that exposure of learning about other roles and learning about other people. But also, it gives you a great foundation base of contacts that you can go back through and be like “hey, I saw that there’s a role at Fidelity, is this a good role? or do you think I’d be good for this role, yes or no?”. You can ask them all kinds of questions and they would answer your questions and if they didn’t know how to answer your question, they would likely pass you off to someone else. That would also be another good contact for you to get in touch with, and that just expands your network base. I’m still in touch with some of my former managers as well, like Crawford said, and it’s been great having to reconnect with them on some level. It’s been a good experience. Networking in general is just very important, especially when you’re in a company like Fidelity because there are so many employees that you want to learn, and you want to have a really good foundational base in case you do end up having a full-time career at Fidelity. That is very helpful.

[00:23:30]

Crawford Stricker: I couldn’t agree more. Building that support system and having those that you can bounce ideas and questions off of surely helps in every way. Lastly, Udi, what are your thoughts on networking at Fidelity?

[00:23:42]

Udbhav Bhardwaj: For me, networking at Fidelity started off with literally ask my manager one question and that was “who does she recommend I reach out to and have a coffee chat with”. I kid you not, Crawford, since then I have asked everyone that same exact question. My policy is one person doesn’t know everyone at Fidelity, but a lot of people know a lot more people than one person does. Because of that I’ve been able to talk to people from different teams and different departments. Another benefit I’ve had from this is the fact that I’m a university student, right? I don’t have the same experience that others do who are working full time at Fidelity, but, by talking to them, it’s actually allowed me to learn more about how to navigate my own career path once I graduate. Actually, I’m able to sort of create a vision for myself one year down the road or even five years from now. I feel like just creating that network of people from whom you can get insights and advice, you can really learn how to apply that to yourself because they’ve been through the same phase we are in. At the end of the day, just learning from a network, growing a network, that in itself is a very big necessity, I would say, in this day and age too.

[00:24:44]

Crawford Stricker: Oh, I couldn’t agree more. It’s such an important source of information and knowledge. Thank you so much for your insight there, Udi. Lastly, a few additional questions we have. First off, Alex, what’s been your favourite thing at Fidelity in total?

[00:24:57]

Alex Willan: I would say my favourite thing at Fidelity in total ... I know this is a redundant answer but it’s probably the networking aspect of being able to connect with all different kinds of people. The team I work with... there’s a lot of people on my team, so communicating with them has been great because I get to learn and I get to just expose myself to different topics and just explore the different parts of my team and different parts of the human resources department, which has been really cool. I think networking and the learning aspect is probably my favourite part.

[00:25:37]

Crawford Stricker: There's nothing wrong with redundant when it's true. I completely agree; the ability to network has just been such a formative experience and it's really shaped my time at Fidelity, so I'm grateful for that. Udi, how do you stay focused during a summer work term?

[00:25:50]

Udbhav Bhardwaj: For me, I like to consider myself as someone who loves having a lot on my plate, I would say. One way I found to stay focused is getting out a sheet of paper the night before the [indecipherable] begins and just making a list of everything to do the next day. For me, personally, just the satisfaction of crossing each item one by one until there's nothing left really gives me motivation to keep on going just because the satisfaction I get from the work, it's right there. Once you cross something off a list, you're like, all right, that's done, on to the next one and then onto the next until the list is over. I would say, for me, just having that list every day is something that's helped me stay focused and do all my work and everything I'm responsible for on time and properly as well.

[00:26:25]

Crawford Stricker: I know I'd emphasize that exact same tool. It's always important to know what's the next goal, so you don't end up spinning your gears. Lastly, Nam, what is your top piece of advice for students beginning their first internship/co-op term?

[00:26:43]

Nam Pham: Thanks Crawford; I love this question. What I would say is that there is a lot of interesting roles within Fidelity. If you are like me, data analytics or whatever team that you're on, your role will most likely stretch to all aspects of the business going from investment management to risks, operations to sales and so on. If you really want to succeed at Fidelity, I would suggest that you take a lot of initiatives and learning about all of the aspects of the business and always ask for more projects. You will be receiving projects from all sorts of channels, from senior executive members, all the way down to the junior analyst level. Pick initiatives in your learning. It's a very welcoming environment. They always promote learning, so you should take every opportunity to do so.

[00:27:37]

Crawford Stricker: Life is one long learning experience and I just think that emphasizes that we never stop, so thank you so much for that, Nam. Once again, thank you, Alex, Udi and Nam for taking the time to provide such terrific insight. I know I learned something. For everyone else that's taking the time out of their day to come today, thank you so much for attending. We really appreciate having you. Have a great one.

Ending: [00:27:58]

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