

Nulo (name stands for “**NU**trition meets **LO**ve”) is an Austin based pet food company that exemplifies its quirky name. The founders of Nulo originally started The Pet Staff, one of the largest pet sitting and dog walking service in the U.S. based in Southern California. While working with The Pet Staff, they saw an escalation in overweight and diabetic pets with no healthy pet food alternatives and, thus, in 2009 Nulo was born. They hired one of the leading animal scientists in the nation and spent almost two years developing the healthiest dog and cat foods on the market. Nulo is a small, but rapidly growing company with a nationally renowned product sold in all Whole Foods Stores and in most pet-specialty stores.

Clearly, Nulo is a very unusual company compared to the types of companies most of my peers got funding to work for this summer. My passion is not pet food and I don't plan on going into the field when I graduate. That being said, this summer was the best work experience I have ever had. Working with such a small company was extremely beneficial to me because I was able to work with many different aspects of the company. At this young stage in my life, I know that I want to go into business, but I do not exactly know what field of business I would like to pursue.

I also found it very invigorating to be able to work for a company that I had no prior experience in. This unique situation allowed me to focus on specific aspects of my work (sales, marketing, social media, etc.) with my personal interests set aside. It helped me see what I truly enjoyed doing to assist me in my career choice. Because of this, every day was different. Although I did do some grunt work, as with any internship, I was able to complete a few very meaningful projects that I know impacted the company in an important way.

I first began learning about the product and understanding the philosophy of the company and once acquainted, I completed a number of different tasks. I generated social media contests and posts. I created several research reports for my bosses, such as the best survey company to help us administer questions to our customers. I helped brainstorm events we wanted to sponsor. I worked with excel to track the expenses and receipts we had, among a number of other assignments.

After doing these different tasks, I came to a point in my internship where I ran out of things to do. There are a finite number of expenses to track and blog posts to write. This lead to arguably the most important skill this experience taught me and that is to take initiative. I realized I could work harder for Nulo, so I talked to my boss and asked how I could best help the company. I was given two projects that lasted the duration of my internship that were the arguably most significant things I accomplished.

The first big project I undertook was scheduling and performing demonstrations. Because Nulo is a smaller company, they do not have the budget to spend money on large forms of advertisement such as television commercials. The most cost efficient way that I could help advertise was to complete demonstrations where I set up a booth with samples of the product and other merchandise and talked to people about what Nulo stood for and why their product is so great. I was given a lot of freedom in doing this and completed demonstrations from places as nice as the Four Season's Hotel (where we also donated \$3000 dollars to different pet charities as well as donated gift baskets for a silent auction) to regular Whole Foods Stores. By the end of my internship, I finished demonstrations at every Whole Foods Store in the Austin and San Antonio area and plan on traveling to Memphis to help them with one of the biggest pet expos in the United States in the fall.

The second big project I worked on was not for Nulo, but for my bosses previous company The Pet Staff. The company is doing so well that they are thinking of expanding into a new region. I was given the task to do market analysis on pet sitters and walkers currently in Austin to see if it were a place they would consider expanding to. I researched every company in the area and compiled a list of the competitors in order by size and threat. I then created a map showing the population size of every zip code, including the different locations of these competitors, and the exact spots where I believed The Pet Staff would have the most success placing their walkers. After this and other research, I gave a large presentation to my boss and was able to watch him craft a business strategy of how to enter into the region, which was work experience I couldn't have imagined gaining this young in my career.

This internship affected my career goals by persuading me to work for a company or in a field that is moral. Doing demonstrations were so easy for me because I didn't have to trick people or give an elaborate marketing pitch to sell the product. The ingredients of the product proved their superiority. It felt good to be selling something to people that would actually help their pet and not have to deceive people to get them to buy it. The passion my bosses worked with was unlike anything I have ever seen and I hope to one-day work for a company that I feel so passionate about and will help as many people as theirs does.