

## **Internship Report**

### **Company Background**

Atria Management Company, also known as Atria Senior Living, is a prominent provider of senior living services in the United States. Its headquarters is located in Louisville, Kentucky, and has been in operation for more than 20 years. It currently manages over 370 senior living communities throughout the country and in Canada, under the brands of Atria Senior Living, Coterie, Atria Signature, Atria Park, Holiday by Atria, and Atria Retirement Canada, and they also own Glennis Solutions, a senior living software that helps with running the communities. The company offers various services to seniors, including independent living, assisted living, and memory care, tailored to the specific needs of each resident. They also provide residents with additional amenities such as meals, transportation, and social activities. Atria Senior Living's dedicated caregivers are available around the clock to provide assistance as required. However, not every community has on-site caregivers. Instead, third-party services are provided, or residents can choose to seek services from Atria Homecare. The company's mission is to provide seniors with engaging and meaningful activities, personalized high-quality care, and a welcoming atmosphere that fosters a sense of belonging.

### **Work Setting**

During my internship at Atria, I worked in a hybrid setting, where I spent Mondays and Fridays working remotely and Tuesdays and Thursdays on-site. When I initially visited Atria during the interview phase, I was briefly shown around the office. The office was quite spacious, with various meeting rooms and conference spaces, private offices for those in management positions, open office spaces, and cubicles.

On my first day, I was placed in a cubicle near the PR/Comms team. The cubicle was equipped with all the necessary tools, such as a work laptop and monitor, to perform my tasks, and some Atria swag items to make me feel welcomed. The office had a vibrant and professional atmosphere, with employees actively engaging with one another and collaborating on various projects. I would usually just see different work teams taking up a conference room to all have lunch and work together.

During my on-site days, I had the opportunity to interact with different teams within the organization. I attended meetings, participated in brainstorming sessions, and even had the chance to observe how the marketing and sales teams interacted with the residents.

On my remote days, I was able to work from the comfort of my own home while staying in touch with my team through digital communication channels such as emails and MS Teams. I appreciated the flexibility of the hybrid setting, which allowed me to balance my work and personal life effectively, and the overall experience was positive.

## **Responsibilities**

The responsibilities for this position include assisting in administering and executing omni-channel communications programs. This includes writing content for company employees, residents, and families. In addition, the position requires assisting in online review management by drafting and posting responses, as well as monitoring social media engagement and comments.

Another aspect of this position involves assisting in storytelling functions. This includes helping with the interviews of residents, families, and employees, organizing and filtering visual assets like photographs, and even drafting content for the company's social media channels. The

position also requires assisting in managing employee content on internal digital platforms, including the internal company website platform.

Additionally, the role involves assisting in writing communications for residents and families on behalf of community leadership. This may include communicating personnel changes, community announcements, and other communications (what will be known as PCPI work). The position also involves assisting the Communications Designer in updating employee materials using Adobe Creative Suite, as well as managing workflow for creative jobs, including the company brand management software, to ensure all production steps are managed in an organized, timely fashion.

Finally, the position requires assisting in managing and executing regular support center-focused communications platforms and events, as well as performing other duties as needed and/or assigned. Overall, this position is a great opportunity for someone interested in gaining experience in communications, PR, and marketing.

Overall, I felt prepared for most of these responsibilities. In UofL, we had classes regarding social media, strategic communication, and some electives involving design work. What I felt unprepared for was the tone to be used in these communications, especially in a corporate environment. I understood that a professional tone was needed but to what extent, and it was also necessary to not have as much jargon. Fortunately, I received help on this while working at Atria and it did not become a major concern.

### **Expectations and Goals**

Before starting the internship, I had set some goals and expectations for myself. I wanted to improve my writing style and was prepared to write a lot. I also wanted to learn more about working in a corporate environment. I was very excited to work in a more formal office setting,

which none of my other jobs had. Additionally, I knew that other than the tools I already knew about, I would be learning to use media management tools that Atria uses. I also knew that some parts of the job involved social media content and I was prepared to do some content mining and drafting on that part. In the end, what I really expected was just to learn more about what public relations was, since I never contacted this field.

### **Experience Summary**

During my internship, I experienced both in-person and remote work environments. The in-person work environment offered several advantages, such as face-to-face communication, the ability to collaborate and brainstorm in real-time, and the opportunity to build stronger relationships with colleagues. This was particularly important for building trust and developing a sense of camaraderie among team members, which helped to foster a more collaborative and productive work environment.

On the other hand, the remote work environment offered greater flexibility, autonomy, and the ability to work from anywhere. This allowed for a better work-life balance, as employees could better manage their time and reduce commuting time. However, the remote work environment also presented challenges such as communication barriers, social isolation, and a lack of oversight, which could impact productivity and collaboration.

Both work environments needed a lot of communication skills to be able to get work done, and interpersonal communication and communication technology was constantly used. The interpersonal communication aspect will be face-to-face interactions and reading non-verbal communication. At times, if I were to find my manager or supervisor at a busy time, I could see some rush in the behavior and conversation. I tried to keep the questions short and left promptly

to continue the work. For communication technology, it was applicable for remote work when communicating via email or MS Teams. More is elaborated in the Learnings section.

As for my manager and supervisor, they provided excellent assistance throughout my internship. They offered thorough training on the tools and platforms we used, and were always available to answer any questions I had. They also provided detailed explanations of tasks and projects, and offered constructive feedback to help me improve my work. Overall, I would rate the quality of their assistance as excellent.

## **Learnings**

By the end of the internship, I completed all my initial internship objectives/goals and expectations, and learned a lot of new skills that I could implement in my future career. Some of the things I already expected and knew, such as needing interpersonal skills to communicate with my manager and coworkers, but being able to really apply it to a work setting just felt different. At the same time, I learned that I quite like working in a good corporate environment. There is always something to do and there is almost never a moment when I am bored. It is also nice to be able to socialize with the coworkers around the cubicle and get them to know better. At the same time, Atria was the kind of company that took care of employees really well, so they would hold workshops and other little events to get their employees active and engaged. I know that not every company is like this, but this experience let me know what kind of work environment I would prefer to find.

What I did not expect to learn was actually the media lists. I knew that I would be handling some communications, but never thought about press releases. I was able to experience the entire process from developing the press release document, gathering contact information of assignment editors, sending out the documents, and actually seeing it posted online by a news

outlet. This experience was very interesting and I really believe it is a skill that will help me in case I get into PR again.

In the end, I could relate a lot of the skills I have gained to UofL classes. I would say that for a PR position in Atria, the courses that helped me the most were Introduction to Communication (201), Communication Technologies (303), Interpersonal Communication (315), Newswriting (320), Strategic Communications (342 and 344), Public Speaking (111), and Business and Professional Speaking (112). COMM 201, 303, 315, 111, and 112 are all classes that helped me with all the communication documents. They helped me understand how communication within a business works and also how people perceive messages. There were times where I was sending an email and I had to reread it a few times to make sure that the information would not be unclear for the receiver. The same is done with the review responses. Interpersonal communication class also set some basics with communicating with coworkers in the workplace, whether I know them or not. For Newswriting class, I learned to use AP style writing, which was necessary in the news release documents I worked on. Lastly, the stratcomm courses were helpful with social media planning.

### **Other Comments**

During my internship at Atria Senior Living, I learned many valuable lessons about working in a corporate environment. One of the most important takeaways for me was the need for preparation and organization in the workplace. I found that the pace of work in a corporate setting can be incredibly fast, and that it is important to be proactive and prepared in order to keep up.

One example of this was in the preparation of documents. In my role, I was responsible for helping to write and distribute various communications to employees, residents, and families.

I quickly learned that in order to be effective in this role, I needed to prepare documents well in advance of when they would be needed. This allowed me to work efficiently and effectively, ensuring that documents were reviewed and approved by relevant stakeholders before they needed to be released.

I also learned the importance of effective communication and collaboration in the workplace. Working closely with the PR/Comms team and other colleagues, I saw firsthand how effective communication and collaboration can lead to better outcomes and improved productivity. By working together, we were able to develop more effective communication strategies and ensure that everyone was on the same page. As a side note, I have also seen coworkers getting second opinions from each other to make corrections in their work. The team collaborated with each other a lot and it could be seen through their interactions with each other in or out the office. Additionally, they would sometimes join each other in fun events outside of the office to get to know each other better.

If I were to have a permanent position of this type, I would first need to have the time for it. Although I am good at time management, I will need to clear out my schedule and commit to the full time position. Also, there are some skills that I should work on such as creative writing and decision-making. I noticed that the university does not really teach how to draft a review response, or at least I have not had a class regarding it. I did not know how to structure it and had to refer to my manager's writing. While writing the responses we also needed to be creative and not sound too repetitive for the readers. Decision-making was also a weak point of mine since I was asked if there were any projects I would want to take on. Unfortunately, I could not decide on a project and just ended up not doing it. I worked on the assigned work most of the time.

However, I would still seek out work that I was comfortable with and try to gain more practice on it.

## **Skills**

To excel in the position I held during my internship at Atria Senior Living, several key skills and qualities were necessary. Firstly, strong interpersonal communication skills were essential for success. This included the ability to communicate effectively with coworkers and external stakeholders, and to build strong working relationships. Clear and concise communication was particularly important when drafting and spreading various communications to employees, residents, and families.

Secondly, excellent writing skills were a must-have for this position. This included the ability to write compelling content that engaged the intended audience and conveyed key messages effectively. This was particularly important when creating content for the company blog, social media channels, and other digital platforms. We also need to be creative and empathetic when writing review responses, as many reviews can be more negative than positive. We will need to empathize with the reviewers and draft a response depending on their situation.

In addition, good time management skills were essential to ensure that deadlines were met and projects were completed on time. This involved the ability to prioritize tasks effectively, work efficiently, and manage multiple projects simultaneously. Strong work ethics were also necessary for success in this position. This included a commitment to quality work, attention to detail, and a willingness to go above and beyond when needed to ensure the success of the team.

Finally, an understanding of key tools and technologies used in the industry, such as Cision and Chatmeter, was important. Additionally, editing skills and creativity were also



valuable assets for this role, as they helped to ensure that all content produced was of the highest quality and aligned with the company's goals and objectives.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would recommend a PR internship at Atria Management Company for future students in the Department of Communication, and even any internships in general. My overall experience was very positive and the work culture was very cohesive. All the coworkers were very kind and helpful. In case I did not know anything or needed a refresh in the material, they were willing to take time out of their day to help me. I was able to learn a lot during my time there and actually found what kind of work I liked and disliked. I really do recommend for any student to take up an internship and gain experience in the workplace, and at the same time learn more about themselves.

In the end, my internship at Atria Senior Living was an excellent experience that allowed me to learn and grow both personally and professionally. I am grateful for the opportunity and the people who helped make it a valuable experience. I am excited to take the skills and knowledge I gained with me as I pursue my career goals.