1. **Take notes.** Always have a notepad and pen with you, and take notes at all your meetings — especially when your supervisor is giving you instructions! My manager would speak quite quickly whenever she was busy and sometimes gave detailed verbal instructions for multiple tasks at one go. It would frankly have been quite difficult for me to recall all her instructions if I hadn’t written them down!

2. **Clarify instructions.** Sometimes, common sense and just keeping your eyes open would make "how things are done" obvious. However, if I was unsure, I never hesitated to ask "stupid" questions like: "Did you want me to print that on regular or letterhead paper?", etc. I especially made sure to do this when I had a bulk of repetitive, time-consuming tasks to do — I didn't want to run the risk of having to re-do them!

3. **Follow up.** If your supervisor talks about a project you'll have to do "soon" but doesn't mention it again for a while, follow up. If you've emailed something to someone but don't hear back about it, follow up. A project isn't over just because you've emailed it off — keep track of all your projects until completion, even if they temporarily seem "out of your hands."

4. **Be early.** Thankfully, this wasn’t too hard for me to do because our official working hours began at 9.30. I usually arrived anywhere between 8.30 and 9.15, and ate my breakfast at my desk while reading my emails and planning my day. So, instead of arriving at 9.30 and immediately having to try play “catch up,” I managed to start each day with a clear picture of what I needed to accomplish.
5. Be mindful of your colleagues' workload and stress levels. Some weeks are more stressful than others. Sometimes, people want to be left alone so they can focus on their work. Sometimes, they'd appreciate a little light-hearted banter to de-stress. "Read the vibes" and adjust your interactions accordingly.

6. Take even small tasks seriously. My manager was extremely generous and nurturing, and she was willing to give me a fair bit of responsibility and let me participate in a lot of "exciting" events. However, much of my day-to-day work as an intern was, of course, quite unglamorous — I spent a lot of time printing, filing and shredding. However, I took all my tasks really seriously, and I think my work ethic was recognized; on a few occasions, my HR Director and Manager jokingly told me to not go back to school and work for them full-time, which was a little awkward, but also very encouraging.

7. Be nice to everyone. Be nice to the secretaries: as a HR intern at a leading international law firm, I had to schedule panel interviews with multiple busy lawyers — being on good terms with their "gatekeepers" definitely made the process smoother and more pleasant. Be nice to the cleaners: a cleaning-lady who I chatted with every morning came to my rescue when the shredder was overflowing and I couldn't figure out where the extra garbage bags were stored. Be nice to the tea-lady: I sometimes was offered leftover food after events. (Actually, just be genuine and nice in general, even if you won’t get anything in return!)

8. Learn as much as you can about your organization. On slow days at work, I tried to spend my time reading articles on our firm’s intranet (instead of going on Facebook). Over the course of my internship, I also tried to ask my HR colleagues and some of our lawyers about their jobs and responsibilities. Through learning about firm, its practice areas, and its people, I was able to gain a better picture about whether this was a work environment that I could see myself in in the long term.

9. Turn up. Attend social events, even if you might be feeling a little lazy! You'll never know who you might meet. At one of the networking events this summer, I ended up bumping into an old friend who knew me as a high school debater. He ended up inviting me to judge a debate on the same panel as Geoffrey Ma — the Chief Justice of Hong Kong! It’s tempting to stay home and relax after a busy week, but I would not have had this incredible opportunity had I decided to skip the event that Saturday night.

10. Say thank you. I loved my internship and the people I worked with, and I was genuinely, constantly grateful that I even had the opportunity to spend my summer at the firm. Everyone around me had gone out of their way to teach me and be kind to me, so I made sure to let them know that I appreciated their time and goodwill.
Additional Summer Snapshots:

Happy days in Hong Kong with my fellow CEO Interns and our incredible Mentors!
Our Columbia-sponsored accommodation: “Hotel-style” dorm rooms at the N.T.T. International House in Kowloon Tong!

Things found in (and perhaps only in) Hong Kong shopping malls…
“Fooooooooooooooooooooooooooooood”
The Ivy Ball 2014: Columbia won the School Song Competition (again)!
Thank You!