In the following “paper” I am going to give some advice or better share some information that I wish I had known before, together with some personal thoughts after this incredible and unforgettable experience.

WHY SHOULD I APPLY AND BE PART OF THE HONG KONG CEO PROGRAM?

- When you apply for a summer internship, you need to think thoughtfully about what you want to get out of it: a full-time offer? Travel? Learn new things? Meet people? Make money? Most of the times it is very difficult to find something that combines them all, and sure the CEO program is NOT an exemption.
  o Full-time offer: it is usually difficult to get a full-time offer, but it is also true that if you are good at networking the Columbia University label in Hong Kong will take you to places and open endless career opportunities. Therefore, don’t sell yourself short, and even though you are seeking a full-time offer give it a shot as I did and you won’t regret it.
  One more thing: MAXIMIZE YOUR TIME GETTING TO KNOW YOUR MENTOR-COWORKERS-EMPLOYER and get out of the interns’ bubble. This is the only way you can exploit the benefits of this program.
  o Travel: I managed to travel a lot throughout the program, but here a big advice and point to keep in mind: during the summer, there are a lot of problems to flight to/from China, therefore make sure to have a lot of time if you want to go there (I had a 24 hours delay once). Also, you are better off travelling at the end of the program instead of doing weekends as I did since apparently my supervisor did not really like that (I had a tough one who believed I should have worked also during weekends).
  If you know you want to travel at the end of the program, make sure to request a visa extension in HK before the ending date if not you will have to pay a 20$USD fine at the airport;
  o Learn new things: that’s all up to you and sometimes goes by luck. When you apply for a position abroad and at the moment of the interview, it is important to ask if the employer has in mind already what they will get you do. Furthermore, make sure to do some research and do not let yourself follow the desire to work for a big name, because I have seen that those who did ended up doing close to nothing and learn even less.
  If you find yourself getting bored at work, ask your coworkers if you can help them etc.
  o Meet people: this program is the best to meet people. There are a lot of programs that the alumni organize and the more you show interest and your desire to get involved, the more they will organize events and so on (museums, dinners, yacht tours, networking events etc). Also, there are ways to get in touch with other Ivys students working in Hong Kong and it is a great way to meet new folks.
  o Make money: Hong Kong is very expensive and most of the companies do not pay very well (some don’t at all). Remember that accommodation is paid for but food (depending on where you work) can be expensive. Therefore, make sure to have some savings and do not rely too much on the internship salaries.
FIRST FEW DAYS: WHAT DO I DO?

Please please please do not do as I did, who always relied on his roommate to get to places etc. On Day one try to use your google maps and learn how to walk from-to the train station from the dorm. I tell you this because when it rains heavily taxis overly charge foreigners and busses do not run. Learn how to get around with busses (I encourage CEE to arrange a little intro tour to how to get around).

Please make sure to ALWAYS have an umbrella with you, together with the Chinese address of the dorm.

AT WORK, ANY ADVICE?

It is difficult to say since this depends a lot on the industry and company. My company was a relatively small but very prestigious one where my supervisor was not the best I could ask for. If I had the chance to go back what I would do is to, at the end of each week, ask my supervisor what I did well and what I did not, asking advice to improve and do better the following week. Again, my supervisor had a very tough training and career to get where he is today and in his mind, I should have gone through the same. So be ready to experience the same, but as long as you ask for feedbacks at the end of each week you will do great. I asked for feedbacks on my last day and I wish I have done it earlier.

LAST SUGGESTIONS:

Try to think outside the box, being sincerely interested in getting to know people. I will never stop encouraging students to push themselves outside the intern’s bubble, try to come across not only as a young kid at his/her first experience abroad but show how anger to learn and unique you are. Explore the city and its hikes, eat local food since it is cheap and super good and remember not to go clubbing when you work the day after