Bridging the Gap From Classroom to Career

A few months before graduating from college, I was offered the opportunity to participate in the Ignition Graduate Development Program at National Interstate Insurance Company. Ignition is a month-long, intensive training and development experience that proved to be the perfect way to launch my career. When I joined National Interstate, I had no prior experience in the insurance industry. I came in with curiosity, a willingness to learn, and a desire to grow professionally. What I didn't expect was how quickly and thoroughly the Ignition program would equip me with the tools, knowledge, and connections to thrive in my role, and beyond.

Building a Foundation in Insurance

Ignition offered far more than just an introduction to insurance; it was a comprehensive launchpad for my career. Through structured educational sessions, I gained a clear understanding of the many facets of the industry and how National Interstate operates across departments. The program also helped me sharpen my professional presence and emotional intelligence, so I could hit the ground running in my new role. One of the most valuable components was beginning the path toward earning industry accreditation through The Institutes, which gave me a sense of direction for long-term growth in the field. Between workshops, networking events, and collaborative team challenges, the program provided exposure to every department across the organization. This cross-functional insight was invaluable. Even though I work in a specific area, I now understand how each team contributes to our shared mission.

Learning From Leaders and Peers

Among the top impactful aspects of Ignition was the access to senior leadership. Throughout the program, we had the opportunity to hear directly from executives and department leaders, gaining insight into their strategies, challenges, and visions for the future. The level of transparency and mentorship was astonishing.

Equally as important was the cohort I joined, comprised of 12 individuals from different departments, each bringing their perspectives and strengths. We learned from each other, supported one another, and built a network that continues to be a resource long after the program ended. I now have connections across the company that I can turn to whenever I need help or insight.

Professional Development That Sticks

Ignition was not just about learning the business; it was also about growing as a professional. One standout session focused on the DiSC assessment, which helped me better understand my communication style and how to collaborate effectively with others. I had taken the assessment before, but this time I gained a deeper appreciation for how my environment influences my behavior and how I can adapt to working more effectively with different personalities.

A Culture That Invests in You

What makes Ignition and National Interstate a great employer is the genuine investment in people. The program is thoughtfully designed, well-executed, and focused on setting incoming employees up for long-term success. It perfectly blended professional development, hands-on learning, and a fun environment.

Looking back, I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be part of Ignition. It gave me the foundation, exposure, and relationships I needed to hit the ground running and to keep growing. If you're eager to learn, open to new experiences, and ready to be challenged in the best way, Ignition is the perfect place to start your journey.