



CHIRP MERCHANDISING CO-OP REFLECTION



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JOB DESCRIPTION



Chirp Merchandising Co-op at Pubmark Inc., Chirp Team

- Pubmark is the parent company of BookBub and Chirp, retail websites that sell e-books and audiobooks respectively.
- The business model of both companies is to partner with publishers who will allow a certain number of books per month to be discounted down to \$.099 - \$7.99 and advertising those products in a daily email blast that highlights certain titles, as well as an app and website.
- At Chirp, I worked across the content, production, and business development teams to provide support wherever possible. I was the first co-op to fill this role.
- This co-op was paid, full-time, and hybrid. I came into the Cambridge office about twice a week for most of the co-op.

RESPONSIBILITIES



- **Content**
 - Write blurbs that represent audiobooks in a compelling light to customers, drawing from trade reviews, industry accolades, and customer preferences
 - Curate book lists and write sales copy to promote popular titles
 - Create monthly pitch lists of books from publisher partners based on customer preferences
 - Manage corporate Twitter
- **Production**
 - Proof and fact-check the daily deals email as well as up to 20 blurbs/week
 - Ensure that site data is clean and books are listed correctly
- **Business Development**
 - Upload and categorize book submissions
 - Compile sales reports and offer sheets for publisher partners
 - Evaluate constructive feedback from author partners and propose appropriate solutions



GOALS



At the beginning of the co-op, I set these goals:

1. I want to be able to quickly fact-check and copywrite, both of which are skills I want to use in my future career as a writer/journalist.
2. I want to learn more about marketing and what kind of initiatives go into increasing revenue/investigating revenue changes.
3. I want to gain insight into the publishing industry to predict what books will be popular with consumers.
4. I want to become accustomed to working in a professional environment and develop workplace communication and time management skills.

I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN...



- That the job was mostly remote. Although it was technically hybrid, the office was usually fairly empty and there was little incentive to coming in person. In the future, I want to search for a job with more of a sense of community and interaction.
- That there was less room for creativity than I thought. I learned that sales writing is less fulfilling to me than journalistic or creative writing to me. Since Chirp is a retailer, even curation tasks were more centered around customer preferences than my own.
- That there was less diversity than I would have preferred. In the future, I aspire to work in more diverse environments for an improved sense of community.





LONG-TERM PROJECT



- Each month, I sent out feedback surveys to independent author partners and recorded the responses I received.
- Near the end of the co-op, I compiled this feedback into a presentation and proposed several ideas of goals for the company based on what respondents expressed.
- This project allowed me insight into the client-facing element of the business and invited me to use my creativity and knowledge of the company to come up with low-lift, accomplishable solutions to improve the company's relationship with partners.
- My supervisors were supportive but very hands-off with the project, which gave me a lot of freedom to structure this analysis/proposal however I saw fit.
- The presentation went well and my supervisors told me they would hopefully begin to incorporate these changes after my departure.

IMPROVED SKILLS



- **Time Management**

- Working across three teams, sometimes my workload would become overwhelming because even my supervisors did not know all the work that was being delegated to me. As a result, sometimes I would fall behind and have to ask for extensions.
- To address this problem, my supervisors and I came up with a tracking system so that they could be aware of all the work I was receiving and I would be able to better predict my own timeline and bandwidth.

- **Professional Communication**

- Since much of the work was remote, I learned to communicate with my colleagues every step of the way through any task or issue. Rather than only messaging a colleague when a task was complete, I learned to indicate whether I had seen a message, offer a timeline, and periodically check back in.



PREPARATION



- **Applying**

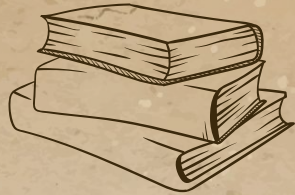
- In the future, I want to more realistic and not apply to roles that:
 - Will not support me as I need financially.
 - Are located in places I cannot feasibly move to.
 - Sound interesting but ultimately do not align with my career goals.

- **Interviewing**

- In the future, I want to do a lot more research before interviewing so that I am not only prepared to sell myself as a candidate but also to understand the company/position I am applying for.

- **Deciding**

- In the future, I want to wait to hear back from my top choice before accepting a co-op elsewhere.



LOOKING FORWARD



- I chose this co-op because I initially had some interest in working in the publishing industry, and I thought that this job had a closer proximity to that goal than it did.
- I expressed this interest to my supervisors, and they gave me the names of colleagues at the company who had worked in publishing. I organized several informational interviews and learned that I would not be well-suited to a career in the publishing industry.
- I appreciated the opportunity to learn from people who have experience in this field, and I'm glad that I know to set my focus elsewhere.
- Working in this role also made me realize that a corporate job is not for me, which I'm glad I was able to discover even before graduating.
- For the next co-op cycle, I want to aim for a more journalism-centric position so that I can figure out if this is something I want to pursue further.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE



- Having only ever worked in food service, working in a corporate role definitely changed my view of the professional workforce. Unlike in my old job, where I took orders, prepped food, and handed meals to customers, I completed tasks without really understanding what effect they were having.
- Feeling alienated from my work had an effect on how I felt. I wasn't actively learning anything like in school, but I also wasn't really actively selling anything, since all the work I did was work that might result in products selling. Although I was working for seven hours a day with not much downtime, I didn't feel like I was doing anything.
- This experience helped me realize that I want to work in a role that is more involved, where I can be creative in some way and be able to see the results in my labor. Although this job wasn't for me, I feel grateful that I had the opportunity to learn what works for me and what doesn't.

THANK YOU!

