

by **Hannah Johnson**

Seizing Opportunities



This year has brought me a whirlwind of changes. Last spring, I graduated from the Ohio State University (OSU) and post-grad life was not what I expected. I did not have a job lined up upon graduation, which brought mixed emotions of uncertainty and stress. I spent the summer applying and interviewing for countless jobs, never really finding the right fit for me.

When I stumbled upon the open communications position at the American Hereford Association (AHA), it struck my interest. As I read into the job description, I thought, “this would be a perfect fit for one of my best friends.” After I sent her the job information, she instantly questioned why I hadn’t considered applying. At first, I doubted I was qualified. Then, with the moral support of my friends and family, I came to realize my past four years spent in college courses, participating in student organizations and taking full advantage of internships had prepared me for any career ahead.

Fast forward through the interview process, accepting the new position and moving 10 hours from home, I frequently find myself reflecting on how I got here. So, how did I get here?

Pausing to reflect

I look back and appreciate all of my past internship experiences, especially with the Ohio Cattlemen’s Association, the Ohio Beef Council and the Ohio FFA Foundation. Without the opportunities and strong network these organizations provided, I know I wouldn’t have been the right person for this job. These organizations gave me a strong start in the agricultural communications field and all the time I spent at trade shows, communicating with Ohio farmers and planning social media calendars has definitely paid off.

I am grateful for the unique student organizations which OSU introduced me to. Not every communications student is exposed to a club set up as a public relations agency. I gained experience with real clients and created public relationship strategies and communication pieces that were actually implemented by those clients. I have a strong attachment for Ohio State, not only because of the football team, but because I gained valuable, real-world experiences which prepared me for a future far beyond Columbus, Ohio.

I am very fortunate I was raised in the livestock industry. I grew up showing cattle, goats

and pigs alongside my brother and sister, and my grandparents raised cattle and goats. Being involved with livestock has not only given me knowledge of the industry but has instilled me with the values of hard work, responsibility and patience. I cannot remember a time when we did not have an animal in the barn and I thank my parents for that and for encouraging my love for agriculture.

All of my past experiences have played a large part in how I got here. Every task I was given, project assigned and chore completed helped me find a great fit in Kansas City with the AHA. Looking back, I never thought I would move so far from home to start a career, but the recent change of scenery and nature of this position has transformed my feelings of uncertainty and stress into excitement and gratitude.

I joined the AHA staff in September and the past two months have flown by. I was welcomed to the team with open arms and felt like part of the family very quickly. I would like to thank my coworkers for a great start to my new career. I look forward to the opportunities to come and, most importantly, look forward to serving the AHA membership. **HW**

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