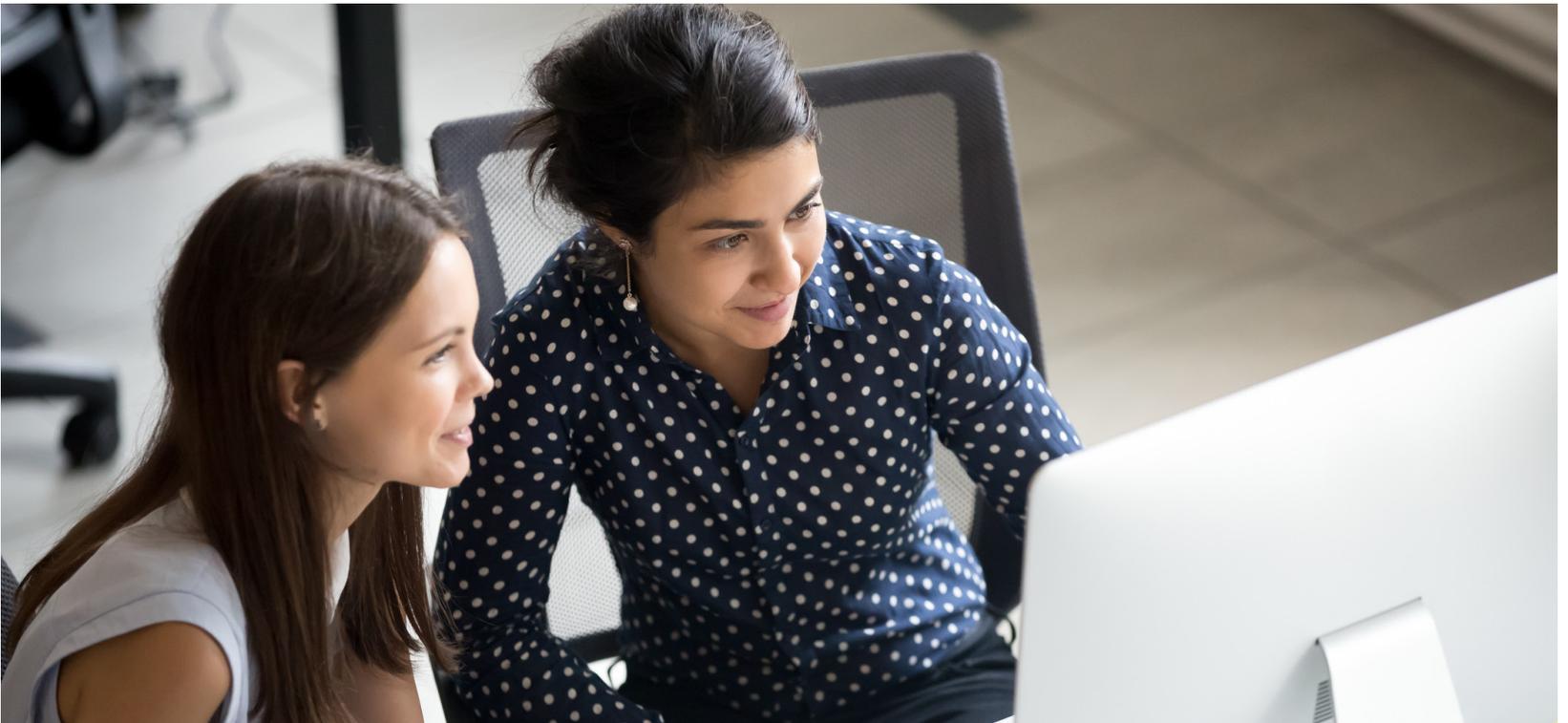


# Case Study: Students Gain Real-World Experience through Global Virtual Internship Program



## Background

The Global Virtual Internship Program (VIP) coordinated by the California International Trade Center allows California Community College students to gain valuable experience creating digital marketing strategies for small businesses that are looking to expand their reach and eCommerce to both global and domestic audiences.

Students work together remotely and receive guidance from a professional mentor along the way. At the end of the program, they have skills that can lead to additional internships or prepare them to transition to a four-year college.

This case study will present the stories of three students who gained critical experience from the VIP and are now ready for the next step in their academic and professional journeys.

## Kharina Miramontes, Palomar College

Kharina Miramontes is passionate about all things writing and got to use those skills working for one of her favorite companies through VIP.

Miramontes found out about VIP through an advertising class and completed an internship with [Jinx](#), a San Diego-based company that creates clothing based on video games like Minecraft and The Witcher. She was already familiar with the brand and excited for the opportunity to work with their team on a rebranding effort.

“The classes I was taking really paralleled everything that they needed so I was able to apply everything that I learned,” she said.

Miramontes and her teammates conducted research on competitor marketing efforts and international marketing strategies. They also created, distributed, and analyzed a survey of the brand’s target audience to gain valuable consumer insights for their final report. The report was delivered to the company’s marketing liaison, who presented it to the organization.

“It ended up being useful information because of the demographic we were able to provide for them,” Miramontes said. “We were able to give a lot of key insights to help them determine how to reach people our age.”

Based on her experience at Jinx, Miramontes obtained a job as a marketing coordinator with a company that provided secure email services for medical providers. She plans to continue pursuing marketing internships this fall.

She recently earned an English degree from Palomar College and will attend CSU Long Beach this fall, where she plans to continue fostering her interests in marketing and journalism.

“I continue looking at marketing internships because I enjoyed what I did with Jinx so much and it really resonated with me,” Miramontes said.



## Troy White, Moorpark College



Troy White's VIP experience required him to make lemonade out of lemons as he worked on new social media marketing strategies for [Limoneira](#), a citrus wholesaler in Ventura County. The company is looking to expand its direct-to-consumer business and the interns helped identify target markets and strategies for reaching those audiences.

White is a marketing major at Moorpark College and will transfer to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo this fall. He began his college career studying strategic communications at the University of Colorado Boulder but found that he wanted to work more on the business side of marketing – and that he was missing the warm weather back home in California.

The internship forced him to think outside the box and work for a brand and a sector he'd never really spent much time thinking about. In addition to making general social media recommendations, White and the team also considered specific countries and regions the company could reach and how to create content that would appeal to those audiences.

"A lot of different cultures use lemons for different reasons, so we tried to tailor our posts to that to reach different audiences and get their brand out there," White said.

They used Google Analytics to assess the company's current audience and Google Market Finder to determine areas with an opening for Limoneira's services. Beyond those specific tools, they had to think outside the box about the different ways lemons can bring value to people's lives – something they did not think they would have to do going into the internship.

"They have wellness benefits and you can use them in recipes ... we just tried to think of everything you could do with a lemon and how people could attach themselves to the lifestyle of consuming lemons," White said.

"Limoneira greatly appreciated the help that Troy White provided during his internship as part of Global Trade Central Coast's program," said John Chamberlain, Vice President of Marketing.

"We will continue to incorporate recommendations made by Troy."

White said the experience made him more confident in his marketing skills and gave him valuable experience in both Google Analytics and Google Market Finder. He plans to pursue a career in marketing for socially-conscious brands utilizing many of the skills he learned through VIP.

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## Danielle Jackson, Santa Barbara City College



Danielle Jackson is from Sweden and says that social media is extremely powerful for eCommerce there. She brought that philosophy to her VIP experience with [Tenikle](#), a company that makes nautically-themed phone holders.

Jackson was part of a team that designed a marketing plan for the company, which began as a Kickstarter in Laguna Beach but has now expanded around the world. She and her teammates drew on their own experience to help the small team expand the scope of its social media audience and content strategy.

“We’re all on social media a lot so we know what people want and what grabs people’s attention,” Jackson said.

The company’s owner, Hans Dose was pleased with the team’s presentation and said it brought new ideas to the table and helped him see his company from a new perspective.

“Danielle was able to provide an actionable social media plan for our business that we took back to our internal team and implemented,” Dose said. “The program was helpful for our business and gave us a unique insight from a younger demographic.”

Jackson will continue studying sociology and plans to attend graduate school. But VIP introduced her to marketing and opened her mind to how sociology and business might intersect.

She also completed an internship with Adeline Polis, Global Trade Regional Director in the South Central Coast Region. She helped plan events, recruiting companies to participate and students to attend.

Both of these experiences helped her learn how to balance coursework with professional obligations and showed her the value of working on a remote team.

“Virtual is the way to go in the future. It brings people such flexibility when it comes to jobs,” Jackson said. “I could pick when I wanted to work on my projects, which gave me the room to study and perform my internship in the best way possible.”



[Learn More](#)

VIP is currently accepting applications from students and companies for fall 2020 internships. For more information, visit [cainternationaltrade.org/vip-application/](https://cainternationaltrade.org/vip-application/).