Industry Guide: Consumer Products

Consumer Products Industry Overview
Consumer Products is an industry that encompasses manufacturing and marketing of products in four main groups: beverages, food, toiletries and cosmetics, and small appliances. Larger items such as automobiles and appliances, along with consumer electronics and technology are also considered consumer products, but the term ‘consumer products’ usually refers to those things that are used in daily personal life. Success in the consumer products industry comes from the design and marketing of products used by individual consumers, primarily in the home. There are also government agencies which oversee and regulate the consumer products industry. Types of consumer products can sometimes be referred to as Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) or Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG).

Positions in Consumer Products
Many Divisions and Roles Available
Consumer products firms tend to be very big companies, the majority of which are conglomerates with diverse subsidiaries, which means there are many divisions and positions open to MIT grads. Products are designed, engineered, manufactured, distributed, and marketed. Thus, consumer products companies may come to MIT looking to hire for a variety of roles ranging from research and design to marketing and sales to logistics and supply chain engineers.

Courses and Programs Typical for Consumer Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course 2</th>
<th>Course 3</th>
<th>Course 5</th>
<th>Course 7</th>
<th>Course 14</th>
<th>Course 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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Consumer products need to be designed, built, marketed and shipped. Given all these aspects, the consumer products industry has positions for many different backgrounds.

Major Employers

Introductory Heading Here
What sort of employers hire MIT students? Can you find MIT alumni in leadership positions in these companies? Have MIT alumni started their own companies in this industry? Maybe include a statistic on how many MIT alumni work for a Major company or mention an alum in a leadership position.

These Companies Recruited Interns at MIT
Internships offer an opportunity to learn not only technical or occupational expertise, but also a chance to learn more about the structure of a consumer products company. The internship information in this guide comes from the Summer Experience Survey and MIT GECD’s CareerBridge website and does not guarantee that these companies are hiring interns at this time. Use this list as a place to start your search for an internship.
Research is Great Experience

Valuable Experience can be Gained at MIT
The Lemelson-MIT program website features an ‘Inventor of the Week’ archive, which includes a Consumer Products category.

UROPs and graduate research done at MIT can be very helpful to enhance your candidacy for a position in Consumer Products. Many of the companies in this industry partner with labs at MIT on projects and research.

According to the Industrial Relations Program at MIT, there are over 700 companies working with faculty and students on projects of mutual interest. Some of those companies include DuPont, Google, Ford, and Samsung. These companies combine to provide 20% of funding for research on campus.

The Job Search and Interview Process
Interviews in the consumer product industry vary as much as the roles within the industry. For design related positions, a portfolio is a common part of the application process. Aside from that, you can expect the same behavioral and traditional questions and multiple rounds common to most other interviews in industry positions.

Rotational Programs are Common
Consumer products companies are frequently very large companies with many business units that often operate across the globe. In addition to these units, there are various stages involved in producing and selling consumer goods. Many of these companies have created rotational programs. Rotational programs are programs where people are hired and work at various placements within a company. During the course of two years, a person in a rotational program might work in four different locations or positions.

Salary Information
This salary information comes from the 2012 Graduating Student Survey
Average SB Salary $72,000 Average SM Salary $109,000

Additional Resources
Professional Organizations
www.acs.org (American Chemical Society - has a section on website for Consumer Product Chemistry)
http://www.ce.org/ (Consumer Electronics Association)

Industry Journals or Trade Publications
International Journal for Consumer and Product Safety
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services
Journal of Consumer Affairs

GECD Services
Drop-in Hours: Monday through Friday 11am-3pm

GECD Staff are available year round for appointments. To make an appointment, login to CareerBridge and select “Make Appointment” from the left side of the welcome page. You can also book by coming in to our office at E39-305 or by calling 617-715-5329

Check out our Calendar for Events and information on Employer Presentations!
http://gecd.mit.edu/calendar