

Heena Makhijani

MSMA

Associate Analyst – CMI Media

1. Prior Experience

Heena had one internship related to digital marketing and an on-campus job helping the Graduate Admissions team doing digital marketing.

2. How Heena landed the interview

From January, Heena started to apply online. Her husband was working in New Jersey so, she also searched for more opportunities there. During that time, she spent from dawn to dusk on her job search and applied to 15-20 jobs per day online. Heena received rejections until March, which was the peak of Covid-19 when many were losing jobs. It was a difficult time, but she didn't lose faith and still kept trying. Her strategy was to aim for smaller companies since she knew that many larger companies were either laying off or furloughing staff. Her applications were focused on Search Engine Marketing (SEM) related roles. For each position, she customized her resume and cover letter according to the job description. Finally, after a lot of hard work, Heena received a positive response from CMI!

3. Alternatives to applying online

According to Heena, LinkedIn is one of her major strengths. First, she expressed that key words are very important. As a digital marketer, she understands what kind of key words will make her profile more likely to appear on the recruiter's search results. Heena also attended a GCD program where the keynote speaker, shared a lot of knowledge, tips and advice regarding the importance of keywords in LinkedIn. For example, Heena updated her LinkedIn profile according to the skills required on target job descriptions that matched hers. Also, connecting to people, of course, helps. Posting an article and sharing insights once a week helps to increase your exposure and LinkedIn brand. That's how Heena built her LinkedIn profile which helped her in the job search process. In addition, Heena often tried to connect with contacts on LinkedIn to build relationships. First, she looked for alumni that worked in companies she was interested in. If that didn't work, she tried to connect with someone in HR or a professional in the area of interest. For example, for a role in Digital Marketing, she would reach out to a digital marketing specialist and request an informational meeting or a coffee chat (before COVID). Sometimes it took more than one ask and a number of follow-ups to receive a response.

4. Interview preparation points

First, it is important to be prepared for the question 'Tell me about yourself'. I used to visit Laura Aiken in Graduate Career Development (GCD) to ensure I was ready and to brainstorm ideas for improvement. Practicing interview skills with GCD, mock interviewers, faculty, Big Interview, mentors, peers, etc. is very important.

After Heena received the call from CMI, she researched online and found questions related to CMI to help her prepare. The CMI recruiter asked both technical and behavioral questions in the first round. Based on her research and preparation, Heena performed well, was able to answer the questions and succeeded in her interview.

5. Timeline

Applied in March – Received offer in June – On-boarded in August

6. Networking advice

When you have a coffee chat with people, try having a conversation about topics in addition to those that are work related. As an example, Heena spoke with an alumnus about restaurants. Since they both love restaurants, they developed a good rapport by sharing their favorite restaurants that they then tried and provided feedback on. Heena suggests that students review the LinkedIn profiles of potential contacts to learn about background and experience, to understand what they like, what they are looking for and what kind of articles they read, etc. Understanding these aspects and potential areas of commonality helps to get the conversation started.