

# The 40-Year-Old Intern

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Welcome to your VocationVacation, with your career escort, Brian Kurth.

Kurth is here to take you on a private getaway from occupational monotony, something he's intimately familiar with: He used to be a director of project management with a phone company.

"I was doing well financially," he says, "but I was just not fulfilled."

So, during his three-hour commutes, he started to daydream. Maybe there were mini-internships for thirtysomethings, maybe there was a chance to test-drive a fantasy career . maybe there were cars that fly.

"There were 20-year-olds' internships galore and elder-hostel experiences for retirees, but nothing for the person in between," Kurth, 43, says. "I wanted to test out three jobs--tour guide, dog trainer and something in the wine industry--but there was just no way of doing it."

So Kurth created the internships himself. In 2001, he worked with a dog trainer. (Nice, but no thanks.) Then in 2003, he arranged a stint with a wine marketing company. (Much better. And it resulted in a job offer, which he accepted.)

But the idea of helping others pursue their dreams never went away, and while he was working in wine, he arranged an internship with a brew master for one friend, and an internship with a fashion coordinator for another. Soon he was helping all

sorts of people land their fantasy jobs, and in January 2004, he declared himself a "career strategist" and launched the VocationVacations website.

Early on, most "vocationers" were people like himself, comfortable but itching for a change. Now the downturn in the economy has brought on many more people who have been laid off or are in some kind of career transition, eager to test out their Plan B.

How does it work? First, click on [VocationVacations.com](http://VocationVacations.com), and scroll through a wide variety of jobs--alpaca rancher, voice-over artist, chocolatier, cheesemonger, fashion buyer, scriptwriter, catamaran captain . there are dozens of choices.

Let's say your lifelong dream job is bakery owner. The site will match you with a business, say, One Girl Cookies in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, and a passionate and accomplished mentor, in this case, bakery owner Dawn Casale.

Then Casale, with her husband and business partner, Dave Croton, will take you under her wing for a one- to three-day "vacation" of baking, pricing, taking inventory, and other ins and outs of the business

It costs roughly \$1,000 for one of these vacations, and they don't include spa treatments. But if you ask architect-turned-bakery-owner Paul Holje, it's worth it. After a similar baking internship, he opened Dakota Harvest Bakery in Grand Forks, N.D. Now he's in his third year of business, with two locations and a hungry clientele.