



An unusual internship opportunity relating to climate change

It's becoming increasingly clear that the investment industry is critical to societal well-being. The way the industry operates is both a major reason for why we are in the mess we are in but equally, investors could be a major positive change agent. And nowhere is this more clear than with regards to avoiding catastrophic climate change.

Preventable Surprises is a new, not-for-profit 'think do' tank that seeks to prevent, or at least mitigate, corporate and market dysfunction, with the focus on what institutional investors can do to be a bigger part of the solution than they are today.

In order to reduce conflicts of interests, *Preventable Surprises* is wary of corporate sponsorship, relying instead on donations from known individuals and foundations. One consequence, and given this early phase in our development, is that we rely on unpaid interns.

On the positive side, the non-financial benefits of this role for a successful candidate are high.

As a 'think do' tank that is fully committed to being both [evidence-based](#), focused on delivering change and hence effective at communication, the intern will be encouraged to develop solid and integrated research and communication skills. This is distinctive from work experience in the academic and campaigning worlds. Academic research is often badly aligned with societal needs (because research projects are defined by what supervisors think will get published and a short-term take on career goals) and pays weak attention to how policy change happens (for well known reasons relating to communication and dissemination but also because there is often a gap in academic know-how about the world of practitioners). And campaigning research often prioritises gathering tactically useful evidence to prove a pre-selected campaign point. At *Preventable Surprises*, interns will be encouraged to be rigorous analysts and committed, yet principled system/social change advocates.

How we work:

We ask for a minimum commitment of 3 months and at least 50% time.

Interns generally work on **one programme** of their choosing (in this case the climate programme). Thus, the intern has one programme director as line manager (in this case Olivier Cassaro) and there will be serious, and hopefully two way, effort to create team spirit, even if this is a virtual team. If the candidate is able to commit for 6 months, rotation between other programmes may be possible depending on the duration of the internship.

Specifically you may be asked to:

- ❖ Help mobilising a network of climate/finance focused "real world" (and probably young) academics. This is partly because we don't have the budget to

- commission research but also because of our strong belief in alliances – empowered researchers defending their conclusions can be much more powerful than more senior researchers who have been commissioned to come to a specific conclusion.
- ❖ Undertake primary research where there is urgent need (e.g. comparison of proxy voting agencies on AGM resolutions relating to climate disclosure).
 - ❖ Draft articles undertaking additional research as needed.
 - ❖ Summarize relevant books / reports and identifying the linkages / differences with the forceful stewardship approach
 - ❖ Identify possible industry “positive mavericks” on the programme area
 - ❖ Support programme-related communications work (drafting tweets, writing speeches, etc)
 - ❖ Help organise programme-related events

You do not need to be based in London so long as you have good internet access.

Any travel or other expenses will be agreed in advance. This is an unpaid internship.

Person specification:

- ❖ Second year graduate student, recent recipient of a graduate degree, or an enlightened finance industry (or related, e.g. law) participant with time on your hands. In general, this role is best suited to a good all-rounder (e.g. MBA) but specific programmes do have opportunities for specialists as well.
- ❖ An active interest/understanding of how the investment system works with, ideally, both an economics/finance background but also some other subject interest (being comfortable in an inter-disciplinary context is highly desirable for this project)
- ❖ Self-directed, strong personal initiative with an excellent work ethic (you will have a manager but they won't be your primary motivator on a day by day basis)
- ❖ Able to manage shifting project priorities
- ❖ Independent thinker who is at ease presenting arguments and proposals that challenge the status quo. You should be comfortable with labels such as “positive maverick”, “positive deviant” or “tempered radical”. Genuine excitement about making financial markets sustainable.
- ❖ Resourceful, methodical, organized researcher and critical-thinking analyst who connects the dots well and so develops a strong case for (behavioural / organisation / system) change.
- ❖ Committed to personal and professional development and keen for constructive feedback on how to improve performance.
- ❖ Strong verbal and written communication skills

Skills:

- ❖ Good wordsmith and confident with the concepts and jargon of investors
- ❖ Proficient in graph and chart creation using MS Excel.
- ❖ Presentation development using MS PowerPoint or equivalent software.
- ❖ Other skills (e.g. graphic design, fundraising, communications) are welcome too.

Benefits:

Particularly because these roles are unpaid, *Preventable Surprises* will seek to provide profile building opportunities, not least through recognition for contributions to outputs. When possible, we will seek to provide interns with access to valuable events and conferences to support learning and also the development of professional networks. Candidates who perform well can expect good references. As a result of the reputation and network of the founder of *Preventable Surprises* (Dr Raj Thamotheram), many past interns have succeeded in getting well-regarded positions.

During the appointment process, candidates will be given the opportunity to speak with previous interns to make sure the fit is a good one.

If you would like to apply, please send an email to Olivier Cassaro, our Climate programme director (Olivier.cassaro@preventablesurprises.com), explaining why you will like the position and enclosing your CV.