

PRIDESTAFF®



Internship Programs

[Creating and Maintaining
a Valuable Business Tool for your Company]



1/14



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Is your company looking for new ways to bring fresh ideas and perspective to your company?

What company isn't?

This guide will help you learn more about internship programs, create a great internship program for your company (or improve the one you have), and maximize the recruitment opportunity your internship program provides.



2/14



[close]



What is an internship program?

According to the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE), an internship is any carefully monitored work or service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and actively reflects on what he is learning throughout the experience.

A typical internship:

- Promotes academic, career, and/or personal development.
- Lasts three to six months.
- May be part or full time.
- May be paid or unpaid.
- Is part of an educational program and evaluated for academic credit.
- Has a distinct “learning agenda” structured into the experience, involving observation, reflection, evaluation, and assessment.
- Reasonably balances the intern’s learning efforts with the work an organization needs done.



Why should employers invest in quality internship programs?

If you don't already have an internship program, you may wonder if it's worth the effort. A quality internship program can be a smart business tool. Here are a few of the ways internships can benefit your business:

- **Decrease recruitment costs**

Internships may provide a source of highly motivated and talented pre-professionals.

- **Get a fresh perspective in your workplace**

Students study current trends in their industry and tend to be tech-savvy and insightful. Even though they are “green,” they can offer new approaches to solving problems and getting work done.

- **Leverage free marketing**

Word of mouth from your interns about a positive internship experience is invaluable, building your company's reputation on campuses where you recruit. Internships may also offer your organization great PR opportunities in your local community.



How to create a first class internship program.

Developing a great internship program doesn't cost a lot of money. But a successful program does require careful planning and an ongoing investment of your managers' time. Here are five steps for developing an effective program that will benefit both you and your interns:

1 Establish a Goal

Before designing a program, you must first understand what you are trying to accomplish. Plus, you have to garner the support of key managers, who will likely be supervising interns directly. Here are some examples of possible internship goals to discuss with your managers:

- Getting additional help on a short-term project.
- Locating future employees.
- Tracking projects in areas where your organization may lack up-to-date technical information or other specific skills, such as in marketing, finance, or IT.
- Providing an interesting and rewarding experience for students.



How to create a first class internship program.

2

Write a Plan

Once you agree upon your company's internship goals, you must put it in writing. Use these goals as the starting point for your internship plan. Draft a detailed job description that clearly explains the intern's purpose and responsibilities. Additional questions to consider include:

- What, if anything, will you pay? Wages vary widely, so be sure yours are competitive – or offer other competitive incentives.
- Where will the intern work? Be certain to allocate adequate workspace and parking space.
- What academic experience will you require? Will you need undergrad or graduate students? What GPA will you require? Determine your standards now, to make narrowing down the choices easy later.
- What will the intern do? Be as specific about daily responsibilities as possible, so the intern will not be confused, bored, or idle.
- What else will the intern do? Beyond daily work, establish other opportunities for the intern to learn and become involved (e.g., shadowing, training, lunches with executives, sit in on meetings). Remember that your interns will be walking advertisements for your company. These little “extras” can make their experiences much more positive and rewarding.
- What are the legal implications? Just like any other workers, interns are subject to legal protections and regulations. Protect your company and the intern by understanding and following the applicable laws.



How to create a first class internship program.



3 Assign a Mentor

Carefully select an individual to whom the intern will report.

- Choose someone with a great attitude and a real desire to teach. Keep in mind that this manager may influence the intern's experience more than anyone else in your organization.
- Prepare the mentor for the rigors of intern management. Effective intern management involves: delegating, leading, and motivating; giving feedback and guidance; providing professional and social networking opportunities. If necessary, provide mentoring training to ensure your manager has all the skills needed to effectively supervise the intern.



How to create a first class internship program.

Attract Top Students

Your internship program will only be as successful as the interns you find.

So now that you have a first-rate program, how do you attract first-rate students?

4

- **Get out there early.** Begin searching three to four months before you need a student to begin.
- **Focus on the work itself.** These days, interns are much more interested in how an internship will help them achieve their long-term career goals. Show them how your program will help them learn about an industry or job function, develop new skills, and strengthen their résumés.
- **Proactively find students from the right places.** Instead of just posting your internships on a job board, try these tactics:
 - Post to local internship job boards. These sites draw candidates in by providing great career tips, and the listing fees are often cheaper than national job boards. Check out JobMagnet.org or the Dream It Do It Campaign (www.dreamit-doit.com/content/campaign/index.php).
 - Post your internships on your website, preferably in your Career Center.
 - Be a presenter at local college career and internship fairs.
 - Send internship information directly to student organizations.
 - Contact the Career Services Directors at local colleges to learn more about the most effective internship recruiting and posting opportunities.



How to create a first class internship program.

Attract Top Students *(continued)*

Show interns how your program addresses their needs. When posting or discussing your internship positions, make sure you address the top concerns of interns:

- **Real work** – interns want to challenge themselves and learn.
- **Honesty about the work involved** – if the assignment will involve some grunt work, be upfront about it.
- **Feedback** – interns want to know how they're doing.
- **Inclusion** – interns want to be included in the daily life of your workplace.
- **Detailed explanations** – when you assign work, explain how and why it should be done.
- **Mentoring** – interns need a supervisor who truly likes to teach.
- **A place to work** – most interns will need a desk, chair, phone, and computer to do their jobs.
- **Coverage for expenses** – students are notoriously poor. If you can, help them offset expenses they incur while working for your company.



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Manage the Intern

Whoever manages the intern should do the following:



5

- **Get off on the right foot.** Start by giving the intern a formal orientation, including:
 - A tour of the facility.
 - An overview of the company's history, vision, and services.
 - A review of the intern's job description and daily responsibilities.
 - Introduction to co-workers.
 - Efforts to make the intern feel at home (show him where employees gather to spend breaks and lunch; treat him to lunch his first day).
- **Give your intern the resources to do the job.** Make sure you send the right message: We want you here! Give the intern a desk, point out the supply room, and introduce your intern to the tech support people.
- **Explain how and why work is to be done.** Let your intern know how his contributions fit into the company's workings.
- **Keep an eye on the intern.** You don't have to watch his every move, but you do need to know how he's managing with his daily tasks. If you see signs that the intern is idle or confused, intervene and point him in the right direction. Pay attention early on and nip problems and bad habits in the bud.



10/14



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How to create a first class internship program.

Manage the Intern (continued)

Whoever manages the intern should do the following:

- **Provide regular feedback.** Create a feedback cycle that includes formal (middle and end of program) as well as informal (weekly) sessions. During these meetings, the intern can:
 - Report on project status.
 - Ask questions.
 - Participate in an evaluation of his strengths.
 - Discuss areas needing growth and development.
 - Receive coaching, counseling, and positive reinforcement from the supervisor.

This regular feedback serves three purposes:

1. It lets the intern know how well he's doing, so he can make adjustments and hone his skills.
2. It provides information to evaluate the candidate for potential future employment.
3. It will help you gauge the overall effectiveness of your internship program.



Internships as a Recruiting Tool.

According to *Inc. Magazine*, a National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) survey of U.S. employers reported that 30.7% of their new college hires came from internship programs. With demographic signs pointing to a shortage of workers in the near future, you can use these suggestions to maximize the recruitment opportunity internships provide:

- **Keep interns engaged.**

Gone are the days of having interns make coffee or collate meeting agendas. Give your interns more challenging assignments that allow them to develop and showcase essential job skills.

- **Bring interns into contact with senior executives.**

When possible, allow your star interns (i.e., potential future employees) to sit in on meetings with, or even shadow company executives. This exposure will enrich the intern's experience, and increase the likelihood that he will accept a position with your organization down the line.

- **Go the extra mile.**

If interns are a primary recruitment source for your company, investing an extra bit of time and money will be worth the effort. You may want to consider perks like Charles Schwab offers:

- Weekly paychecks.
- Stock options.
- Corporate housing.
- Paid travel expense.



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13/14



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