



SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE FOR NEW INTERNS

As with any worthwhile experience, developing a successful internship experience requires thought and planning. This guide contains information that will be useful as you design an internship that will be mutually beneficial to both you and your intern. Taking the time to orient your intern to their new work environment will help create a sense of belonging, and will help to clarify tasks and policies. Please be sure to provide sufficient information to ensure that the student understands company policies and safety procedures. Here are some tips that have been useful in intern-employer relationships in the past:

- Help interns be successful from the very beginning by having a workspace set up for them before they arrive if feasible. This allows them to get started right away and assures them that you expect them to be an integral part of the organization.
- Assign projects that are challenging and valuable to your organization – consider the level of experience, education and motivation that students possess. Offer pre-professional tasks (less than 50% clerical work). It is helpful to set goals and put them in writing. Be sure to define what you want to see from the interns by the end of the internship.
- Compile a list of secondary tasks for times when interns finish their assignments ahead of schedule.
- Meet regularly with the intern to answer questions and to give guidance and feedback. It can be frustrating and counterproductive for interns if they feel they are interrupting you. Having a set time to discuss their work will increase efficiency and productivity.
- Consider interns as “real” employees and teach them about the values of the company. It is critical that they go through an orientation and be given written policies if available. It benefits the organization if they have a realistic view of the workplace.
- Keep them in the organizational loop through emails, memos or staff meetings.
- Occasionally, surprise the students with “perks” such as a coffee card, paid parking, or include them in office outings such as baseball games or picnics, etc. This helps them feel like a part of the organization and can boost morale.
- Ask students if there are specific areas they would like to learn. When possible, arrange “personal learning opportunities” for one-on-one discussions with company executives and key customers to help them begin building their professional network.
- When possible, provide professional networking opportunities to help students gain additional insights into this career and also increase future employment contacts.

Training might include the following:

Business Operations/Orientation

- Business's products/services
- Who are the consumers?
- Goals of organization, mission statement, philosophy
- How the student's role contributes to organization
- Roles of other employees; who supports who
- Provide directory with names and extensions

Administrative Policies

- Business hours, break and lunch times
- Staff meetings (important to include students)
- Alert key personnel that students are in dual roles as trainee and employee
- Encourage regular employees to share expertise
- Assign site supervisor as student's mentor
- Resource binder with routine information, organizational structure
- Information on parking, restrooms, supplies, meeting rooms, etc.
- To whom will the intern report? Will the intern work with one department or several?

Employer Role

- Provide the student with leadership experiences and opportunities to make decisions
- Treat students as assets with full-time potential
- Return the student to campus as an ambassador for your company
- Maintain professionalism in your relationships with students, and expect professionalism in return
- Represent your positions accurately and follow through with supervision and guidance
- Never ask students to participate in any activities that are unethical, illegal, or unsafe

Performance Expectations

- Provide a clear job/project description for the work experience
- Define expectations of job and related tasks
- Provide frequent, informal feedback on a job-well-done
- Clearly identify inconsistencies of performance; make suggestions for improvement
- Conduct an informal mid-term review
- Conduct a final performance review before student leaves assignment

We appreciate the opportunity you are providing for our students to gain "on the job experience". Please contact us if we can help facilitate this learning experience in any way.