



Cape Girardeau Area Chamber of Commerce

Leading Businesses ... Serving People ... Creating Communities

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION. The use of internships as part of the recruitment process increased tremendously since 2001. Employers report interns are the best source of new full-time employees, according to recent surveys by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

If your organization can offer internship opportunities, it is important that you prepare for each student's entry into your organization and that you promote your program to the students from local institutions.

Students need professional work experience to learn to locate entry-level job openings in the region. Companies like to reduce hiring risk by 'test-driving' candidates before hiring them. Quality internships and co-operative education programs offer both parties a low-risk, "win-win" hiring opportunity.

WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP? An internship, first and foremost, is a learning experience. Typically, an internship is a one-time work experience involving a student who has attained considerable academic preparation. An internship allows an advanced student to work in a professional setting under the supervision and mentoring of a practicing professional. Objectives and practices vary, but the experience permits the intern to apply principles and theories learned in the classroom to real-life projects.

Internship Characteristics:

- A typical internship is a one-time experience lasting from three to six months
- May be part-time or full-time, paid or un-paid
- Internships may be part of an educational program and carefully monitored and evaluated for academic credit (*highly recommended*), OR may be part of a learning opportunity undertaken as an individual learning experience
- An intentional "learning agenda" is always structured into an internship
- An effort is made to establish a reasonable balance between the intern's learning goals and the specific work an organization needs done
- Internships promote academic, employment, and personal development

HOW CAN MY ORGANIZATION BENEFIT FROM AN INTERN? Internship programs offer excellent returns on your recruiting investment. An effective internship program:

- Gives you a low-risk opportunity to try out student talent—to experience how a student performs on the job
- Offers a cost-effective source for talent to fill full-time job opportunities
- Helps retain highly-trained human capital to grow our regional economy

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE INTERNSHIP. The most successful internships are those in which there is a good, working partnership between the **employer** and the **student**, with active support from the **educational institution**. When students plan their internship through their academic institution, they may receive academic credit for that internship (*highly recommended*), and may receive formal validation of their experience on their transcript. When they receive formal mentoring by an academic coordinator, who is familiar with their classroom learning and with helping interns plan, monitor, evaluate and reflect on their internship experience, they get more out of the experience. As the internship sponsor, you have access to the experience and expertise of the academic coordinator as you operate the internship. For example, your academic contact can help you plan the intern's activities at your organization, and help you evaluate the intern's performance.

STEPS TO BEGIN AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM. Design an internship program that meets your needs. As varied as companies are in age, size, industry and product, so too are their internship requirements. How do you know what kind of program will work best for you? Designing an internship program to meet your needs is as easy as:

Set Internship Goals

- What does your company hope to achieve from the program?
- Are you a small company searching for additional help on a project?
- Is your company growing and having difficulty finding competent employees?
- Are you a nonprofit without enough money to pay, but can provide a rewarding experience?
- Are you searching for employees with leadership potential?

Write a plan:

Draft a job description that explains the job's duties. Do you want someone for a specific project? Or general support around the workplace? Is your goal to offer exposure to the range of assignments at your company?

Things to plan:

- **Will you pay the intern?** Wages for interns vary widely, and some fields typically do not pay interns. In this region, most organizations pay their interns because most students pay for their education with part-time jobs.

- **Where in your workplace will you locate the intern?** Do you have adequate workspace? Will you help him or her with parking arrangements, with living arrangements, etc.? Summer interns often do not have campus housing.
- **What academic background/skills and experience do you want in an intern?**
- **Who will have primary responsibility for the intern?**
- **What work will the intern perform?** Be specific. Interns, like others in the process of learning, need structure to not become lost, confused or bored.
- **Do you want to plan a program beyond the work you give your intern?** Will there be special training, performance reviews, lunches with executives, social events?

TIMELINE FOR RECRUITING INTERNS. Students undertake internships at any point in their academic career or after they graduate. When recruiting for the Summer, Fall and Spring semesters, please follow this schedule to ensure enough time to post your job description, interview potential candidates, and hire your intern:

Semester	Start	Job Description Complete
Summer	January 1	February 15
Fall	February 15	April 1
Spring	August 15	October 1

CONTACTS:

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SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

XYZ Corporation
1234 Main Street
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703

Position Description: Sales and Marketing Intern

Effective Date: Summer 2007

Our Sales and Marketing Department is looking to fill 3 Sales and Marketing internships for summer 2007. Marketing, PR, or related majors are encouraged to apply.

XYZ Corporation provides a number of services to the entertainment industry, from trailer cutting to online rebates to in-store signage fulfillment. We have streamlined the entertainment business for 5 decades by marrying technology advancements with cost savings for our clients.

Qualifications:

- MUST BE at least a current college Junior
- Minimum 2.8 GPA
- Flexible schedule, 20-40 hours per week
- \$9.00/hour, plus academic credit

General responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Create marketing plan for our newest product line
- Create monthly newsletters and press releases
- Assistance with Direct Mailing campaign
- Assistance with XYZ promotions, festivities and events

Performance Skills Desired:

- Superior written and oral communication skills
- Basic knowledge of MS Office and database management

To Apply submit cover letter and resume to:

Bob Smith, Marketing Director
XYZ Corporation
1234 Main Street
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
573-555-1234
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