FAQ SHEET

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Do I need interns?

• In order to assess the viability of hiring interns, companies should evaluate the availability of meaningful work and workspace, as well as their capabilities to support a paid internship (or otherwise ensure that an unpaid internship meets federal criteria and the intern’s interests).
• “Some aspects to consider are whether you will pay interns, or how you can otherwise compensate intern efforts; whether your company can support multiple interns; the availability of meaningful work for interns; the type of projects that can be assigned; your ideal duration and time of year to host interns; and how your physical space and equipment will accommodate additional individuals.”
  o From Internships.com - http://internhub.internships.com/employer/resources/setup/12steps
• If you find that your company does not have the resources to support a full-fledged intern program, you might consider hiring a part-time employee instead.

How does an internship benefit me?

• There are numerous long term benefits for initiating an internship program
  o High potential to convert interns into full-time employees
  o Allows you to test-drive interns by evaluating how well they fit into your company culture
  o Provides you with valuable feedback about your business operations
  o Helps you prepare to hire more millennials in the future
  o Allows you to tackle projects that regular employees wouldn’t be able to complete, maximizing productivity for the entire company
  o Increase your company’s visibility via word of mouth or testimonials

What’s the difference between an intern and a part-time employee?

  o Internship must be educational in nature – the work assigned to an intern MUST fulfill some kind of learning objective that is relevant to their field of study. This means that an internship should be designed with educational goals in mind.

Should I pay my interns?

• Unpaid internships – the Department of Labor, under the Fair Labor Standards Act, has defined 6 criteria that internship programs must meet in order to be exempt from minimum wage and overtime provisions. They are:
1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

Source: [https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm](https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm)

- Only a few states (New Jersey, New Hampshire, New York) place more stringent standards on unpaid internships.
  - New Jersey – applies additional criteria to the federal intern test
    - The employment for which the intern is training requires some cognizable skill;
    - The training received during the internship is not specific to the employer and its needs, but may be applicable elsewhere for another employer or in another field or endeavor; and
    - The internship is sponsored by the employer, is outside regular work hours, and the intern does not perform productive work during the internship.
  - New Hampshire - requires employers to submit an approval form to the Labor Commissioner before the commencement of an unpaid internship.
  - New York – applies additional criteria to the federal intern test
    - The internship fits the curriculum requirements of the individual’s school; and
    - The individual receives school credit for the work being performed during the internship program.

- Colleges and Employers

  - Internships for Academic Credit
    - Some schools offer academic credit for a student’s internship experience. If you have identified a list of schools that you are interested in, make sure to visit each school’s website and explore their career services center for more information about academic credit. Policies can often vary within a single school amongst its individual colleges, and many business and communications programs will have their own resources for internships on their webpage. You and your intern will be required to have the internship approved by the student’s college or academic department by filling out forms before, during, and after the internship.

Who do I want for my internship position?

- Marketing/sales/advertising internship
  - Marketing, sales, management, advertising majors
- Supply chain management internship
  - Supply chain management, information systems, operations, logistics majors
- Finance/Accounting internship
  - Business, finance, economics, accounting majors
- IT internship
  - Computer science, mathematics, information systems, engineering majors
- Marketing/social media outreach/PR
• Marketing, advertising, communications, journalism, business, English majors

• Manufacturing intern
  o Engineering – mechanical, electrical, industrial, manufacturing majors

• What level of undergrad?
  o Freshmen and sophomores: for less skill-based position types (social media outreach) and for short-term, project-oriented internships
  o Juniors, seniors and recent grads: for positions that require more training and specialized skills (business development, manufacturing) or for internships that facilitate long-term employment

**What do different internship positions look like?**

• Marketing, PR, engineering, administrative, IT, supply-chain management, or a combination.

• Provide a week-by-week guide to several of these position types with sample duties and introductory training procedures si

• Brief case study – two different internship models from SnugZUSA:
  o Short-term, project-based internship
    • This intern dabbled in different tasks and projects within the sales department
    • The employer provided a $100 gift card incentive for the intern to create a marketing campaign for the company
    • In this case, the internship allowed the company to delegate miscellaneous tasks to the intern, while providing the proper incentives to ensure the intern’s motivation to succeed
    • Other idea maybe have them design/be in charge of email campaign, social media content, database entry and organization
  o Long-term internship
    • This intern was given much more vigorous, specific training in order to give them a solid customer service background
    • After the internship, the intern was hired as a fulltime employee
    • In this case, the internship allowed both the company and the future employee to “test-drive” each other for mutual fit

**Where do I find interns?**

• College Navigator
  o Use College Navigator (provided by the National Center for Education Statistics) to help you identify schools in your area that offer programs that fit your organization’s needs.
  o Choose your location by state, region, or zip code
  
  o Choose the programs that fall under the position you’d like to fill

  o Use other filters to narrow down your preferences (level of award, institution type, undergraduate population size, admission rate, etc.

  o Get your results!

• What you can do once you’ve found a target school:
  o Visit their website and research opportunities for employers in the career services center and corporate relations. Opportunities include:
• Career fairs and networking events
• Employer-student match services
• Interview facilities
  o Visit the website for an individual college within the university or the academic department that suits your intended position.
  o Oftentimes, individual schools and academic departments will have their own resources for companies to recruit their students.
    ▪ For instance, a business school might have its own resume books, recruiting guidelines, employer engagement programs, and internship requirements.
  o If you are unsure about your options as an employer, contact a university staff member in career services, a representative of the individual school of interest, or even a department chair or professor for more information.
• Additionally, companies can make use of the special alumni network benefits offered by most schools to explore recruiting options at an employee’s alma mater.

How do I conduct an interview?
• Recruiting professionals recommend a technique called Behavioral Interviewing – rather than asking a candidate what they would do in a hypothetical situation, interviewers should ask candidates what they have done in past situations. This gives employers concrete evidence of the candidate’s individual, proven abilities, as well as illuminating their potential weak spots.
  o How to ask a behavioral interview question:
    ▪ Don’t lead the candidate towards the right answer.
    ▪ “Tell me about a time when you successfully worked out a compromise when you and a coworker/team member disagreed on a particular issue.”
    ▪ Instead, throw more open-ended questions at the candidate – this will show you much more about how they deal with conflict and difficult situations.
    ▪ “Could you tell me about a time when you and a coworker/team member disagreed on a particular issue?”
• If you are unable to conduct an interview in person, virtual conference (Skype) and phone interviews are viable methods.
  o Make sure to reach out to your candidate beforehand via phone or email to confirm they have the necessary faculties to participate in a virtual web call. The last thing you want is to have a conversation derailed by technological difficulties.
• Other tips for conducting a successful interview:
  o If possible, include one or two of your staff members in the interview process. Candidates may become more relaxed if they can talk with someone who isn’t asking all the hard questions, which will allow you to judge how well the intern candidate interacts with the potential coworkers/supervisors. In addition, staff members can provide more nuanced positive or negative feedback about the candidate that will factor into the decision to hire.
  o If the candidate is in your area, do them a favor and take them out for lunch off-campus for the interview.
  o Let the candidate know beforehand about what to wear and give them a general heads-up of the topics you are going to touch upon in the interview. Since some undergraduate students may have never participated in an official job interview, this will allow candidates to adequately prepare and give them a positive impression of your company before the interview even begins. Remember, you’re evaluating their proven skill set and personality, not their ability to bluff on the fly.
  o Allot one-and-a-half to two hours for the interview – this will allow you to get a full sense of their individual qualities as you ask questions that are specific to their past experiences.
How long do internships usually last?

- An internship could be during a fall/spring semester – in which case, don’t have them work more than 10-20 hrs/week
- Typical summer internships last 2-3 months
- This means you should figure out if you need an internship position and what the intern would do before you start recruiting!
  - “If you run a small business or a company whose workload changes seasonally or sporadically, consider hiring interns on a per-project basis.”
  - You should start planning your internship program at least 5-7 months ahead of that, and recruit within the 2-5 month period before the program starts.

What are some essential forms/procedures to include my program?

- Checklist of forms:
  - Compensation and hours agreement
  - Internship agreement
  - Welcome letter:
    - Will confirm the details of the internship:
      - Position title, dates, hours
      - Location and parking
      - Supervisor contact information
    - What to bring on their first day:
      - Signed internship agreement
      - Photo I.D.
      - Social security card
      - Proof of U.S. citizenship
      - Voided check from intern’s bank for direct deposit purposes
  - Dress code: what to wear, what not to wear
    - Introductory guide to the internship
      - Includes in-depth information on internship structure, company profile, work goals, meetings, evaluations, dress code, social media, communications (phone and email), important contact information
  - Internship timesheet
  - Mid-internship competency evaluation
  - Bi-weekly informal check-in meeting checklist
  - Exit interview and evaluations:
    - Intern’s evaluation
    - Supervisor’s evaluation
- Checklist of standard procedures:
  - Before the internship starts, introduce your intern to the industry by sending them these PPAI webinars about the basics of the promotional products industry.
  - Assign a mentor/supervisor who will deal directly with the intern on a day-to-day basis. This staff member should be communicative and willing to work closely with a potentially inexperienced new hire.
  - Set an initial meeting between the intern and their supervisor to establish goals, sign necessary forms, and answer questions.
  - Take your intern on a tour around the company, introducing them to various departments.
  - Situate your intern in their working space – show them how the phones work, set up system passwords and access codes, machine operation (if applicable), building access, etc.
  - Perform mid-internship evaluation meeting and informal
  - Conduct an exit interview with the intern.
**What are a mentor/supervisor’s responsibilities?**

- No matter their position, every intern should have an onsite supervisor who directly oversees the intern's day-to-day assignments and long-term projects. This supervisor is responsible for answering any questions raised by the intern; in addition, they help steer the intern’s work projects and evaluate their performance. If the intern is pursuing academic credit for their internship, their site supervisor will most likely be responsible for making sure that evaluation forms are filled out and reported to the student’s school. The relationship between an intern and their supervisor/mentor is an essential factor in determining the quality of the intern’s time at that company. Therefore, it is recommended that the supervisor establish an open-door policy in order to facilitate honest discussion and feedback. Supervisors are also in charge of conducting monthly competency evaluations as well as bi-weekly informal check-up meetings.

**What does the timeline of an internship program look like?**

- These are the four I’s to conducting a successful internship program:
  
  **Incubate** your program:
  - Identify the needs of your company
  - Draft intern job description:
    - Job duties
    - Qualifications desired including major
    - Citizenship requirements, if any
    - Application procedure
    - Compensation rate, if any
    - Duration of internship
  - Approve student learning objectives
  - Consult school policies regarding recruiting and hiring
  - Appoint mentor and provide brief training

  **Initiate** contact:
  - Recruit intern
    - Write job posting/description
    - Locate and visit schools
    - Recruiting seasons for fall, spring, and summer interns:
      - Fall: August – September
      - Spring: November – February
      - Summer: January – May
    - Conduct hiring interview with the student
    - Confirm employment

  **Induct and Instruct** your intern:
  - In the period before the internship, send your intern PPAI education materials to introduce them to the industry.
  - Work with student to coordinate work and school schedules.
  - Review legal considerations:
    - Review and approve internship agreement
    - Conform to state and federal labor laws;
    - Address workers compensation issues
    - Conduct appropriate employment practices orientation
  - Conduct intern orientation and provide safety information
  - Sign training agreement
  - Verify and sign attendance and/or time records, as required;
• Implement best practices:
  o Conduct periodic evaluations of intern—at least monthly
  o Provide resources for intern to learn about your business and the industry
  o Supervise the intern's work projects and provide support via open-door policies and informal check-ups
  o Include interns in staff, department, and regional meetings
  o Obtain evaluation of intern experience at the end of the internship