



**SPAC
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**Hire an Intern: Shaping the
Next Generation**

**Colleen Jolly, CPP APMP Fellow
(former intern)**

What is an Intern/Internship?

- Minimize risk/cost of full time hire
- “Test run” for employment/confirm interest in a career path
- Part of university curriculum
 - Engineering and medical programs
 - Specific class or Credits received
- Set Time Period (90 days, a summer, etc.)
 - During a busy period/when you need extra hands
- Compensated or uncompensated

“...everyone LOVES interns. Most times they do the work no one else wants to do. It’s like getting a new puppy – everyone wants to play with it. It’s not like that when you join the real world—people don’t view you as young and cute, they see you as a threat or competition.”

Think Win-Win: beneficial for you and for them!

Who Are (potential) Interns?

- College-aged/new to the workforce
- Veterans/new to your industry or function
- Curious to learn more
- Not ready to commit
- Having trouble finding a full time job
 - Leverage or access
 - Congressional internships



Interns can be anyone

How Do I Find Interns?

- Alumni networks/university career centers
- Job postings/online searches
 - General: Monster.com, LinkedIn.com, Glassdoor.com, idealist.com
 - Specific: internships.com, looksharp.com, internmatch.com
- Word of mouth
- Informational interviews
- Social media/blog influencers

“Like any position on the Hill, I did a number of informational interviews and applied to a number of ‘official’ listings, but I finally gained my internship through an informal message from a contact with whom I had done an informational interview.”

CoverGirl + Maybelline found their newest ambassadors through social media

How Do I Hire the *RIGHT* Intern?

- Filing a need?
- Do you have the ability/time to find, train house (desk/computer/phone), pay (if not intern, staff that manages them)
- Hiring the most appropriate candidate?
 - Use the same hiring process for any employee
 - Treat all hiring decisions like your highest-ranking employee
- Know the law (Federal/State/Local)

“A truly bad hire – someone who is unstable, or undependable in performing his or her job – can be a financial and public relations disaster for your company...your negligence in making a hire will have exposed your company to unnecessary risk.”

If you do not have a need or the time to train/manage/support an intern, you have set them up to fail

How Do I Create an Internship?

- Identify:
 - Specific project(s) for intern(s) and timeline
 - Expectations/end state or goal
 - Skills needed to get to end state (can be taught vs. should be present)
 - Benefits to you/your company AND to intern from internship
- Clarify any “dues” to be “paid”
- Advertise clearly for the position
- Beware of unintended consequences



Balance high value tasks with company sensitive issues

How Do I Create an Internship?

Training

- Orientation: “how tos”
 - Relevant specifics + some extra like dress, decorum and communication
- Orientation: “whys”
 - May be new to them
 - Encourages new ideas after an understanding of why “old” ideas are in place
- Formal training done for any employee
- Mentor: not just supervisor
 - Ideally with a connection (same career interest, same university)

“Training improves employee contributions. It creates better teams. It is also a tremendous retention tool. Employees want training; so much that many cite the lack of training as the reason for leaving their jobs. They want the challenge and pride of learning new skills.”

You have the power to attract/retain qualified people through quality management and people skills

How Do I Create an Internship?

Goals

- Use SMART goals
- Ask them to provide benchmarks and milestones for the project
 - Provide guidance on typical time lines
 - Follow up before a deadline
 - Track progress
 - Incentivize (if relevant)
- Identify resources/people for support

“There is a great amount of freedom to learn through asking for specific experiences. If I had a set of goals and objectives that I wanted to achieve through my internship, I would have been able to ask for more challenging and beneficial experiences, and could have gotten even more out of my time as an intern.”

When employees buy in, they are most apt to work harder and look for ways to be successful.



How Do I Create an Internship?

Reviews/Measurement

- Be objective
- Be specific
- Respect schedule (milestones/benchmarks)
- Check in regularly with supervisor/mentor
- Ask new colleagues for feedback
- Praise in public and correct in private
- Treat your intern as you would any employee*

“In my second internship [at the same company] I was a full-fledged member of the design team doing the same work (mostly design validation) as other junior engineers. I had meaningful responsibilities with real impacts from Day 1 of employment.”

An internship is not “adult-babysitting”

How Much Should I Pay an Intern?

- Consider your company, the responsibilities, learning opportunities, amount of access and visibility of position
 - High visibility/competitive positions (i.e. Congressional internship) = typically unpaid
 - Less visibility/less competitive positions (i.e. proposal internship) = typically paid (Stipends, hourly rate, performance-based bonuses)
- Set a range, set a budget, document then apply consistently
- Find something of value they want—negotiate

“Co-op/internship experience is often counted as job experience at hiring companies. Raises are better and more often than your peers. Your first promotion may come before your peers. It allows you to make an immediate good impression upon your new peers... and that impression will last for as long as you are with that company.”

Sometimes you get what you pay for!



The Internship is Over— Now What?

- Always conduct an exit interview
 - Apply lessons learned to improve your program
- Include possibility of full time hire/returning for future internships in job criteria: be clear in your intentions up front
- Complete a professional reference/other required paperwork (if needed)
- Be a future resource

“When I eventually entered the workforce I could tell who among my peers had participated in an internship or coop program. Those that had were more confident, displayed more initiative and generally produced higher quality work. The same applied to me....If you can get an internship that provides real experience it is worth its weight in gold. It will propel your career and give an enormous advantage over your peers.”

Be very clear when the internship is over

Conclusion

- Interns can be an important part of your future hire pipeline
- Lower-cost educated and motivated labor can improve your corporate bottomline especially during busy periods
- Enter into every hiring relationship with honest, respect, and clarity of purpose
- Learn from each other
 - Unique perspective
 - New technology/process



Interning is the “real world” degree you get after traditional schooling



Contact/Future Questions

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Questions Asked Current and Past Interns

1. Did you participate in an internship program (if so please continue)? If not, why?
2. Were internships required for your degree program or career path?
3. Were internships recommended for your degree program or career path?
4. How did you find out about your internship program? Formally or informally?
5. Briefly describe your internship – number of hours required (ex 30-40 hours per week), duration and time (ex 3 months during the summer), pay structure (ex unpaid, hourly, stipend), work hired for (ex hired as a graphic design intern), work actually done (ex most time was spent filing papers)
6. Did your internship meet or exceed your expectations? In what way?
7. Would you intern for this company again? Why or why not?
8. Would you take a full time position with this company/organization? Why or why not?
9. Would you recommend interning (not necessarily for the company/organization you interned for) to others? Why or why not?
10. What is the long term benefit or lesson you take away from your experience?
11. What do you wish you knew now about the interning process and/or company that you didn't know before your first experience?

Contributors:

- Past and current interns and employees 24 Hour Company
- Abby Miller (Wilner), author of *Quarterlife Crisis* and *The Quarterlifer's Companion*
- Members of the *Quarterlife Crisis* message boards quarterlifecrisis.com (now defunct)