

Top Ten Tips for the Proper Care and Feeding of Interns

Today, the issue of unpaid internships is on center stage, but employers need to really focus on the overall program to benefit their organizations and the students. Structuring an effective program takes time, effort and commitment from all levels of the organization. " Internship programs are so valuable because they are a win-win for the company and the student, if they are done the correct way," says Raedawn Johnson, corporate recruiter at Solutionary in Omaha. " A successful internship program is a team effort among HR, upper management, supervisors, and really all members of the team to provide mentorship."

If you are bringing in interns as a means to get things done cheaply, then you need to rethink your strategy. Your internship program should tie in with your talent acquisition and organizational development strategies. Internships are the new entry-level jobs, points out Dr. Phil Gardiner, director of the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University. He refers to internships as "high-stakes events." According to Gardiner, " the internship now replaces the starting job as the place college students actually begin their journey into the workplace."

Having the internship structured around productive, purposeful work is the key element to an effective, world-class internship program. You could have all the bells and whistles in your program, but if your interns are filing papers or answering the phone, it's all for naught. Mike True, director of the internship center at Messiah College and an internationally recognized and respected internship advocate, points

need to also train them on what it means to be a good corporate citizen.

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