

## Interns as a Valuable Resource



Developing an internship program can benefit both the employer and the interns who participate in it. Such a program provides valuable experience to students who are usually working toward careers in a related field.

When designing an internship program it is important to consider all aspects in order to ensure success for your company and the intern:

- Define the reasons your company is interested in an internship program.
- Create a committee to help design the program. Include supervisors, managers, newly hired employees, human resources, and key personnel who can serve as mentors to interns.
- Recognize what the intern can gain from an internship at your company. Hands-on experience may provide a stepping stone into his or her career, potential employment, and networking opportunities.
- Plan in advance the workload, availability of mentors, and physical resources for the intern.
- Determine what resources the company will use in filling internship positions. Schools, career counselors, colleges, and local chapters of trade associations are possible sources. Generally, allow eight to ten weeks in advance for screening and selecting candidates.
- Determine whether the internship will be paid or unpaid. Note that the Fair Labor Standards Act has established strict criteria that must be met for internships to be unpaid. Only paid interns are considered employees and are permitted to do productive work for the business.
- Once your company has decided to hire an intern and designed your program, steps can be taken to ensure the success of your program:
- Assign a mentor to show the intern around and help the individual fit in. Employees from various levels and departments should be considered as mentors.
- Provide effective supervision to follow through with necessary training and to monitor the intern's progress.



Further, it demonstrates support for and creates a link to the educational institution that provides resources for interns. This link may be a recruiting source when entry-level employees are needed. If the intern is paid, he or she may be able to assist the organization with some tasks that regular employees have not had time to complete. Remember, however, that the primary purpose of an internship is to provide an educational experience for the intern, not to perform work for the employer.

- Conduct an orientation program for the intern, including information on company history, mission, organizational structure, and goals.
- Provide meaningful assignments that challenge and stimulate the intern. Projects assigned should include learning objectives that are clearly designed and mutually understood.
- Involve the intern in organizational events, including staff meetings.
- Provide frequent feedback to the intern on progress and accomplishments. Feedback, whether formal or informal, will provide insight on ways to help the intern and the company in accomplishment of goals.
- When the internship assignment ends conduct an evaluation/exit interview to give the intern performance feedback. Provide a written evaluation, focusing on accomplishments, strengths and areas of weakness, and constructive guidance. The intern can also provide valuable feedback on suggestions to improve future internships for the company.


This sample document is only an example and is based on the laws in effect at the time it was written. MRA-The Management Association, Inc. does not make any representations or warranties regarding the appropriateness or prudence of using this information for any particular individual or situation. Your company should add, delete, or modify the content of this document as needed to suit your purposes. This material is for your information only and should not be construed as legal advice. In some circumstances it may be advisable to have legal counsel review final documents prior to implementation. © MRA – The Management Association, Inc.



Developing internship programs with structured learning opportunities can be a valuable work experience for the intern and provide your company with a fresh outlook, a good feeling, and a possible source of new hires.

Interested in getting started? MRA's [HR Advisors](#) can answer your questions and provide tools you can use!

## MRA's HR Hotline can help you!

 866-HR-Hotline | 866.474.6854

 [InfoNow@mranet.org](mailto:InfoNow@mranet.org)

 [mranet.org/24-7/hr-hotline](http://mranet.org/24-7/hr-hotline)

# As one of the largest nonprofit employer associations in the nation, MRA:

**Serves 4,000 employers**

covering one million employees worldwide.

Holds more than **2,000 Training** events annually.

**200 HR experts**

with more than 2,000 years of collective knowledge, experience and expertise.

Offers more than **1,000 HR Guides** templates, toolkits, and more.

HR SERVICES



LEARNING & ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT



TALENT MANAGEMENT



TOTAL REWARDS



## MRA is Your TotalHR® Resource.

MRA helps you create powerful teams and a safe, successful workplace with talent, tools, and training.



Wisconsin

Minnesota

Illinois

Iowa

[www.mranet.org](http://www.mranet.org) 800.488.4845