

10 Benefits

of starting an internship program

1. **Find future employees.** An internship program is a year-round recruiting tool. Implementing an internship program means you have an ongoing pipeline of future fulltime employees. For many, the process of recruiting and hiring is a drain on company resources. One solution: Appeal to tomorrow's staff members when they're looking for internships, and all you have to do is choose the best of the bunch when it comes time to hire. Moreover, college campuses are viral societies. This means if your organization impresses one class of interns, word will quickly spread. Soon you'll find the most sought-after student talent is interested in working with you.
2. **Test-drive the talent.** It's a human resources reality: A new employee makes a solid impression in the interview, but then just doesn't gel with your current team or your company's way of doing things. Because of this, hiring someone as an intern is the most effective way to evaluate their potential as a fulltime employee. When you "try out" candidates via a semester or summer internship, you make fewer mistakes when it comes to fulltime staffing; you avoid the pitfall of training a new hire, only to find out they're not a fit for your organization...or that the entry-level employee doesn't like the field. Starting an internship program lets you benefit from added manpower, while more accurately assessing candidates.
3. **Increase productivity.** Speaking of additional manpower, setting up an internship program allows you to take advantage of short-term support. The extra sets of hands help your employees be more productive, prevent them from becoming overburdened by side projects, as well as free them up to accomplish more creative tasks or those where higher-level, strategic thinking or expertise is required.
4. **Increase employee-retention rate.** The proof for the test-driving theory is in the positive employee-retention figures: According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' 2009 Experiential Education Survey, almost 40% of employers reported a higher five-year retention rate among employees they'd hired via their internship programs.
5. **Enhance perspective.** It's not just the extra sets of hands that make interns advantageous. Especially in an organization of only 12 or 15 employees, new people bring with them novel perspectives, fresh ideas, and specialized strengths and skill sets. These augment the abilities of your professional workforce.
6. **Take advantage of low-cost labor.** Interns are an inexpensive resource. Their salaries are significantly lower than staff employees, *and* you aren't obligated to pay unemployment or a severance package should you not hire them on fulltime. Moreover, while their wage requirements are modest, they're among the most highly motivated members of the workforce.
7. **Find free-of-charge.** Working with your regional university allows you to advertise your internship completely free of charge. This means you get extensive exposure to the top candidates without putting a dent in your recruiting budget.
8. **Give back to the community.** As a small business, you likely rely on community support. Creating an internship program is an excellent way to give back. Hiring interns not only helps students in your community get started; it enhances the local workforce as a whole.
9. **Support students.** Internships provide students numerous perks: They gain experience, develop skills, make connections, strengthen their resumes, learn about a field, and assess their interest and abilities. Offering a paid internship is particularly beneficial, because it enables economically disadvantaged youth to participate. Students who have to help fund their own schooling will need a job, regardless. Providing an internship allows that job to facilitate a positive future.
10. **Benefit your small business.** When looking for fulltime work, the top talent often go for big-name businesses. But when seeking internships, *learning* is the leading draw. Many candidates feel they'll get more hands-on training, real experience, and mentoring opportunities with smaller organizations.

Employer takeaway: In terms of both today's workload and tomorrow's workforce, starting an internship program is an excellent way to facilitate success at your small- or medium-sized business. **Source: Internships.com**