



MORE THAN JUST A PAIR OF HANDS: DESIGNING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR A WIN-WIN-WIN

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The Problem/Challenge

- Very few schools require internships
 - Only some companies offer internships
 - Many internship programs lack structure
 - Yet, this is an important training ground for future sensory scientists
- Implication: Strategic leadership needed to design internship experiences to grow the future of our profession.



In Pursuit of the Facts

- The Interviewees
 - ▣ Companies
 - ▣ Students/recent grads
 - ▣ Academia
 - ▣ Recruiters
- The Method
 - ▣ Conducted one-on-one phone interviews 20-60 minutes in length
- The Timing
 - ▣ July – September 2010



Interviewees



Energizer.



Playtex.





Topics Explored

- Length of internships
- Structure of internships
- Recruiting, interviewing, hiring
- The good, the bad & the ugly
- Example of success
- Recommendations

CURRENT STATUS





Educational Requirements

- Options
 - ▣ Undergraduates mid program
 - ▣ Undergraduates before starting Graduate School
 - ▣ Graduates mid program



Length of Internships

- Range of Responses
 - ▣ Summer (10w, 12w, or 3m)
 - ▣ Semester or Two
 - ▣ 6 months
 - ▣ 9 months
 - ▣ 11 months
 - ▣ 12 months+



Making a Case for 3 months

- Most attractive for students
- Coordinate recruiting across all R&D disciplines (efficiency) and ability to piggyback
- Affords opportunity to be part of an intern “class”
- Global communication of processes to all interns at once



Making a Case for 6 months+

- First 3 months are training, shadowing, observing, grounding; considered introduction only
- Need to take a project from start to finish to see it through
- Students need time to get exposure to corporate politics and how we adapt



Structure of Internships

- Most common responses
 - ▣ Assigned a project
 - ▣ Work up to a project
 - ▣ Project/intern fit assessment
 - ▣ Required to do a presentation at the end of internship
 - ▣ Act as a junior sensory scientist
 - ▣ Exposure, shadow, do



Recruiting

- Company website
- On-Site campus visits
- Email to specific professors
- Flyers sent to food science departments
- Networking at meetings
- IFT employment bureau
- Word of mouth
- E-Groups and Sensory.org
- Trial and error; multiple venues



Interviewing

- Phone interviews only
- On-site campus interviews
- On-site only if local



Hiring

- Via temp agency
 - ▣ Paid hourly wage
- Housing
 - ▣ Included/not included
 - ▣ Stipend offered
- Other Perks
 - ▣ Moving expenses coverage
 - ▣ IFT travel stipend



Defining Success

- A great coach/mentor
- Paired with a professional and attended all the same meetings
- Exposure to the business
- Got real responsibility
- Treated like a professional
- Involved and executed start to finish



Why Don't More Universities Require Internships

- Delays graduation
- Professors have limited time
- Number of sensory facility is down
- Students have different career paths and not appropriate to force



Why Don't More Students Seek Out Internships

- Geography
- Hurry to graduate
- Don't look beyond food
- Don't realize importance of this type of experience to their career



Why Don't More Companies Have Internship Programs

- ❑ Lack of senior management support
- ❑ Lack of budget
- ❑ Haven't proven business case
- ❑ No open positions

BUILDING A CASE FOR INTERNSHIPS





What's in it for Students?

- Real world experience
- Ability to assess if this is what you want to do when you graduate
- Opportunity to add to your resume
- Chance to develop your soft skills



What's in it for Academia?

- Enriches your program
- Better prepares your students for entry into the workforce
- Reenergizes your students on importance of sensory fundamentals



What's in it for Companies?

- Preview new talent
- Bring focused attention on a business when resources are limited
- Opportunity to publish
- Opportunity to get feedback
- New perspectives to old problems

RECOMMENDATIO NS





For Students...

- Don't close your mind off to the possibilities
- Be ready for it!
- Express what you want to learn
- Take initiative
- Come in to learn and not just to get a job
- Remember why you are there



For Academia...

- ❑ Don't overinflate the skills of your students – be realistic
- ❑ Let your students know about internship possibilities
- ❑ Help students articulate learning goals, and then help select potential internships on the basis of those goals
- ❑ Check in regularly with student interns to ensure they understand why are they doing what they are doing
- ❑ Give feedback to companies



For Companies...

- Upfront/Prior
 - ▣ Get HR involved
 - ▣ Partner with professors
 - ▣ Be specific on what you are looking for
 - ▣ Be open to non-us citizen students
 - ▣ Interview the same way you would a new full time hire
 - ▣ If not in an intern class, help new interns get settled



For Companies...

- During
 - ▣ Find the right coach
 - ▣ Communicate expectations
 - ▣ Identify a meaningful project
 - ▣ Check-in frequently
 - ▣ Ask for their feedback
 - ▣ Treat them like permanent employees
 - ▣ Make sure their work gets exposure and treated the same



Big No No's for Companies

- DO NOT...
 - ▣ Treat interns as technicians
 - ▣ Give false hope of job opening
 - ▣ Assume students have as much experience as you think they do
 - ▣ Spend your time teaching them sensory
 - ▣ Give them a mini-thesis experiment



How Can SSP Help?

We have a shared responsibility!

Questions:

- ▣ Should we create training opportunities?
- ▣ Should we create an Internship network?
- ▣ What about case studies?
- ▣ What other ideas do you have?



Cathy Brandt

Bush Brothers

Edgar Chambers

Kansas State University

Jean-Marc Dessirier

Unilever

Lauren Dooley

Univ of Arkansas Student

Veronica Egan

Kelloggs

Mary Beth Einerson

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