

# BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

## FOR INTERNSHIPS IN THE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

- 1. Identify an internship coordinator.** One person should coordinate all internships. Before interns come on board, organizations should identify a dedicated coordinator, outside of the intern's direct supervisor, to guide students through their experience. This could be a human resources representative, office manager, or team leader.
- 2. Determine the company's need for additional employees.** The internship coordinator should work with various departments to determine the company's needs and determine if interns can meet them.
- 3. Assign a sponsor.** A sponsor is not a supervisor, but rather a resource for the intern. A sponsor can be asked for guidance on things ranging from "How do I work with other employees?" to "Where is a good place for lunch?" The supervisor assigns work and monitors progress.
- 4. Develop internship job description and finalize hours/pay.** The internship coordinator and supervisor need to work together on these items to be sure the job will meet the supervisor's needs and be within budget.
- 5. Post internship job opening.** The internship coordinator and supervisor need to work together on these items to be sure the job will be posted in the most appropriate locations. (Note: Post to specific local schools in your geographical area. Handshake is also a good platform to connect students to employers: <https://www.joinhandshake.com/>)
- 6. Evaluate and interview candidates.** Be sure to include appropriate questions for a first-time worker.
- 7. Prepare and provide an onboarding process and orientation.** This may be the students' first office experience. They will likely not know what equipment, tools, or skills they need and presume you will provide it. Orientations ensure everyone starts with the same expectations and role definitions. Have intentional conversations about internet/phone use, meeting protocol, work hours, where to park, how long their lunch break is, etc.
- 8. Provide a handbook.** Whether in a paper format or presented as a special section on your website, a handbook serves as a guide for students, answering frequently asked questions and communicating rules in a warm and welcoming way.
- 9. Teach skills not taught in school.** An internship is often a student's first introduction to the professional world, so teach skills they don't learn in school. Show interns how to communicate with all levels of the organization and how to maneuver within the company. Developing these skills can impact career development and future success in the workplace, whether at your organization or elsewhere. Encourage interns to interact with employees throughout the company, ask them to sit in on meetings with full-time employees or give presentations about their work, and help them integrate into the organization by holding meet-and-greets with other departments.
- 10. Get to work.** Interns are often willing to share ideas and bring enthusiasm to the office every day. Be sure they understand their work and how it contributes to the company. Provide them with real work assignments. They should be doing work related to their major that is challenging and recognized by the organization as valuable.
- 11. Evaluate the intern and the internship program.** It is important to provide feedback to the intern. Not only does it help them improve their performance, but it also prepares them to enter the workforce.