

The Employer

Intern Program Components:

- The internship must be more than **just** an hourly job / position.
- Operational managers should be familiar with the intern program at the property, and committed to the time and involvement required to make it successful for the property and the intern.
- Interns should be invited to attend management meetings to get a management perspective.
- It is recommended that interns work from an hourly position eighty percent (80%) of the time and spend the other twenty percent (20%) learning management functions in closely related departments. Performing an hourly job will provide them with a strong operational foundation.
- It is recommended that interns rotate through various departments / positions / areas. The intern would operate out of one department but obtain exposure to other related departments. For example, work as a front desk clerk but also spend one or two weeks in housekeeping and reservations; or, work in the restaurant but spend one or two weeks in the kitchen and purchasing.
- A “bonus” for the intern would be to send them to a typical two to five day orientation and/or corporate training program.
- It is recommended that the intern meets once a month with an executive committee member to learn about their career path that got them there, and their responsibilities.
- It is recommended that the intern complete the company management or supervisory training manual. This will help them meet their college course requirements and provide them with a written reference base, in addition to a head start upon graduation.
- It is recommended to give the intern at least one performance appraisal so they can experience having their performance rated. For some, this will be the first time and it will be very helpful.
- Prepare other employees and supervisors for accepting the student’s participation and encourage their cooperation and support of the intern.
- Give him/her the opportunity, after a few weeks, to speak at a staff meeting where he/she can tell about him/her and the HRM program; or, lead a staff / committee meeting to gain perspective on setting agendas and disseminating information.
- In the event a student is not performing in accordance with accepted standards, and has been given all necessary chances / warnings / opportunities for corrective action, the employer is under no obligation to continue employment. Please notify the intern coordinator immediately should this occur.

Things to avoid: *(based on comments received from our interns)*

- Sending an intern to a manager or department that does not support or understand the intern program
- Assuming that the intern is comfortable in the work situation. Some are very grateful for the opportunity and will do nothing to upset the apple cart. For some, it will be their first work opportunity in our hospitality industry.
- Forgetting about the intern. A call from the human resource department to touch base is very welcome.
- Working the intern into the ground. The intern expects to work but also expects it to be reasonable and fair. Remember that they will be very hesitant to rock the boat or volunteer comments or critique. They will, however, tell everyone back on campus the good and the bad of their internships.
- Changing the program in mid-stream. Give them a clearly laid out plan. It can be adjusted and revised, but let them build on the experience and relationships in the department where they are.
- Dragging out the interview and placement process. Meet the dates for follow-up interviews, offer letters, and respond to phone calls / emails. The worst PR a company gets is by missing deadlines, making mistakes and dragging out the placement process. All students talk to each other—they have a very effective grapevine.

Summary:

The internship experience is an exciting time for a college student. It is an opportunity for him/her to step up from typical hourly positions and receive exposure to management responsibilities along with the company's culture and operational philosophy. An internship is a sought after experience. When interns return they can be a company or property's best ambassadors. If a manager takes some extra time with an intern, he/she will improve the quality of their experience.

It is not expected that interns will be perfect. One of the best experiences for them is working through difficult situations. It will give them the confidence that they can see it through and develop maturity and professionalism. Do not let them get by with anything, but realize they come from a university environment, which is quite a different world. Help them make that transition.

Remember that interns are successful college students. They will possess good analytical skills and skill sets that will include technology, academic theory and often a foreign language. They have chosen to major in Hotel and Restaurant Management and the internship will help them transition from academics to the workplace. The experience will assist them in determining if this is the career they want to pursue. While it is not believed that interns should be treated differently, it is beneficial for all to recognize the skills and abilities they bring with them.