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Interns and Entry-Level Employees



TILSON E-GUIDE

Table of Contents

PAGE 3	Introduction
PAGE 4	Interns — Overview
PAGE 9	Interns — Best Practices
PAGE 11	Entry-level Employees — Overview
PAGE 15	Special Considerations — Mentorship Programs
PAGE 18	Conclusion
PAGE 19	Appendix A — Onboarding Resources
PAGE 24	Appendix B — Mentorship Resources
PAGE 26	Appendix C — Intern Resources

Introduction

Interns and entry-level employees can be a huge asset for any company. Internships are opportunities for undergraduate students, recent graduates, and graduate students to learn from on-the-job training and to experience work in their chosen field. Entry-level positions are opportunities typically sought after by recent graduates or individuals switching careers that allow individuals to enter the workforce often with little experience or education.

As with any employee, employers must take the proper steps to successfully onboard interns and entry-level employees and provide them with the tools for success at the organization. This e-guide serves as an introductory guide to interns and entry-level employees and provides best practices for recruiting, hiring, and retaining the top talent in each of these positions.

Interns — Overview

The Basics

Internships have come a long way from the stereotypical “make copies and go on an office coffee run” roles and have evolved into more valuable positions. Creating and maintaining a well-designed internship program can be an important part of your recruiting strategy and corporate image. Establishing an internship program can yield several advantages for your company. Attracting young talent through a solid internship program can draw in new ideas and knowledge of the latest studies and developments in your industry, such as recent social media trends. The energy and enthusiasm brought by interns can be refreshing to work with, and interns who are inquisitive and intelligent can challenge the status quo and help you view your work processes from a fresh perspective.

A competitive internship program that provides value to your interns can also contribute to a positive corporate reputation. Satisfied interns will share a positive view of your company with others. This word-of-mouth advertising can help you attract new interns and employees. You will be seen as a desirable company to work for, as well as an organization that cares about the community by teaching the young professionals in your industry.

Possibly one of the biggest advantages of a good internship program is the ability to attract, screen and test potential full-time employees. Working with interns serves as an efficient way to consider them for future employment. If you decide to hire an intern as a regular employee, not only will you have someone who has proven himself or herself to you, but you will be able to reduce training time and expenses because the intern will already be familiar with the company and at least partially trained for a full-time position.

Who is an intern?

According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) Wage and Hour Division guidelines, an intern is a student or recent graduate undergoing supervised practical training in a work environment. What distinguishes an internship from a part-time job is that an internship’s purpose is to provide an educational experience for the intern, whereas a part-time job does not promise any educational value beyond necessary job training.

An intern can work full time or part time, and the duration of the internship can last several weeks, a semester, a summer, or a whole year. Internships can be paid or unpaid positions, but special

considerations must be made in order to comply with legal regulations if you offer an unpaid internship.

Note: This e-guide focuses primarily on paid internships.

How are internships beneficial to the intern?

Internships provide value to the interns in several ways. Primarily, the experience serves as a way to learn practical, on-the-job skills and observe how an organization works. The intern can apply classroom knowledge to action in the professional world.

Internships can also be beneficial because they provide an open door to a student's desired career field. The interns have an opportunity to prove themselves and to earn either a full-time position with your company or a recommendation from you for when they are looking for jobs elsewhere.

What demographic is most likely to be looking for an internship?

The oldest members of Generation Z—those born between 1995 and 2012—are beginning to enter the workforce. Experts say that one of the most important things a prospective young graduate or graduate-to-be can have on their resume is internship experience. This is because employers are much more likely to hire someone with internships and work experience rather than someone with a generic resume, lacking experience.

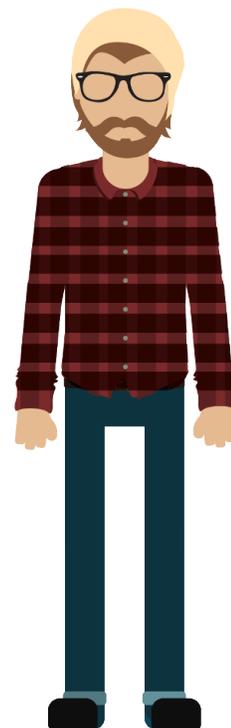
As a result, many Generation Z students will be looking to build their resume with an internship, which, in turn, means that you need to adjust your internships to appeal to them.

Who is Generation Z?

Generation Z members are remarkably different than their millennial predecessors. Generation Z grew up during the recession, so they are thought to be more career-orientated than millennials. They grew up hearing about the struggles of millennials and they are trying to avoid making the same mistakes. They are more realistic and resourceful, and they desire to have more control over their careers.

Generation Z members aspire to be entrepreneurs. According to a study from Universum, 55% of Generation Z members are interested in starting their own companies. Like the millennials before them, Generation Z shuns the traditional 9-to-5 office jobs and dreams of self-employment. Generation Z grew up witnessing the success of innovative startups like Facebook and Uber, as well as crowdsourcing. They have ambitious goals of developing their own startups and being their own bosses.

Because Generation Z will be even more tech-savvy than previous generations, it is important to connect with these individuals on multiple



social media platforms. Make sure your company's website and hiring process (e.g., job posts and application) is mobile-friendly, and develop innovative recruitment videos that can be easily shared on sites like YouTube to attract new top talent.

Do I need to create a specific internship program, or can I use general onboarding procedures?

Although your intern would likely benefit from going through some of your general onboarding procedures, such as an office tour and meeting the team, you should invest the time and resources into creating an intern-specific onboarding program in order for the experience to be as beneficial to you and your intern as possible.

A good internship program does not happen overnight, though. Carefully consider what your company wants to gain from the process, what the intern should learn from the internship and how you will make the program a successful one. Before beginning an internship program, you will need to assess your resources. The following are a few things you should consider when designing and implementing an internship program.

1

Goals and Objectives

As the foundation of the internship program, you will need to establish goals for both you and the intern. You must decide whether you want to use the internship program as a channel for choosing new full-time employees, or whether you're interested in simply providing a learning environment for young professionals. Knowing what your company's goals are will guide the internship planning process.

Goals for interns should include concise, measurable learning objectives as well as a list of projects and tasks that you want them to accomplish. Interns should not merely be given "gofer" assignments, but rather tasks that have value to both your organization and the intern. Set reasonable deadlines for each item and be prepared with extra work in case the intern completes tasks more quickly than anticipated.

2

Feedback

A key component in meeting goals and striving for quality learning and productivity is evaluating the intern's work and offering constructive feedback. Weekly meetings, open communication throughout the workday and an exit interview at the end of the internship will help the student learn from the experience. In the exit interview, you can also solicit feedback from the intern about how you can improve the internship program in the future.

3

Supervision

Decide who will be responsible for supervising the intern. The supervisor will coordinate schedules and training, be available for questions and provide constructive comments on the intern's work. The first meeting between the supervisor and intern should cover information such as expectations, goals and workplace policies. After that, weekly meetings are recommended to address questions and concerns and provide timely feedback.

4

Training

Assess the resources you have for training your intern. Depending on the size of your internship program and your company, you may find a combination of group sessions, individual mentoring, training manuals and videos to be helpful training tools. Plan training that will contribute to the actual work the intern will be performing as well as information that provides insight into your industry.

5

Credits and Compensation

Some schools allow students to earn college credits for their internships. If the internship is for credit, you may be responsible for filling out paperwork to meet the student's course requirements. You will need to work with the student and his or her school to determine exact guidelines. Other students may not need or want to earn credit for their internships. Instead, they may be looking for real-world job experience without having to pay tuition for the internship credit.

When should I start looking for an intern?

You should start the hiring process for an intern approximately two to three months prior to the anticipated start date of the internship. This gives you ample time to collect applications and conduct interviews before making hiring decisions.

Before students can apply, you will need to create an internship summary in order to attract candidates. The summary should include information such as the following:

- A description of your organization
- The types of tasks that will be assigned
- The preferred and required candidate skills
- What training will be provided
- The start and end dates and number of required hours per day or week
- Whether the internship will be paid
- How to apply
- General information about transportation and housing facilities, if applicable

Make sure you follow typical hiring practices, such as adhering to equal employment opportunity laws. You should provide all hired interns with your regular employee handbook, which should contain safety procedures and any other necessary policies.

What are some other internship considerations?

There are a handful of other things to consider regarding internships, including the following:

- The number of interns you hire will depend on the size of your organization, your needs, and the resources you have available in order to provide a good experience for your interns.
- If an intern is not working out well, most programs follow at-will employment guidelines (check with legal counsel for specific advice). However, internships last a limited amount of time, so firing an intern is a rare event, usually reserved for when an intern commits a truly egregious act, such as lying or stealing.
- Look to hire an intern who fits your company's culture. Poor hiring decisions can be extremely costly for your company in terms of business interruption, wasted recruiting and training resources, and lower employee morale. You may realize that an individual is not a good fit, or a new employee may choose to leave if the job doesn't match his or her expectations. In both circumstances, many of these separations are due to the fact that the hired individuals did not fit the company culture and lacked productivity or creativity.

Interns — Best Practices

5 Tips for Intern Managers

1

Create an open-door policy for your interns.

Because of the nature of internships, intern managers will have to take on a variety of different roles, which include supervisor, educator, mentor and gatekeeper. Establishing an open-door policy lets your interns know that they can come to you with any questions or concerns they may have.

2

Schedule regular check-in meetings.

Regularly meeting with your interns allows you to achieve the following:

- Make your interns feel like part of the team.
- Discuss and set goals for your interns.
- Help your interns stay on track with their goals.
- Keep your interns informed on upcoming projects.
- Answer your interns' questions or concerns.
- Learn more about your interns, such as their interests and career aspirations, and how you can help them.

3

Prepare.

Taking the time to properly prepare for interns is crucial. By doing so, you can make sure that you're providing your interns with work experience that's actually valuable and you'll give them a guide to reference through the internship. Additionally, you can create a set of performance evaluation standards to monitor your interns' performance.

4

Provide meaningful tasks.

Because internship experience is all but expected for those who are looking for their first full-time job, and the experience is supposed to be educational, you must make sure that you give your interns meaningful tasks. Moreover, try to assign your interns tasks that relate to their career strengths or goals, or personal interests.

5

Take time to be a good mentor.

Try to be someone who your interns can learn from. Providing both formal and informal growth opportunities is part of helping someone learn. This also includes providing networking opportunities for your interns whenever possible.

Help Your Interns Avoid These Mistakes

According to Business Insider, the following were the top 15 mistakes interns made in 2016. Take note of these and help your interns avoid making the same mistakes.

1. Oversharing	2. Complaining	3. Assuming or not asking questions
4. Failing to take initiative	5. Spending the night at the office	6. Not respecting or understanding boundaries
7. Quitting one internship for another internship	8. Working for free	9. Dressing inappropriately
10. Communicating poorly	11. Ignoring the details	12. Going on a vacation
13. Being lazy and rude	14. Acting unprofessionally	15. Being unresponsive

Source: Business Insider

Entry-level Employees — Overview

The Basics

Entry-level positions, at their most basic, provide employees with the opportunity to gain experience while getting paid. These positions require little to no experience or, sometimes, education. Often, these jobs help an organization accomplish work that more experienced individuals typically don't have the time to do.

Entry-level positions generally pay more than internship positions, but less than positions that require more experience or skill. Over time, entry-level employees acclimate to the organization, hone industry skills, gain experience and develop the potential for better paying and higher positions.

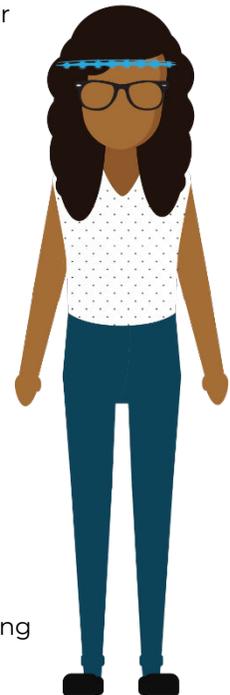
Organizations can benefit greatly from entry-level employees, as they can find the top talent in the market and train them in the skills necessary to advance in their career field (and company), without having to pay for a more experienced worker. However, entry-level employee turnover can be high, which can cost employers a significant amount of money. To avoid incurring turnover costs, your organization needs to be mindful of who the typical entry-level employee may be and adjust your recruiting and retention strategies accordingly.

What demographic is most likely to be looking for an entry-level position?

Although there are exceptions, young millennials—those born between approximately 1980 and 1994—are currently the most common applicants for entry-level positions. Some members of Generation Z may also be among entry-level job applicants.

How do I recruit entry-level employees?

Because your most common applicants will be either millennials or Gen Zers, you should focus your recruiting efforts on these two demographics. Consider the following suggestions:



- **Create specific job ads.** Be as specific as possible in your entry-level position's job description and list duties, requirements, perks, and benefits, and contact information.
- **Attend job fairs and career events.** Because many young millennials and Gen Zers are graduating college and looking for full-time employment, college job fairs, career events and networking nights are the best resources for seeking out entry-level employees.
- **Review social media sites.** Gen Zers and millennials are tech-savvy. Look at online social media sites, like LinkedIn, or online portfolio sites to gain more insight into prospective employees than reviewing a resume allows.

How do I hire the right entry-level employees?

Hiring for entry-level positions is unique in that there is typically a limited list of references and a lack of relevant experience. To avoid incurring the negative costs of hiring the wrong employee, consider the following tips:

- **Market your company to recent graduates.** Focus on marketing your company as attractive for recent graduates rather than marketing specific positions and titles. Finding a way to effectively showcase your organization's values and mission can help you attract candidates who will thrive in your company's environment and who fit your company's culture, rather than those who are job hunting for a specific title.
- **Look past limited experience and for achievement in other areas.** When reviewing a candidate's resume, look for extracurricular activity and volunteer opportunity involvement. If a candidate received particular awards, was in a leadership role or organized various events, take note. These qualities show that a candidate has the drive and initiative it takes to succeed and grow in an entry-level position.
- **Ask the right questions.** With entry-level employees, you will likely have to abandon the typical interview questions because some applicants have zero job experience. Consider asking situational questions, or opening questions to other experiences outside of work.



How do I retain entry-level employees?

It's no secret that the turnover rates for entry-level employees are historically high. With millennial entry-level employees, turnover rates may be even higher than other generations.

According to the Gallup study, "The State of the American Workplace," millennials are the most disengaged of all working generations and are the most likely to leave their jobs in the next 12 months if

the job market improves. However, while nearly half of actively disengaged millennials want to find new jobs, only 17% of engaged ones do.

How does an employer engage its millennial workers? Millennials who are engaged usually have a strong sense of what their organization stands for. Find ways to help these employees understand and internalize your company's mission.

Additionally, the 2012 study, "Maximizing Millennials in the Workplace," conducted by the University of North Carolina Kennan-Flagler Business School, offers four suggestions. The study found that millennials want their employers to have four critical traits, including the following:

1. **Coaching.** Millennials were raised in an environment of constant feedback and expect it to continue in the workplace.
2. **Collaboration.** Employers should be clear about the big picture, so employees understand their roles.
3. **Measures.** Millennials were raised with a lot of structure and evaluation rubrics and are accustomed to understanding how they will be judged and assessed. They expect these metrics to continue in the workplace, so employers should define clear and consistent job assessment criteria.
4. **Motivation.** Millennials want a work environment that is comfortable and inspires them to contribute without fear of being criticized.

Are there other strategies I can use to retain entry-level employees?

Yes, there are other strategies that you can use to retain entry-level employees, including the following:

- **Offer a competitive wage.** Even with a developed recruiting program, fantastic work environment and great work-life balance, it will be difficult for your company to attract and retain the best employees without a competitive pay policy. Most HR professionals suggest that being competitive with compensation means paying an average of 5-10% more or less than the average market pay for a job or a group of jobs. Click [here](#) for more information on wage statistics and pay averages.
- **Design career paths or plans.** Career pathing is a structured, comprehensive development planning process intended to help employees visualize their career potential within a company. Organizations that use formal career pathing processes tend to have more engaged employees because employees believe that their employers are concerned about their growth. Career pathing provides employees with avenues to reach individual career goals while fulfilling their company's mission.
- **Check in regularly.** Meeting with entry-level employees consistently can create an open-door policy and culture. This type of culture invites employees to speak with you candidly and can demonstrate that your organization values the thoughts, opinions, and work of entry-level employees.
- **Improve benefits offerings.** According to a recent study by Aflac, 88% of employees view voluntary benefits as a crucial part of a comprehensive benefits package. Expanding your voluntary benefits offerings can help you improve retention and recruit qualified employees.



Special Considerations — Mentorship Programs

The Basics

Mentoring programs can be valuable tools for recruiting, retaining, and developing top talent in all positions, but especially at entry-level and internship positions.

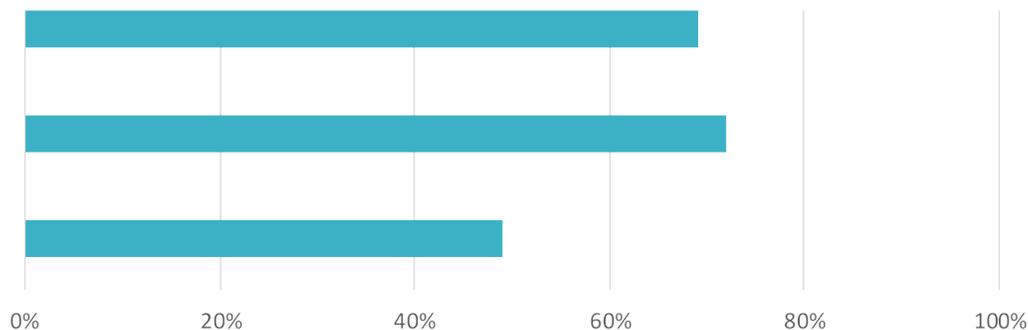
A mentor is an individual in the workplace who shares his or her knowledge and expertise to help another employee grow professionally.

Mentoring programs can benefit not only the mentees, but also the mentors and the company as whole.

Assigning a mentor to a new hire can be invaluable to the onboarding process. Sun Microsystems conducted a study that looked at data from more than 1,000 of its employees over a five-year period and found that its mentoring program had positively benefitted everyone involved.

According to the study, 25% of employees who participated in the test group had a salary grade change, compared to only 5% of employees who did not participate. Also, mentors were promoted six times more often and mentees were promoted five times more often than those not in the program.

Retention rates were also higher—**69%** for mentors and **72%** for mentees, with a **49%** retention rate for employees who did not participate in the program.



Benefits for the Mentee

Mentees can achieve the following benefits through a mentoring program:

- **Skill development**—Mentors teach mentees the skills and qualities they will need to succeed, along with familiarizing them with the company's protocol and procedures. This, in turn, can teach mentees how to do their jobs more efficiently.
- **Continual growth**—Mentors provide ongoing feedback to their mentees and teach them how to take constructive criticism and apply it to their jobs. This type of feedback can feel less intrusive than regular performance reviews, and employees may respond better to it as a result.
- **Networking**—Mentoring allows employees to build a professional relationship over a period of time and teaches them about the value of networking.
- **Talent development**—By providing mentees with the skills and support they need to succeed, mentees will be more prepared to advance to new positions within the company and to take on leadership roles.

Benefits for the Mentor

Mentoring programs can also reap significant benefits for the mentors themselves, including the following:

- Give mentors the opportunity to help someone else out, which may increase mentors' self-worth.
- Help mentors re-energize their careers, which may increase their commitment to your company.
- Allow mentors to fine-tune their communication and leadership skills, which can be valuable as they continue to grow in their own careers.

Benefits for the Company

In addition, there are significant benefits that can be realized by your company:

- **Retention**—Mentoring helps employees feel more engaged in their work and more in control of their careers. Employees will feel like the company cares about them and may be more loyal as a result—in turn, reducing turnover-related costs.
- **Recruitment**—Advertising a mentoring program can help recruit qualified candidates and establish yourself as an employer of choice within your industry.
- **Productivity**—Because employees have the skills they need to do their jobs effectively, this can increase productivity and reduce the number of errors made on the job. Employees may also feel more confident in their work and spend less time second-guessing themselves.
- **Company culture**—By encouraging employees to build positive relationships with one another, you can promote a sense of cooperation and teamwork at your company.



Mentoring programs can be a low-cost way to increase retention, attract new talent and improve employee morale at the entry-level position and internship levels—all of which can help your business become more profitable.

Conclusion

By using the strategies outlined above, you can position your company, interns, and entry-level employees for success. By taking the time to properly prepare for, recruit, hire, train and retain top talent in these positions, you can increase your organization's productivity and engagement, improve employee morale, and reduce turnover costs—all of which can boost your company's bottom line.

For more information on any of the strategies mentioned in this e-guide, contact Tilson HR today.

Appendix Printing Help

There are many printable resources in the following appendix. Please follow the instructions below if you need help printing individual pages.

1. Choose the "Print" option from the "File" menu.
2. Under the "Settings" option, click on the arrow next to "Print All Pages" to access the drop-down menu. Select "Custom Print" and enter the page number range you would like to print or enter the page number range you would like to print in the "Pages" box.

Click "Print." For more information, please visit the [Microsoft Word printing support page](#).

Appendix A — Onboarding Resources

New Hire Letter

Use this template to create a customized new hire welcome letter for your organization.

[Insert first name] [Insert last name]

[Insert home address]

[Insert city, state, and ZIP code]

Dear employee:

We are pleased to welcome you to 's team. At , we strive to provide high-quality, competitive benefits to our employees.

Please take the time to review and complete the following forms (if applicable):

- [Insert HR forms and benefits]

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these forms or our benefits offerings, please contact your HR representative.

Sincerely,

Onboarding Checklist

Keeping track of the onboarding process for new hires can be overwhelming for even the most seasoned HR team. Consider utilizing a simple checklist to navigate the onboarding process in a way that is conducive to creating a welcoming atmosphere and a long-term relationship. This checklist can be used as a starting point for you to customize according to your own needs, whether it is for a hiring manager, manager, or mentor.

Before the employee's start date

Job Duties and Schedule

- Contact the employee with useful information that may include any of the following:
 - Confirmation of the start date, time, place, parking, maps, and dress code
 - Name of his or her mentor, if applicable
 - Request to complete new-hire paperwork, such as tax forms, direct deposit form and emergency contact information
- Add regularly scheduled meetings to the employee's calendar.
- Plan the employee's first assignments.

Social

- Email the employee's department with relevant information about its new team member, such as his or her start date, role, and a brief bio. Copy the new employee, if appropriate.
- Select and meet with the new hire's mentor, if applicable. Provide suggestions and tips.
- Set up meetings with critical people for the employee's first few weeks.

Work Environment

- Clean the work area and set up his or her cubicle or office space with supplies.
- Order office or work area keys.
- Order business cards and a name plate.
- Arrange for parking, if needed.

Technology

- Order technology equipment and software.
- Arrange for access to common shared network drives.
- Add the employee to relevant email distribution lists.
- Arrange for phone installation.

Training and Development

- Arrange pertinent trainings required for the job.

First Day

Job Duties and Schedule

- Introduce the employee to the workspace.
- Review outline of duties and expectations for the first week.
- Review hours of work. Explain policies and procedures for overtime, vacation time, sick time and holidays.

Social

- Be available to greet the employee on the first day.
- Introduce the employee to others in the workplace and his or her mentor.
- Take the employee out to lunch. Include the mentor and any relevant team members.

Work Environment

- Give the employee a key or a building access card.
- Take the employee on a building tour.
- Explain how to get additional office supplies.

Technology

- Provide information on setting up voicemail and computer.

First Week

Job Duties and Schedule

- Give the employee his or her initial assignment—something small and doable.
- Briefly check in with employee each day to address any questions or concerns that may arise.
- Explain the annual performance review and goal-setting process.
- Review the process related to the probationary period, if applicable.

First 3 Months

Job Duties and Schedule

- Conduct regularly occurring one-on-one meetings while giving timely, useful feedback.
- Meet for an informal three-month performance check-in.
- Create written performance goals and professional development goals.

Social

- Meet with the employee's mentor to review initial stages of mentorship and answer questions.

Training and Development

- Ensure the employee has attended all scheduled training and is signed up for any future training sessions that may be needed.
- Provide information about continued learning opportunities, if applicable.

First 6 Months

Job Duties and Schedule

- Conduct six-month performance review.
- Review progress on performance goals and professional development goals.

First Year (Between 6 and 12 Months)

Job Duties and Schedule

- Celebrate successes and recognition of the employee's contributions.
- Continue providing regular informal feedback. Provide formal feedback during the annual review process.
- Have a conversation with the employee about his or her experience to date.
- Discuss potential goals for the next year.

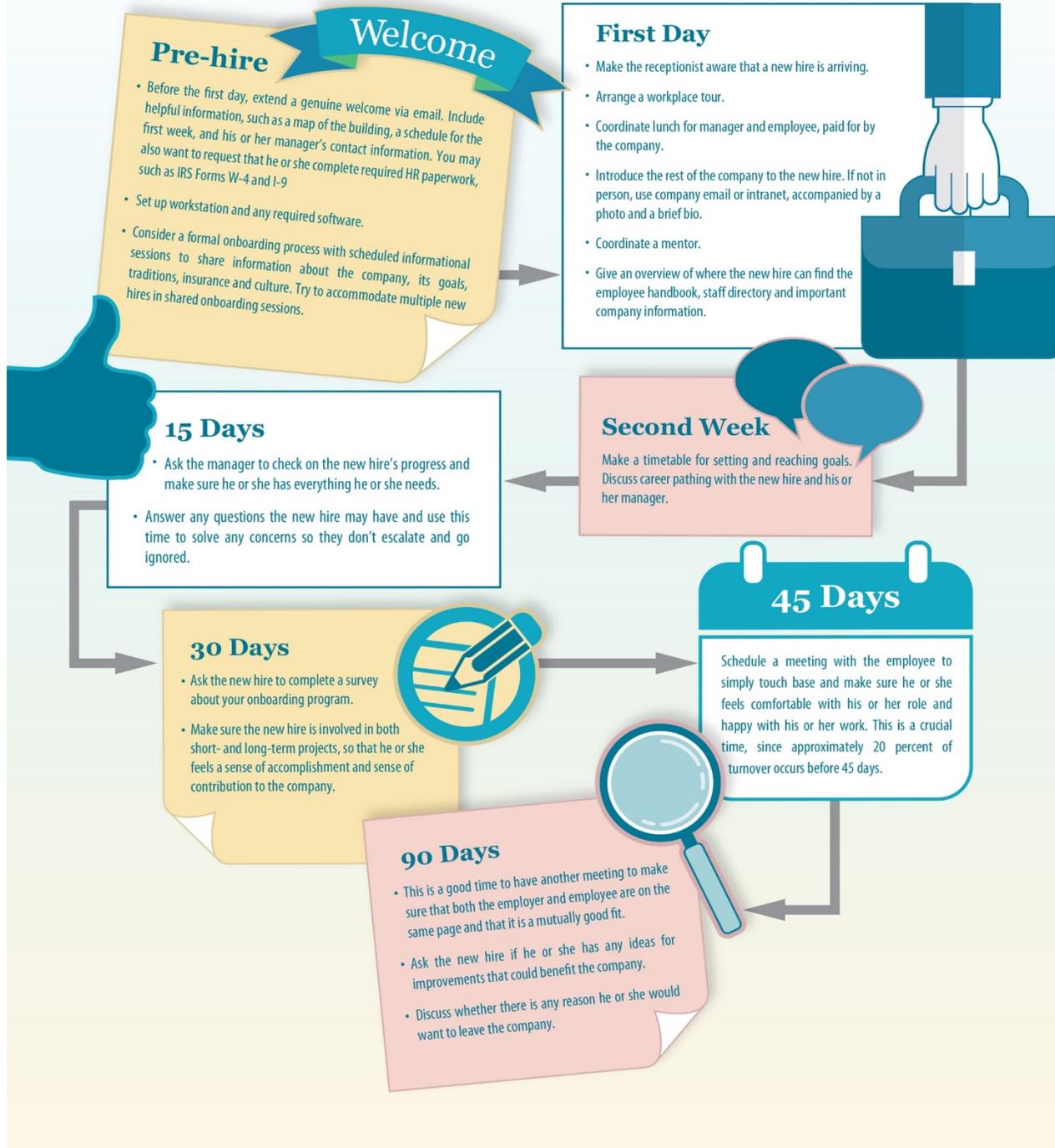
Training and Development

- Discuss the employee's professional development goals and identify relevant learning opportunities.

Onboarding Infographic: First 90 Days

The infographic featured on the next page lays out how to set new employees up for success during their first 90 days of employment.

The First 90 Days: Setting Up New Employees for Success



Appendix B — Mentorship Resources

Mentor-mentee Matching Form

Use this form to gather information about your new hires so that you can match them with a mentor.

Name: _____

Current position title: _____

Area(s) of professional interest: _____

List three adjectives that best describe your personality: _____

What adjective best describes the role you would like your mentor to play (only choose one):

- Colleague
- Sounding board
- Teacher
- Motivator
- Other (specify): _____

What are your hobbies and interests?

How often would you like to meet with your mentor? _____

What is your preferred method of communication with your mentor?

- Email
- Face-to-face meetings
- Instant message
- Other (specify): _____

Mentor Meeting Form

Meeting date: _____

Name of mentor: _____

Name of mentee: _____

1. Today's meeting agenda:

-
-
-

2. Action steps from last meeting:

-
-
-

3. What challenges are the mentor/mentee currently facing?

-
-

4. What opportunities are the mentor/mentee currently facing?

-
-

5. Action steps for next meeting:

-

Appendix C — Intern Resources

This section includes the DOL guidance on unpaid internships, as well as an exit survey for interns to complete following the completion of their internship.

DOL Guidance: Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) defines the term “employ” very broadly as including to “suffer or permit to work.” Covered and nonexempt individuals who are “suffered or permitted” to work must be compensated under the law for the services they perform for an employer. Internships in the for-profit private sector will most often be viewed as employment, unless the test described below relating to trainees is met. Interns in the for-profit private sector who qualify as employees rather than trainees typically must be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over 40 in a workweek.

Test for Unpaid Interns

There are some circumstances under which individuals who participate in for-profit private sector internships or training programs may do so without compensation. The Supreme Court has held that the term “suffer or permit to work” cannot be interpreted to make a person whose work serves only his or her own interest an employee of another who provides aid or instruction. This may apply to interns who receive training for their own educational benefit if the training meets certain criteria. The determination of whether an internship or training program meets this exclusion depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of each such program. The following six criteria must be applied when making this determination:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment.
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern.
3. The intern does not displace regular employees but works under close supervision of existing staff.
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern, and, on occasion, its operations may actually be impeded.
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

If all the factors listed above are met, an employment relationship does not exist under the FLSA, and the act's minimum wage and overtime provisions do not apply to the intern. This exclusion from the definition of employment is necessarily quite narrow because the FLSA's definition of employ is very broad. Some of the most commonly discussed factors for for-profit private sector internship programs are considered below.

Similar to an Education Environment and the Primary Beneficiary of the Activity

In general, the more an internship program is structured around a classroom or academic experience as opposed to the employer's actual operations, the more likely the internship will be viewed as an extension of the individual's educational experience (this often occurs where a college or university exercises oversight over the internship program and provides educational credit). The more the internship provides the individual with skills that can be used in multiple employment settings, as opposed to skills particular to one employer's operation, the more likely the intern would be viewed as receiving training. Under these circumstances the intern does not perform the routine work of the business on a regular and recurring basis, and the business is not dependent upon the work of the intern.

On the other hand, if the interns are engaged in the operations of the employer or are performing productive work (for example, filing, performing other clerical work, or assisting customers), then the fact that they may be receiving some benefits in the form of a new skill or improved work habits will not exclude them from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements because the employer benefits from the interns' work.

Displacement and Supervision Issues

If an employer uses interns as substitutes for regular workers or to augment its existing workforce during specific time periods, these interns should be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over 40 in a workweek. If the employer would have hired additional employees or required existing staff to work additional hours had the interns not performed the work, then the interns will be viewed as employees and entitled compensation under the FLSA. Conversely, if the employer is providing job shadowing opportunities that allow an intern to learn certain functions under the close and constant supervision of regular employees, but the intern performs no or minimal work, the activity is more likely to be viewed as a bona fide education experience. On the other hand, if the intern receives the same level of supervision as the employer's regular workforce, this would suggest an employment relationship, rather than training.

Job Entitlement

The internship should be of a fixed duration, established prior to the outset of the internship. Further, unpaid internships generally should not be used by the employer as a trial period for individuals seeking employment at the conclusion of the internship period. If an intern is placed with the employer for a trial period with the expectation that he or she will then be hired on a permanent basis, that individual generally would be considered an employee under the FLSA.

Where to Obtain Additional Information

This publication is for general information and is not to be considered in the same light as official statements of position contained in the regulations. For additional information, visit the Wage and Hour Division's (WHD) website at www.wagehour.dol.gov or call the toll-free information and helpline, available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in your time zone at 1-866-487-9243.

* The FLSA makes a special exception under certain circumstances for individuals who volunteer to perform services for a state or local government agency and for individuals who volunteer for humanitarian purposes for private nonprofit food banks. WHD also recognizes an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to nonprofit organizations. Unpaid internships in the public sector and for nonprofit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible. WHD is reviewing the need for additional guidance on internships in the public and nonprofit sectors.

Source: DOL

Intern Exit Feedback Survey

Name: _____

What agency or department did you work in? _____

Was the work a valuable experience in relation to your academic studies? (Yes/No) Comments:

Were you given responsibilities that enabled you to apply the knowledge and skills you are learning through college coursework? (Yes/No) Comments:

Were you allowed/given the opportunity to take the initiative to work beyond the basic requirements of your role? (Yes/No) Comments:

Did your supervisor work with you regularly? Was he or she available to answer questions when necessary? (Yes/No) Comments:

Briefly note new skills, techniques and knowledge gained in this position:

What was your favorite experience of the internship?

What was your least favorite experience of the internship?

Is there anything that was not covered that should have been covered in the internship program?

Do you think your academic program adequately prepared you for this internship? (Yes/No) Comments:



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