How to Capitalize on your Internship Program; Best Practices for Retention & Conversion of Interns

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The Era of Measurement

• Obama creates Chief Performance Officer
• Budgets are squeezed
• Greater citizen involvement/oversight in ensuring tax payer $ are working
• Trend in private sector, non-profit, higher education and philanthropic sector
Goals for the Day

1. Start a conversation about how we can all better deliver and communicate results of internship programs
2. Learn from each other on what works, what doesn’t and where we need to go to truly capitalize on the programs
3. Provide a framework for re-thinking results
4. Share case studies – Federal Highway Administration & Department of Defense
5. Q & A & Comments
Framework

1. Goal Setting
2. Measurement Tools
3. Program Design
4. Assessment
5. Program Tuning
Common Problems with Demonstrating Results

• No pre-defined goals- or goals are unrealistic: i.e. **hiring is a hurdle**
• Measure activity, not results
• Burdensome
• Limited expertise and tools for measurement & assessment
• Hard to communicate to public, internal or external constituencies
Internship Programs

• General agreement that these programs are important and play a critical role. (OPM-PMA)

• Obama Administration focus on Service Learning

• Good for Agency & Good for Society
Current Metrics

- Number of Participants
- What schools and majors are represented
- Diversity Statistics
- Anecdotal information about experience
- How many students hired?
Clarify Goals and Align them to Agency Priorities – Examples

✓ We want to provide x type of student POSITIVE hands-on exposure to the government or specific field
✓ We want x type of students to develop skills and inclination to secure federal positions
✓ We want to bring the perspective of x type of student to our workforce
✓ We want our agency to gain visibility on x campus or with x group
✓ We want to supplement our workforce with temporary help to achieve x results
✓ We want to expand our FTE pipeline pool with x type of students
✓ We want to hire x number of people by x date
Example 1

Goal:

We want to supplement our workforce with x type of student help to achieve x results.

Metrics:

• What were the specific accomplishments of the student?
• What was the cost-savings of bringing on student intern vs. FTE or consultant?
• What was the time frame for project completion vs. time frame without student?
• What unique expertise did student bring to project?

Tool

• Focus of survey is on employee/employer
Example 2

Goal:

We want x type of students to develop skills and inclination to secure federal positions

Metrics:

• Will you pursue a federal job upon graduation?
• What are the benefits of working for the federal government?
• What steps will you take to secure a federal job?
• What is a KSA?
• What are the important elements of writing a KSA?
• What are the different departments or agencies that you will target for employment upon graduation?
• What additional skills/courses will you need to secure your target position?

Tool:

Focus of survey is on student
Example 3

Goal:

We want to hire $x$ number of people by $x$ date

Metrics:

- How many students were hired upon completion of program?
- How many interviews did each intern candidate have?
- How many students were multi-year intern returnees?

Tools:

HR & Students are surveyed
Next Step: Design Your Program to Produce the Right Results

- Strong orientation for interns & mentors
- Identify goals to everyone involved
- Manage expectations
- Develop cohort amongst interns
- Provide networking opportunities
- Provide wide exposure to agency through project rotations
- Training & development for students
- Context is critical
- Stay connected after the internship
Program design will vary depending on the goals
Gather & Study the Data

- Pre and post assessment benefits
- Paper vs. electronic collection of data
- Survey Monkey
- If you are working with internship partners develop instruments together
Communicate and Share the Data

• Many agencies could learn from each other
• Take the time to effectively communicate the findings agency heads
• Brag about your results!!
• Work with partners to highlight results to broader audiences
Refine your Program

If you’re not ready to make improvements, don’t ask the questions!
Review the Cycle

- Set Clear, Realistic Goals, Aligned to Agency Priorities
- Develop Measurement Tools
- Study Data & Fine Tune Program
- Design Program
- Assess Program
- Fine Tune Program

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Case Studies

• Federal Highway Administration – Student Internship Program for Diverse Students (STIPDG)
  - Serena Matthews & Gregory Murrill

• Washington Headquarter Service, Department of Defense, Kenneth Rauch

• Other Input
Questions?

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