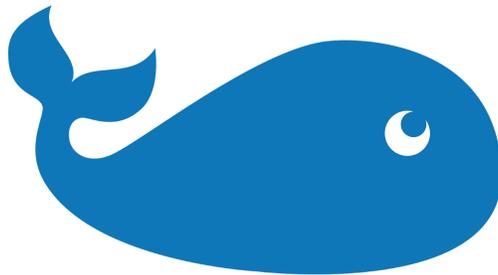


The Simple Guide to Building an Awesome Internship Program

**WHOLE
WHALE**



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Very proudly produced in Brooklyn, New York

Dedicated to Annaliese, our Baby Whaler

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Introduction: Is This for You?

This ebook is a focused resource designed to super-size your internship program and unlock the incredible potential of the rising generation for your organization. We begin by making the case for interns before covering best practices and offering simple templates and ideas to improve your programs. Along the way, we'll share insights from organizations that we've been proud to call clients, including Idealist.org, DonorsChoose.org, DoSomething.org, Move For Hunger, the Michael J. Fox Foundation, and many others.

The resources and ideas presented here will help any organization to rethink their approach to internship programs and unlock more potential in this overlooked workforce. Regardless of your budget or staff size, you can better integrate your interns in a way that augments and supports your organization's mission. Beyond the logistical benefits, internships provide the indispensable role of introducing the rising generation into the workforce. The not-so-hidden hope we have in writing this book is that it will encourage more nonprofits and social impact companies to open their doors to new talent — and that this flood of new talent will then hopefully realize the wide world of social impact business and choose it as a career path.

Special thanks to Idealist.org, an organization that has been connecting interns and professionals to the social impact sector for over a decade. They rock, and are the only network we consistently trust to promote our employment opportunities (and we would say that even if we hadn't worked with them).

About the Authors

George Weiner

George is the Chief Whaler of social impact agency Whole Whale, and the cofounder of the nonprofit PowerPoetry.org — the largest online teen poetry platform. Prior to that, George was the CTO of DoSomething.org where, during his 7 year tenure, he oversaw the overhaul of the site twice (winning a [Webby Award](#)) and helped to build a community of over 1.5 million teens taking action on issues that matter to them.

George founded Whole Whale in 2010 with the goal of reducing the data and technology education gap in the nonprofit world. To date, Whole Whale has worked directly with over 65 nonprofits to multiply their online impact, and has reached over 100,000 nonprofits through the company's free podcasts, video trainings and online resources.



Outside of whaling for good, George is on the board of America's Charities and the To Be Heard Foundation. He is also a tech columnist for the *Nonprofit Times*, contributes to the impact and technology section of the Huffington Post, and is a frequent speaker at nonprofit technology conferences. In order to foster greater support for top technical nonprofits, George founded the group CTOs for Good, which supports and connect CTOs working for great social impact nonprofits.

Alison Glazer

Ali works with Whole Whale's marketing and advertising team to help nonprofits use social platforms and digital advertising strategies to increase their reach and impact. During her time at Whole Whale, Ali has executed digital advertising campaigns for organizations including Greater Than AIDS, the Cancer Research Institute, National Stroke Association, and more. She has spent over \$1 million in ad dollars to drive impact through resource distribution, volunteer recruitment, and the growth of online communities.

Certified in Google AdWords and Google Analytics, Ali and has personally managed over \$3 million of Google AdWords grant dollars, helping nonprofits to grow while measuring the metrics that matter most. She has successfully maxed out the grant and increased conversion rates for more than a dozen nonprofits — in one instance increasing volunteer registrations by over 250% in just 3 months. She also trains clients and the nonprofit community on all things AdWords, and won't rest until every nonprofit is using the grant effectively.

Rachel Clemens

Rachel works with Whole Whale's content team to help both Whole Whale and its clients craft high-impact pieces that advance their vital work. Having recently graduated from Williams College with a BA in English and concentrations in Creative Writing and Global Studies, she remains fascinated by the energizing power of words and believes that content strategy is a crucial aspect of increasing the reach of nonprofits.

Now filling the role of Whole Whale's Content Whaler, Rachel began as a Content Intern, which marked her fourth internship in the nonprofit and social impact world. Using both her communication skills and her personal experience, she hopes to provide relevant insight on the importance of creating (and promoting) effective nonprofit internships for students and young professionals.

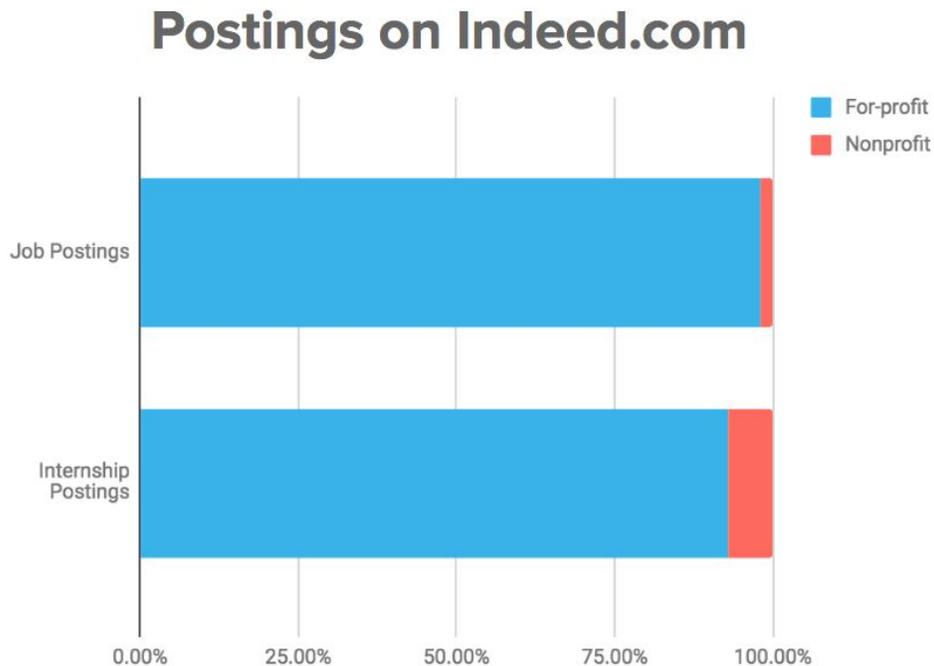
Why Should You Care About Interns?

Take a minute and think back on your own career history: What were the first experiences with professional work that you had beyond the ice cream shop, brick laying, or lawn mowing? How did those internships, apprenticeships, or part-time jobs shape the onset of your journey into the working world?

Now, imagine that you had the chance to hire your younger self: How might you shape that experience to maximize outcomes for both parties. Forgetting the *Hot Tub Time Machine* and *Back to the Future*—ish consequences of such an event, it is a fun thought experiment and one that might lead to you real insight about the real value of internship programs — both for the organization and the intern.

Whole Whale is a social impact company based on the idea that we should be maximizing every opportunity, using each aspect of the metaphorical whales around us when it comes to tech for social impact. Over the years, we've realized that there is a massive adjoining market (or, to keep the metaphor going, a white whale) that the social impact sector isn't fully leveraging: Interns.

In this time, we have also seen amazing work done by well-trained and well-managed interns both for our organization and our clients. Nationwide data also suggest that the social impact sector relies heavily on this workforce. In the summer of 2017, there were 19,600 internships posted on leading job site Indeed.com. Of these 19,600 listings, 7% of them were for internships in the nonprofit sector (compared to only 1.8% of Indeed.com's 3.8 million job postings that were for nonprofits).



Nonprofits are not alone in their fostering of and reliance on interns. According to job search website Glassdoor, some of the top for-profit companies have even been increasing their intern compensation. Looking at the list of [top-rated corporate internship programs](#), names like Facebook, Google, NBCUniversal, Disney, Microsoft, PepsiCo, Morgan Stanley, and Apple show up — all for good reason. These are successful companies that understand something that others don't: Properly run internship programs are worth the investment.

The importance of recruiting burgeoning talent extends beyond tech talent. There is a wide range of job roles covered by more than [30,000 open internships in the US](#). Yet despite this fact, there are still many social impact organizations that may have written off their internship programs because they can't see the full picture. When analyzing the cost-benefits of interns, we've identified 5 cases to consider.

Our Top 5 Cases for Developing Interns

Case 1: Developing the talent pipeline in a competitive landscape

Internships provide the ultimate “try before you buy” option for potential full-time employees. Metaphors (which can range from test drives to wine tasting) aside, internships can be a powerful vetting process, even before factoring any short-term work they do into the equation. If you subscribe to the Zig Ziglar quote about people in relation to creating a successful company, the idea of using interns to develop a talent pipeline is a no-brainer.

“You don't build a business. You build people, and then people build the business” — Zig Ziglar, author and motivational speaker

To make the economic case clear, the organization's hiring ecosystem and lifecycle must be considered. Hiring is a time-intensive and high-risk endeavor, where the wrong hire can cost a company as much as 15 times their salary according to Geoff Smart and Randy Street, authors of *Who: The A Method for Hiring*. An internship is a low-risk way of testing the fit of a potential employee because you actually work with them!

The most common argument against internship programs is the cost in time and money. This is a sound argument — if the program is poorly run, talent isn't recruited, work isn't properly mapped out, and there is no long-term pipeline need for hiring.

If your organization is hiring people annually in entry-level positions, an internship program should be a must. This is what DoSomething.org realized early on, and as of 2017 roughly 30% of their current staff are former interns.

In a 2017 report by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the 5-year retention rate for employees that began as interns was 51.8% vs 35.8% retention for employees that did not begin as interns (n=276 employers). This difference is significant, especially considering the compound value of employees that stay beyond this mark. These data help demonstrate the direct link between strong internship programs and employee retention.

The labor market is becoming increasingly competitive for companies searching for talent. The increased competition means that companies need to start thinking about talent pipelines as early as possible through internships.

Internship programs can help your company start recruiting from top colleges and universities, thereby solidifying your reputation as a great place to work. This then becomes a simple game of sales: Potential employees are currently in college, and the sooner they start learning about your “product” (e.g., job availability), the better. Students that are at the top of their class come at a premium and if you want your organization to be at the top of *their* lists, it helps to get in front of them early with what can be a trial run for them as much as a trial run for you. If done properly, well-established internship programs can serve as your own on-campus recruiter, helping to attract the best talent from any given school.

Case 2: Fresh ideas and constituent thinking

What is the value of a fresh perspective that reshapes how a team may consider its market? As teams work together over time, they become more efficient, but they also become more trapped inside the box of groupthink. Channeling a pipeline of new thinkers into this mix can greatly increase a team’s ability to tap into fresh ideas and novel approaches to existing problems.

New ideas and solutions often come from the fringe, from people thinking with a different perspective as was pointed out in several studies done by the *Harvard Business Review*. Some of these solutions are groundbreaking, along the lines of the Taco Bell Doritos shell (which allegedly started as an intern pitch idea in the late 90s and went on to be a billion dollar win for the company).

As they are typically in their college years, another asset that interns have is insight into how the rising generation thinks. This is an issue that many nonprofits are trying to address as their donor and audience pools continue to age up, which means this solution can act as free market research. For groups working to directly reach the college market, internships can be easily baked into outreach strategies. There is something very powerful about having the market you wish to reach at the planning table, giving instant feedback on how ideas may resonate with an audience of their peers.

A note on constituent voice: While college interns will give an excellent idea of what the market at large might be interested in, keep in mind that it is just one part of the sampling that should be done. The voice of one is great for anecdotal ideation, but the data from many should always be balanced when building outcome driven strategy.

Case 3: The art of getting things done

Traditionally, it's true that it can take one to 3 months for new hires to start producing valuable work for a company. This is brutal for semester-long internships. But if an intern program is set up with planned onboarding trainings and work that is precisely mapped out for their skill levels, a lot can get done.

In the case that your organization just needs extra hands on deck to move tasks forward, Move For Hunger has created trainings and strategic work that allow for its interns to deliver immediate value. Their 2-day training systematizes critical skills interns need to manage their database and craft the messaging and content creation that will make up the bulk of their tasks. At its peak, Move For Hunger manages 2 interns for every staff member — a staff that is made up of 60% former interns.

Case Study Tip: Move for Hunger: “It took a long time to build a strong internship program. We now have 70+ interns that apply for limited spots each semester, which allows us to choose great interns. However, it wasn't always this way. We continue to collect feedback from our interns to make our program stronger, and create a structured curriculum so as to not create a burden on our staff managing them. Interns can be a LOT of work if you don't have specific tasks for them to do.” — Adam Lowy, Founder

When it comes to getting things done for interns, once the training is done, the task management is the critical element in productivity. We love this famous quote from Dwight Eisenhower as a helpful guidepost for thinking about the types of work that may fit well for interns.

“What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important.” — Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States

The Eisenhower Box

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Do. Do it now.	Decide. Schedule a time to do it.
Not Important	Delegate. Who can do it for you?	Delete. Eliminate it.

If departments and individuals can take time to do top-level task accounting — mapping out where different categories of work fall into a 4-square matrix — it will help determine where interns might be a good fit. The areas to look for are the bottom-left (Less Important/Urgent work) and the top-right area (Important/Not Urgent work) of the matrix.

The Less Important/Urgent work may include data cleaning, social media monitoring, junk mail checking, and other mechanical tasks. This area tends to incorporate the classic making copies, envelope-folding type of intern tasks that simply need to be done as a right of passage. When this kind of work is taking up the bulk of intern time, it's critical to explain how the work fits into the bigger mission. It's easier to be a cog in the wheel when you understand where the car is going. Good interns know to expect and deliver on this kind of work — as long as there are some more important responsibilities layered in.

Work that lives in the top-right of the matrix, Important/Not Urgent, is the best work, and requires the most planning. This type of work can range from deep research, market analysis, writing articles, and other special projects that have only lived as ideas in your organization's ecosystem. Intern programs provide a great way to explore some of the research and development ideas that all too often just sit on the shelf. It should be noted that this kind of work requires a lot more planning and oversight as interns will need more guidance and structure for these tasks, which also serve as excellent measures of full-time employee potential.

In the Managing Interns section, we'll dive deeper into more ideas for these categories of work.

CASE STUDY: Move for Hunger

Contact: Adam Lowy, Founder

Website: moveforhunger.org

Staff size: 12, full- and part-time

Move for Hunger's internship program has become a key piece of their organization (at times, the Move for Hunger staff is made up of 60% interns). But it wasn't always that way: Move for Hunger has spent years developing a highly-effective and efficient intern program that offers a valuable learning opportunity to students while producing high-quality work for the organization.

The key to success for Move for Hunger was a long-term commitment to sustaining and improving the program. "We continue to collect feedback from our interns to make our program stronger and create a structured curriculum as to not create a burden on our staff managing them," says Founder Adam Lowy. "Interns can be a LOT of work if you don't have specific tasks for them to do".

Interns can also be a lot of work if they don't know how to do the tasks they've been assigned, which is why Move for Hunger uses a formalized onboarding and training process. "We hold a mandatory 2-day orientation to onboard each new class of interns, give them background about the organization, train them on our CRM, teach them how to field questions on the phone and email, and have them learn what each team member is responsible for," explains Adam. This holistic training process gives interns the resources and tools they need to be productive early on in their time with the organization. "Through Salesforce views and reports, we can stay on top of what is being completed by each intern."

Move for Hunger's internship program is a great model for organizations that are concerned about the cost (financial and otherwise) of taking on interns. The standardized orientation process ensures productivity early on, and protects full-time staff from being bogged down with management.

And, while Move for Hunger doesn't pay interns, they understand the importance of showing appreciation and recognizing good work. "Appreciation Nights" are held throughout the year to recognize work done by interns and keep alumni involved. This public recognition and acknowledgement of investment on the interns' side not only validates intern involvement, but also allows former interns to stay connected to the organization. Move for Hunger's investment in developing and refining their internship program has provided ongoing returns.

Case 4: Internships are good for the economy

The goal of your organization is to solve the social issues of your mission, not to help the economy. However, it's great to know how your organization's labor practices can contribute to the larger system.

Internships are a critical step in the learning journey of young people, one that is desperately lacking in our current economy. This has been true since the dawn of specialized skills, where apprenticeships taught upcoming generations the secrets of the trade. Current data from NACE show that paid internships lead to a 60% chance of employment, versus 36% for those without internships.

Helping young people join the workforce in their respective fields of interest accelerates their growth and maximizes their lifetime earning potential. The sooner someone begins their career journey, the faster they learn and gain experience that results in an increased compensation. Millennials are now the largest working generation in the US, and internships are one of the best ways to accelerate college graduates into the workforce as baby boomers retire and the generation past millennials begins to come of age.

Case 5: Leveraging digital natives

Yes, it's a big stereotype that all young people know technology and as a result can code your website in their sleep. This assumption can lead to very messy results. However, the current generation is ubiquitously described as "digital natives," and coding is becoming what touch-typing was for older generations. Given the right oversight and direction, we've seen amazing results from digitally-trained interns. This generation is eager to learn and hungry to build new things that reach people.

Almost as sure as gravity, the farther people travel down their career paths, the more bad habits are acquired. There is something refreshing about being able to bring in cohorts of people without this kind of professional baggage. Interns are far more receptive to adopting the processes and standards of the way things should be done at your organization.

For the rising generation, the default setting is learning. They are constantly evolving with every operating system upgrade and new social media platform that launches. However, knowledge about how a platform works should not pass for discretion on what to post or larger strategy. To make this point more clearly, it can't be assumed that just because a young person uses SnapChat and Instagram Stories that they can then manage a brand voice across that channel. In the same way that it can't be assumed that the passenger of a car knows how to drive it, younger interns shouldn't be given the wheel simply because they ride in the car.

The holy grail is mixing the capacity to learn, energy, and familiarity with technology landscape with a strong onboarding and management process. The willingness to jump into the unknown with an open mind can be especially helpful for exploring and researching new opportunities and pushing a team to grow. Unlocking the potential energy behind interns in the workplace is why this book was created. Enjoy!

Finding and Hiring Interns

Writing Great Intern Job Descriptions

An internship job description should do two things: It should give potential interns the information they need to decide if they could be a good fit for the role, and it should convince those potential applicants that this is a role they want. Way too many organizations forget that a job description is also a sales pitch. During an interview, it's (mostly) on the applicant to explain why they're the right pick. But, during the job hunt, it's on organizations to prove to potential candidates that they're worth applying to.

Nonprofits have a built-in value proposition: Their cause coupled with the impact of the organization itself are an effective way to attract the best applicants. Organizations should include their [vision and mission statements](#), and proof of impact, in their intern job descriptions.

Cause buy-in is essential for proving the value of the role to interns, especially for organizations that can't pay their interns. For organizations that can't drive applications with perks and prestige, the value of the organization's work and the worthiness of the cause can be an effective way to engage the best applicants. Nonprofits should emphasize throughout the job description how the intern's role and day-to-day tasks will be contributing to the organization's mission.

Job description best practices:

- **Avoid jargon.** Interns are looking to learn, and can be discouraged from applying if they already feel intimidated or unqualified based on the language of the job description.
- **Be honest about payment.** Be explicit about whether or not the role is paid or not and how payment is handled. This will save everyone a lot of time.
- **Focus on their takeaways.** Remember, internships should be mutually beneficial. Emphasize the opportunities interns will have, the skills they'll learn, and the people they'll be exposed to.
- **Be honest about grunt work.** Interns want to do high-value work, but most expect that the role will include at least some administrative work. Be clear about what kinds of 'grunt' tasks interns will be tasked with and assure that it will only take up <25% of a intern's time.
- **Brag!** Whatever perks you can offer, show them off. Monthly team lunches, summer Fridays, kickball, coffee with the CEO, anything. Ask employees and former interns what their favorite parts of their job are and advertise those in the job descriptions.
- **Don't be too picky.** Unless you really need an intern with tons of photoshop or javascript experience, keep your requirements as open as possible to avoid disqualifying a potentially great candidate from the get-go.

Our [intern job description template](#) will guide you through writing a great job description.

CASE STUDY: Grassroot Project

Contact: Tyler Spencer, Founder and Executive Director

Website: grassrootproject.org

Staff size: 4 full-time

The Grassroot Project has just four full-time employees, but that doesn't stop them from bringing interns on board! "We advertise internships as the need for interns arises," explained Founder and Executive Director Tyler Spencer. "Sometimes we also have interns who cold-call us and propose projects (e.g. a communications project for a student in a graduate communications certificate program), and then we decide whether to take them on or not."

Despite a lack of a formal program, The Grassroot Project is able to benefit from having interns on their team. Interns contribute to the organization by inputting and analyzing data and drafting social media content. At its peak, 50% of The Grassroot Project's small team is made up of interns.

Be specific about application instructions

Screening applicants is always difficult, but screening intern applicants presents a unique challenge as most candidates have little to no relevant work experience. This can make it even harder for the hiring manager to differentiate between applicants and decide who should advance to the interview phase.

Including a specific prompt to be answered in applicant's cover letters gives hiring managers something to work with from the outset. First, including a prompt or question will make it easy to weed out all candidates who don't follow instructions. From there, it will also give hiring managers a better idea of each applicant's personality and make it easier to identify bright spots amid the resume pile. An arts organization might ask interns to write a bit about their favorite painting or how they got interested in classical music. Likewise, an education-focused nonprofit might ask applicants about a teacher that had an impact on them. A question that works for many nonprofits would be to ask for new volunteer recruitment ideas.

Where to Post Internships

Once a job description is written and posted on your organization's site, it's time to [get the word out](#). Consider using sites such as:

- [Handshake](#)
- [Idealist.org](#)
- [UCAN](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Internships.com/nonprofits](#)

Put your job description [everywhere](#). If your organization has the [Google AdWords Grant for Nonprofits](#), create a campaign advertising the position to college students searching for internship opportunities.

Need help taking advantage of the AdWords Grant? Take our online [Google AdWords Grant for Nonprofits course](#) for free with code 'INTERNS'.

Interviewing and Hiring Interns

Most internships are short term, but that doesn't mean organizations should cut corners when it comes to the hiring process. Maintaining a thorough hiring process for intern candidates ensures that none of the investment being made in the program is going to waste.

Having potential interns complete a short project as a part of the application process, for example, can give nonprofits a strong idea of which applicant is most suited for the job. Organizations should screen candidates, assign a project, hold a formal interview, and then extend an offer to the best candidate.

Screen applicants

Once nonprofits have eliminated all the cover letters that ignored the prompt in the job description, it's time to start screening. Organizations should set up 15 minutes phone calls with top applicants to get a better feel for them. These screenings aren't meant to guide hiring managers to their final decision, rather they give hiring managers an opportunity to heat-check the people behind the papers they've been scouring.

Are they professional? Were they on time and do they have their resume in front of them? Do they send a confirmation email before the call and thank-you email after? Do they know what the organization does and are they familiar with organizational values and site content (in other words, did they do their homework)? Are they human?

The questions for this initial interview should be short — again, 15 minutes is all it takes. Consider the following questions for this initial screening:

- How did you hear about us?
- Are you qualified to work in the U.S.? Can you be in office and meet the requirements of the job?
- Why are you interested in our organization?
- Tell me more about the roles or experience on your resume: What did you do? What did you like? What challenged you?
- Is there anything you want to add that is not on your resume?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Interviewers should focus especially on the questions that the candidates ask them - are they thoughtful and curious? Beware of questions that are super generic or that could have been answered by reading the website or job description.

This short conversation will give a little life to the resumes the hiring manager has been reviewing and help narrow down the “maybe” pile.

Assign a project

The best way to get a sense for a potential intern’s work style and experience is to assign them a relevant project. After conducting a short phone or video screening, assign all remaining applicants a short project that is relevant to what their position would be. This might be drafting [social media content](#), writing an article for the site, or even pulling data from your organization’s Google Analytics account.

Leave the project fairly open-ended and give candidates some space to make it their own. This can give organizations a better idea of who the applicant is and what they are capable of delivering, in addition to serving as an example of how applicants perform with little oversight and guidance.

Final interview

Organizations should then schedule follow-up interviews with the candidates that turned in the best projects.

What to look for in candidates

- Are they a culture fit within the organization?
- Do they have passion for the cause?
- Do they demonstrate an ability to learn quickly?
- Are they a high future potential?
- Are they efficient? Is there an ability to get things done? Are they self directed?

[Interviews matter](#). But it can be difficult to get a feel for who candidates really are with the standard set of interview questions. Mixing in some out-of-the-box questions can give hiring managers a better idea of who these people are beyond the scripted interview Q+A and what they may bring to the table. Plus, it can be fun!

- 1. Dogs or cats? Ketchup or mustard? Beach or mountains?** A few of these rapid-fire this-or-that questions at the top of an interview can help break the ice, which puts the candidate at ease and minimizes the chances that nerves get in the way. This also gives the hiring manager an idea of who the applicant is outside of their work experience.
- 2. Which campaign of ours is most exciting to you?** Organizations should ask applicants what recent campaign, client, program, initiative, or event is most interesting or exciting to them. First, this shows the hiring manager whether or not the candidate did their

homework and spent time getting to know the organization. It also serves a great extension to the “Why do you care about this cause?” question, and can provide insight into whether or not the candidate aligns well with the mission of the organization.

- 3. Explain Google Analytics to me like I’m a 5 year old.** Maybe it’s not Google Analytics. Maybe it’s SalesForce, Twitter, or even a social issue like lack of access to healthcare. Whatever is relevant to the organization or the role specifically, this kind of question is effective in achieving two things. First, it helps you to see whether or not the candidate has a true understanding of the topic: It takes a deep understanding of something to explain it simply. Second, it’s a way to test communication skills. Does the candidate know how to play to their audience?

What to look for in an intern

Hiring interns is different than [hiring full-time employees](#). As mentioned in the last section, interns are typically students with little work experience — and potentially no relevant experience. This can make it difficult to spot the distinctions between candidates or choose one application over another. Hiring managers shouldn’t be discouraged or distracted by lack of experience when making these decisions: Lack of professional work experience does not equate with a lack of information. You can simply shift focus to other pieces of a potential intern’s resume and career path.

Community involvement is a great positive indicator, especially for nonprofits and social-impact organizations. A candidate that is active and engaged in their community is likely one who is not only invested in social good, but also proactive in having a role in it. This quality could make them a great option for an internship within an impact-oriented organization.

And if their only formal work experience is working the register at the local hardware store, that’s still helpful! How would their managers describe them as an employee? How would their coworkers describe them? Tap into this during their interview and on their reference calls: Someone’s work ethic and ability to get along with others is typically apparent in all environments, not just the office.

Finally, hiring managers should focus on the future: Does the candidate have an apparent interest in the nonprofit or for-benefit sector post-graduation? Or are they treating a paid internship position like a summer gig? It’s important to understand how this particular role fits into how they see their future, especially for organizations that consider hiring interns full-time after their internship is complete.

For more guidance as you screen resumes and cover letters, here is what Monica Wilson, Senior Associate Director of Dartmouth College’s Career Services, cites as qualities organizations often look for in intern candidates:

- **Communication Skills:** Clear and concise written and verbal communication skills
- **Agility:** People who think on their feet and can adapt to a rapidly changing situation
- **Willingness to Manage Up:** People that will advise a supervisor of something if they have a concern or recommendation

- **Ability to Work Collaboratively:** Team players that know how to listen and participate in meetings and group work.
- **Flexibility:** People who are willing — and eager — to chip in wherever they're needed
- **Curiosity:** People who are genuinely interested in learning

How Can Nonprofits Compete for Talent?

The issue of competing for top talent isn't new to the nonprofit sector. It's often a challenge for organizations to acquire and retain the best employees when they're up against larger for-profit organizations with higher salaries, more perks, and larger hiring budgets.

Unfortunately, this challenge is one that trickles down to hiring interns. Monica Wilson suggests getting on the same timetable as the big companies. "Some fortune 500 companies start interviewing 9 months to a year ahead of an internship start date, so if an organization is waiting until April to post a summer internship opening, some of the top talent has already committed to another role." Get ahead of the curve with organizational needs and make a commitment to hiring an intern earlier to better compete for the best candidates.

There is one advantage that nonprofits inherently have: the cause. When asked what students are looking for in internships and jobs, Monica is quick to say that young people want to know that their work is helping people. "Regardless of the organization, nonprofit or not, students have an interest in community service and social impact."

Cause buy-in can give nonprofits a tremendous leg-up on for-profit companies that are competing for the same students. Monica suggests getting your organization's name out and building a presence on local college campuses to spark interest in your organization's cause that can lead to interest in employment down the line. This approach also gives organizations that can't predict internship opportunities 9 months in advance the opportunity to nurture interest long-term with students in the area.

What Do Students Want in an Internship?

In creating a strong internship program, empathy is an essential foundation. It's crucial to consider how the perspective of the intern affects their satisfaction in their role, and thereby their overall value to your nonprofit. Before they become young hires of your organization, the majority of interns are immersed in some form of educational or collegiate culture. What do these students want from their internships?

Personal value

Students desire an organization that cares about them and their professional development. Take steps to recognize your interns' individual worth by giving them opportunities to display their interests and personality within their work (and outside of it). Interns will feel encouraged if their unique backgrounds and professional goals are reflected in the tasks assigned to them.

While some organizations successfully manage many interns and maintain high levels of individual happiness, keep in mind that students want to feel like they're more than a number — the attractiveness of a large peer class does not necessarily outweigh the value of personalized professional attention.

A voice at the table

Students want to contribute to the organizations they work with. Even self-starters won't do this right away without permission, so make it clear that the [pathways of communication](#) are open and run both ways: your organization's staff are receptive to their ideas. Encourage intern feedback in both formal and informal settings, and highlight the value of their fresh perspectives. Allowing intern voices to hold real weight in an organization reaffirms to them that these roles have some publicly-recognized meaning in the bigger picture of their careers, and also gives employees important and necessary input about the progression and success of any internship program.

CASE STUDY: Idealist.org

Contact: Kara Montermoso, HR and Operations Manager

Website: idealist.org

Staff size: 20 full-time

Idealist.org knows that a successful internship program means not only value for them, but also value for all organizations those interns will go on to work for. Emphasizing inclusion, Idealist.org sees an internship experience as an opportunity to mentor and empower young professionals.

“For many, this may be one of their first, or at least one of their early, experiences of being part of a formal workplace,” says Kara Montermoso, HR and Operations Manager. “So we put careful thought into the impression we are able to make, both for our own organization as well as for employers in general.”

The key to leaving a good impression? Inclusion and autonomy. Idealist.org recognizes that making interns feel as integrated as possible into both office culture and staff flow is key to creating a positive internship experience. This commitment to inclusion doesn’t just apply at a social level, it also extends to the work done by interns.

While intern responsibilities at Idealist.org depend on the team and projects interns are hired into, all interns are trusted to work on meaningful tasks that are vital to the success of staff projects. “We aim to give them responsibilities that they can really feel ownership over while making sure that they feel supported in their own learning process,” adds Kara.

Idealist.org’s internship program is one that looks beyond the few months that interns are with them, and focuses on mentoring and training young people to be high-performing employees in their future workplaces. Sometimes, as Kara points out, that future workplace is Idealist.org. “Over the years, with a little bit of opportunistic timing, various interns have made the transition to full time staff, which can be a great win for both parties.”

Timely feedback

For many interns, this work experience also serves as their first experience with professional evaluation. Do this well, and do it often, by giving your interns feedback in a timely way. Make sure you touch base regularly about the overarching goals of their performance while also responding to the specific projects they complete.

A formal review process isn’t necessary — interns might even prefer more frequent, less formal feedback. But always provide them with answers to their two most pressing questions: Are they performing well? And how can they do better?

While the power of positive encouragement should never be underestimated, neither should a helpful balance of constructive criticism. Even if you feel that an intern is hitting the bars set for them, don’t assume that they only want praise. Students like to learn, and they know that they weren’t hired as interns because they’re experts in the field.

There is no need to make up concerns that don’t exist, but there is always room for improvement. Give interns pointers for making a task easier or more efficient (even when they do it well the first time), and reward good work with more responsibilities. When positive feedback and reliable tasks are interspersed with new challenges, interns have the encouragement and stability needed to help them rise to the next occasion.

A guiding mission

If you've taken the time as an organization to create and refine a guiding mission for yourselves, why wouldn't you take the time to make sure that mission inspires your staff? Even daily tasks should align with your organization's overarching mission, including those completed by interns.

Interns want to have an understanding of the [mission of the organization](#) they work for, and they want to know how their work contributes to that goal. Explain how their own work helps your team achieve its [mission](#), and augments the larger vision of the organization.

Rewarding work

Despite attempts to paint their generation as self-obsessed, today's students actually care more about doing work for others rather than for themselves. They want to know that their work is helping people.

Regardless of whether or not the organization they work for is a nonprofit, students have an interest in community service and social impact. Harness these passions and make sure that interns understand the positive effects of the work they do in their internship. A sense of fulfillment will only serve to heighten their commitment and the quality of their professional output.

Transparency

One thing that students definitely want out of their internships is a clear indication of whether or not their internship is going to lead to a job offer. No future job potential isn't necessarily a deterrent, but transparency is valued.

Give interested students honest answers about job prospects following an internship, and outline any projected timelines regarding assessments of their progress, in addition to detailing what would make them a good fit. If the opportunity for future employment doesn't exist as a direct result of an internship, that's okay, but make sure that interns know this, and that you focus on both communicating and strengthening the other valuable aspects of your internship program.

Insight into the nonprofit world

A big question that drives students to take nonprofit internships is an interest in how a nonprofit organization functions. Allowing interns to catch a glimpse into the workings of multiple projects and departments during the course of their time with your organization will give them a more fully-formed picture of the way a nonprofit internally runs. This can also relay the sense that the organization is well-organized and impactful. For example, Dartmouth College interns report that their internships helped to dispel myths about working in nonprofits, providing positive reinforcement for being in the industry.

According to Monica Wilson, students that intern at a nonprofit tend to report that the experience gave them exposure to how organizations are managed, what the pain points are for

them, and what they value in employees. Monica also notes that “interns see their position as an opportunity to mimic what a full-time role might be.”

Using internships as trial-runs for interest in certain industries or organizations is a common goal of many students, and leaving them with the best possible impression will work to the benefit of any nonprofit.

Training + Onboarding

Importance of Onboarding

Having a standard [onboarding process](#) in place for employees and interns can drastically increase their productivity. In fact, one study found that [62% of companies](#) with onboarding programs saw higher time-to-productivity ratios. Think about what this could mean for an internship program: If crafting an effective onboarding process increases the productivity of all future interns by 62%, then taking on interns may not be as much of a burden as it once seemed.

Intern onboarding is especially important for organizations that may wish to consider extending full-time job offers to interns. Not only does onboarding and training prepare interns to do the best possible work for an organization, but a proven track record of past interns as current full-time hires also increases the chances of their wanting to stick around.

A study from the Wynhurst Group found that employees are 58% more likely to still be with the company 3 years later if [they had completed a structured onboarding process](#). If all interns are treated as potential future employees, then this can feed into an organization's talent retention rate.

The Onboarding and Training Process

The key to effectively onboarding an intern is having an onboarding process in place before interns arrive for their first day. Knowing when — and how — key information and resources will be shared with interns will make it easier for their supervisors and other team members to benefit fully from their contributions.

Start onboarding before they arrive

The less time staff spends addressing simple questions and organizational concerns, the better. Document the basics, like dress code, office hours, and payment details in an intern handbook that is sent out before they arrive for their first day. This will allow more time for managers to cover a greater depth of job- and task-related questions during orientation and training versus general company culture and day-to-day logistics.

Hold a formal orientation

The first impressions an intern has of an organization will shape both the quality of their work and how seriously they take the position. Starting with a formal orientation will set a standard that your organization has high expectations of the entire team, and is also willing to invest in a collective buy-in for those expectations. This orientation also helps reduce the time wasting questions like “How do I get paid?” or “Who do I ask about x?”

At Whole Whale, we have a formal Day One onboarding process that includes a roughly 3-hour-long orientation with each intern's direct manager. This time is used to walk through the systems and tools we use, from Slack and Asana to Gmail and Drive, and cover the basics of our team structure and operations. The goal of this initial meeting is to give interns the knowledge

they need to get started and the resources they need to work through basic questions and challenges without the help of their supervisor

Move for Hunger takes a similar approach: They hold a mandatory 2-day orientation to onboard each new class of interns. This includes giving them background about the organization, training them on their CRM, teaching them how to field questions via phone and email, and helping them learn what each team member is responsible for.

This approach, spending a dedicated chunk of time covering the basic processes of your organization, can save staff members hours over the course of an internship. Dedicate this time upfront to cover internal tools, processes, and expectations, and intern managers won't have to address those questions and concerns on a daily basis.

CASE STUDY: Women Deliver

Contact: Brittany Tatum, Communications Associate

Website: womendeliver.org

Staff size: 38 full-time

Women Deliver has a formalized intern process that covers hiring and onboarding an intern for each of their core departments each semester (fall, spring, summer). Interns work 10 to 20 hours per week for about 3 to 5 months, and are compensated at the rate of \$15/hour. The organization relies on interns for important fact checking and data research work that's vital for the organization to publish updated and accurate [infographics](#). Interns also post blogs on-site and contribute content for social media.

Women Deliver understands that internships should benefit both the intern and the organization, and they know that effective management is key to creating a mutually beneficial experience. They also know that it's not 100% on the manager to create learning opportunities — it's also on the interns.

Brittany Tatum, Women Deliver's Communications Associate, encourages interns to be vocal about work they're interested in: "I think an internship is only as valuable as you make it, from both the perspective of the intern and the manager. For me, the beginning of every new internship is a menu full of options. If you know your manager is doing something you're interested in learning about, all you have to do is ask to be involved in it somehow!"

Keeping the lines of communication open between interns and their direct managers ensures that interns will have the opportunity to speak up about projects they think they could be most successful in. And this isn't just good for creating a positive experience for the intern, it's good for the organization, too. Being flexible about which projects interns take on, and giving those interns a say in what they do, means they're more likely to work on projects they're interested in and inclined to succeed in, which means better work for the organization.

Brittany takes time to regularly talk with the interns she manages about how their experience is going and how she can help improve it. “I personally start every check-in with my intern by asking, ‘What are you doing, and what would you like to be doing?’, because it is so easy for an internship to turn into busy work no one else wants to do, and I don’t think anyone gains anything from that.”

Set goals

A large portion of this initial orientation should be reserved for goal-setting. Agreeing on objectives and key results of the internship program helps move interns towards meaningful achievements that correspond with your organization’s overall mission; it also gives interns a sense of structure. Set a variety of goals. This can include [learning goals](#), task or project goals, long-term goals, and even personal goals.

Learning goals can be completing an online course or passing a certification exam. Task or project goals should be directly related to what an intern works on day-to-day, and tied back to quality, such as completing a quarterly report for a client with minimal edits from a supervisor.

On the other hand, long-term goals — such as building a larger internal resource or learning to use a new tool or system that they can then train the team on — give interns something big to work towards and something to do if they’re ever light on work. At Whole Whale, we like to round this out with personal goals, such as going from 0 to 60 on doing a push-up, to build a sense of personal connection and support outside of our job descriptions.

From a managerial perspective, these goals serve as a rubric for intern managers to evaluate intern performance and give interns complete transparency into whether or not they are doing a “good job.” And don’t forget to write them down! Writing goals down in a shared document forces interns and their managers to reach an understanding of what is expected which makes an internship more enjoyable and productive for everyone involved.

Not only do goals help keep everyone on track and constantly improving, but they also motivate interns by validating the work they do for the organization. It’s easier to think you’re doing something meaningful when you’re working on SEO keyword analysis than it is if you’re fetching coffee.

Systematize the process

Once a polished process is in place, it’s important to systematize these steps, especially when onboarding multiple interns at once. During their first few weeks with your organization, set aside some time or interns to study the fundamentals on which they’ll build their capacity throughout their time with your organization.

Using resources like [Whole Whale University](#) and [Google Analytics Academy](#), interns can easily learn the basics they need to complete tasks without taking valuable time away from your staff for training. This approach can also help encourage self-sufficiency, which means fewer unnecessary questions down the road.

The real benefit of this “teach-a-person-to-fish” approach is that it establishes a foundational knowledge that staff can build on later with more advanced trainings. By having interns self-learn the basics, staff can dedicate training time to the more nuanced and difficult aspects of things like Analytics and AdWords, ensuring that both intern time and staff time is being used wisely.

Keep onboarding, even after day one

Onboarding doesn’t end after the initial orientation: Ongoing training throughout the internship will keep interns moving up the learning curve and increase their ability and productivity during their time with a nonprofit.

Before interns arrive, schedule trainings with different team members throughout the course of the internship. Having structured learning built into an internship equips interns with the knowledge they need to complete projects autonomously. This is also a way to ensure interns are given what they need to reach the goals they set on day one.

The advantages to having an extended onboarding process go beyond productivity and learning. Aberdeen’s 2016 onboarding study found that organizations with an onboarding process that lasts a month or longer are 9% more likely to retain first-year hires than organizations that don’t. Of course, for internships that last 3 months, there is only so much time that can be spent on onboarding. But planning trainings, meetings, and check-ins with team members for interns throughout their time with your organization helps to keep them engaged and moving forward at all times. Plus, if an organization goes on to offer a full-time position to an intern, much of the onboarding process has already been completed.

Case Study Tip: Move for Hunger: “We hold a mandatory 2-day orientation to onboard each new class of interns, give them background about the organization, train them on our CRM, teach them how to field questions on the phone and email, and have them learn what each team member is responsible for. Through Salesforce views and reports, we can stay on top of what is being completed by each intern.” — Adam Lowy, Founder

Managing Interns

Intern HR Conduct Considerations

The decision to include interns in your organization does come with its own set of HR and legal considerations. Most organizations already have a code of conduct in place for staff members, however these policies generally assume that employees are adults and over the age of 21. Since interns tend to be college-aged, they may not meet these requirements (both legal and cultural), so an organization should take care to clarify their rules and expectations regarding the conduct of interns.

From the legal standpoint, it becomes important when hiring interns to consider creating an addendum to existing company HR policies. This addendum would explicitly address issues that could arise for younger employees, such as stating that underage hires cannot drink at company functions. Consider, too, how to outline expectations around other age-related legal situations as well such as dating policies.

Designing HR conduct policies specifically for intern onboarding and training can be extremely important as well. Note in the creation of these policies that college-aged interns are still new to the professional expectations of the office environment. Even though interns may present as adults, organizations should still set them up for success by relaying clear conduct expectations.

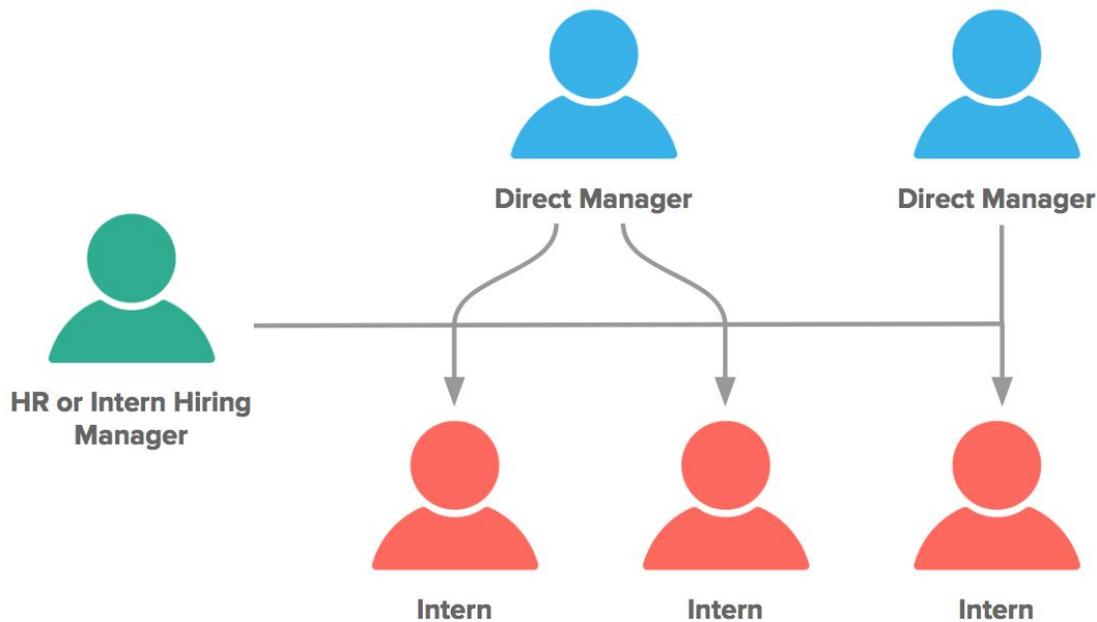
Explaining the office dress code is an instance in which a company should maintain a clear line of guidance for their interns: Tell your interns exactly what type of clothing is expected in the workplace. Many organizations have stories to share about staging interventions with interns that decided to wear particularly revealing clothing during the summer months. Such clothing is generally considered acceptable in interns' normal school settings, and is therefore normalized by their peer group. Because of this, interns are less likely to realize when some outfits aren't appropriate for a workplace. Organizations can help everyone avoid uncomfortable situations by providing concrete examples of the types of office clothing that are acceptable and unacceptable.

Organizations should also think about defining "work-readiness" for their interns. When an employer tells their interns that they should arrive "work-ready" every day, they should make it clear that they expect interns to come to work on-time, properly dressed, showered, and mentally prepared to do productive work. Explicitly state early on that smelling like the gym (or the bar from last night) is not acceptable in the workplace - this will help prevent an uncomfortable conversation later on. Feel free to communicate these terms in a light-hearted way like having pictures of a bar or gym, noting that it is not where they work, but make sure that the statement of "work-readiness" is there and understood by both parties.

Intern managers

As long as there is at least one person in charge of intern management, there is no one right way to set up a reporting structure. Depending on the size of the intern program, the role of the hiring manager may be delegated to HR to simplify hiring and recruiting. Once hired,

however, the intern's manager needs to be set, and to set clear expectations set for their direct report's work, as noted in the onboarding process.



Organizations like [DoSomething.org](https://www.do-something.org) also have an intern coordinator that oversees all of the interns, working in tandem with the intern's direct manager. This helps with efficiency of the more general onboarding and HR components while also making the interns feel like a cohort during the summer season. Having an intern manager guide broader continuity of the experience will also help save time for the direct manager of the intern. They can help protect against the biggest detractor to intern programs which is wasting full time employee's time.

Intern management is also a great way to train and build future full-time employees' ability to manage. Being a good manager is something that can only be taught through experience and interns provide an excellent training ground for this. With shorter hiring time frames, the management process is condensed into a refined timeline and will present many 'management moments' for employees to learn from.

The intern's manager should also consider their role as a mentor, going beyond the perfunctory role of a task master. Mentorship should be about creating a mutually beneficial relationship, offering interns the chance to ask for guidance in their careers. It also gives the mentor a chance to reflect and synthesize what matters in their work. Remember mentors don't just have to be the direct report, HR intern managers can arrange "lunch with the leader," where the intern cohorts can meet with C-level employees as a group.

CASE STUDY: DoSomething.org

Contact: Mike Fantini, Chief Product Officer

Website: dosomething.org

Staff size: 60 full-time

DoSomething.org loves interns. Their formal intern program takes on 15 to 20 part-time interns for fall and spring semesters, and another 15 to 20 to work full-time through the summer. Interns are paid \$13/hour and have the option to complete the internship for school credit.

That might sound like a lot of interns — and it is. As of this writing, DoSomething.org's staff is made up of 25% interns. But effective management of these roles ensures productivity and value for both the intern and the organization.

DoSomething.org relies on full-time staff to create a meaningful, productive internship position and manage successful interns. Interns are assigned to one manager, who specifically hires them. "Each manager creates personalized project and skill goals for their intern to ensure that we're assigning imperative projects that will support their growth and development, while making a meaningful impact on the organization," explains Chief Product Officer Mike Fantini.

What makes DoSomething.org's interns so successful isn't just the program, but also the organization's recognition of and appreciation for the fact that these are people at the beginning of their careers. Emphasizing the future of interns' careers produces high-value employees for either the DoSomething.org team or another organization.

"We make sure all intern managers are equipped to manage them properly, ensuring that whether the intern goes on to get hired here or at another incredible organization or company, they always have a positive memory of their time at DoSomething and, in return, become some of our strongest brand advocates," adds Mike.

DoSomething.org also understands that great interns make great employees: 20% of their current full-time staff are former interns. CEO Aria Finger says that "Hiring exceptional former interns as full-time staff is a no-brainer! Think about it, you get a 3+ month trial to see them in action - are they a solid team player? Do they take feedback well? Passionate about the org? It's a win-win for both sides because you both know what to expect from the job and the employee."

Grunt Work vs. Meaningful Tasks

Interns know there's going to be a bit of grunt work as part of the core expectations of their job. It's important to acknowledge this as a manager, and possibly use the Eisenhower Box to explain how their work will range across the matrix. It's also critical to have specific tasks and projects for interns to be working on at any given time. Know what these are before they arrive on day one.

Case Study Tip: Move for Hunger: “We continue to collect feedback from our interns to make our program stronger and create a structured curriculum as to not create a burden on our staff managing them. Interns can be a LOT of work if you don't have specific tasks for them to do.” — Adam Lowy, Founder

CASE STUDY: USO

Contact: Adam Faircloth, Senior Digital Strategist

Website: uso.org

Staff size: 150 (in the DC office)

USO doesn't have a formal internship program. Instead, interns are treated as volunteers to the USO. These interns are brought on staff as needed, and as their availability allows, to help out the IT, development, and brand departments.

But not having a formal program doesn't hinder the USO from getting massive amounts of value out of interns. Adam Faircloth, Senior Digital Strategist, says that “The three most important tasks that interns do for the organization include: perform data hygiene on donor databases and document processes for data management; conduct analysis of social media metrics; and complete creative projects – our mobile app prototype was developed by an intern!”

Dealing With “What do I do now?”

Many internship programs get cancelled because managers have to deal with hourly questions along the lines of, “What do I do now?” This question is bad for everyone involved, because it means interruptions and frustration will only grow over time for both the intern and their manager.

This issue is a clear sign that the right systems aren’t in place. Use a [project management](#) system like [Asana](#) or [Producteev](#) to map out clearly defined near- and long-term work that interns can work on over the duration of their internship. Think back to the Eisenhower Box: Balancing your intern’s plate with both Urgent and Not Urgent work ensures that they have tasks to work on now (Urgent) and later (Not Urgent).

The Eisenhower Box

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Do. Do it now.	Decide. Schedule a time to do it.
Not Important	Delegate. Who can do it for you?	Delete. Eliminate it.

If there still aren’t enough tasks to keep your intern busy, remind them of quality versus quantity: College trains students to master task completion, rewarding their work with high grades based on completion followed by quality. There is a compulsion to check off the boxes in management systems, which can lead to issues of quality. It’s highly recommended that managers review and return early work back to interns with notes to improve the quality — even if the work is

satisfactory. Setting the standard for higher quality work will make sure they know to only hand over polished products.

Practical Ideas and Possible Intern Tasks

In order to really avoid the ‘what do I do next?’ problem, here is an awesome list of potential tasks that might be perfect for your interns.

1. **Data hygiene projects.** This can range from cleaning and completing Salesforce, spreadsheet, CRM or other databases for stakeholders. Make sure to create a dev copy and avoid letting interns edit live databases.
2. **Social media posts and account maintenance.** We’ve noted that organizations should guard their voice online. The safest way to have interns participate in social media is to have them analyze the data and then come up with sample posts for the platform. Have your interns take the [Whole Whale Be Your Own Social Media Guru course](#) to better understand the theory and analytics behind major platforms - use code INTERNS to get it for free!
3. **Social media analytics report.** Have your intern review the past year of posts and data from your major platforms. They should answer questions the staff has about performance, give 30k foot view of what happened, and generate insights about what’s working in a report. For fun, have them also prepare a 30 min presentation for the organization. Have your interns take the [Whole Whale Be Your Own Social Media Guru course](#) before getting started.
4. **Meta descriptions and tagging.** Interns can be given assignments to clean up tagging and past content on platforms like YouTube or Pinterest which will help discoverability. Writing meta descriptions for main pages on your website is another good task that will help indexing of a website. This is especially easy if Wordpress or another simple CMS is being used.
5. **Website content SEO clean-up.** Have interns use Google Analytics to identify frequently visited pages that have been ignored. Have interns update content with new statistics, research, and internal cross links. This will greatly help the continued SEO growth of those pages. For fun, you can also offer a bounty for any spelling or grammar errors found on the site. Many eyes make for light work. Bonus, have interns take the [Whole Whale content marketing and SEO course](#) - use code INTERNS to get it or free.
6. **QA and user flow testing.** Interns can walk through the main user flows of your website and note where there is confusion. Have the intern map the steps involved so your team can review at a bird’s eye view. Interns are also great for giving feedback on new tools and products and subsequently logging bugs.
7. **Website content creation.** Beyond updating, consider whole new sections of the site that could be researched and created. Again, have interns learn about [how to write in the right style for search](#) before getting started.

8. **Custom photo stock.** This is a fun excuse for an intern to run around the office and any physical sites to take good pictures of work in action. Index and put these photos in a system like Google Photos or Flickr for the organization to use in the future.
9. **Business challenge.** Challenge interns to create a 10 page presentation that researches an existing problem in the company and pitch practical solutions. For example, a guide on using Minecraft to reach tweens, or a short training on memes or emerging social media platforms the company should be aware of.
10. **Handwritten updates.** [DonorsChoose.org](https://www.donorschoose.org) is known for their epic handwritten notes from students. Why not create a similar messaging for the work your organization is doing? Have interns handwrite thank you notes to VIP members of the community.
11. **Web analytics reporting.** Have interns dig into the organization's Google Analytics to answer business questions like where are you growing regionally and online over the past year. Have your interns take the [Whole Whale and TechSoup Google Analytics course](#) to help them better understand the platform:
12. **Google Ad Grant account management.** The Google AdWords Grant is part of the [Google.com/nonprofit](https://www.google.com/nonprofit) program offering \$10k/month in search ads. This grant is a use-it-or-lose-it system making the risk low that an intern will "waste" money. Have them take the [Whole Whale Google AdWords Course](#) (free with code INTERNS) to better understand the nuance of the grant management strategy.
13. **Plan or support an event or major meeting.** A detail oriented intern may be the perfect assistant to a major event. They can refine guest lists, do community outreach, and help with day-of craziness. Or, perhaps there is a backlogged idea of gathering your volunteers for a small appreciation event that an intern can help arrange.
14. **Create and design a crowdfunding campaign.** This can be done first hand for the organization for a specific initiative. Or, let the intern become an expert that can offer help to members in your community fundraising network (like super customer support for your audience).
15. **Super customer support.** Most websites have contact us forms that people then slowly respond to. By using a tool like Zendesk, you can set up a legitimate user ticketing and response system, allowing interns to provide enterprise level support for your audience around basic topics.
16. **Internal documentation and program FAQ.** Have your intern interview the major departments and create a master FAQ and document that explains the different acronyms and concepts that outsiders may not know. This product can then be used for new employees, future interns, and even new vendors to help them get up to speed faster.
17. **Organize that neglected online/offline space.** Every organization has that room that has become a disaster. The right intern can bring an outsider's eye to organizing and filing rooms like this. Online file spaces on the cloud also have a tendency to devolve into a mess. With the right oversight, interns can help categorize these files. Be sure to have a backup of your files when giving an intern the ability to modify.
18. **Update and benchmark the organization chart.** It's amazing how quickly this can fall out of date. Have your intern review the existing structure and then create a good looking visual with a tool like Draw.io that outlines departments, titles and names. As a bonus you

can have your intern then use tools like causeiq.com to see the staffing arrangements of similar organizations. Finding out which positions others in your field have that you don't can be quite revealing about potential strategies.

Value of Flexibility

More so than full-time employees, interns see their work experiences as exploratory — an opportunity to get a better feel for an industry, role, or company. Monica Wilson says that the students she helps place in internship roles often “appreciate the opportunity to explore fields and roles they might not be familiar with.”

This shouldn't come as a surprise. Interns are, after all, typically college students at the very start of their careers. Giving them the opportunity to move laterally within an organization can help keep interns engaged and can guide them through identifying what they're best at and most interested in. Of this, Monica adds, “It's important for interns to not feel pigeonholed in an organization; they should feel like doors are opening for them.”

Organizations need to understand this expectation to effectively manage and provide a valuable experience to interns. Consider building an internship program that is rotational or gives a student exposure to all departments of the organization. This format can help interns identify what they're interested in and better understand the “big picture.”

This might mean that a graphic design intern takes on some editorial tasks, or that an operations intern sits in on some marketing meetings. Nonprofits should be flexible where they can: it's rare for 19-year-olds to know exactly what their interests and strengths are. The more opportunities interns have to identify those areas of potential, the better value they'll be able to provide organizations. And remember that “What do I do now?” issue? Allowing room for exploration is another way to keep interns curious, engaged, and busy.

Organizations who can't offer as flexible of a role to interns should give interns other opportunities to explore their organization, like coffee or lunch with key members of each department. Having a built-in opportunity for interns to connect with team members beyond their direct supervisor ensures intern inclusion in an organization, both socially and professionally, which is necessary for the career development of young professionals. It's also helpful for the organization as they consider hiring interns for full-time roles.

Case Study Tip: Women Deliver: “I personally start every check-in with my intern by asking, ‘What are you doing, and what would you like to be doing?’ It is so easy for an internship to turn into busy work no one else wants to do, and I don't think anyone gains anything from that.” — Brittany Tatum, Communications Associate

Value of Inclusion

Professional and social inclusion is a typical and natural side effect of a “rotational” or cross-departmental internship. But for organizations that hire interns for more specified roles, interns don’t always have the opportunity to get to know the team beyond their direct manager and other interns.

One of the most common pieces of feedback that Whole Whale has received from our own interns is that they want more opportunities to interact with the team. Interns are seeking a holistic experience that includes the opportunity to connect and engage with an organization in addition to learning and gaining experience. The bottom line is that inclusion and immersion matters - not just for the intern’s experience, but for your team as well.

Invite interns to meetings when appropriate, set them up for coffee or lunch with team members they don’t get to work with often, and plan some team outings or activities that they can attend. Even better, if you have multiple interns, have them work together to organize an event for the whole team.

And, if interns are brought on with the possibility of consideration for a full-time role, organizations should keep this in mind throughout the internship. How do interns fit in with and work with other team members? What’s their approach for completing tasks with little oversight? Are they self-starters? Are they perfectionists?

A major benefit of hiring an intern for a full-time role is that you’ve already had a few months to see how an individual interact and collaborate with your team. But in order to gain this insight, you have to give them the chance to actually interact and collaborate with current team members.

Culture fit is an important piece of employee retention. It’s also, unfortunately, nearly impossible to predict during a traditional interview process. Organizations should take advantage of the time they have with interns to gauge how interns work with the team and fit into the trajectory of the organization. Then, use that insight to make the most informed hiring decision possible.

Case Study Tip: Idealist.org: “We have found it most important to make sure that interns feel integrated into the office culture and staff flow as much as possible. We aim to give them responsibilities that they can really feel ownership over while making sure that they feel supported in their own learning process. For many, this may be one of their first or at least one of their early experiences of being part of a formal workplace so we put careful thought into the impression we are able to make, both for our own organization as well as for employers in general.” — Kara Montermoso, HR and Operations Manager

CASE STUDY: The Michael J. Fox Foundation

Contact: Jude A. Williamson, MS, Senior Vice President, Human Resources

Website: michaeljfox.org

Staff size: 130 full-time

“We have a great deal of interest from organizations (such as Dartmouth) and friends of the Foundation to offer science-based, marketing and communications internships,” says Jude A. Williamson, MS, the Senior Vice President of Human Resources for the Michael J. Fox Foundation.

Last summer, the Fox Foundation sponsored 13 interns, and generally offer 2 to 3 internships during the fall and winter semesters. The Fox Foundation also has a group of managers who develop projects for the Foundation’s interns, which is a big focus for hiring. With a staff of 130, the focus is “on meaningful projects rather than percentage of staff.” In the HR department, Jude also works on offering events for interns to mingle and learn, such as lunch with the Foundation’s CEO.

While unpaid, the internships at the Fox Foundation offer a travel stipend and have allowed interns to add such accomplishments to their resumes as video production, database curation, grant reviews, and business partnership assessment “We have been grateful for their bright minds,” adds Jude.

Ongoing Training

We already mentioned the importance of training throughout an internship, but it’s more than worth bringing up again. Scheduling ongoing trainings with your interns on a variety of topics with a number of team members helps keep your interns engaged, interested, and constantly moving up multiple learning curves. Before an intern joins your team, identify projects and training opportunities that interns and full-time staff can collaborate on. This will ensure that all interns get the chance to interact with your team and become immersed in your organization.

Structured, thorough trainings can also encourage independence in interns. Giving them the knowledge and access to resources they need to complete certain tasks reduces how much support they’ll need while working on projects and will save your staff time in editing work later on.

Importance of Regular Feedback and Review

To quote a 2014 *Forbes* article, “According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, millennials only stay in each job an average of 18 months, so if you’re waiting to evaluate their first year in the job, they’ll already be two-thirds of the way out the door.”

While most interns will probably only stay with an organization for a few months, the benefits of [frequent feedback and reviews](#) aren’t lost. Checking in regularly with interns will have a tremendous impact on the work they’re able to complete and the impact they’re able to have

during their time. Plus, the key to goal setting is checking in regularly. If an intern isn't hitting certain goals, don't wait until their final review to find out or to let them know.

Check in weekly or biweekly to track progress and, if an intern isn't progressing, ask why. Do they have the resources they need to complete the task? Are they overloaded with work? Do they have the capacity to take on more? Keeping the communication channel between interns and supervisors open allows interns to be as productive as possible- a good thing for them and for the organization. At Whole Whale, all interns have short, weekly meetings with their direct manager to check in on projects, learning goals, and give feedback (to interns *and* to managers!).

Having this time built into an internship can also help interns work more autonomously. Knowing that, on Tuesday at 1pm, an intern will have face-to-face time with their manager to ask questions about their work and the organization means that interns need to ask fewer questions throughout the day.

Should You Pay Your Interns?

One considerable point of contention in structuring nonprofit internships is the question of payment. Should interns receive a paycheck? In 2017, just 40% of the 6,800+ US internships posted to Idealist were paid.

These numbers suggest that the nonprofit world trends toward offering unpaid or volunteer-based intern positions. It's easy to cite the fundamental differences between not-for-profit and for-profit business models as intuitive explanations for this trend: Funds run tighter and staffs run smaller in many nonprofits, and it has never been uncommon for those with a passion for social good to put in time as a volunteer or an unpaid intern before securing a full-time role in a nonprofit.

But just because this is the norm doesn't mean that it's the best, or even the most cost-effective, approach to running an internship program. We believe that there are a LOT of good reasons to pay your interns, both to your benefit and theirs.

Legal considerations

Internships are not opportunities to recruit free labor. If you currently use, or are thinking about starting, an unpaid internship program, educate yourself about federal labor laws. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) governs the ways in which interns must be compensated under federal law depending on the duties that they are performing.

In order to run a fair and legal unpaid internship program, employers have to take a number of steps to ensure that the work being done by an intern has beneficial educational value and does not displace the work of regular, full-time employees. Essentially, legal unpaid interns should be doing work that is more akin to professional "shadowing."

Employers must also be transparent with interns about the lack of compensation and make sure that the duration of the internship is clearly defined. If you are considering hiring interns because you need a larger staff or hope to begin growing your organization, think about whether a paid intern might be able to provide more valuable work than an unpaid intern (and

whether this will in turn give the intern a more beneficial and realistic experience of your nonprofit).

Student career development

In order to create an internship program that gives value to both employers and interns, keep the perspective of the intern and their career goals in mind. Students seek out internships as a means of exploring different professional fields, but they also hope to strengthen their marketable skill set and create future employment prospects.

While these are not impossible outcomes from unpaid internships, a 2016 study by the NACE Foundation concluded that paid internships have more positive effects on student career development and post-graduate employment rates than their unpaid counterparts. This study found that unpaid interns were 10% less likely to judge their internship experience as “extremely beneficial.” Students that completed an unpaid internship in the year leading up to college graduation were also more likely to be unemployed 6 months after graduating.

One of the reasons that paid internships have a higher chance of translating into positive career development is that payment signals commitment for both parties involved. Interns and their managers feel a lower sense of commitment to their respective roles when they are not obligated to each other through any terms of compensation. In this case, it becomes easier for unstructured aspects of an internship to remain unaddressed, thereby decreasing the educational value for an intern as well as the productive value for employers.

Unpaid internships and exclusion

Improving the structure of internship programs has the potential to do amazing things for nonprofit talent growth and talent retention. Obviously, nonprofits need — and want — to attract the best and the brightest employees to strengthen the scope and the effectiveness of their organizations. But consider how using unpaid internships as a funnel for talent recruitment can work against this very goal by making such opportunities inaccessible to the larger talent pool: Not all young people can afford to work unpaid jobs during (or after) their undergraduate careers, and even those with a strong desire to be part of the social sector can be driven into other professions due to a need to find paying opportunities.

As Rusty Morgen Stahl states in his 2013 article for *The Foundation Review*, “Talent Philanthropy: Investing in Nonprofit People to Advance Nonprofit Performance,” a continued reliance on unpaid internships in the nonprofit world means that, “those who can afford to work without pay have an upper hand from the beginning. One can imagine that the awareness and access gap grows among non-college bound and other disconnected youth — the very young people whom many nonprofits seek to serve and might cultivate as future leaders.”

Unpaid internships present barriers towards building a nonprofit community that is as diverse in thought and experience as it wants to be, contradicting the fundamental values of many social good organizations and ultimately deterring talented, passionate, and creative minds from joining the nonprofit industry.

Positive takeaways from unpaid experiences

Despite the validity of these points, nonprofit internships can, and do, provide value to interns outside of compensation. There are some lessons that even seem to be amplified by unpaid experiences. For instance, the NACE Foundation found in its same 2016 study that, while both paid and unpaid interns reported valuable takeaways from their experiences, the outcomes of paid and unpaid experiences were different.

This study asserted that unpaid internships were specifically correlated to more positive outcomes in “the areas of confirming or rejecting career interests, setting and attaining career goals, quality of supervision, and networking.” Unpaid interns were much more likely than paid interns to reflect positively on their quality of supervision and on the available networking opportunities. On the other hand, paid interns reported their experience as being “significant to professional skill development,” while unpaid interns did not report the same gains in that area.

All of these findings can be brought to bear on unpaid intern programs. How else can an organization provide enough substantial value to a student to offset the intern’s cost of being uncompensated? The emphasis unpaid interns in this study placed on supervision and networking suggests that a higher investment of staff time has the potential to add significant value to their experience. This type of investment can be helpful for the staff as well: When more time is spent training and getting to know an intern, that intern can ideally provide more useful work in return.

On the other hand, NACE’s study begs the question of whether organizations are investing enough time in paid interns to allow them to gain a truly meaningful experience. While fairly compensated internships should benefit both students and employers, the assurance of financial compensation should not correlate with staff spending less time working directly with interns.

Whether or not it’s possible for an organization to pay their interns, nonprofits should prioritize ensuring that their internship program offers students the most valuable professional experience that it can.

CASE STUDY: DonorsChoose.org

Contact: Margie Cadet, Director, Talent, Diversity, and Inclusion

Website: donorschoose.org

Staff size: 100 full time, 60 part time

DonorsChoose.org takes on about 15 interns each summer and takes a unique approach to intern compensation. Interns are individually considered for payment, and qualified interns receive a stipend that may range from \$500-\$2,500 for their time with the organization.

“To be considered for a stipend, the applicant must commit to a minimum of 8 weeks at 10 hours per week, and cannot be the recipient of any other grants or stipends related specifically to this internship,” explains Margie Cadet, Director of Talent, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Interns provide the organization with copies of their FAFSAs or SARs for evaluation, and interns who qualify receive a stipend in addition to an unlimited MetroCards for the duration of their internship. This needs-based approach to intern compensation allows DonorsChoose.org to hire the best possible candidates and avoid the exclusion that often results from unpaid internship postings.

Interns as a Piece of the Hiring Funnel

Recruiting and retaining talent has been an ongoing challenge for the nonprofit industry. According to the 2017 Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey, the gap between nonprofit hiring and corporate hiring is quickly narrowing—and nonprofits are doing little to ensure that they remain in the lead. In fact, the number of nonprofits that anticipate hiring decreased between 2016 and 2017.

Data gathered from this survey indicated that hiring qualified staff within limited budget constraints remains the top staffing challenge for nonprofits. Despite admitting to struggles with talent acquisition, the majority of these same organizations also responded that they had no talent management strategies in place to address recruitment, retention, or DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) concerns. Furthermore, they indicated that they had no plans to develop or implement such strategies.

Clearly, finding and hanging on to qualified employees creates significant problems for the nonprofit world. In the midst of these larger and more foreboding industry trends, the idea of hiring and managing interns can feel like more work than it's worth. But, when done correctly, implementing a strong internship program within your organization can have a tremendous ROI. This is especially true if you treat your internship program as a part of your overall hiring funnel, and direct the energy of such programs towards addressing bigger-picture staffing concerns.

Impact on Recruitment Costs

Finding and hiring new employees requires money, and it is precisely this issue of relative cost of talent acquisition that was found by the Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey to be the biggest staffing challenge for nonprofits in 2017. Consider, then, how many of these cost barriers would be mitigated by using a well-run internship program as part of the hiring funnel.

Converting interns to full-time hires costs far less than bringing in brand new candidates—organizations wouldn't need to allocate any additional funds towards recruiting, training, and onboarding new hires that were formerly interns (assuming that strong internship programs provide a realistic understanding of the organization's daily work, and have prepared interns to do such work). Using an internship program as the first step in the hiring funnel will also ideally lead to increased retainment rates beyond the entry-level, encouraging promising talent to stay within an organization long enough to lower recruitment costs for higher-level positions as well.

Acceptance Rate for Intern-to-Full-Time Hires

Interns are highly likely to accept your offer for a full-time role, so there's a good chance that if they can make it through the application process, they're going to take the job. According to NACE's 2016 Internship & Co-op Survey, 85% of interns that received full-time offers after their internship accepted the position. Take advantage of these statistics. If you can sustain an internship program that successfully attracts the type of entry-level employees that your organization needs, capitalize on the opportunity to convert these interns to full-time hires. Returning interns already represent a much lower risk than outside hires due to an increased

knowledge of their work ethic, skills, and personality, and their more reliable acceptance rate only serves to diminish general hiring risks even more.

Hiring the *Right* Intern

It can be tempting to hire an intern for a full time role — transferring someone from an intern to a full time role means organizations can spend less time on recruiting and much less time on onboarding and training. But it's important not to settle for the wrong intern-to-full-time hire just because it saves time in hiring and training. Asking current interns to go through the same application and interview process that you require of non-intern candidates can help nonprofits assess current interns within the standard hiring rubric. This gives the hiring team an apples-to-apples comparison of all candidates.

Another way to ensure that interns make for strong full-time hires is to focus primarily on hiring for culture fit and soft skills. Prioritize finding and retaining interns that seem most likely to engage with the organization. As long as they have the willingness and ability to keep learning, such interns can be trained for hard skills and expertise over time. But focusing on culture fit has a greater impact on an intern's decision to accept an offer – successful integration and socialization into an organization can highly increase the likelihood that a new employee will stay with the organization.

Case Study Tip: DoSomething.org: “Hiring exceptional former interns as full-time staff is a no-brainer! Think about it, you get a 3+ month trial to see them in action - are they a solid team player? Do they take feedback well? Passionate about the org? It's a win-win for both sides because you both know what to expect from the job and the employee.” — Aria Finger, CEO

Retention Rate of Interns

Considering the cost in time and money to hire and train new employees, retention should be a goal of all organizations. Here's the good news - interns that are later hired for a full-time role stay in that role longer than hires that were not cultivated through the intern funnel. In one study, the 5-year retention rate for hired interns was 51.8%, compared to a 35.8% retention rate for non-interns. Hiring interns for full-time positions can improve a nonprofit's chances of building and sustaining a strong team.

Improved retention rate for intern to full-time hires can be attributed to internship programs being a highly effective way to test out whether or not a candidate is a good fit for a team. By hiring an intern for a full-time role, organizations are able to onboard someone that the team has already gotten the chance to know. The organization and direct manager know the intern's strengths, weaknesses, areas of interests, and understand how they interact with the team. This is so much more than organizations know about a typical hire!

And these same benefits exist for the intern. Interns have a strong understanding of an organization functions and, hopefully, had the opportunity to get to know the team, which

reduces the risk of job dissatisfaction due to culture fit. And, if the full-time role is similar to the duties of the intern position, the intern has had ample time to identify whether or not the position is right for them.

Of course, this benefit relies on interns being fully and properly immersed in the organization during their time as intern, which is why effective intern management is crucial for the overall success of a nonprofit internship program.

CASE STUDY: GlobalGiving

Contact: Kevin Conroy, Chief Product Officer

Website: GlobalGiving.org

Staff size: 52 full time

GlobalGiving has taken a unique approach to internships, expanding their internship program into a more robust fellowship program. The fellowship program is longer and more intensive than the internship program at the organization had been. Fellows stay on the team for 13 months, receiving a \$28k stipend for their role in as well as full benefits, including health care. In 2017, GlobalGiving had 7 fellows working alongside their team of 52 full-time staff members.

This longer-term engagement gives the GlobalGiving staff the opportunity to spend more time effectively training and mentoring young professionals than they would be able to do in a traditional short-term internship.

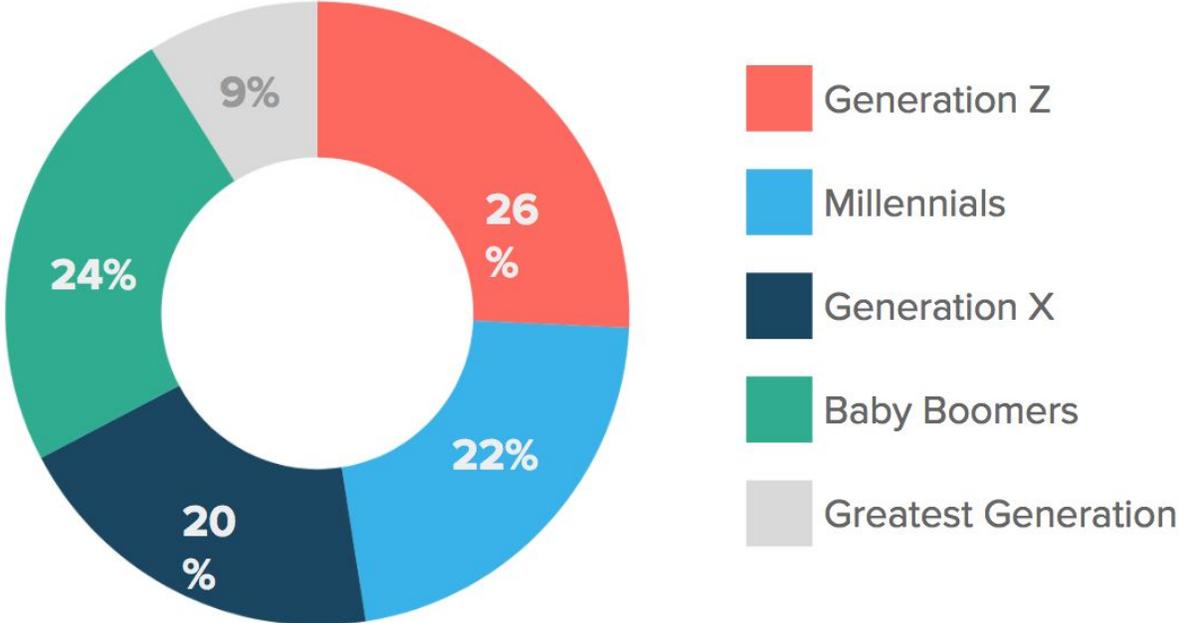
“We’ve found that, by supporting this entry-level, training position even more than we were before (when it was ‘interns’), we are not only getting higher quality work, but we’re developing this next generation of leaders even more,” says Chief Product Officer Kevin Conroy. “We’ve had several Fellows transition into full-time roles at the end of the fellowship and it’s been better for everyone involved.”

Conclusion

In the last 40 pages, we’ve made the case for a strong internship program, looking at examples of other organizations and giving you the framework to develop your own internship program. More importantly, we hope this book has opened your eyes to the treasure hidden in the rising generation that can be captured in well-run work study programs. Like capturing renewable energy through solar energy, Generation Z is starting to dip their toe into the workforce and it’s more important than ever for your organization to be there.

According to Nielsen’s 2017 Total Audience Report, Gen Z is currently the largest living generation in the US, representing people born from 1997-2015. So, if you are still in a room worrying about how to reach those “young Millennials” with your programs, let it be a huge alarm bell that you are missing what’s actually in the offing. Gen Z are true digital natives and are very quickly differentiating themselves from other generations in ways that will affect your business.

Generational Composition



Source: Nielsen Total Audience Report (Q1 2017)

Hopefully we have given you the seeds to grow a competitive advantage for your organization through internship programs. If this book has opened your eyes or even influenced you to increase investment in your interns, consider sharing it within your organization or with a friend. The larger hope we have is that internships run by nonprofits and socially responsible companies become greater educational partners with the educational journey of the rising generation. It's a chance to shape the morals and work ethics of the next workforce that will inherit our work. What could be more important than that?

A final thought from George: This book is dedicated to my new little girl, who is changing the way I think about education and the future of work. I believe one of the smartest things the social impact sector can do to change the way we work is by educating the rising generation about work that matters. Plus, it would be nice to have a world where there were more well-run and meaningful work opportunities for my little one.

Appendix

Find all of our downloads and more resources around interns at wholewhale.com/interns.

- Client disclosure
- [Downloadable orientation and training guides](#)
- [Downloadable intern handbook](#)
- [Job description template](#)

Client Disclosure

Whole Whale has worked with many of the organizations mentioned in this book. The following is a list of our affiliations with organizations mentioned:

- Move for Hunger - Past client
- USO - Past client
- Global Giving - Past client
- DonorsChoose.org - Past client
- Idealist.org - Past client
- The Grassroot Project - Past client
- The Michael J. Fox Foundation - George Weiner past advisor
- DoSomething.org - George Weiner former CTO

Intern Orientation Agenda

Office Tour

Get interns comfortable with their new digs. Where are the bathrooms? How does the coffee machine work? When does the refrigerator get cleaned out? What are the good lunch and coffee spots in the neighborhood?

Also, make sure interns have all the keys, key cards, fobs, and secret passwords they need to actually get into the office.

Organization Background

Why does your team do what they do? Spend some time talking with interns about:

- Your organization's mission
- What, exactly, you do
- Why your work is important
- Organization history: When was the organization founded? What have been some major organizational wins (and losses) to date?

Make sure that interns are filled in on the foundation of your organization so they understand the “big picture” of what they’re working towards. Bonus points if they understand how the tasks they do day-to-day lead to larger impact.

Office and Company Culture

Organizational structure

Take a look at team and organizational structure with new intern(s), answering the following questions:

- What are the departments in your organization, and what purpose do they serve?
- Who, specifically, does what?
- Who should interns ask about certain things?
- Do people work across multiple departments? When does this happen and how is this executed?
- Who can interns expect to work with?

For smaller organizations, take the time to touch on each individual's role. For larger organizations, emphasize departments and highlight key people that may be a resource for interns in the future.

Giving interns a clear vision of how an organization is structured and who is responsible for what is imperative in helping them understand their role in an organization. It also gives them the

information they need to reach out to the appropriate staff members for help, advice, or resources.

Company culture

- Dress code
- How can interns request time off? Who should they tell if they'll be out sick?
- Does your organization have casual Fridays? Happy hour on Thursdays? Full staff meetings on Mondays?

This is an opportunity to give interns the information they need to be comfortable and understand what to expect. But don't forget to use this as an opportunity to get interns excited about working with your organization! Highlight the best parts of working at your organization and be sure to emphasize that interns are welcome to all team activities.

Systems Setup

Get interns set up with all of the platforms and tools they'll need to access. This might include:

- Email setup
- Setting up logins for key tools and databases
- Getting hooked up to the office printer
- Downloading relevant software
- Giving access to key documents, resources, Slack channels, etc.

Don't forget to explain why and when these tools are used. For example, if your organization uses a task management system like Asana, make sure interns understand why this system is in place so they can utilize these tools in the most effective way possible.

HR and Legal Pieces

- When can interns expect to be paid?
- How will they receive payment?
- If they need to invoice for payment, who should those go to? How often should they be sent and for how much?
- If interns have questions about or issues with payment, who should they contact?
- W4s and other legal paperwork
- Employee handbook (yes, even for interns!)
- Emergency contact documents

Job Description Template

[Position Title] - [Your Organization]

[Your Organization] is an organization that [tell us what you do!]. *Keep it short: what does your organization do, how do you do it, and why do you do it.*

We are looking for a [Position Title] to [what is the key function of this role]. *Tell us what you're looking for. For example: a Development Intern to assist our grant writing team, or a Marketing Intern to use our digital channels to spread awareness about our cause.*

Logistics! What is the duration of the internship, how many days per week are interns expected to work, where is your office, and is the internship paid? It's better for everyone to know what they're getting into upfront. If any or all of these elements are flexible, say so!

Responsibilities

What can interns expect to do day-to-day? Be honest. If there are going to be administrative aspects of the role, include that here with assurance that it will only take up to 20% of the intern's time, for example. A potential list of responsibilities could include:

- Draft grant applications
- Create reports on our social media and advertising results
- Draft social media content Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- Write and edit blog posts to share on our website
- Research and reach out to potential partners in the community
- Manage communications with volunteers

Qualifications

What are you looking for in an intern? If it's not absolutely required, don't include it. Or, be explicit that it's a "plus" and not mandatory. For interns, the qualifications section shouldn't be intimidating — you don't want to scare off potential candidates that could be right for the job but think that they shouldn't apply because they don't currently hit every single point on this list. Keep it simple!

- Experience managing social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram)
- Great written and verbal communication skills
- Familiarity with Google Analytics is a big plus
- Superb attention to detail
- Passionate about social causes
- Desire to learn the things they might not already know on this list!

To apply

Send a cover letter and resume to [the hiring manager] with the subject line '[something specific to your org].' In your cover letter, please answer this question: [something specific to the role or the cause].

Asking for applicants to follow specific instructions, like answering a question in their cover letter or using a certain subject line, gives hiring managers a quick way to weed out applicants who don't read carefully, follow instructions, or put enough care into the application.

[Organization Name] Intern Handbook

Welcome to the team!

What is [your organization]?

Include mission and vision statements.

Team values

Positive, honest, mission-driven, etc. What are the attributes and attitudes all team members are expected to uphold?

GENERAL

Get all the basics in writing.

- Office location
- Dress code
- Office Hours
- Management
- Personal & Sick Days
- Holidays
- Religious and High Holidays

FUN STUFF

Get interns excited! Brag about the perks of being on your team, like

- Upcoming team outings
- Weekly team lunches
- Learning opportunities or organization events

DON'T BE A JERK

Detail any behavior, harassment, or anti-discriminatory policies

FINANCES

Include how, when, and how much will interns be paid, plus contact information of the best person for interns to reach out to if they have any issues.

ROLE

Include job title, length of internships, and name of the intern's direct manager. If your organization has non-compete, confidentiality agreements, or similar policies, be sure to include them here.

I, [intern name], understand the contents of [your organization's] Intern Handbook.

Intern signature

Date