

# Keys to a Successful Internship Program

1. **Have a Plan.** The quickest way to kill momentum for everyone involved is to not have a plan for their summer. Clearly outlining the 10-week schedule creates structure and clarity on day one of their internship. Like anything, the work you do on the front side will determine the success of your internship program. A good plan will also eliminate those wasteful and aggravating days that are associated with not having anything for them to do.
2. **Meaningful Work.** Solving problems like refilling the coffee, re-painting the lines in the parking lot, or rearranging unorganized rooms will not provide value for you or your intern. It also almost guarantees they will not be coming back to you for a permanent job after they graduate, which happens to be one of the biggest reasons to have them in the first place! Have a list of projects ready to review with them and explain why it is important to the company. Ask them which ones they feel most comfortable and confident completing. This will build trust and engagement and make for a much more meaningful experience for everyone.
3. **Assign a Mentor.** Interns need someone that has been around the block to help them navigate the cultural waters of the company. Having someone they trust and know they can go to will help make them more productive and less timid. It is also important that the mentor you assign understands how important a role this is for the future of the company. Some might view this role as a babysitting position – it is significantly more meaningful than that and they should know it. It probably goes without saying, but make sure the mentor is a champion of your company's culture.
4. **Provide Feedback.** Do not wait until the last week to check-in. One way to make sure they are learning, and progressing is to have them complete a weekly progress report. Interns will have a fresh perspective, and if they trust you, they will be candid when expressing their feelings on the company and areas for improvement. They are not as concerned about keeping their job after their internship is completed.