



Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.
The original outplacement company



CONTACTS

James K. Pedderson, Director of Public Relations
Office: 312-422-5078
Mobile: 847-567-1463
jamespedderson@challengergray.com

Colleen Madden, Media Relations Manager
Office: 312-422-5074
colleenmadden@challengergray.com

For Immediate Release

Internships Continue to Gain Importance

1 IN 4 EMPLOYERS HIRE FROM AMONG PAST AND PRESENT INTERNS; WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STAND OUT FROM THE PACK?

CHICAGO, May 27, 2014 – With roughly one-in-four employers recruiting entry-level workers from the pool of current and former interns, it is more important than ever for college and university students and recent graduates to perform well in these employment proving grounds. Unfortunately, many of those embarking on summer internship programs in the coming days and weeks could fail to make a positive impression on their employers, according to one workplace authority.

“Thousands of young people will participate in paid and unpaid internships this summer. While most will do a good job meeting the responsibilities laid out for them, many will not take the extra steps required to ensure that they stand out, thus increasing the chances of becoming a permanent employee down the road,” said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of global outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

Internships are an essential stepping stone to full-time employment for entry-level job seekers. In a recent survey of 100 human resources professionals by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, 26 percent of respondents said that internships are the leading source from which entry-level candidates are recruited and hired.

According to an outlook released earlier this year by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, the entry-level job market has improved steadily over the past three or four years. However, the competition for these positions remains fierce and having internship experience is a must on any resume. The latest data indicate that the number of internships being offered to bachelor’s-degree students is on the rise.

A survey of employers by the National Association of Colleges and Employers Internship & Co-Op survey found intern hiring will increase this year by 1.3 percent among bachelor's degree-level candidates. Overall, NACE expects more than 26,600 interns from all degree levels to be hired 2014. The biggest increases in intern hiring will occur in retail trade, accounting services, food and beverage manufacturing, information and financial-related industries, including banking, insurance and real estate.

“Employers view internships as a valuable hiring tool. It gives employers the chance to evaluate a potential employee’s performance for an extended period of time in real-world conditions. It also lets an employer gauge how the intern fits into the company culture, which is nearly as important as skills and experience.

“As an intern, it is critical to treat each day like a job interview. You want to set yourself apart from your fellow interns. As the slowing economy potentially leads to fewer full-time positions, it is critical that interns exceed expectations. Those who merely meet expectations probably will not get the full-time job offer,” said Challenger.

“Meeting the right people during your internship is also critical. It is likely that the person supervising the interns is relatively low on the corporate totem pole. In fact, he or she may be only a year or two out of college. The intern with full-time job aspirations should make a daily effort to meet the managers and executives who make the hiring decisions. The higher up the executive you impress, the greater the odds that a permanent position will be found for you,” he added.

“Students who do not receive an offer from the company where they interned can still benefit from the experience. Managers and executives in the company represent the beginning of your job-search network. Even if they cannot find a spot for you in their company, they may know executives in another company that may have openings.”

John Challenger provided the following advice for this year’s crop of summer interns to improve their chances of being offered a full-time job or the opportunity to return next summer, in the case of non-graduating college students:

Treat your internship as a real job.

The best way to prove you are qualified for a permanent position is through action. Think of your internship as a trial period or extended interview for obtaining the position you desire. Always be on time and meet deadlines. Maintain a positive attitude and show that you are eager to learn and succeed by seeking out feedback to improve your performance and develop new skills.

Take initiative and exceed expectations.

By taking initiative you can show management that you are capable. Do not be afraid to voice your own ideas, offer solutions, and ask questions. Show interest in attending meetings and seek out extra work and new projects. When you go above and beyond the minimum, you demonstrate your commitment level and gain the attention of management.

Dress according to company dress codes.

While you want to stand out from the pack, you don't want to draw attention to yourself for the wrong reasons. By dressing professionally you reinforce the impression that you can adapt to and fit in with the company's culture.

Keep track of your contributions and accomplishments.

Keep track of the projects you worked on, your individual contributions, and the results achieved. Having a tangible record of your achievements with the company is a helpful tool in convincing a manager why you should be hired full time.

Network, network, network.

Developing contacts inside and outside of your department is extremely important. Schedule lunches or meetings with company managers and executives to give them a better understanding of what you're about and what you plan on accomplishing. Find a mentor to teach you the ropes of the organization and offer advice on company politics. The contacts you make through your internship could prove invaluable throughout your time at the organization and throughout your career.

Ask about available entry-level positions.

Let your employer know that you would like a job with that particular organization. Ask about what positions are available and express your interest in them. An employer will be more likely to consider you for a position if they know you are interested in it.

Stay in contact.

If you don't get hired for a position immediately after your internship ends, stay in touch. Check-in with your contacts and provide updates on your progress. This will help to keep you in the forefront for the employer's mind when a position opens.

###