

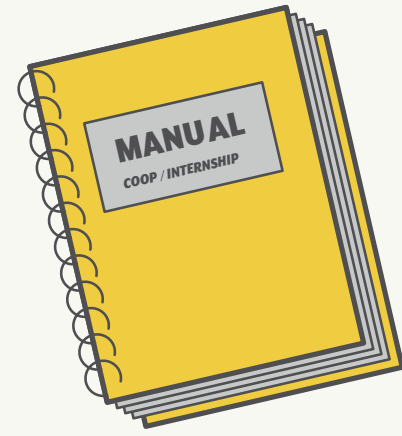
Creating Best Practices with Employer Partners - How to Construct Quality Off-Campus Educational Pedagogy

Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

SO YOU WANT TO HIRE AN INTERN OR CO-OP?

A "Quick Start" Guide to Starting and Growing a Co-op or Internship Program

Starting an internship or co-op program can seem intimidating, especially for smaller companies where everyone wears a lot of hats and there's not always an official policy or procedure for how things get done. Partnerships with local colleges and universities are the best way to start connecting with candidates – beyond that, here are some field-tested best practices to help you get up and running in no time!



For the purposes of this study, we're talking about:

Definitions

(Just so we're all on the same page)

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION (CO-OP) =

Full-time (35 hrs. per week), paid, supervised, rotational professional experiences for students; ongoing rotations of semesters or quarters dedicated to school or work

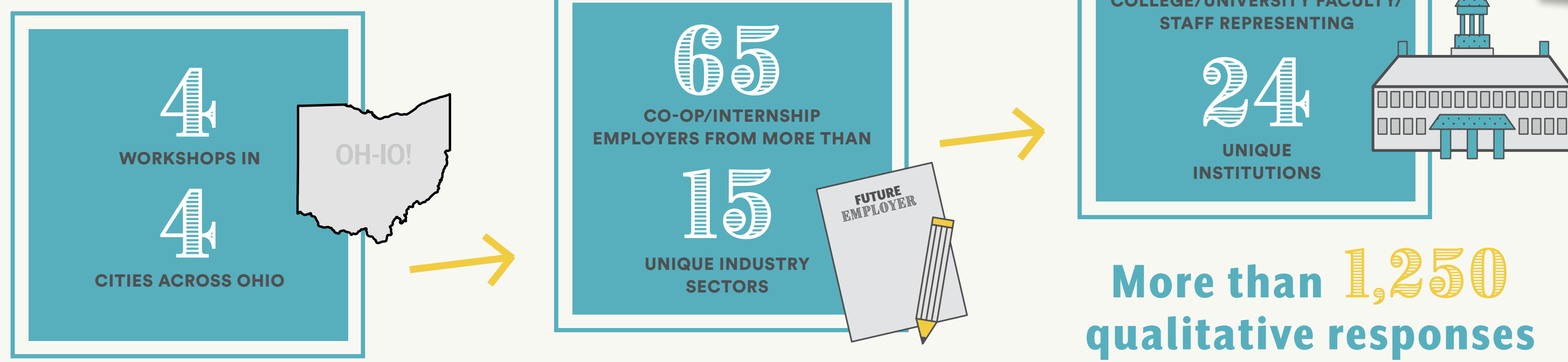
INTERNSHIPS =

Part-time or full-time, supervised professional experiences for students, often completed while simultaneously taking classes; may be paid or unpaid if working for a non-profit organization

The first steps of any project or journey are always the hardest, but once you've got the ball rolling with campus recruitment, interviews, and making offers, you're ready to start thinking about actually putting your new hires to work. Let's move on to Section 2: Let's Get to Work!

Time flies when you're having fun – before you know it, both you and your intern or co-op will look at the calendar and realize it's almost time for them to head back to campus. Hopefully it's been a great fit for everyone and you can't imagine life without their contributions to your team. Or maybe it's been a good learning experience, but you're headed in a different direction. Either way, having a plan to address what's next will avoid an awkward last day. Let's move on to Section 3: Future Planning

Methodology (Best practices according to who?)

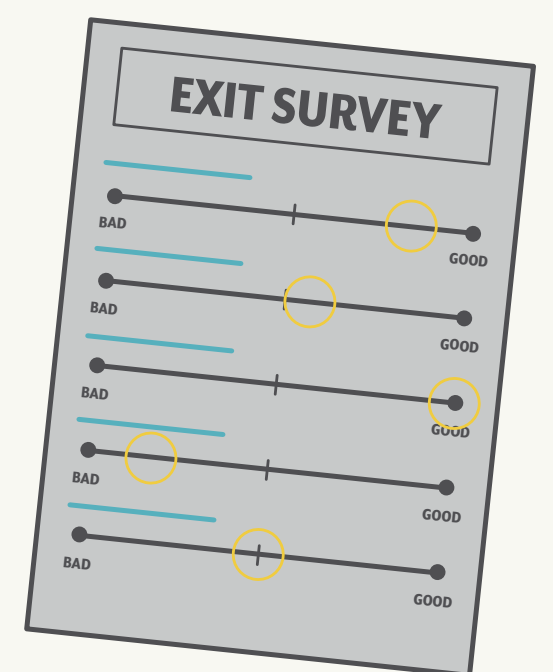


BIG IDEAS for QUICK WINS:

- 1 Define and articulate what your organization hopes to accomplish by building a program – what does success look like?
- 2 Organizations report a higher ROI with hiring co-ops and interns when adopting the mindset of building a recruitment pipeline (rather than sporadic or overload hiring)
- 3 Academic calendars and timelines don't always directly align with those in industry. It's typically best to be thinking about and planning for co-op/ intern hiring at least 3 months prior to the season you plan to hire for. Recruitment, hiring, and evaluating is an ongoing process, so it's possible to build in reoccurring or cyclical activities.
- 4 Onboarding and training are often underserved – companies/organizations usually offer something short on day one, but "ongoing onboarding" or training in small segments throughout the semester can have a stronger impact.
- 5 Building an impactful relationship between universities and companies that hire co-ops/ interns requires ongoing brand-building and multiple touchpoints beyond a career.



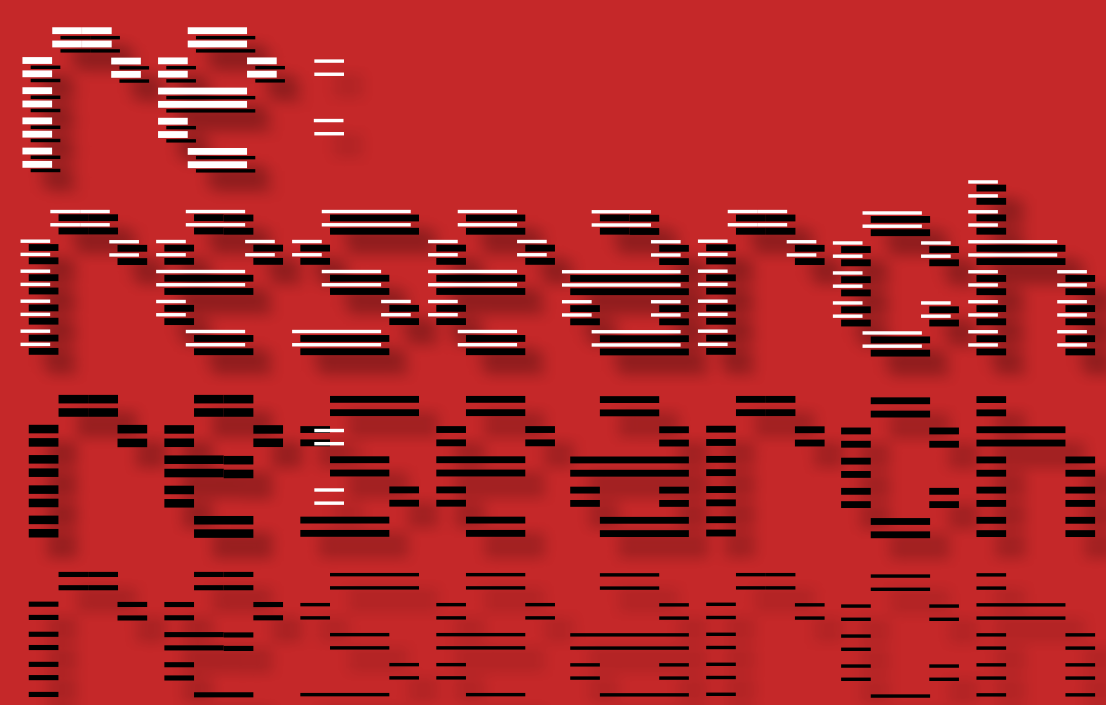
- 6 A well-written company and job description are the most effective first line of initial "screening" to get the right candidates.
- 7 A standard "welcome packet" with general policies, expectations, program goals, and a company map or seating chart for all co-ops/ interns can be a simple but powerful tool for getting them up and running quickly.
- 8 Assigning both a supervisor AND a mentor (with different roles) is a great way to increase on-the-job performance throughout the term; students may informally develop mentorship from other sources, but an assigned mentor creates a "safe-space" if informal mentorship doesn't happen organically.
- 9 Conducting simple "exit research" with co-ops/interns (formal or informal) to measure how the experience met their expectations can be a great tool for continuous improvement of a company's program.
- 10 Staying engaged with former co-ops/interns between semesters has a strong impact on their potential to return for another semester (and re-integration when they return).



STAY ENGAGED!

FINAL CLOSING THOUGHTS

While there's no formula for building the perfect co-op or internship program, leveraging the best practices and tips from this report should help to de-mystify the process and provide some actionable ideas for building or refining a program that works best for your organization. Maintaining a strong program is a continuous process; invested relationships with the schools you recruit from, and on-going feedback from the students you hire can help you stay ahead of the curve. Consider this guide as a starting point, or another "tool" in your toolbox for building the ideal program; share it with human resources professionals in your organization, co-op and intern supervisors and mentors, and the academic intuitions you partner with.



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