

Speaker 1 00:00:05 Welcome to the Clear Impact Podcast brought to you by PGTI University. Thanks for joining us today. My name is Sherri Connor, and I am your host.

Okay. Saylor, what about you?

Speaker 2 00:00:21 Well Sherri, I thought you would never ask.

Speaker 1 00:00:25 We didn't even do introductions. We need to backup. Okay. We're going to start over. We're going to start over. So we're here today on the Clear Impact podcast. We have the kindest friendliest, excited, enthusiastic faces I've seen all day. And, uh, so I'm going to let you guys introduce yourselves and tell us a little bit about, I was, so I want to know your name, where are you going to school and what your major is? So Josiah, I will start with you.

Speaker 2 00:00:47 My name is Josiah Pool. I'm going to the University of Florida and I'm studying Mechanical Engineering for my Bachelor's degree, which I'll finish up this fall, got one class left for that, but I'm actually at the same time completing a Master's in management with the business school. So a little bit of a transition there.

Speaker 1 00:01:04 And you're interning in marketing, correct,

Speaker 2 00:01:06 But not really marketing, it's marketing with quotes cause I'm, I'm in the product management branch of it. So I actually don't really deal with a ton of marketing.

Speaker 1 00:01:15 It says more about the product. Got it. Okay. We are excited to bring you this new series, Workforce of the Future. Our first guest is Jessica Murphy, one of our HR business partners and coordinator of our 2022 summer internship program. Jessica shares some winning insights for a successful internship of your own. We also hear from several of our interns from the summer of 2021 sharing a bit of their experience as interns. We have Saylor Evans, Josiah Pool, Nicholas Hull, and Dylan Thomas.

Speaker 2 00:01:44 So my name is Saylor Evans. I currently attending Ohio University, and I am a finance major there.

Speaker 1 00:01:51 Is that where they do that chant, O H,

Speaker 2 00:01:53 That's Ohio State. We're the JV. We are, we're an hour, like I believe it's Southeast from Columbus. So we were more of the, O U, Oh yeah. That's our, that's our chant. It's not O U, oh no.

Speaker 1 00:02:09 Okay. Sorry to interrupt. Go ahead.

Speaker 2 00:02:11 Um, no, that's, that's pretty much it. I mean, I am not as qualified or have all the degrees that Josiah over here was feeling. I'm not, I'm not qualified at all. I am interning in the corporate finance here at PGT. Yeah, this is my actual second year here with us. So it's, it's been a really great learning process so far. Oh,

Speaker 1 00:02:31 Nice. A repeat offender.

Speaker 2 00:02:33 Yeah, absolutely.

Speaker 1 00:02:35 Nice. We are kicking off a new series today and we are talking about the Workforce of Tomorrow. And one of the reasons I wanted to tackle this topic is because there is a shortage of skilled, experienced, knowledgeable labor, especially in the industry that we are serving. So what does that mean for a dealer? It means that you're going to have to hire somebody that doesn't have experience. You're going to have to hire somebody that is willing to learn, but doesn't maybe come with the credentials that you would like, or maybe the credentials that you are used to hiring. So we have an internship program that we've been doing for several years at here at PGT Innovations. And I thought it would be fun for dealers to entertain, maybe launching an internship program of their own. Because eventually we're all going to run out of people that are currently working for us and we need to hire new people. So, we have invited Jessica Murphy, who is one of our HR business partners and welcome to the show, Jessica,

Speaker 3 00:03:34 Thank you so much for having me. Um, I really appreciate it. And I look forward to talking about our internship program and the benefits that it can bring.

Speaker 1 00:03:40 Awesome. Well, I was told that you were the person who is overseeing our internship program for this coming 2022 summer, right. Because we basically do summer internships, right? Correct. Yep. Okay. I kind of already gave this answer away, but we do want to just touch on it again. Why would a dealer choose to launch an internship program? I mean, sometimes when you think of internships, you think of cheap labor or free labor, you think of, oh, I'm going to keep this kid occupied for the summer, or I'm going to have someone who can fetch my coffee and run errands for me. Um, but that's not what we're really talking about when we're talking about internships. So why would a dealer choose to launch an internship program with our own

Speaker 3 00:04:22 Very good question. I know a lot of companies are asking themselves that now, um, ultimately interns can offer a unique experiences. So they have different skillsets than people in the workforce currently, you know, they're typically younger, they're excited, they're just dipping their toe into the workforce. Um, and they come with a lot of fresh new ideas. Okay. So another thing that an internship can offer for our dealers is it will really create a pipeline of qualified employees. So as you had touched on earlier, the labor force right now is just drained. You know, it's very difficult to find people who are qualified in the positions that you are trying to fill. So interns, you can, uh, you can have the person who's already in college or in a trade school and you can train them up to what you want. You're basically training the workers of tomorrow, right?

Speaker 3 00:05:14 You know, they're early in their career. You can mold them into what, what your business needs and then you can hire them on full time once they're done with school. Um, another thing is it provides mentorship opportunities for your current employees. So let's say you have someone who is up and coming in their career and you really want them to be in management at some point, but they're just not quite there yet. An intern offers them a great opportunity to build those leadership skills. So not only are you building a pipeline of qualified candidates from the intern perspective, but you're also training your current employees on how to be better leaders and better managers for your company.

Speaker 1 00:05:49 Oh, that's a great point. So how would they choose an intern?

Speaker 3 00:05:53 So that takes a little bit of effort I will say. So it requires a lot of background preparation. Okay. So really you need to kind of sit back and think, why do I want an intern? You want to

think about the kind of entry level skill sets that you can teach them. And you want to come up with a detailed job description, the better the job description, the better the candidates will be, because the candidates, they want to know what they're getting into, right? So if you have a very detailed job description, then they know what they're getting into. And it usually gets them excited because they can envision the job.

Speaker 1 00:06:23 Right? Not just like, we want you to come in at seven in the morning and be done at three. And we're just going to keep you busy all day. That's not very enticing.

Speaker 3 00:06:30 No, not at all. So you really want a job description that sets those expectations and even get a little bit creative with the job descriptions. On your business webpage, if you have videos of what the job is, and what you would be expecting the intern to learn and work alongside with your current employees doing, that's a great way to build engagement. Um, another thing is you want to make sure that you interview multiple people. I know you put all this work into building the job description and building the website and your first applicant you're super excited about, but you really want to be patient and wait until you get multiple applicants. So that way you can figure out who the most qualified is. And then lastly, um, you really want to have a cross functional interview panel. So, um, I know what we do is we have someone from marketing. We have someone from manufacturing. We have someone from HR because all those different departments, they have their own desires, but they also have their own skill sets that doesn't necessarily translate to the different departments. So someone in marketing may notice something about a candidate that someone in manufacturing didn't. So it really allows for you to evaluate the candidates and choose the best one.

Speaker 1 00:07:31 I can see where that would be helpful, especially if you're filling more than one position, because now you have different people that might be wanting their own interns and they can kind of get a sampling of who might work best for their own team.

Speaker 3 00:07:43 Absolutely. If you have multiple intern positions open, um, then one candidate may work best in this department. Another one better in this one. So it definitely creates that collaborative environment between everybody.

Speaker 1 00:07:55 Nice. So are interns paid or do they work for free or, uh, what are some pros and cons of that?

Speaker 4 00:08:03 Um, so I'm Nick, I'm a, the code compliance intern here at PGT and I go to Florida Gulf Coast University, and I'm currently a Civil and Environmental Engineering intern. Um, my favorite part is just been, a generic answer, but just the experience as a whole, um, just getting to see all the different parts to go into the company and working with the other interns and seeing what they do. It's just, it's kinda mind blowing that even just one, like just glass. This is just one industry, like throughout America, it's just crazy to see all the different parts that go into it. It's really great to be a part of it.

Speaker 5 00:08:32 My name is Dylan Thomas. I graduated from USF in Mechanical Engineering in December of 2020, and I'll be attending UCF for a Master's program also in Mechanical Engineering and August of 2021. And here at PGT, I'm the Design Engineering intern.

Speaker 1 00:08:48 So what has been your favorite part so far this summer of being here?

Speaker 5 00:08:53 Number one, prototyping. So the iLab has a lot of 3D printers in which I can design something and send it out to a printer and it does its magic and, you know, a couple hours or a day later, it prints out a nice part for me. So that's pretty cool to go from design to a physical product in a short amount of time. Um, so that's really cool to see. I didn't get a lot of 3D printer use in school. You know, I'm running those things almost every day now, so that's pretty fun.

Speaker 1 00:09:19 Be sure to tune in for upcoming episodes to help you understand the fenestration industry, what you need to know when buying windows and doors and other related topics, you can find out more about us at pgtiuniversity.com. You can also find us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Speaker 3 00:09:37 Yes, I would highly, highly recommend all of the interns being paid. Um, and the reason for that is because of the current labor pool, it's almost impossible to find someone who is willing to do it for no pay, because there's so much competition out there. And on top of that, it's been proven that if you have a paid internship, you're likely to gain three times the number of applicants than you would, if it was unpaid. Okay. Along with that, it ensures a more qualified group of candidates and a more diverse. Okay. And I mean, diversity and inclusion is a huge hot topic right now as it should be. Um, so you're definitely gonna want to think about that when you choose your interns as well. And then ultimately, I mean, at least for PGT, we just feel like it's the right thing to do. Along with that, most of these interns are in college, right? So the last thing we want is for them to be unpaid worrying about how they're going to pay their bills, because then we won't get a full hundred percent of them. And the point of their internship, as it's a very condensed program, but we really want them to make a difference here. We want to help them grow their skills. And if they're worried about pay, it's probably not going to happen.

Speaker 1 00:10:39 Right. And I would imagine as young adults and college students, they are facing, okay, do I get an internship or do I get a job, because I have to feed myself next year. So it's nice if an employer can offer a paid internship. Absolutely. Where does a dealer find interns? Like, how do they go about that? Do they contact a school or do they put a posting on social media or do they just ask around like, what's a good way for them to find people?

Speaker 3 00:11:08 I would say, all of the above. Okay. If you're really looking for the best quality intern you can get, you're going to want to do everything you can to find them. Ultimately, I would recommend partnering with universities and technical schools as soon as you can. So if you know that your internship is going to be over the summer, you should actually start preparing the year before, believe it or not. Building those relationships will allow for you to be invited to those career fairs that they have. And those students attend those career fairs, looking for A) a career or B) an internship.

Speaker 1 00:11:38 Nice. One, two more questions. So how can you evaluate whether or not an internship was a success?

Speaker 3 00:11:45 Yeah. So this is a little bit more of a difficult thing to measure, right? So I think it's important from the very beginning to again, evaluate what exactly you want this intern to be doing and key performance indicators or KPIs, throughout their internship. So what we do is throughout the summer, we have frequent checkpoints. So, um, whoever is leading the internship program, um, they meet with the interns altogether, um, usually about every other week. Um, along with that, we do ensure that we complete exit interviews at the very end of the summer, that ask a variety of strategic questions to better understand what went well and what didn't, because there's always something to

improve. Right. And then we take those notes and we evaluate it as a team on what we can do better for the next year.

Speaker 1 00:12:28 Okay. So should they have somebody besides their direct report be in that role?

Speaker 3 00:12:34 Yes, absolutely. Because if you want the most honest truth, then you're going to need someone who isn't the direct manager.

Speaker 1 00:12:40 Okay. And then obviously if they decide that they want to continue working for you when they graduate, or they say, Hey, let me know when you're ready for a full-time position, or can I call you when I'm finished with my degree, or whatever, then, you know, it was a success because they want to come back. Absolutely. So one last question. What is a memorable moment or story that you can share of working with an intern?

Speaker 3 00:12:59 I can't think of one specific story, but I will tell you that the group that we worked with last summer was by far the most intelligent, most energetic, just most fun group I've ever worked with. And throughout this internship program experience, it really taught me that it's okay to have fun and it's okay to listen to other people's ideas. And it doesn't always have to be so corporate. For example, we had a party at the end of the year where the interns were in charge of planning that party.

Speaker 1 00:13:28 Oh my...

Speaker 3 00:13:29 Yes. It can get a little scary with some of their ideas. Um, but they couldn't decide between if they wanted to do a Christmas themed party, like a Christmas in July or if they wanted to do a luau. Okay. So what they did was they combined them. So we had a Christmas luau.

Speaker 1 00:13:43 Okay.

Speaker 3 00:13:45 I loved it. You know what, it was the most fun I've ever had, at work at least, you know,

Speaker 1 00:13:51 That's awesome. Yeah. That's awesome. I think I saw them that day. They were all decked out in their Hawaiian shirts. Actually, we put out a call to all the interns last summer because two of them were sitting right outside the podcast studio and I would see them all the time. And so we put out an all-call to the interns and all nine of them said, yes, I want to be on the podcast. So we'll be hearing little snippets of those conversations throughout this series as well. So just a little shout out to them. I was like, wait, what? I can't put nine people in this studio. So we did them in batches, but it was a lot of fun. They were definitely an energetic bunch. Yeah.

Speaker 3 00:14:23 But very fun, very, um, very intelligent. They made some great initiatives around our company. I got to tell you, if you have an intern and it's, well-planned out, they can do a lot.

Speaker 1 00:14:34 I love the fresh eyes that they bring. And definitely because I think they grew up in a different generation. They see things so differently than we do, um, or than I do. So I think it's, you know, it's great to have that, that perspective. I love that. Well, this has been a fantastic conversation, Jessica, thank you so much for giving some nuts and bolts around how to do this. Um, we'll be hearing in future episodes around what are the benefits to the intern? What are some key things for the manager of the intern to know? And so we'll be covering a lot of different facets of this particular topic. So thanks

for listening. Thanks for coming. Have an awesome day. Thank you so much for having me. Alright. Take care.

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