

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.

Speaker 1 00:00:19 Trying to corner the market on fresh talent? There's something really great about helping someone else, like an intern, and then realizing they will actually be helping you. On today's episode, we hear from current employees who got their beginnings here as interns. Hong Chen, a Senior Engineer in Code Compliance, and Morgan Lingle, a Talent Specialist with our HR Team, joined me for this fun conversation. They shared about staying awake on truck deliveries, and the genius behind Ice Cream Fridays.

So welcome to the Clear Impact podcast. We are here this morning with Hong Chen and Morgan Lingle. Good morning. Welcome. Good morning. Good morning. Um, so one of the reasons that I wanted both of you in studio is because we're in the series, Workforce of Tomorrow. And my understanding is that you have both been interns here and then now your employees. So we want to just talk to our dealer audience a little bit about how they might have a successful internship program of their own. So I want to just to get some insight from you guys around your experience as an intern, and you can take turns or however you want to answer the questions and you guys just met today, right? Yeah. Okay. So let's just do a brief introduction. So Hong, tell us a little bit about you, your title and how long you've worked here.

Speaker 2 00:01:34 Hi, my name is Hong. I currently am a Senior Code Compliance Engineer here. I started as an intern back in 2018, summer of 2018. When I was finishing up my last year in engineering school, up in University of Florida over the summer, I was able to, um, take on a two-part internship and the three months I was here, and I guess afterwards they liked me enough to offer me a job. And I've been here or five plus years coming up five and a half. So almost six, actually it's almost six years. It's how fast it's gone. Wow. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:02:05 Awesome. Okay. And so Senior Code Compliance Engineer.

Speaker 2 00:02:09 So like a little bit about that. Uh, sounds a little, probably a little weird, but code compliance is kind of like Florida Building codes. Every single time we build, there's a certain minimum standard that the building has to achieve and we specialize purely on the opening size. So like windows, doors, anything that goes into an opening, any product that we sell that goes into an opening, we engineer it to make sure that meet certain wind loads and meet certain DP requirements and energy requirements, et cetera,

Speaker 1 00:02:37 DP, meaning design pressure. Sure. Right. Yep. Awesome. Well, I'm glad you could squeeze a little time and walked down the hallway because this studio is actually in the same building your office is so that's super convenient. And so Morgan, yeah. Tell us a little bit about you.

Speaker 3 00:02:53 Um, so my path to PGT was a little different than most. So I started in the summer of 2020 as an intern in HR. Um, I didn't really know what I wanted to do career wise, so they put me in HR. It was great. I started under Trish in workforce development and then quickly got pulled into recruiting, which was not necessarily what I signed up for, but little did I know it's what I needed. It was a ton of fun. And then I graduated from Geneva College up in Pennsylvania and I came back over my winter break. Actually, they asked me to come back and help with recruiting just because of the demand we had for hires. Um, so I did that and they offered me the job came back and I've been a talent

specialist now since May. So I'm just new, you know, just starting out, figuring it out. Yeah. That's exciting.

Speaker 1 00:03:33 What were some things that you experienced as an intern that convinced you that you wanted to work here after you graduated?

Speaker 3 00:03:40 I think the environment, so my college really taught us, we had a class in our senior year about like what to look for in the workforce. Um, what you're looking for and PGT really showed that, with like the family environment here. I don't know if it's because I was working in HR that I saw it upfront, but like they really take care of their people. We have the corporate chaplain, which was something very unique and the services he offered was something I was very interested in, kind of goes along with like what I'm passionate about, like people and helping people. And then everyone was just so kind. I mean, it really felt like when I was interning, there was a family environment I felt comfortable. Um, but yet I felt pushed to grow, which is something I was looking for and very much to drawn to. In addition, like PGT is so much room for growth as a company. And I really wanted to be a part of that. Like I want to be a part of the growth, the development. So that's really why I came back.

Speaker 1 00:04:23 Awesome. What about you Hong?

Speaker 2 00:04:25 Actually, I'm in the same side with Morgan and this one. Um, I know, um, the people I met here during the time I spent here as an intern, I know it's a little cliché, so I'll elaborate a little bit on that. Um, so again, like I said, I, I took on the internship. Uh, it was a two-part internship. I wanted to do more design engineering, but a couple of people that interviewed me, pushed me to, um, more towards operational leadership and with HR's help, they were actually able to set up like, hey, let's do half operational leadership, and the other half design engineering. So throughout those two parts, I was actually able to meet a lot of really, really cool people. And then there's one particular person that stood out. This person was basically, kind of took me under his wing, became my mentor from a work professional standpoint.

Speaker 2 00:05:06 He made me a better engineer, more, more or less kind of like less of a book engineer, a more of a practical engineer. So thinking outside of the box, thinking more practically, instead of thinking in numbers and formulas, that kind of thing. But outside of work, it was also kind of just a really great mentor. Someone who helped me solidify my faith and someone who just kind of what was there for me and kind of told me that engineering is a tool, not an identity. And that's something that I think that I came back to work for PGT because of him and was able to learn a lot from him.

Speaker 1 00:05:38 The mentorship thread was a very common one, um, in some previous podcasts that we've done, um, all the way from the brand new people, all the way up to, you know, senior executives, correct. Talked about, um, mentorship and the value of that. So, yeah.

Speaker 2 00:05:51 And I'll add to that, because at first I thought it was just, just him, but then along the way you get you, you a lot more other people and they're exactly the same. So I think top leadership here has a knack for finding like some really, really great people that were willing to kind of like invest in those that they lead.

Speaker 1 00:06:07 I think it goes back to a solid HR strategies. Uh, yeah. Okay. So is there anything that you wish that you would have learned more about during your internship?

Speaker 2 00:06:18 For me? I think I would have loved to learn more about the business, because as an intern, you kind of like are given a task, a problem to fix and you're laser focused on solving that problem. But I work really, really well, and I think a lot of people work very, very well, when they understand the why in what they do, and why they're solving the problem. And having a better understanding of actually how the business and why is our business is more successful than our competitors. Right. I think that understanding that, hey, like we're introducing a certain product line because this is what the trend is going towards. We're discontinuing a certain product line because hey, it's, the sales is not there. The demand is not there. And so that's why we're having to cut certain materials or certain profiles because of that. So all of these other things where like, hey, we're testing this and we have to get this product to pass because the market demands it. Right. So kind of like a little more foresight into why we're doing what we're doing. And that I think provides a little bit of an edge and an extra like motivation to kind of like, hey, can't give up now because this is the future.

Speaker 1 00:07:20 Yeah. To have a broader understanding of how the task or area that you're working in impacts the larger.

Speaker 2 00:07:27 Yeah. It came with like a lot more exposure to the team to different aspects of the business, when what's important to them. Um, and it just came naturally when, once you spend a lot more time and are piqued by those interests, and that curiosity, and you're asking the right questions and a lot of people here are into business and they'll tell you if you ask.

Speaker 1 00:07:47 Right. Awesome.

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How about you, Morgan?

Speaker 3 00:08:08 So mine's a little different, um, route, uh, I wish I was more clear on what I wanted to do, what path I wanted to go down. Um, so like I said, previously, I went into HR because I didn't really have a specific field. Um, I graduated with a double major of international missions and social services. So very much so, not recruiting or talent specialists, not, not in that lane. So I wish I had a better understanding of why I wanted to do that way. My internship, I could kind of take ownership of it more in the direction it went. I'm very grateful. I learned a ton and I'm still doing recruiting, which, I mean, I'm very grateful the opportunity. It's fun. It's interesting. It's keeps me on my toes for sure. But yeah, I personally wish I would have had more clarity on where I wanted to go with my career, but it was still, it's still a great opportunity and led to an amazing opportunity.

Speaker 1 00:08:53 Well, I think both of those things that you majored in come into play nicely in an HR role because we have, I think 22 different languages are spoken on our production floor. So the international piece, I'm sure you took some courses that would help relate culturally, you know, to a wide array of people, which we have here, and then the social services. I mean, it's all about people.

Speaker 3 00:09:16 So it's definitely, I've, I've found in the past. I mean, since May that I've been here pulling more from my education that I thought I would in this role. Um, and just relying on what I've learned and overall just how to care for individuals. It comes down to, you know, people matter and although it may not seem like an emergency to you, it might be to them, you don't know what's going

on in their lives. So, I mean, it's all worked out amazing. Um, so it's, it's great. It's interesting. Every day that use my education in different ways than I thought it was going to.

Speaker 1 00:09:43 Awesome. Okay. One last question for each of you, if you have something great, if you don't, don't make it up, but, or you can, I don't, I wouldn't know if you're making up stories or not. Is there a memorable moment or a story that you want to share about being here as an intern?

Speaker 2 00:09:58 It's actually pretty funny. Um, so the operational leadership side of, uh, my internship, one of the requirements, uh, that a lot of the leaders typically, when you become a leader, is that you have to go on a customer delivery. So I was on one of our semi-trucks with one of the drivers and you help deliver product to our customers. And we get a lot of praise from our dealers of how nice and courteous our drivers are. And so I woke up at like probably 3:30 in the morning. I had overslept, right? And so I woke up like probably on half an hour later after that, that morning. So the day starts pretty early for truck drivers. And when I got there, I was lucky enough that they had like a morning meeting, like a 30 minute morning meeting. So I got there just on time and some of the area leaders in the group leaders, or kind of like giving me some, a challenge like, hey, stay awake during the time that you're on this drive.

Speaker 2 00:10:47 I'm like, how bad can it be? Like, I'm gonna stay awake. I'm going to like staple my eyes open. Like I was, I was going to like overcome this challenge and prove him wrong basically. And on the drive, I didn't realize that like all these truck drivers had to pick up some of these like 200, 300 pound panels, really, really heavy windows. I was there kind of like, hey, you're the extra muscle let's go. And I got these like really nice gloves. And I realized, I learned very quickly that you don't bend your arms. You just straighten up your arms and you use your hips to kind of pick up these products. And then by the end of the day, I was beat and then I have to stay awake for the three hour drive back. Where did you go? Miami area. Okay. So like majority of our dealers are. On the way back, and I'm trying to stay awake.

Speaker 2 00:11:27 And I had connected with the driver cause he was a, he was a high school wrestler and I was a high school wrestler. So we'd kind of connected via wrestling. And I told him that like, hey, there's this challenge that like, the area leaders are saying that like, I can't, you can't like, there's no way for me to stay awake throughout this challenge. And he told me that like, oh, that's okay. I was like, why? And he's like, well, you got the rumble strips on one side. And then you got the cars honking at you on the other side, if you ever get off of your lane, I'm thinking this is what you're using to keep in the lane. No, I'm like, I don't know if he's joking. Um, I'm hoping that he's joking.

Oh he was joking....

Speaker 2 00:12:02 Maybe, he sounded pretty serious, but I'm like, I was so afraid to fall asleep. Cause thinking that like, this is exactly what's going to happen. Oh no. But that, like, that kind of stuck with me throughout the whole internship. I had a blast telling, uh, all the area leaders about it and That's funny. Yeah. It was funny. It was a fun day. It was fun.

Speaker 1 00:12:20 That's fun. Well, he probably just saw you as a young college kid and like, I'm just going to see how gullible he is. That's fun. How about you Morgan?

Speaker 3 00:12:29 When I was an intern, it was the height of COVID. Um, so a lot of the fun intern activities ended up getting cut, but we start a ton of fun. I just remember we were doing, at this time we

were doing the renovations in the HR space. We were all in that product display room, kind of, we call it like the fishbowl. We were all in there together. Um, and that just calls for such a fun environment, hectic, but really fun. And I, I am, like big, I'm big on ice cream. I love ice cream. Yeah. And so I went to my supervisor and I was like, hey, can we, can we do ice cream Fridays? And she's like, what? And I'm like, can we eat ice cream on Fridays? She's like every Friday? And I'm like, yeah, yeah. I was like, I think we, I think we earned it through Friday, you know? Um, and so then it's probably every other Friday we realistically did it, but I was in charge of ice cream Fridays and it was a blast two o'clock yeah. Ice cream Fridays love them. Oh, nice. Yeah. So there's a lot of fun. And now, you know, now that I'm back, they're like, Morgan, when are we doing ice cream Friday? And I'm like, I don't have the time to go to the store and I just get ice cream from the cafe. Right. Yeah. But a lot of fun.

Speaker 1 00:13:31 Awesome. So here's a question. Do you ever feel like it's too cold for ice cream? No.

Speaker 2 00:13:37 What? We are in Florida.

Speaker 3 00:13:38 Is it ever too cold for ice coffee? No,

Speaker 1 00:13:41 Like in January when it's like the high is 50 degrees?

Speaker 3 00:13:46 I don't think so. I'm from Pennsylvania and even there, it's not ever too cold for ice cream. Do you think it is?

Speaker 1 00:13:51 Yeah. I'm a minority in this though. I've had this conversation, I've asked this question around, and it's pretty universal that it's never too cold for ice cream, but I think it is. I think it's too cold for ice cream.

Speaker 3 00:14:02 Maybe if you added, like hot fudge on top, warming up maybe?

Speaker 1 00:14:05 Maybe

Speaker 2 00:14:08 Sprinkles? Love me some Reese's pieces,

Speaker 3 00:14:09 Cookie dough crumbles.

Speaker 1 00:14:12 Yeah. I'm from the Midwest. So I know all about winter, which is why I don't live there anymore. Awesome. Well, this has been a great conversation. I'm so glad you guys could square away some time today to chat and now, you know, each other and you know, who's responsible for ice cream Fridays and all of those fun things. And

Speaker 1 00:14:30 Thank you so much for, uh, for chatting with us today. Have an awesome day. Thank you for having us. Thanks

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