

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 00:00:20 On today's episode, we continue in the Workforce of Tomorrow series with more interns who continue to do great work here as employees now. In the first half, we hear from Christian Freeman, the very talented Graphic Designer, who happened to create the logo for this podcast. In the second half, we chat with McKenna Tanski, who turned her final project as an intern, into a full-time role here at PGTI. McKenna's passion for stopping Human Trafficking led to all our drivers and sales teams becoming trained through Truckers Against Trafficking.

Good afternoon. We are here on the Clear Impact Podcast and we are in a series, Workforce of Tomorrow. And this is basically for whoever is in our dealer audience that is trying to figure out, how do I feel this empty space? I know I need more people. I know that all the good people already have jobs or I've already hired them. How am I going to continue putting people into the right space? So we have an internship program, and I would encourage our dealers to consider having an internship program of their own. And with that, we are speaking today with Christian Freeman. Hi Christian. Hey, how's it going? It's going well. Um, how are you doing?

Speaker 2 00:01:28 Doing good, busy, but good.

Speaker 1 00:01:30 Christian actually had his hand in the Clear Impact podcast early, early on because he designed our logo, which I'm very excited about still.

Speaker 2 00:01:38 It's good to see something grow, like we were really invested in since the beginning.

Speaker 1 00:01:41 Yeah, no, the colors are awesome. It's looks very professional. Whenever I show it to people, they're like, Ooh, like that's legit.

Speaker 2 00:01:48 I'm happy with it. We had a good focus group in the choosing phase. So I'm glad it all worked out.

Speaker 1 00:01:52 Yeah, no, it was awesome. So Christian, you work as a graphic designer in our marketing department, but you were actually an intern here once upon a time. So I wanted to just kind of talk a little bit about that. What were some things that you experienced as an intern that convinced you that you wanted to work here after you finished school?

Speaker 2 00:02:11 One of the main ones is just the faith that I had from my manager, Stephanie and Kim, not just myself, but the other intern at the time too, Allie, it just seemed one like, you know, they wanted us to do some work and help them out, you know, lower their workload and everything. But at the same time, they're really invested in seeing us grow and just learning stuff, which in previous internships and like internships my friends have told me about, it seems more, it's like, okay, you coming to work, you might learn a couple of things. I'll help you out. Oh, the company is more interested in you, you working and it's cheap for us or sometimes free. But here it was like the complete opposite, like, okay, you're working, but we also want you to learn the process of the business or, you know, just get real life experience with it. So I think it's just the faith that they had in us and also how much they try to push us and encourage us and kind of all combined together, and it's worked out great.

Speaker 1 00:02:54 Nice. And there happened to be an opening and an area that you liked, so, yeah. That's awesome. So is there anything that you wish you would have learned more about during your internship that maybe would have set you up a little better as an employee? Or do you feel like it was adequate?

Speaker 2 00:03:11 The main one right now is just learning more about the products. Because when I originally started, I was in corporate marketing, so it was more about our overall corporate brand, but now that I'm in normal marketing, digital marketing, it's more brand based and product based. And like just recently this week, I'm doing updating a lot of the brochures and editing them. So I'm getting a little confused on if a brochure is Winguard Vinyl impact, sliding glass door, 570 product and Winguard Aluminum - Vinyl or whatever, single hung 540 product. And just like not really like, sort of being familiar with the products, but not fully understanding them. I get a little lost sometimes, I think I'm updating one brochure. I look at the proof that they send me for the edits, and I'm working on something completely different or like the wrong page. So I think just understanding the products a little bit better since from the beginning, that could have helped me out more. When we first started, we did a walk through the whole plant. They explained like, oh, this line is for this, this line is French doors. This is for a Single Hung and this is how it's made. So I had an overall understanding of it, but just like kind of more precise stuff.

Speaker 1 00:04:11 Right. Yeah. And there's a constant evolution going on of products. And so the second that you think you have it all figured out, it's going to change.

Speaker 2 00:04:21 No, there's some type of little movements. I go to see the French door line and it's actually like the architectural window line now, just like little improvements to just the floor in general. Right.

Speaker 1 00:04:30 Another, some stuff in Fort Myers that is not even done here. Yeah. So I was like, wait, where'd those sliding glass doors go?

Speaker 2 00:04:35 It seems like almost like once a month, I'll walk out and like, wait a second, I'll do a double-take, trying to imagine, like there was something here before, let me try to remember what it was. Cause this looks completely different to me right now.

Speaker 1 00:04:45 Right? Yeah. Try doing tours. That's fun. Yeah. Yeah. I've been dabbling a little bit with that. So, um, one of the things that I wanted to kind of tie all of these different interviews together is to share a story or a memorable moment that you could share from your time of working as an intern. Okay.

Speaker 2 00:05:03 I have two. One is during the internship in the program, we have a community project, community outreach, or just helping the community in some type of way. And since ours, my internship was in 2020, it was just like the heat of quarantine. So we thought we can't really go out and like interact with people too much face to face. So we did a food drive and just working with all the other interns. And since it was quarantined, even at work, we didn't really meet as much, whereas we might have on a normal regular year. So we went outside and gathered like large boxes for the food drive. And he's like started painting them, and just hung out with everybody, which is like nice to do, at the same time you're trying to help your community. And then the other is when we were opening our plant AP2 where WinDoor is at, there's a backroom for training that they're using now.

Speaker 2 00:05:44 And they asked me to help design one of the windows that faces one of the main roads outside. So I did it all, they loved the concept and the idea of it. And then when it came time to print it, it was just surreal to see such a large project actually come to life. So I've worked on stuff before that was actually used by the companies ,or wherever I worked at, or interned at, but to see it on such a large scale that covered like giant windows. And also a lot of things are more, I guess, just in the moment, but investing in something permanent, hopefully like it will last like 10, 20 years, it was just really nice. And to see, you know, my work here, even as an intern, it was valued and is actually on display for everybody to see. It was just surreal when it was getting installed.

Speaker 1 00:06:18 Are you talking about Coopey World? Yes. Oh, I've seen that. It looks amazing over there. Thank you. You did that? Yes. Oh, that's fabulous. Yeah. Yeah. We took a tour of that about a month ago. Cause I hadn't been over there and I was like, oh wow, this is, this is impressive. So good job. That's awesome.

Speaker 2 00:06:35 The whole day of install, it's just kinda crazy. Cause we were working on Coopey World and some other stuff in our main plant. So just kind of going back and forth. I think I left at like eight o'clock cause that's finally when we finished everything. Tiring, but at the same time, just exhilarating seeing your work come to life.

Speaker 1 00:06:48 Well, I'm not surprised. I see a lot of talent in what you do and I've been very impressed with your abilities. Thank you. And I've worked with a lot of graphic designers in my day. So, um, hats off. I'm so glad that...Appreciate it... yeah, no, it's awesome having you here. Any last parting words for a dealer around hiring an intern or employing an intern, anything come to mind?

Speaker 2 00:07:07 Like I said earlier, one of the main important things to me that I remember, and I'll always remember, is just how supportive my managers were. So I think, you know, getting the work done is one thing, but also being there for your interns and showing them, Hey, I'm invested in you, just as you are already invested in the work here. One of the main important things that especially younger people, our demographic is going to really get called to that. So I think focusing on the interns and getting invested with them is also as important as them getting invested in you. It's like a little two way street.

Speaker 1 00:07:31 That's awesome. Thank you so much. This has been a great conversation. Yeah, of course. You're welcome. I appreciate your time today. Have a good day. Thanks.

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 00:08:15 Good morning, today we are here on the Clear Impact Podcast, and we are in the series, Workforce of Tomorrow. And today we have the lovely McKenna Tanski with us.

Hello.

So glad you could be here McKenna.

I'm glad to be here.

So tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do here.

So I am a marketing specialist. I graduated from Auburn University with a marketing and finance degree, and I am currently working under Stephanie CZ and corporate marketing. So I do a lot of internal communications, press releases, social media, and just really communicating to the employees and team members.

Speaker 1 00:08:34 Wonderful. And so one of the things that's pretty cool about you, is that you were here as an intern before you became an employee. And that's the focus of this series that we're in is helping our dealer audience to figure out how they're going to fill their employee funnels. Because everyone who has experience in windows and doors is already working. And so the demand is through the roof. We have a ton of people moving to Florida. We have housing that is going bonkers and people need to get creative about how they're going to fill their next position. So an internship is a nice way to be able to do that. And we've had an internship here for a lot of years, right. So I thought it would be kind of fun to just talk about your experience as an intern and how that might be helpful for a dealer who's considering launching something of their own. So what are some things that you experienced as an intern that convinced you that working here would be a great thing?

Speaker 3 00:09:28 Yeah. I would say the internship program is just such a good idea to again, bring in young, raw talent. The culture and community was something that really stood out as I was an intern at PGT. Really, every team member that I was able to work with, was very open to helping me learn and grow and accepting me into their circles. And really just like inviting me into the department. Like I felt a part of the marketing department. When I was here during the program, I was actually put to work and was able to get real hands-on experience. And because of this and the great leaders that I was under, I learned so much and was able to get a lot of diversity, and a lot of just rich knowledge in marketing in general, I knew I wanted to be a part of a work culture that had a desire to grow and push me to be better every day. And that was very evident that PGTI was that company after my internship.

Speaker 1 00:10:17 So you didn't run away and go, I don't want to be in marketing. I don't want to work for a big company...

Speaker 3 00:10:22 No if anything, it definitely solidified my desire to be in marketing and to continue learning in that field. Awesome.

Speaker 1 00:10:29 So at what point in your college career did you serve as an intern? Were you like between junior and senior year? Do you remember?

Speaker 3 00:10:36 Think it was between sophomore and junior year. Okay. How

Speaker 1 00:10:39 Did it change your college experience after serving as an intern?

Speaker 3 00:10:42 I've always said that like serving as an intern is a completely different learning experience than college. College is very textbook, very test-y to the point and like knowledge based, but an internship is very hands-on, applying that knowledge. So I feel like after my internship, I was able to take what I learned here, and how I saw that being put into practice, and be able to easily understand that in the textbook.

Speaker 1 00:11:05 Kind of both-and. Yeah. Is there anything that you wish you would've learned more about during your internship that maybe would have made it a little easier to come in as an employee?

Speaker 3 00:11:15 I wish that I would've taken some time to dive deeper into the different parts of marketing. Marketing is very multifaceted. And during my time here, I was exposed heavily to brand marketing, which was amazing, and I really enjoy brand marketing, but I would have loved to learn more about digital or product, just dive into those, those different aspects.

Speaker 1 00:11:33 Yeah. Marketing is a very huge space for sure. Yeah. I know we have an amazing marketing team here, So could you share, I love stories and I think people really connect around stories. Can you share a memorable story or a moment of your time as an intern?

Speaker 3 00:11:51 Um yeah, my final presentation was a very memorable time for me. We were given the task to present on something that we either learned during our internship, or something that we saw here at PGT that, um, could benefit PGT or it could implement into the company to just better the company. I chose to do mine on the latter and chose a topic that was very close to my heart, which is stopping human trafficking in the state of Florida. So I, um, did my presentation on implementing a cause marketing program at PGTI around stopping child trafficking in Florida. And it was just a great opportunity to be able to like sit down with the leaders of a company and show them like you have an impact. You have a chance to reach your hand out and to stop this awful crime that is in our state. And now working here at PGTI, that's like part of my role is corporate social responsibility.

Speaker 1 00:12:41 So the cause that you chose was around human trafficking in Florida. And so help me connect the dots. How does our company who builds windows and doors, make a difference around human trafficking? What was the connection on that?

Speaker 3 00:12:56 Yeah, so originally, I've always had a passion to stop human trafficking, and I saw while doing some research that the executives are all very involved in charities, such as children's charities like, um, Children's First, or women's charities. And human trafficking is very heavily revolving around children and women. So I figured it would be a great way to bring something that they are also passionate about, and merge it into a corporate cause. So far, PGTI has participated in a Highway Heroes program, where we put all of our truck drivers through a anti-human trafficking program. So they're able to see the signs and spot the signs on the road for human trafficking, and know what to do if they happen to see that.

Speaker 1 00:13:44 And our sales team also?

Speaker 3 00:13:48 Yes. The sales team also was able to receive training. They just because our sales team and our truck drivers are all heavily on the roads, and they have a huge opportunity to stop this crime if they see it.

Speaker 1 00:14:00 That is amazing. Yeah. Oh, congratulations!

Speaker 3 00:14:03 Thank you. Yeah, it was really cool to take something that was from a project that I was heavily working on during my internship and be able to incorporate it into my job now and kind of dive into that deeper and expand on it.

Speaker 1 00:14:15 That is incredible. Yay. Yeah, that's fantastic. Oh McKenna, I'm so glad that we got a chance to talk about this. Is there any, any last comments?

Speaker 3 00:14:24 I definitely say I learned a lot during my internship program and it's a great way to just bring in talent that's really passionate about growing and learning and understanding more about your company and more about your industry in general.

Speaker 1 00:14:36 And I think seeing things through fresh eyes is always a good idea. Like, you know, if you hire people because of their character and because of their work ethic and because of their intelligence, the experience part can be filled in later, right. Um, and where PGTI University comes in, because we can train all your people. We offer that for free. And so you don't have to have someone who's experienced. Um, anyway, this has been a great conversation. Thank you so much for your time today. Of course. Thank you. All right. Take care.

PGTI University is the Customer Education Team for an entire family of brands. We began with the original EZBreeze porch enclosure line, then became PGT, America's leading brand of impact resistant windows and doors. We then added CGI, CGIC, WinDoor, Western Windows, New South Windows, Eco Windows and Doors, and our latest acquisition, Anlin Windows and Doors.

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