

## INCREASING THE VALUE AND INTEREST IN MARKETING INTERSHIPS

William D. Price, Marriott School of Management, BYU, Provo, UT 84604; (801) 378-2709.  
Michael D. Geurts, Marriott School of Management, BYU, Provo, UT 84604; (801) 378-2398.

### ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the value of a student internship in marketing for students, professors and employers. Increasingly employers are looking at quality work experience as a desirable quality for potential employees graduating from a university. The criteria that have changed the most in recent years for admission to MBA programs has been quality work experience. Although graduate schools and employers both want their applicants to have quality work experience, some students are unwilling to do an internship. Quality internships are very different from part time jobs. It is important to consider what can be done to insure students get a quality experience that will be of benefit to students, professors and future employees.

### WHO WANTS STUDENTS TO HAVE AN INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

There are four stakeholders that have an interest in students doing undergraduate internship. First are future employers at which the student did not do an internship. These potential employers are interested in what the student learned while interning. They also have a student who is less likely to find out that he does not like employment in the business world. The student has already had a taste of what is expected and what happens at corporations. Therefore, the risk of hiring an employee that terminates his employment is reduced. The potential employer also has the opportunity to contact the company at which the student worked to get a reference about the student's performance.

The second group that has an interest in having marketing students have an internship experience is companies that provide the internship. These companies get several benefits from internships. They get to know the personality, work habits and abilities of a potential employee. They can

determine if there is a good fit between an intern and the company at which he is working. The risk of hiring former interns is less than the risk of hiring other students. The company also gets work performed at a relatively low price. Companies could view hiring interns as an alternative to hiring temporary employees.

A third group that benefits is the professors. The students who have been on internships are generally more interested in the material and can contribute to class discussions when what is being taught relates to what the student experienced as an intern. One author had the experience of teaching sales forecasting to a group of students. While many of the students seemed to exhibit the same high interest in learning, there were students that became fanatical about learning the material. One of the students made the comment to the effect that the material being presented would have been extremely valuable to him in his internship last summer. The enthusiasm of these students, who are motivated by their internship experiences, rubs off on other students and makes the learning experience richer. When a number of students in a class have had an internship, the professor may feel the challenge to prepare material that is more relevant to what happens at companies. This is a positive contribution to the students' education.

The fourth group that is interested in students having had an internship experience is the students. One major benefit to students is that many of the companies will offer the intern permanent employment. The student then has an offer in hand, which she can use in negotiating with other companies who want to hire her. The student is also relieved of the pressure of finding a job and the fear of graduating without employment. The intern also has had a chance to observe the culture of the company that provided the internship. He can determine if it is a place that he would

like to work without committing to the company for permanent employment.

#### REASONS STUDENTS DO NOT DO INTERNSHIPS

There are several reasons that students do not do internships. First, some feel that it may be a low quality experience not much different than a part time job. Second, the student may not want to delay her projected graduation date by going on an internship. This is particularly true when the internship cuts into the normal academic year. Third, some students may already have a job waiting for them when they graduate and see no value to them in doing an internship. Fourth, some students do not want to relocate. Fifth, some students have a hard time finding an internship on their own.

#### INCREASING THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS DOING AN INTERNSHIP

The marketing group at BYU was able to dramatically increase the number of students going on an internship and registering for an intern class. The following shows the pattern of growth:  
1996/1997 = 32, 1998/1999 = 73,  
1997/1998 = 66, 1999/2000 = 175  
There were two major steps that were responsible for the growth. The dramatic growth from 1998/1999 to 1999/2000 was due to having the internship count as a class that was useful for meeting graduation requirements for most emphasis (majors) for the degree in business management. The Marriott School of Management at BYU only has two undergraduate degrees one in accounting and the other in business management.

The class was structured to provide an education experience for the students and to encourage the company employing the intern to provide a quality work experience. Requiring students to write a major report about the company before the internship, During the internship, the students are required to write a weekly report about what they are doing as an intern did this. At the conclusion of the internship the students are required to write a major report about their internship and they are encouraged to

include any proposals or reports they had produced for the company.

By continually monitoring the internship, the company employing the intern is motivated to assign the intern tasks that provide the intern quality experiences. The interning companies are usually anxious to hire BYU graduates and want to maintain a good reputation with faculty and advisors to the students. The class removed two of the reasons for student not going on an internship. The internship class counted toward graduation requirements. The internship class provided a quality experience.

#### NAME CHANGE

Several years ago the marketing group at BYU was given the task of setting up a retailing institute in response to a major donation. Large numbers of retailing companies recruited at BYU. In 1996, The name was changed to "The Institute of Marketing: Retail, Sales and Services." The institute is often referred to as the "Marketing Institute." The change in the name made students who were not interested in retailing willing to let the institute find them an internship. The marketing institute has a director who has a major objective of finding permanent jobs and internships for students. The Marketing Institute does all the reading and grading of the reports produced by the students as interns.

#### CONCLUSION

Internships can be of great worth to students, employers and professors. In order to get some students to go on an internship, it becomes necessary to provide someone that can find internships for them. It is also important to provide a way of insuring that students have a quality experience. This can be done by having an internship class that counts toward filling graduation requirements that keeps track of what students are doing on their internships.