

Provide Meaningful Work and Strategically Align Student Roles with Business Needs

As young people try to transition from school to work, many get caught in the “no experience – no job” cycle. Breaking the cycle requires meaningful work experiences.

In our experience, meaningful work happens when young people understand how the work they’re doing each day is aligned to the results of the team and the organization, and when their work offers them a stretch, moves them outside their comfort zone and offers a challenge that requires them to rise to it.

What creates this challenge? It’s about doing work that requires the intern to use new skills. This could be working with new people, developing new expertise or working in a new environment. The fit between the intern and the work is crucial; striking the right balance of challenge is how you create fit. The right fit is when you find work that does not create either boredom or anxiety.

When working with your early in career talent, focus on providing clear expectations while giving them the autonomy to get the job done in their own way. This clarity is especially important for shorter work terms to ensure interns have the direction they need to deliver.

What is Meaningful Work?

The intern and the work assignment need to fit together. You can have entry-level work for an entry-level employee, but you should have more advanced work for a more skilled or more highly-trained intern. Work that would be appropriate for one young person wouldn’t be appropriate for another; like with any other position you offer, always focus on the capability fit.

Consider the work that exists across your organization and then focus on the skill and capabilities required to do it well. Interns want to do work that adds value, aligns to your business success and offers them a challenge - to do work that matters.

For shorter work terms, think about specific time-framed projects and innovation challenges. Is there a project you want to get off the ground or a business problem you need to solve? This type of work offers a win-win as it provides clear accountabilities and allows you to work towards completing a priority.

If the work you have is less complex and would not be challenging for post-secondary graduates, consider first and second year post-secondary students or even high school grads. You can give demanding work to interns, and the majority will rise to the challenge. It is essential that the tasks and desired outcomes are very clear. Success, timing, and process has to be specific and well understood by all.

Interns come with capabilities that are associated with both their education level and their personal skills. Experienced managers will build on this foundation of meaningful work and be ready to adjust day to day work fit the individual.

BRING YOUR INTERNSHIP TO LIFE!

Find the Fit

Think about your business needs and goals for the future. What’s the best way to organize your needs?

- By skill level and training requirements?
- By room for creative engagement and input?
- By time-frame and work hours needed?

Once you’ve assessed your needs, you can target your internships to find candidates who will be challenged and engaged with the work that you have for them.



Excerpt from the [RBC Launching Careers Playbook – A Guide to Creating Internships](#). To download the full guide, please visit the [I Create Internship](#) module on www.rbc.com/launchingcareers.