

INTERNSHIP

Engage trainees to get a new perspective

TOWARDS the end of a university course, students are required to have hands-on experience by being attached to an organisation related to their field of study.

They would, by then, have learnt the theoretical part of their major and are expected to co-relate this with the real world.

Very often, however, their world is limited. As they are attached to the organisation for a limited time, they are not allowed to meet or interact directly with clients. This is understandable as they may unintentionally upset the ongoing smooth relationship between the company and its clients/vendors. Diplomacy and communication take time to develop.

Interns are often left to themselves to engage in unproductive activities instead of being "taught the ropes". It is commendable that companies do take in interns but make this commitment work for mutual interest. There is so much a company can tap from an intern as their ideas are fresh. Engage them more in discussions for fresh perspectives. Make them feel they have contributed to the organisation

and, vice versa, that the organisation has benefited as well.

I am a product of internship. There was no structured programme for me at that time. However, it did not stop me from learning as much as I could and developing relationships with people from the various disciplines and learning from them. One would be amazed at how much people are willing to share about themselves if asked.

Over the years, I have had a fair share of interns under me. By then, I had developed a structured programme from Day 1 to the time they completed their internship.

The first week was always with me and I ensured they knew about the company's credentials and its operations worldwide. Every week after that, they were attached to the different disciplines within the company. All discipline heads had copies of the programme ahead of time to be able to plan what to expose the interns to. I touched base with the interns occasionally to ensure all was well.

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