

Internship Planning Exercise

Purpose: this exercise will help you identify the goals of an internship program, clarify the target audience, and evaluate how to move from minimum viable product for an internship program to a more mature program that better meets the organization's goals.

Setup: Identify a small team (4-8 people) of people who have an interest in seeing an internship program succeed. Divide the team into two small groups for the following exercise.

Small group work

Divide into 2 small groups (2-4 people) and take 15-20 minutes to consider the following exercises. Within each group assign someone to take notes, someone to report to the large group, and someone to watch the time.

Group 1: Develop an **aspirational goal** for your internship program. What would your **ideal internship program** achieve?

- What are the goals of the program, both for the organization and for the potential interns? Brainstorm a list of potential goals and identify the top 2-4 goals each for the organization and the intern.
- Who is your ideal internship candidate?
 - What level of education do they have?
 - What are their career ambitions?
 - What is their background? (e.g. race, gender, or economic identity)
- What are the benefits of your program for the organization? For the interns?
- **Bonus:** Create a [user persona](#) for your ideal intern candidate. Find a stock photo, draw a quick sketch, or clip a photo from a magazine. Give your intern a name. Describe your persona's biography, professional goals, and qualifications.

Group 2: Your goal is to identify the easiest path to a **minimum viable product** of an internship program by creating a **sample internship announcement** and an **internship application from your ideal candidate**. Remember, for both the announcement and applicant, your goal is to identify the **path of least resistance** for the organization to launch a viable internship program.

As you design the announcement and application, please consider:

- Who will you recruit?
 - What age and educational level?
 - What career interest?
- How will you recruit candidates? Will you post the position? If so, where? Will you tap employee's personal networks? Will you use other methods?
- How will you select your interns? What references or qualifications will you look for? Who makes the decision?



- How will you support the intern? What type of staff supervision will the intern receive? Will they be compensated? What equipment, training, or materials will they receive?
- What will the internship logistics be? Where will the intern be located? What will the internship schedule be? How long will the internship last?

Discussion

Bring both groups come together to report back on their discussions. They will likely find a gap between the aspirational vision and the minimum viable product. (This is a good thing! How sad would it be if the organization's aspirational goal lined up perfectly with the minimum viable product!)

As a group discuss:

- How to the **target audiences** of the aspirational and minimum viable internship programs differ? How are they the same? Who is included or excluded from each groups' vision?
- How do the **outcomes** of the aspirational and minimum viable internship programs differ? How are they the same?
- As you consider the gap between the aspirational and minimum viable internship programs, do you feel you need to adapt either? If so, how? Are there tweaks you can make that help close the gap?
- What additional information do you need to ensure that your internship program is meeting the organization's and intern's needs?

Next steps

This exercise only has value if you act on it. Develop an action plan with clear timelines and accountability.

If you need help with the next step in your process, schedule a free consultation with [Change Works Consulting](#). We will be happy to help you build clarity around your next steps to create a diverse and inclusive team.