

Intern U

(February 21, 2007) Z University is the brainchild of Matthew Zinman. The idea is that internship programs are badly conceived and executed if they exist at all. Z University offers expertise and resources in deploying world class internship programs. Here's their view of the problem/opportunity.

Report after report confirms what most every employer already knows: college graduates are “ill-prepared” to meet the demands of our increasingly complex job market. The U.S. government is seemingly more focused on holding higher education accountable than on developing and supporting actionable solutions.

Concern continues to build among employers as the Baby Boomer generation exits the workforce. Yet too few employers embrace the opportunity, accept social responsibility, or recognize their inherent motivation to take action. Meanwhile, student demand for internships continues to rise sharply and employers are failing to keep pace.

STUDENTS	EMPLOYERS	ACADEMIA
• Improve competencies	• Add student productivity	• Help students succeed
• Career trial within or outside of chosen academic major	• Time gains enable employees to achieve higher level tasks	• Career trial within or outside of chosen academic major
• Increase market value	• Cultivate recruitment pipeline	• Strengthen employer relations
• Build professional network	• Inject enthusiasm & fresh ideas	• Broaden education role
• Obtain mentoring guidance	• Build loyalty of future employees	• Add value to offset rising tuition
• Earn credit and money*	• Add/broaden capabilities	• Create non-profit “safety net”
• Apply classroom learning	• Uphold social responsibilities	• Uphold social responsibilities
• Tap into “hidden” job market	• Prepare tomorrow’s workforce	• Instill future alumni with loyalty

You might think that such a “triple win” scenario would inspire positive change. However, with all due respect to those who have developed world-class internship programs, we believe the problems are that employers either do not know what they’re doing, do not have the tools to do it right, or do not know what they’re missing.

The Intern Toolkit, which is at the heart of this endeavor, is a step by step guide to installing and executing an Internship Program in your company. The Toolkit contains four kinds of material: 1) Practical Tools, such as for project management and performance measurement; 2) Adaptable Templates, 3) Practical Insights, and, 4) Best Practices.

We think that the material is interesting enough that you should get it if you are considering an internship program or currently implementing one. We're pretty certain that this is a first of its kind and that it will offer a meaningful competitive advantage.