PALM BEACH TECH

ASSOCIATION

Internship Best Practices Manual

Originally developed by the Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA)

Intern Best Practices Manual

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I. INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW

A. Internship Philosophy

The starting point a successful internship program is establishing a clear philosophy and set of objectives. Why is it important that your organization offers internships?

Typical reasons for investing in internship programs include:

• Accessing New Talent

• Developing direct relationships with schools and professors

• Helping develop desired skills in technical disciplines

• Training the incoming workforce

Best Practice: **Document your philosophy**: Palm Beach Tech recommends that you establish a one-page internship overview document that outlines your philosophy for internships. This is a “north star” document that should be reviewed on a periodic basis.

B. Internship Criterion

Once the need for an internship program is established, the next step is to define what intern roles are necessary, the experience / education level and whether the internship is paid or non-paid.

Best Practice 1: **Identify internships in specific technical roles**. Included below is an example list of the major technical roles that Palm Beach Tech members have internships in:

- Cyber Security
- Data Analytics / Data Science
- Software Development
- Project Management
- Quality Assurance (QA)
- User Experience (UX)
- DevOps
- Information Technology (Help Desk)

Each technical role dictates some basic body of knowledge needed as a prerequisite for the internship. It isn’t unusual for Palm Beach Tech members to require specialized training, education and even previous work experience to be considered for certain technical internships.

<u>Best Practice 2</u>: **Document experience, location, and educational level desired.** In terms of best practices for scoping intern requirements, we recommend specifying the following:

- Goals of internship
- Location of internship
- Payment Terms
- Time frame of internship *(Dates & Hours)*
- Technical degree program desired
- Specific programming languages & skills desired
- Scope of potential projects that might be addressed
- Educational background *(e.g., high school, state college, 4 year degree program, etc)*

C. Paid vs. UnPaid Internships

There are two major considerations that member employers should be aware of when determining how to compensate interns.

<u>Business Reasons</u>: **The market landscape for hiring technical professionals is fierce**. Most companies, regardless of size, are offering paid internships because they can't recruit technical talent without offering some type of competitive wage

<u>Best Practice</u>: Provide some means of pay for all interns:

1. Offer paid internships, especially for technical positions.
2. Pay interns either a fixed stipend or hourly rate
3. Pay interns between $10 - $25 per hour
4. Base pay scale on qualifications and the complexity of the internship.
5. Document internship; have it countersigned by both parties and maintain the records.

<u>Legal Reasons</u>: **Be very cautious of the legal distinction between employees and interns**. This discussion generally takes place when an employer is trying to determine whether the intern will be paid or non-paid. Supreme Court ruling "Walling vs. the Portland Terminal Company" is the prevailing case determining whether a candidate meets an non-paid "intern classification."

<u>Best Practice</u>: Use the six factors outlined in the ruling to determine whether a non-paid internship is compliant with the law:

1. Training, even if it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to that which would be given in a vocational school.
2. Training is for the benefit of the trainees.
3. Trainees do not displace regular employees, but work under close observation.
4. Employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the trainees and on occasion his operations may actually be impeded.
5. Trainees are not necessarily entitled to a job at the completion of the training period.

6. Employer and trainees understand that trainees aren't entitled to pay for training time.

D. Work With Educational Institutions

There are several educational institutions supplying local tech talent, including research universities, state colleges, technical trade schools, and credentialing programs.

But from purely a statistical standpoint, institutions don't produce enough qualified candidates to fill all open tech jobs. Palm Beach Tech works with all local institutions to address this continuously, but employers should build direct relationships too:

Best Practice 1: **Be aware institutions and their of programs in your backyard.** To see the full list of institutions and what programs they have: https://palmbeachtech.org/directory/education-1/

Best Practice 2: **Work with institutions that build curriculum with you**. Every academic institution looks to evolve their curriculum to the needs of the business community to improve the "work readiness" of their students. Companies can engage and participate in active dialogue about how they can improve their programs to directly support jobs you need filled.

Best Practice 3: **Use the Palm Beach Tech team to make the right connections**. At any point, Palm Beach Tech has the best insight into local academic institutions, their faculty, and willingness to modify/change existing curriculum to meet the needs of the employer community. Most of all, Palm Beach Tech staff can expedite your workforce pipeline efforts.

Best Practice 4: **Stay in touch with Career Centers**. An institutions' career center is most responsible with connecting with local companies and assuring students find jobs. Here are a few of the people Palm Beach Tech works with directly:

- **Florida Atlantic University** | Jennifer Fabricius *(Assistant Director)*
- **Palm Beach Atlantic University** | Kimberly Ladd *(Director)*
- **Lynn University** | Barbara Cambia *(Executive Director)*
- **Palm Beach State College** | Jose Ortiz *(Program Director)*

II. PRE-INTERNSHIP

A. Timeline Summary

All internships should have a general timeline overview, depending on how far out interns are recruited. A common intern recruiting cycle allows for employers to fill their internships up to and event beyond a semester before the start of an internship.

Best Practice 1: **Establish an internal timeline to fill open internships.** Although there is no one-size-fits-all requirement, a minimum goal should be to open and fill an internship position at least 45 days prior to the internship start date.

Best Practice 2: **Use a work back schedule to manage the internship recruiting process.** It is very easy to miss the window for recruiting interns since there are a number of factors involved. Having knowledge of the educational institutions' calendar and the degree programs' academic requirements will help to determine the best times for internship recruitment.

Best Practice 3: **Identify an internal project owner for internships.** This role should function as the main contact with educational institutions and should be responsible for managing deliverables in the work back schedule.

B. Developing a relationship with Education Institutions

Identifying stakeholder(s) can be difficult depending on the structure of the education institution, school, department, and career center. Working with Palm Beach Tech is still the best way to make these connections and find your allies.

Best Practice 1: **Establish a good relationship with professors**: Although not all professors care about placing their students in jobs, most do and they are the best source of assessing talent and have direct insight into their capabilities. Simply reach out to professors to build relationships.

Best Practice 2: **Ask professors about their students**. Employers that have had proven and consistent success in building talent pipelines have one thing in common, they ask the professors about their students, with the best interns referred by their instructors.

Best Practice 3: **Show up on campus**. The best way to get noticed is to show up. Many schools have opportunities (outside of career fairs) to engage with students whether it be mentoring, teaching, or presenting, giving you a leg up on other employers.

Best Practice 4: **Financially contribute to scholarship funds or to student-groups**.Whether it is in the form of a scholarship or a general contribution, there is no better way to “influence people and make friends” then by financially supporting students. It’ll also attract the attention of both the professors and the administrators and will help access to the top students within programs.

C. Pre-screening requirements

Pre-screening internship candidates is an important part of any efficient recruiting process. There are different philosophies around how rigid vs. simple an application process should be.

Best Practice 1: **Establish basic information requirements for pre- screening interns.** All intern candidates should submit the following documents as part of the internship application process:

1. Resume / Curriculum Vitae *(including GPA’s)*
2. List of References *(2-3 Minimum)*

Best Practice 2: **Consider Requiring Writing Samples for pre-screening interns.** Effective communication is the single biggest competency that all professionals struggle with – it is part of being human. Obtaining a writing sample is an excellent way to assess whether the intern has basic skills to function in the role. It also shows that the candidate is interested, thoughtful and willing to spend the time to put their best foot forward. Consider requiring the following:

1. Cover letter
2. One-page essay explaining how the internship will enhance their classroom experience.

D. Documenting the Internship description

Once internship criteria (i.e. role, education requirements, payment) have been established, a written description should be produced summarizing the terms of the internship.

Best Practice 1: **Use a consistent template to document the intern description.** Clearly laying out the role, education requirements, payment terms, duration of the internship, the intern’s manager, and objectives is critical.

Best Practice 2: **Keep the internship description to one page.** An internship description is a marketing tool to recruit new talent into the organization. Keep it simple, clear, and on brand.

E. Posting the Internship

Once a work back schedule is developed, it must be executed. Posting the internship is the first step in recruiting interns into your organization

Best Practice 1: **Keep the posting time frame tight.** Generally, a position should be posted for no more than 14 calendar days, and the position filled within 30 days of the original posting date.

However, the schedule may be reduced or extended to meet particular needs.

Best Practice 2: **Post the description in channels where you have existing relationships.** Avoid, posting internships on websites like Craigslist, Indeed, etc. Instead, focus on distribution mediums that are more selective, like to educational institutions, Palm Beach Tech's job board, or any places curated to connect technology employers with interns.

Best Practice 3: **Communicate with the applicants.** Any intern who submits an application via should receive a communication that his/her application has been received. If a candidate will not be invited to advance, he/she should be informed and what exact criteria was not met.

F. Scheduling the Interview

Best Practice 1: **Coordinate the logistics prior to the interview.** Create a one-page interview agenda that describes who the interns will meet with, what the focus of the interview is about and the time allotted for the interview.

Best Practice 2: **The hiring manager or the intern manager should serve as interviewer.** These are ultimately the two accountable and responsible parties for ensuring a positive internship. Giving them the ability to provide feedback will greatly reduce the risk of making a bad hire.

F. Performing the Interview and Final Candidate Selection

The in-person interview is an extension of your company's brand. A well organized and engaging interview process has a very positive impact and creates excitement to join the organization.

Best Practice 1: **Involve multiple parties in the interview.** In addition to the hiring manager and intern manager, involve other employees in the interview process. It demonstrates team solidarity and provides for additional perspectives on the candidate.

Best Practice 2: **Use competency based questions to assess qualifications.** Included in this manual is a list of questions, which focuses on competencies but are not intended to be all encompassing. Focusing questions on desired competencies and values is a great way to determine alignment between the employer and the intern.

Best Practice 3: **Consider using an "out of the box" essay question.** Included in this manual is a list of essay questions, designed to assess interns critical thinking skills. Generally, there is no "right" answer but they can help employers evaluate the candidate's writing style, aptitude, clarity of communication and ability to perform under a time constraint.

Best Practice 4: **Use evaluation forms to rate the interview.** After each candidate interview, each interviewer should complete a standardized evaluation. This will help with pinpointing assessment differences and identifying the candidates' strengths and weaknesses.

Best Practice 5: **Be methodical and timely with ranking performance.** Feedback should be given by the entire team of interviewers in-person and as a group within hours of the actual interview. Using a consistent ranking system to evaluate candidate performance also helps.

G. Post Interview Follow-Up

Once interviews have been conducted and the final candidates have been selected have been made, it is important timely follow-up with both the selected and non-selected candidates.

Best Practice 1: **Check references.** A minimum of two references should be contacted for all candidates that get selected for intern roles prior to issuing an offer.

Best Practice 2: **Consider background checks in the process.** Performing background checks is always a good idea, but may be a contingent requirement that all interns and employees get background checks regardless of their role upon accepting an offer.

Best Practice 3: **Issue an intern offer letter in a timely fashion.** Assuming everything checks out, it is important for hiring managers to prepare to make the offer quickly. Good tech talent is in high demand so securing resources in a timely fashion is in an employer's best interest.

Best Practice 4: **Inform non-selected candidates.** From a brand standpoint, it is important that employers communicate to all candidates, regardless of whether they were chosen for the internship. Ideally, non-selected candidates should be contacted within 24 hours of the filled role.

III. DEPLOYING INTERNS

A. Timeline Summary

Each internship is different and could be as short as a month or as long as a year, but the cycle for deploying the interns follows a fairly consistent pattern

Best Practice 1: **Plan an Orientation; Assign Mentors on first day.** On their first day, interns should get their handbook, meet their mentors, and receive necessary information from their supervisor.

Best Practice 2: **Assign Projects within a week.** The priority of any internship should be the tangible learning experience everyone has, and projects are best for this.

B. Managing relationships with educational institutions

The core to an effective technical pipeline is continued and ongoing contact with educators, professors, and other key stakeholders before, during and after the internship.

Best Practice 1: **Periodically reach out to professors to provide a status update on interns.** Sending out email reports that in 2 paragraphs or less summarizing their work is a great way to stay connected with the professor and keep a company mentor engaged. It also starts a feedback loop between the institution and employer that should drive greater alignment and relationship.

Best Practice 2: **Reach out to other interested constituents within the education institution.** Direct relationships with professors are a top priority, but not the only priority. Depending on the structure of the school and program focus, there will be other parties interested in receiving updates on interns, like program chairs or lab directors.

C. Internship orientation

For many interns, this may be their first “real” professional experience. Give them background about the organization, how the company makes money, and how their role fits into the business.

Best Practice 1: **Prepare an orientation handbook.** An orientation handbook is a helpful tool that not only introduces the intern to the company but also fills “down time” typically associated with deploying a new intern.

Best Practice 2: **Include organization and role specific information in orientation handbook.** The handbook will be a core tool that interns reference throughout their experience with the company. Including specific information (ie: staff names, employee benefits or perks, social programs, conference room names, etc) will help the intern integrate into your company's culture.

Best Practice 3: **Consider giving the intern a journal to document their internship experience.** Whether this is in physical copy, an electronic form or on a wiki, a journal can be a helpful tool. Requiring them to document their daily experience in a consolidated place will expedite their learning curve, reinforce core concepts, and will augment their academic studies.

D. Identifying a Mentors

An intern is both a trainee and student. In order for an intern to produce, learn and show progress they must have appropriate supervision and access to good mentors.

Best Practice 1: **Assign a direct supervisor to the intern**. A direct supervisor should manage the interns work, provide coaching and feedback and assign new tasks. This role should function as the "technical" mentor and will likely have the most direct impact on improving the intern's skills.

Best Practice 2: **Assign a "buddy" to each intern.** A "buddy" refers to an employee that an intern can go to on an informal basis to ask questions and get advice. This role typically functions as a "social" mentor and even a past intern themselves who can help them integrate into the culture and deal with the challenges of working in a new professional environment.

Best Practice 3: **Allocate a small budget for interns.** Whether it is the entire program, direct supervisor, or a buddy, periodically taking the intern out to coffee or on field trips will make them feel part of the organization expose the intern to people at all levels in the company.

E. Assigning work

Being thoughtful about defining assignments, providing clear instruction and hands-on supervision will put the intern in the best position to realize positive outcomes.

Best Practice 1: **Assign meaningful projects.** Project-based work is effective for training and developing interns because projects typically have a finite time period, a clear-end deliverable and can be often executed independently or within the construct of a small collaborative team.

Best Practice 2: **Spend time on the front end explaining what success looks like.** When the project is issued, do not just let the intern start working. Rather, meet with the intern to discuss the project and talk about expectations and answer questions together at the onset of the project.

F. Managing and training the intern

Interns should be included in every aspect of the company, but having them record, report, and present their work will add tremendous value to their experience.

Best Practice 1: **Involve intern in scrums & meetings.** No one in a company works in isolation and this is especially true of interns. Give interns the opportunity to work with others and interact with different teams. They'll benefit from seeing how their work fits into the bigger picture.

Best Practice 2: **Build in weekly touch points to provide frequent feedback.** Whether this is a formal sit down with the intern or an informal discussion, carve out 30 – 60 minutes per week to meet with the intern to get feedback about their experience and to help them.

Best Practice 3: **Require the intern to communicate in writing and verbally.** Requiring the intern to summarize what they did in writing is a valuable exercise. Written communication requires the intern to reflect on scope, objectives, and what they did to make progress towards the end goal.

Best Practice 4: **Give the intern an opportunity to present.** Verbally to present in front of an active group is monumental in terms of developing skills and confidence in a professional setting.

G. Evaluating the intern

In addition to providing feedback throughout the internship, a formal evaluation of the intern should be performed prior to the conclusion of the internship.

Best Practice 1: **Align intern evaluation with employee evaluations.** Interns are potential employees and should be evaluated under the same set of values and competencies. The purpose for employers is to assess whether there is a good cultural and technical fit.

Best Practice 2: **Perform a written evaluation.** Whether the actual evaluation takes place as a conversation or as a document review, a written evaluation is super helpful to an intern's development. A written evaluation provides a summary of the internship and functions as an excellent reference material for the intern in terms of honing/pursuing future skill sets.

Best Practice 3: **Incorporate feedback from multiple parties.** Feedback from different employees provides a more comprehensive and well- rounded analysis of performance. Although the intern may work with one direct supervisor, many within the organization have observed them.

Best Practice 4: **Make an internal decision to hire the intern.** The primary reason employers offer internships is to build a long term workforce strategy. An internal conclusion should be reached as to whether the company would hire the intern and/or work with them on future projects.

IV. POST INTERNSHIP

A. Making an offer to the intern

If at the duration of the internship, its decided to make an offer of employment to the intern then all should discuss this with the intern and pursue a formal offer.

Best Practice 1: **Make an offer as soon as possible, if within 6 months - 1 year of graduation.** If your company has a positive experience and values the contributions of the intern, it is likely that other employers will as well. Given the hyper competitive landscape for technical talent, it is important to make a good faith offer as soon as possible.

Best Practice 2: **Offer more project work, if > 1 year away from graduation.** Timing of graduation is an important factor, considering trends to make full-time offers prior to students entering their last year of school. But if the intern is a great performer and has several years left of classes, it may be impractical to make an offer. But, securing their services remains a priority as you don't want to let trained talent walk out your door to another employer.

Best Practice 3: **Use compensation surveys to make an informed offer.** Every company has different financial resources, but all companies operate within a competitive marketplace. Understanding what the market bears for professionals in similar roles will inform a good offer and reinforce a positive courting process. (company size, role, location, industry vertical, etc.)

B. Providing curriculum feedback to education institutions

This is the most important activity for employers and also the single biggest flaw in the current paradigm with educators. Employers are not informing educational institutions of specific technical and soft skill needs, with academia falling behind on what has value in the real world.

Best Practice 1: **Schedule recurring in-person meetings with professors.** Reaching out to professors on a recurring basis throughout the internship, employers will set the stage for a meaningful review of curriculum. Curriculum should be assessed at least twice a year, and face-to-face feedback is the most effective way to drive change.

Best Practice 2: **Focus efforts on educational institutions willing to modify their curriculum.** Not all schools are created equal, nor are they all motivated the same way. There are institutions that genuinely want feedback from the employer community AND are willing and have flexibility.

Best Practice 3: **Leverage Palm Beach Tech.** Palm Beach Tech Association is a connector between technology employers and the educational institutions and can be very helpful in pointing out which schools are the best to partner with and can provide unique insight.

C. Leveraging the intern experience for future opportunity

Interns who have had a positive experience are some of the best brand advocates around. They also have direct access to other talented students in their programs. Using them to recruit others is a smart strategy.

Best Practice 1: **Ask the intern for introductions to other top students.** Start to develop relationships with other students in the school. Ask to meet the intern for coffee or lunch and have them bring qualified peers that they believe would be a good fit. Alternatively, have the intern connect your company to these students in email and set up an office visit so they can tour the premises.

Best Practice 2: **Ask the intern to present in the classroom.** Do not make this a sales pitch. Rather, send a qualified subject matter expert to speak on a topic that is relevant to your company and is being currently covered in the curriculum. Incorporate the intern into the presentation and have them share their on-the-job experiences.

Best Practice 3: **Consider a referral program.** This does not have to be overly formal and can be a small reward. That said, giving the intern an incentive to recruit their friends/top students will help your business and should be considered an investment.

APPENDIX A - ART OF THE INTERVIEW QUESTION (GUIDANCE)

Gathering information is the key to competent interviewing, and nothing is more important than an ability to be flexible in your questioning techniques. The following are 12 questioning techniques that can help guide you through the interview process:

Close-Ended Questions

These are the most commonly asked questions in interviewing, and also the most commonly abused. How often have you heard of interviews asking a close-ended question such as, “Can you work under pressure?” Only yes and no are the possible answers.

The interviewer has no information, no way of comparing any one candidate against another. While a closed-ended question is inappropriate in its most common usage, it is useful as a questioning technique when you are looking for commitment (“Can you start on Monday?”) or when you are refreshing your memory or verifying information from earlier in the interviewing sequence (“You were with company XYZ for three years?”). You can also use it to initiate a line of questioning on a single subject.

Open-Ended Questions

These questions are logically the opposite of the first questioning technique. With an open-ended question, the interviewee cannot get by with a monosyllabic answer. Instead, the question demands an explanation in response. For example, “How do you succeed in working under pressure?” is an open-ended question that asks the interviewee to answer in detail. As a rule of thumb, this style of question is preferable to closed-ended questions, and is guaranteed to keep the candidate talking and you listening. These questions often start with: “I’m interested in hearing about...”, “I’m curious to learn...”, “Would you share with me...” etc.

Past-Performance Questions

This technique has been developed into a whole style of interviewing. Past-performance, or behavioral, questions are based on the premise that past actions can predict future behavior, that any individual can be expected to do at least as or as badly on the new job as he or she did on the last. They are open-ended by nature, yet focus they focus on requesting specific examples of past behavior.

These questions are usually prefaced with: “Tell me about a time when...”, “Share with me an experience when...”, “Give me an example of...”

Negative-Balance Questions

When interviewing, you can easily be tempted to believe that a candidate strong in one area is equally impressive in all areas. This is not always the case. Whenever you find yourself becoming unduly impressed, try, “That’s very impressive, was there ever an occasion when things didn't work out quite so well?” or simply “Now can you give me an example of something in this area you are not so proud of?”

Negative Confirmation

When you have sought and found negative balance, you may feel that you are maintaining your objectivity, or that the answer you receive may be disturbing enough to warrant negative confirmation. For example, let's say the interviewee told you about a time he or she found it necessary to go around their supervisor to achieve a goal. As a manager, you may be concerned that this behavior is common with this individual. Consequently, you should seek negative confirmation with, "You know, that's very interesting, let's talk about another time when you had to...". Similar successive examples would help you confirm negative traits and perhaps save you from a poor hire. Conversely, you might find that particular negative situation to be an aberration, a one-time thing, and nothing to be worried about.

Reflexive Questions

Reflexive questions are great conversation forwarders. They help you calmly maintain control of the conversation no matter how loquacious the interviewee. For instance, if an applicant starts to ramble about various experiences, it is easy to interrupt with a reflexive question that will allow you to proceed with other topics. This is done by adding to the end of a statement phrase things like: "Don't you?, Couldn't you?, Wouldn't you?, Didn't you?, Can't you?, Aren't you?" Etc. For example: "With time so short, I think it would be valuable to move onto another area, don't you?" The candidate's reflex is to agree, and the conversation moves on.

Mirror Statements

Mirror statements are used to capture the essence of a candidate's answer and to get more detail. This technique involves mirroring or paraphrasing a key statement made by the interviewee and following it by closing your mouth, nodding, and looking interested. Repeat the substance of key comments (e.g., "So, whenever you are late for work, you come in early the next day to make up for it"), then sit and wait for the interviewee to expand on the mirror statements.

Loaded Questions

This technique is useful to probe the interviewee's decision-making approaches. The question style requires the interviewee to decide between tough options, for instance: "Which do you think is more important when running a business, X or Y?". Loaded questions ought to be carefully balanced judgment-call questions; the easiest and most effective way to employ them are to recall real-life situations where two divergent approaches can be judiciously considered then frame the situation as a question. For example, "I'm curious to know what you would do if..." or "What would be your approach to a situation where..."

Half-Right Reflexives

This question style is used for those interviewees that you are having a difficult time eliciting information from. The basis of the technique is to make a statement that is only partially correct and ask the interviewee to agree. For instance, "I've always felt that customers ought to be given respect only after they have purchased something, don't you?"

Leading Questions

This technique leads the listener toward a specific type of answer. These questions often arise accidentally as a result of the interview explaining what type of company the interviewee will be joining; the interviewee knows that to retain any chance of being offered a position, he or she must answer a certain way and consequently does so. These questions are not inadvisable, but like closed-ended questions, they must be used appropriately. Their best use is as an information verifier, to get the candidate to expand on a particular topic. For example, “We are a company that believes the customer is always right. How do you feel about that?”

This type of question style should only be used once the candidate’s belief or performance in a particular area has been established.

Question Layering

A good question poorly phrased will lose its bite and give you incomplete or misleading information, but question layering can probe an answer thoroughly and on many levels. If an interviewer were to simply ask: “Can you work under pressure?”, this question requires only a “yes” or “no” answer reveals no interesting insights about the candidate and it leads the interviewee toward the type of answer he or she knows you want to hear. Instead, you should join this closed-ended question with some of the other questioning styles previously discussed in order to obtain more relevant insights. Modifying the example above, the interviewer should alternatively ask:

1. Can you work under pressure? (Closed-ended)
2. Tell me about a time when you had to work under pressure. (Open-ended)
3. So, it was tough to meet a deadline? (Mirror Statement)
4. How did this pressure situation arise?
5. Who was responsible?
6. Why was this allowed to occur?
7. Where did the problem originate?

Now you have seven different angles to the same question, each revealing a distinctive aspect of the personality, performance, and behavior of your candidate.

Hamburger-Helper Questions

The basis of this technique is to stretch a question using the following three principles:

1. If you are either dissatisfied with the first answer and want more data, or are so fascinated with the answer that you want to hear more, say, “Give me some more detail on that, it’s very interesting”

2. After hearing an answer, add, “What did you learn from that experience?” This is an excellent layering technique that can help you assess the candidate’s judgment and emotional maturity

3. Perhaps the best technique for gathering more information is simply to sit silently and look at the interviewee. The interviewee will tend to think your silence implies you are expecting him or her to speak.

APPENDIX B - SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General

1. What is it about a career in sports franchising that interests you?
2. What, in particular, interests you about the Seattle Storm Organization?
3. Do you think your grades are an indication of your academic achievements and success in general?
4. How do you define success?
5. Where do you want to be in five years from now in your career?
6. What is the greatest risk you have taken?
7. What three words would your peers use to describe you?
8. Why should we hire you or what can you contribute to our organization?
9. What are your two greatest strengths?
10. What is your greatest weakness?
11. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be and why?
12. What type of people do you work best with?
13. If you could describe the best supervisor, what characteristics would they possess?
14. What aspects of your life do you get the most excited about?
15. What kinds of things do you like to do for fun?

Decision-Making

1. Give us an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision. Was this difficult for you and why?
2. What decisions are easiest for you to make and which ones are the most difficult? Why?
3. What is the worst decision you ever made?
4. What is the best decision you ever made?
5. Can you think of a decision you made in the past six months, that did not turn out as well as you liked? What was the situation? What went wrong? What did you learn from the situation?

Communication

1. What are some of the characteristics of a good listener?
2. Tell us about a situation where you demonstrated poor communication skills. What would you have done differently?
3. How would you rate your communication skills on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the best and 1 being the worst) and why?

4. How would your friends/fellow students describe your communication skills?

5. What is an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person, even when that individual may not have personally liked you?

Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills

1. What are the characteristics of a successful team?

2. Tell us about an unsuccessful team of which you were a member. What, if anything, could you have done differently to make the team successful?

3. Tell us about a successful team of which you were a member. What made this team successful? What did you contribute to its success?

4. Do you work better alone or as part of a team? Why?

5. What can you contribute to establish a positive working environment for our team?

6. Have you ever worked on a school project where you were a part of a team and your teammates were not accomplishing the tasks at hand? How did you handle this?

Quality

1. What are some steps you take to monitor the quality of your work?

2. How does the quality of your work impact your coworkers and others around you?

Creativity

1. What are some of your motivators for creativity?

2. Why is creativity important and useful?

3. How can an organization benefit from creativity?

Operating Effectiveness

1. What are your aspirations for personal and professional growth?

2. What do you feel is the key to working efficiently? What steps can be taken to improve efficiency?

3. In what capacity, within this organization, do you feel your skill set(s) would be used most effectively?

Core Values

1. Do you feel it is important to pursue excellence? Why or why not?

2. How do you measure success? How can we help you become successful within our organization and what do you feel you can contribute to ensure our continued success?

3. What core values are meaningful to you and why?

Management

1. Give me an example, from your past work experiences, about a time when you had an underperforming employee reporting to you. How did you address the situation? Did the employee's performance improve? If not, what did you do next?

2. If I were to interview the people who have reported to you in the past, how would they describe your strengths and weaknesses as a manager?

3. Please describe your philosophy of management. What value can your philosophy add to our organization's culture and work environment?

4. Under which management style have you experienced the most success?

Leadership

1. What leadership qualities do you possess?

2. What factors do you feel must be present within an organization for you to lead most effectively?

3. You decide to reorganize the department or work unit that you lead. Tell me how you would proceed with this reorganization?

4. What is an example of a time you played a leadership role in an event, activity, department or work unit, or a project?

5. Please describe how you led the efforts and tell me how people responded to your leadership.

Sample "Out of the Box" or Essay Questions

1. You are on an eight-hour transatlantic flight. Of the people alive today, who would you choose to sit next to and what would you talk about?

2. You are invited to a potluck. What would you bring?

3. If you could trade places with anyone for just one week, with who would it be?

4. If you could be any character in fiction, who would you be?

5. If you could be a superhero, what would you want your superpowers to be?

EXHIBIT C - INTERVIEW TIPS

Reference Tips

1. Smile, remember – they are interviewing us too!

2. Observe and document during the interview – evaluate after. Try to avoid drawing conclusions until the interview is complete.

3. Try to AVOID the following:

   a) **Halo Effect** – implying that the candidate will be strong in all areas because they are really strong in a couple of areas.

   b) **Stereotyping** – passing judgment because of who they remind you of.

   c) **Similar to me** – favoring a candidate because they remind you of yourself.

   d) **Positive and Negative Leniency** – ratings fall at the upper or high end of a rating scale (positive) or ratings fall at the bottom or lower end of a rating scale (negative). Does not want to hurt the candidate's feelings or constantly "saving" the upper end of the rating scale for the ultimate candidate.

   e) **Central Tendency** – all ratings fall in the center range of the rating scale. This rater never gives high or low ratings.

   **Rather than burdening yourself with the task of trying to pass judgment on a candidate, approach your interviews with the goal of trying to predict the candidate's ability to perform in this environment.*

4. <u>Listen, listen, listen.</u> Try to avoid talking too much. There will be time at the end for them to ask questions.

5. Pay attention to what they are saying and let it sink in

6. Don't be pre-occupied with what you are going to ask next

7. Don't be afraid to ask for more detail, especially if their answer is vague

8. Don't rush into the next question

9. Complete the evaluation form

10. Break the ice by asking about something of personal interest in the resume or ask about a hobby

11. Try to ask as many of the same questions to each candidate as possible, this will make comparisons easier.

12. Try not to make up your mind in the first three minutes. Gather the evidence and then evaluate

Tips for Conducting the Interview

1. Step #1: Prepare for the Interview

   a) Review the resume – note major aspects of background and history.

   b) Set up the physical environment – avoid glare, set up chairs for good communication and ability to comfortably take notes.

   c) Define your interviewing roles – designate lead interviewer and avoid "dueling questions."

2. Step #2: Opening the Interview

   a) Greeting the candidate – as soon as possible after arrival, introduce yourself, ask they candidate by what name they prefer to be called, and break the ice if they appear nervous.

   b) Verifying resume information – double check contact information.

   c) Structuring the interview – let the candidate know what to expect (i.e., structured questions, opportunity to ask questions, and that you'll be taking notes).

3. Step #3: Gathering Information

   a) Use the structured interview – ensures that the questions are job-related and the same questions are essentially asked to all candidates.

   b) Ask probing questions and listen to responses.

   c) Control the interview – ensures comprehensive coverage of all the important areas.

   d) Encourage the shy interviewee.

   e) Take notes.

4. Step #4: Discuss the company culture

5. Step #5: Closing the Interview

   a) Ask for questions.

   b) Explain when candidate should expect to hear from the organization.

Tips for Note-Taking During an Interview

1. Note-taking is essential to recall information the candidate reported during the interview.
2. Without notes, interviewers can recall less than one-fourth of the information discussed, even immediately after the interview.
3. Note-taking helps the interviewer gather complete behavioral information. Notes remind you of what is missing.

4. Note-taking reduces the tendency to develop a general impression of the candidate.

5. Your evaluation will reflect the behavior examples recorded on your interview sheet instead of a general impression.

6. Note-taking saves time during decision-making phases of the selection process. You will not lose time trying to recall information about the candidate.

7. Note-taking should be done openly. This gives the interviewee the feeling of value and enhances their self-esteem because it shows effort.

8. Note-taking should not be a signal to the candidate. Take notes throughout the interview, not just when the candidate talks about a particular subject, otherwise it is a cue to the person to focus on these areas.

9. Record key words. First, record action words, then record situation specific items and lastly, record the outcome. This will assist in recollecting the most important information.

Tips for Effectively Listening During an Interview

1. Give Your Full Attention:

a) Really focus your energies to make a concerted effort to listen to the candidate's perspective. The visible effort automatically generates full attention as well as a much better understanding.

b) Try to listen for the interviewee's attitude because doing so will help keep you interested.

c) Have a goal that does not put you in a difficult win/lose position.

d) Stop what you are doing.

e) Maintain good eye contact.

2. Clarify what is Being Said and Confirm Back to the Candidate You Fully Understand:

a) If you are unsure of the meaning of what is being said, let the candidate know.

b) Briefly restate the substance of what is said to provide feedback to the candidate that you clearly understand what is being communicated

c) Try not to repeat what the candidate has said; use analogies or examples instead of exact repetitions.

3. Be Respectful:

a) Adjust your tone of voice, rate of speech, choice of words, and energy level to show the candidate you are willing and able to communication at their level and understanding.

b) Use both verbal and non-verbal responses.

c) Try to speak at approximately the same energy level as the interviewee. This will show them that you are willing to follow their views and opinions without making them felt inadequate or misunderstood.

d) Demonstrate that you are impressed rather than trying to be impressive. The more interested you are in what the candidate has to say, the more they will be interested in what you have to say.

4. Evaluate the Candidate

Don't tell the candidate how he or she feels or means by their words. Focus on getting the word "you" out of the conversation.

5. Presenting or Asking for too Much Information

Be sure not to talk too much or give a candidate more information than he or she can handle in a statement. Also, be sure not to make questions too complicated or complex.

6. Interrupting

When a candidate is speaking or thinking, do not cut them off to present your line of thinking or ask them another question. This behavior conveys a lack of respect.