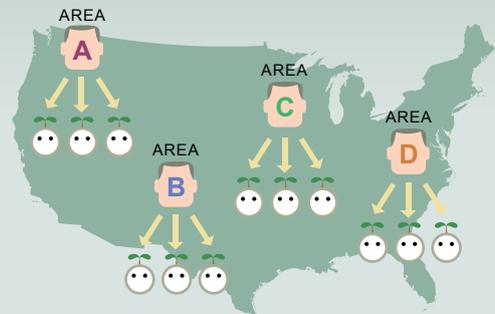


Internship Program and Recruitment Practices of a U.S. Employer That Hires More Than 8,500 Grads Per Year



Enterprise Holdings is the world’s largest car rental service provider with annual revenues of 17.8 billion dollars and 83,000 employees¹. The company, which owns and operates the Enterprise Rent-A-Car, National Car Rental and Alamo Rent A Car brands, conducts mass hiring of college graduates in the United States. We asked Marie Artim, Vice President of Talent Acquisition at Enterprise Holdings, about the company’s tactics for entry-level hiring and its internship program.

Two Hundred Recruiters are Responsible for Hiring More Than 8,500 Graduates

The major part of our hiring is done at the entry level. We place campus hiring at the center of our recruitment strategy. We train the entry-level talent and promote them into leadership functions in different aspects of the organization, from HR to logistics, to purchasing, to supply chain, to sales and marketing. Enterprise promotes almost entirely from within. We have a structured system that enables this hiring/development approach, called the Management Training Program.

We recruit from all degrees and majors at the entry level. We look for people who are interested in management, learning from the program and the opportunity to grow with the company. So naturally we see more people from business related fields or liberal arts and communications, but we are open to any degree. This year we hired about 8,500 - 9,000 full-time staff into our Management Training Program. The internship program will have about 1,700 students. Two hundred recruiters handle the hiring for all of these positions in addition to others.

Local Markets Manage Hiring and Internships Independently

Each region conducts its own hiring activities. They identify hiring needs and goals for their region, then the talent acquisition and hiring managers work hand-in-hand to achieve them. We do not have an internship coordinator at the corporate level either; local recruiters manage the program. Interns are supervised by the branch manager they are assigned to, who also provides necessary training and support.

Since we take a decentralized approach, I do not know exactly how the New York program is running, for example. What I do at the corporate office is make sure the branches have the tools, resources, materials, training and consultation that they need. We have recently provided a comprehensive guide to local teams. The hiring teams are accountable to me for results such as hiring interns and converting interns. The program is highly decentralized but with a lot of consistency and structure. The purpose of our internship program, what we expect from interns and what they should learn from the program are all shared by the entire organization.

Interns and New Hires Are Given the Same Responsibilities

Interns typically work 40 hours a week for ten to twelve weeks. A handful of interns, such as the ones in accounting, are assigned to the corporate offices, but the vast majority of our interns work with our management team at one of our branches.

One thing that makes our internship program strong and unique is that our interns are given the exact same responsibilities as someone in the Management Training Program. They are involved in everything from customer service to sales and marketing, and even running the operation's financials. It is hands-on training with a lot of structure.

Internship Gives an Advantage over Peers When Joining the Company Full Time

The Management Training Program runs for eight to twelve months. At around three to four months, people usually get a pay increase and additional responsibilities. So, completing an internship would basically mean completing the initial stage of the Management Training Program. Interns who return to the company on a full-time basis will be a step ahead of their peers who did not participate in the internship.

Assessment of interns' performance is also done in the same way we assess our full-time staff. We use a numbers-oriented performance matrix. For interns specifically, we have a weekly one-on-one session with them to cover what they have learned and how they are doing. At the end of the internship we give more formal feedback.

Main Focus is to Improve the Conversion Rate

We currently convert around 50% of our interns. Quite honestly, improving this rate is our biggest opportunity at the moment. Hiring managers are hesitant to extend an offer in August to outgoing interns who do not graduate until the following May. We need to commit ourselves to get some messaging across so that they leave our internship knowing we want them. We have really been focusing on this area.

Competition among employers for qualified interns is intensifying. The recruitment side needs to educate the management in the field that internships are not meant to be a way to fill vacancies for a few months. It is rather supposed to be a structured program that provides experiential learning/work experience. Building a program with this in mind would make the program strong over time and interns would find it meaningful.

(Interview: CareerXroads)

Marie Artim Vice President of Talent Acquisition, Enterprise Holdings



Talent Acquisition leader responsible for company-wide strategies and directives. She plans and develops advertising, marketing, interactive media, training and tools for nearly 200 recruiters. Marie was the Board President of NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) between July 2011 and June 2012.

This column has been posted to the website of Recruit Works Institute.

Footnotes:

1. <http://www.enterpriseholdings.com/>