How to Build Your Brand and Engage with Customers

COSE recently reached out to members of its Expert Network to address questions related to his or her field. Featured today is Carol Staiger, business coach and marketing consultant with Vantage Point Enterprises.

What is the biggest challenge your clients are asking about today, and how are they overcoming that challenge?

Ultimately, clients always ask for a path to an improved situation, whether it be obtaining new clients, improving financial results, or finding relief from an employee issue. As a Business Coach, one of the important benefits I bring to clients is awareness: 1) awareness of aspirations and self-imposed limitations, 2) awareness of options they have for improving their companies or their individual situations, and 3) awareness of resources to keep them from going it alone.

Once clients are really aware of these things, their demeanor changes, they are enthusiastic, a door has been opened. Yet things, their next steps will differ, they are asking about today, and how are they approaching that evolution?

The study found that employees who had completed either an internship or co-op program were more likely to be with their employer at both the one-year and five-year retention benchmarks.

1) Are candidates for Project Manager evaluated at all on their communication and people skills? Why not? Obviously the project will require the coming together of many minds, hearts and hands to achieve successful completion. Does this candidate have the right combination of cognitive and social skills to complete the Project in the most effective manner?

2) The use of electronic communication tools to inform participants about Project information should be supplemented by face-to-face human interaction, even if that communication is accomplished remotely, using tools like Skype. And, yes, scheduling a team meeting may mean building in the cost of a day-long session at a nearby off-site facility, but it will be worthwhile. The opportunity to interact face-to-face with other team members will enrich the process and create synergy.

3) Regular reviews with Project Team or the Project Leadership group, will probably occur, and I support this. But there is no substitute for the Project Leader “checking in” with key individual Project Team participants from time to time. Is the goal clear? Does that task make sense? Is there an unanticipated roadblock that this person recognizes? It’s intelligence like this that informs the Project Manager’s next steps.

By Shana Marbury, General Counsel / VP Strategic Initiatives & Research, Greater Cleveland Partnership

5 Takes on the Value of Internships

The value of internship programs to the actual interns working within a firm isn’t hard to see. The interns get an opportunity to put their classroom skills to work in a real-life environment while also getting a chance to add valuable contacts to call on during their impending future job search. But what’s in it for employers? Some of the early returns to a Greater Cleveland Partnership survey on the value of intern programs have found hesitancy on the part of some companies to bring interns on, citing such reasons as not understanding the value interns can bring to an organization or not seeing a need to have an internship program in place.

Data around those companies that have such programs in place, however, indicates there is a benefit to employers who commit to internships. Employers made job offers to 64.8% of their interns during 2014 with 79% of interns accepting those offers, according to a study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. The study found that employees who had completed either an internship or co-op program were more likely to be with their current employer at both the one-year and five-year retention benchmarks.

As part of the Greater Cleveland Partnership’s ongoing internship study, which is being completed in conjunction with Cleveland State University, survey respondents were asked to identify their top reasons for bringing interns aboard. Five responses from North-east Ohio companies are below.

Citizens Bank

We have a Commercial Banking internship program to create a pipeline of diverse talent for future hiring. The college students are also a value-add for time-limited projects.

FIT Technologies

• Helps offset high staffing needs during the summer season.
• Offers value at an economical hourly rate.
• Supports IT training and college programs.

Turner Construction Company

Aid in success of future recruiting efforts. Increase diversity. Provide exposure to our industry for interested candidates.

Cost: $10 for members, $20 for non-members Register at www.cose.org/events.