

Small Business Matters

Want more information and resources on this week's topics, ideas and events? Go to www.cose.org/smallbizmatters.

 **52 TIPS FOR YOUR BUSINESS**

Tip #52 - Source a Supply of Interns

There are a number of reasons your business should place a high priority on internships. Besides the fact that your company is playing an integral part in training future employees, you are also developing your own pipeline of potential future employees. According to a report from the Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education, 53% of employers increased their number of student interns in 2014, compared to just 35% who did so in 2013.

But what's the best way to source and utilize these students? First, in my professional experiences as a former recruiter, the best way to find a supply of interns is through developing partnerships with local colleges or universities. Contact your local career center to understand the programs offered and their process to identify interns. At Cuyahoga Community College, we are prepared to meet you at your office to understand your talent acquisition plans and how we can supply you with talent through our internship program with resumes of students actively seeking internships.

Hiring student interns should be similar to the process and assessment of hiring professional staff to your organization. Most employers include multiple staff members from the department and cross-functional teams to help represent their area in the selection process. Using this collaborative approach will provide a strong assessment of the student intern's background and support from the department. Employers need to identify the technical and soft skills necessary to be successful in their department and how that student would fit in their organizational culture. Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*, concludes before an organization takes their performance to the next level to be truly great you need

the right staff in place. Hiring internships is important to identify the right staff to be on the right bus and in the right seat.

Internship program structure

Internships are typically part-time throughout the year and are short-term assignments. Employers provide us with feedback during our site visits and consistently are seeking students with strong soft skills and business acumen to work in a business environment. The technical knowledge is important and they are willing to train students on their processes to be effective.

Highly successful internship programs have a thorough job description that includes productive work assignments related to department and organizational goals. Students are eager to practice what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to their internship.

Employers who create a learning environment for students and provide the opportunity to use their skills, knowledge and abilities on projects creates a sense of ownership to make the internship experience a success.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' 2015 Co-op survey, most of an intern's day will be spent doing analytical/problem-solving followed, in order, by:

- project management;
- communications;
- logistics;
- clerical tasks; and
- nonessential functions.

Small business advantage

The advantage of being a small business can allow students to get more exposure and experience in business operations. They



JT Neuffer,
Cuyahoga Community College

usually report to the owner or senior leader in the organization who will train and prep the student to make an immediate impact. Students seeking internships are encouraged to explore working for organizations that can provide them an opportunity to learn regardless of the size in organization. Our students who have participated in a co-op position routinely participate in College career center events in order to share their experiences with other students and to advise them that they, too, can receive a successful and quality internship experience working for any size organization.

The feedback we receive from our students has been overwhelmingly supportive of the on-boarding, guidance and relationships with their supervisor. Some employers offer a mentoring program to keep students engaged and identify areas of concern before they become an issue. Other successful experiences from our students indicate a high level of support and commitment from the team they worked with during the internship.

For more information, contact JT Neuffer, Director, Employer Relations, Eastern Campus at jon.neuffer@tri-c.edu or 216-987-2893

 **BIG IDEAS**

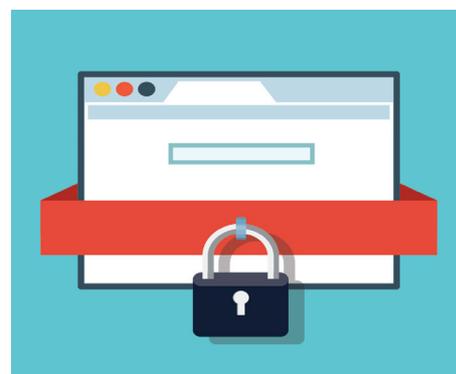
5 Ways to Boost Cybersecurity at Your Firm

By Alicia Hoisington

According to Kaspersky Lab's "Damage Control: The Cost of Security Breaches" report, 90% of businesses in 2015 experienced a security incident, and 46% of businesses lost sensitive data because of an internal or external security threat. According to the report, small businesses spend an average of \$38,000 in direct spend to recover from the attack. Indirect costs from a breach on a small business can cost an additional \$8,000.

"Small businesses are particularly vulnerable to cybersecurity threats and crime," says Gil Goldberg, district director of the Small Business Association Cleveland District Office. "Given their role in the nation's supply chain and economy, combined with fewer resources than their larger counterparts to secure their information, systems and networks, small employers are an attractive target for cybercriminals."

Goldberg says now is the time to take stock of your business's cybersecurity health by securing your information, identifying risk and learning best practices for guarding against cyberthreats. According to the association, five of these best practices include:



- **Protect against viruses, spyware and other malicious code:** Each of your business's computers should be equipped with antivirus software as well as antispyware. These should be updated regularly.
- **Use strong passwords and change them often:** Consider implementing multifactor authentication that requires additional information beyond a password to gain entry.
- **Establish best practices for payment cards:** Work with banks or card processors to ensure you're using trusted and validated tools as well as anti-fraud services. If you haven't made the EMV shift yet, get up to speed on what you need to do to update your equipment.
- **Back up important data and information:** Regularly back up data on all your computers. If possible, back up your data automatically or at least weekly. Store the copies either off-site or on the cloud.
- **Control physical access to computers and networks:** For instance, laptops can be easy targets for theft, or can easily be lost. Ensure laptops are locked when not in use.



For more on this topic, be on the lookout for the refreshed version of the COSE Update magazine, which will debut early next year.

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December 21

By The Numbers



44%

The percentage of employers using their internship program as a proving ground for hiring potential future employees.

SOURCE: NORTHEAST OHIO COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Connection Calendar

A GLIMPSE INSIDE THE 10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES PROGRAM

Interested in learning more about the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program or thinking about applying? This is an opportunity for you to get an inside peek at what the program is about. You will learn about the program, meet lead faculty member Larry Polena, participate in a mini session and engage with a panel of local small business owners who graduated from the program.

JANUARY 14, 2016

11:30 AM – 1 PM

Tri-C Advanced Technology Training Center, Cleveland



DRIVING CASH FLOW FROM ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS WEBINAR

An increasing number of small businesses are implementing upgrades that improve energy efficiency, reduce waste and minimize the impact on the environment. Business owners know that lower energy use translates into improved profitability and cash flow, and that investments in energy conservation measures can add significant value to business assets. Attend this webinar and learn how to evaluate your facility, identify rebates and incentives, coordinate with the installer(s) and determine the right debt financing option for your project.

JANUARY 27, 2016

11-11:45 AM

Cost: FREE

Email energy@cose.org to register



Check out www.cose.org/events for all the latest happenings.