

A photograph of three young adults, two women and one man, standing in front of a grey brick wall. They are all smiling and looking upwards and to the right. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a dark jacket. The woman in the middle has curly dark hair, large hoop earrings, and is wearing a dark camouflage-patterned shirt. The man on the right has short dark hair and is wearing a black jacket with a yellow hood. The text 'Recruiting College Interns' is overlaid in large white font on the lower half of the image.

Recruiting College Interns

IBM took the initiative to help the client transform
its campus program



Insight

Integrate digital processes

IBM started providing recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) services for this global manufacturing client in 2001. Ten years later we also began supporting the client's Campus Programs for college students, including the Summer Internship Program.

For the last few years IBM has integrated new features into the client's internship recruiting program to gradually morph it into the digital process that it is today. The IBM team saw opportunities to make the process more efficient for recruiters and enjoyable for candidates and took the initiative. Changes were not a response to a client request or perceived problem, but upon hearing our ideas, the client was eager to follow our lead.



Idea

Focus on personal connections

IBM recruiters typically support 40 recruiting events a year to fill internships for a range of positions: engineering, marketing, data analytics, legal, supply chain, R&D, manufacturing, finance and accounting, among others. We run recruiting days on campus, info sessions in classrooms and student unions, hospitality suites at conferences and Intern Appreciation Days on site at client and off-site locations.

As we transitioned the process to digital, students had to adjust to the fact that IBM recruiters didn't collect their paper resume—something virtually every college student used to show up with at these events.

Instead, recruiters might look at resumes, but only to use them as conversation starters. This leads to a more personal interaction, because instead of the recruiters worrying about scribbling down information from the candidates and remembering names and faces, they can fully engage in conversation.

Here's how the new process works. A candidate registers on the recruiter's tablet with full name, email and phone number, also providing his or her classification, major and areas of interest/focus. Our recruiting team uses the phone number to connect each candidate registration to the recruiter information—notes the recruiter may have made during or immediately after the conversation—on the back end, and then we email the candidate and invite them to join the client's Talent Community.

The last step of registering in the Talent Community is uploading the resume into the client's CRM. (Candidates also have the option to scan a QR code on a card the recruiter gives them, which enables them to upload their resume to a digital landing page linked to the client's site.)



Impact

Supporting growth, controlling cost and other benefits

The internship program has grown from about 170 interns to 300 interns in the time that IBM has led the digital transformation of the program. Our recruiters interview close to 1,000 candidates collectively, and we meet with more than 6,000 intern candidates during the course of the recruiting cycle, from September to March.

Not only has this new approach supported the growth of the program, but it has brought other benefits as well:

Efficiency. We've developed an efficient method to capture candidate information and make it available to recruiters immediately. It's a "green process," which appeals to college students, as does the fact that our recruiters don't load down candidates with papers and trinkets as they leave the recruiting event.

Cost. The process that IBM came up with doesn't cost the client any additional funds. (Technologies exist to do this but at a premium cost—as much as \$20,000 a year.) We leveraged functionality in a system the client was already using.

Personal connection. Both candidates and recruiters appreciate that their face-to-face time at recruiting events is centered on conversation and questions, not reviewing a resume. This has led to . . .

Increased intern and hiring manager satisfaction. We've seen a growth in satisfaction among interns with the recruiting and application process, and improved satisfaction among hiring managers with the hired interns. In fact, interns consistently have ranked the Summer Internship



Program a 4.5 out of 5 on satisfaction surveys. In addition, in 2018, the client was named to WayUp's list of [Top 100 Internship Programs](#).

Compliance. By collecting and storing digital resumes, the client remains in compliance with regulations that govern fair treatment of candidates and documentation of follow-up. Resumes accepted in relation to a job have to be kept for two years to comply with an assortment of laws. Compared with paper resumes, digital resumes not only help with ease of storage, but they are easier to share with interested parties at various locations across the United States.

Through iterations of executing ideas and making adjustments, the IBM recruiting team designed a successful approach to recruiting interns for this client. We are now adapting the system for another client for whom we deliver RPO services. If your organization needs to start or improve on an existing internship recruiting program, contact [IBM Talent Acquisition Optimization](#) for more information.



A photograph of three young adults walking and laughing on a city street. On the left, a young man with a shaved head, wearing a black jacket over a yellow hoodie and light blue ripped jeans, is smiling broadly. In the center, a young woman with voluminous curly hair, wearing a dark green jacket and black pants, is also laughing. On the right, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue denim shirt and black pants, is smiling. They are walking past a brick building with windows. The overall mood is joyful and energetic.

What the Interns Are Saying

“Working [here] means a lot of opportunities to use my skill sets, grow my knowledge and find the right place to fit in the company based on my interests.”

“They encourage you to take time out of the day to network with people and learn about things that you may not be working on that are happening around the company. They also want you to get involved in the community and explore in your time outside of work. [This company] wants you to have an experience, not just get experience.”

“I have had 5 internships and [this one] was easily the best one that I’ve had.”

An intern supervisor for the client added, “This is a valuable program to develop potential talent and give them a free pass at what they may ... want to do with their career. [It] helps save time in recruiting and retainment of interested talent once they re-approach us for full-time roles.”

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Route 100
Somers, NY 10589

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