

How to Boost Your Business with a Summer Externship!

Does your business have a project you haven't been able to tackle due to lack of capacity? Are you looking for ways to promote your business and give your staff a little more support? We know how difficult it can be to keep up with the changing needs of your business over the summer. That's why Idaho businesses like yours are taking advantage of the Summer Externship Program!

Hosting an extern is not a significant burden for businesses like yours. In this program, you will select highly-skilled teachers from your area to work with your business for 200 hours of on-site work experience- all free to you! This partnership between the Idaho STEM Action Center, Idaho Workforce Development Council, and Micron Technology aims to highlight the work you do by fostering relationships with teachers to build the next generation of our workforce.

Here are the top ten tips businesses like yours have for making the most of the summer externship program:

1. **Identify your business need:** The first step in preparing for a successful summer externship is selecting the work you would like your extern to handle. Keep in mind this is not simply a job shadow. These teachers offer some incredible skillsets, and they are looking to learn from a challenging and engaging workload. This is your business's opportunity to hone in on the most rewarding or urgent projects to tackle.
2. **If you already know an outstanding teacher, invite them:** Over the past few years, several businesses have found that they can streamline the externship process by recruiting a teacher they would like to work with the summer. This is a great way to guarantee you are matched with someone whose skills match your business need and who is a good match for your company's culture.
3. **Act fast to get your top picks:** If you don't have a relationship with teachers in your area, don't worry! We collect resumes and application materials from interested teachers and provide them to you. Act fast though- the application with the skills you need could be in high demand! Schedule your interviews as soon as you can to get your top pick.
4. **Make use of resources available to you:** Numerous tools are at your disposal to help you make the most of your summer extern. We host informational webinars, have staff available for check-ins, partner on online communication platforms, and promote the program through a many other virtual and in-person means. If you have an issue or concern you aren't sure how to address, or if you want to make a good experience even better, our team can help point you in the right direction. Don't hesitate to reach out.
5. **Maximize the benefit of your extern's skills and time:** Don't underestimate how quickly an extern can work through a project. Teachers are highly skilled professionals, and have often surprised business hosts with how quickly they complete tasks. Plan a project that is substantial enough to occupy 200 hours, and don't be afraid to have an extra project or two ready to go if needed.
6. **Highlight your business:** We love hearing about the work you and your extern are doing this summer. We collect stories shared by businesses and teachers, and often share them out to a statewide audience. This presents an excellent opportunity for your business to enhance its visibility and reach potential new customers via the STEM AC website, blog posts, newsletters, marketing campaigns, and so much more.

7. **Be flexible and have fun:** With various dynamics at play during the summer, the externship may deviate from your initial plans. Whether your extern completes projects faster than expected, your business needs or schedules change, or new opportunities to explore are identified, remain flexible and make the most of your summer. We want this to be not only a learning experience, but also a fun one.
8. **Communicate early and often:** Just like preparing for any new employee, make sure you communicate with your team ahead of time to ensure a smooth onboarding process. Introduce your extern to as many departments and individuals within your organization as you can. Who knows? Maybe their fresh eyes on your business operations can identify a new, exciting opportunity. The more communication and interactions they have, the more enriching both of your experiences will be.
9. **Keep in touch after the summer ends:** Don't let your relationship end with the externship program! Continue to highlight your business and careers in your field by visiting your extern's classroom or partnering on fun programs throughout the year. This is also a great way to see how your work is impacting students in your area. There's nothing more rewarding than seeing this impact firsthand.
10. **Act now! It's free in 2024:** 2024 will be the final year summer externs are guaranteed to be provided at no cost to Idaho businesses. If you're curious about the program, take advantage of this no-cost opportunity now to see if it's a good long-term fit for your company. Make the most of the coming summer with a skilled, free employee while you can!

Learn more about this program and apply in early 2024 at <https://stem.idaho.gov/apply/stem-externships/>