Best Practices for Managing a Student Worker

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Introduction

AGENDA

• Setting the stage
• WU employers
• WU student workers
• Tips for success
• Career Center
• Q&A
Setting the Stage

• Think about your best student worker(s)
  What were their qualities?

• Think about your most challenging student worker(s)
  What were their qualities?
Employer Perspective
What Skills do Employers Look For?

Employers rate candidate soft skills/qualities in order of importance:

1. Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization
2. Ability to work in a team structure
3. Ability to make decisions and solve problems
4. Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work
5. Ability to obtain and process information
6. Ability to analyze quantitative data
7. Technical knowledge related to the job
8. Proficiency with computer software programs
9. Ability to create and/or edit written reports
10. Ability to sell or influence others

Source: Job Outlook 2013
Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers
WUSTL: Current Reputation among Recruiting Leadership

- Very smart
- Dedicated strong contributors
- Balanced, savvy, and ambitious
- Very solid, hardworking students
- Passion for their alma mater

From Career Center Initiative: Current Reputation Among Recruiting Leaders
Additional Employer Feedback

• Extremely bright and passionate students
• Able to demonstrate intelligence in the interview but not always able to demonstrate how skills apply directly to the job
• Students often need to work on their interpersonal skills and confidence
• Others need to show a bit more humility
• Proper follow-up communication
• Not always “culturally competent”
Who Are These “Student Workers” Anyway?
WU Students Are…Brilliant

- WU has an 18% acceptance rate
- WU named by Lumosity as the “smartest college in America”
- Top employers include: Accenture, Boeing, Deloitte, Google, etc.
- Many of our students go to Ivies for graduate school
- 2/3 of students pursue multiple majors and/or minors
- They’ve got the “hard skills”
WU Students Are…Well Rounded & Other-Oriented

• 332 student groups on campus
• Over 70 student groups are others-focused
• 19 varsity sports, 37 club sports, and 75% of students participate in intramurals
• 25% participate in Greek Life
• 68% of WU students participate in community service
• City Year, TFA, Venture for America among top employers last year
• Students also went to Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Habitat for Humanity, etc.
WU Students Are... Millennials

Narcissistic
Lazy
Disloyal
Sheltered
Delusional
Immature
Short attention span
Social media addicts

Or...

Confident
Connected
Open-minded
Civic-minded
Upbeat
Team-oriented
Pressured
Tech savvy

Young
“The key to creating the best possible experience for a work-study employee is to remember that's what she is: a student and a worker both. On one hand, it is important to acknowledge that, because she is a student, she might not always be able to come in extra hours—and that, every once in a while, she might even need to stay home from work to prepare for an important exam. On the other hand, it is important to realize that she is a legitimate employee in a workplace....
She should be introduced to everyone in the office, and they should show her recognition and respect, just as she is expected to show them recognition and respect. This means doing everything from greeting her in the hallway to responding to her emails. Even though work-study work is, by nature, part-time work, work-study employees should not be treated as temporary or incompetent. As a work-study employee, the greatest reward is being treated as a competent equal in the workplace. When a worker feels that she is valued, she will value her work all the more.” – junior student
Bridging the Gap
Finding a Management Style

“Managers also don't know how to manage their younger workers appropriately. They often make the mistake of using either the hands-off approach or micromanaging their workers. Neither of these management styles work well with younger employees.”

-Dan Schwabel, founder of Millennial Branding
What Students Seek in the Workplace

- Give us real work
- Be honest
- We like feedback
- We want to be included too
- Please explain

- I want a mentor
- A minute of your time, please
- Be prepared
- Um...I need a chair

Adapted from 10 Concerns of Interns (Starting and Maintaining a Quality Internship Program, Michael True)
Help Your Student Worker be Successful (a.k.a. We Love Gen Y!)

Get to know your student worker

Provide context for the work

Encourage questions

Be transparent about expectations and support

Provide ongoing feedback
What Works: Orientation

• Tour of the office; include restrooms and building “quirks”
• How does the office fit into the rest of the University
• Meet staff (how should they be be addressed), explain where each fits into mission
• Explain logistics: where things are kept, turning in time sheets, etc.
What Works:
Understand They Aim to Please

- Typical day
- What to do if tasks completed
- Dress code?
- How should they communicate if absent or late?
What Works: Expectations & Coaching

- Communicate your absent or late policy
- Clarify cell phone and computer usage
- Difference in communication - email, phone, FB, twitter, text, etc. You may need to coach on business communication.
- Will you be flexible regarding exams/homework?
- How and when will they receive feedback from you?
What Works: Ongoing Training

- Answering the phone
- Sending a professional email
- Using a fax machine
- Using a copying machine
- Use of kitchen

- Train for specific duties
- Give a “cheat sheet” with office facts
- Customer service philosophy
Don’t Forget about the Soft-Skills

Include Soft Skill Development in Training!
- Don’t make assumptions about your student worker
- *Discuss* and *demonstrate* soft-skills required on the job such as:
  - Communication
  - Time Management
  - Listening
  - Teamwork
  - Organization
- Have a mentor provide *ongoing* training in soft-skill development...
What are your best practices for managing student workers?
The Career Center as a Resource