

➡➡➡ **CASE STUDY 3 - Interns**

Money Makers for Non-Profit Organizations

Interns Are an Inexpensive Way of Getting the Manpower or Girlpower You Need

Burn Foundation, Philadelphia, PA

Enthusiastic Interns make a big impact on getting things done. When the Burn Foundation needed workers to help with promotions but didn't have the funding, I thought about how we could find volunteers to help with the tasks at hand. I remembered when I was in college and I was assigned to a work study program. The job paid very little, maybe \$1000 per 16 weeks semester, but the contacts that I made and the experience that I gain were invaluable. I have used those experiences to secure better jobs, to network with the people and board members who I met, and eventually to start my own intern programs.

I've often preached to my own son, and his friends, about the positive aspects of volunteering for a cause. Unfortunately, they did not seem very interested. However, when I talked about becoming an intern for a foundation that could help them make contacts and get experience that they could put on their resumes, their ears perked up.

So that is the tack that I took to create new Intern program for The Burn Foundation. First I went to the local colleges and universities. I had to do a bit of leg-work to find the right person to promote my program. Typically there is a work study program or student activity group already in place. Either an industrious student or a helpful guidance counselor will usually be anxious to offer younger students an opportunity to make a few dollars, get some experience, and make some connections.

Once you've found the right person to promote your program, ask them if you could post flyers on a message board or get them to suggest the opportunity to interested students. I typically offer a stipend of \$1,000-\$1,500 per 15-16 week semester. The cost for these interns is negligible as they will pay for themselves five times over, as well as, alleviate much of the stress of having to do everything yourself.

I've handed of such tasks as updating databases, writing newsletter articles, running errands to pick up awards or flyers, working on golf outings, helping make preparations for a walk, helping with major events and even organizing volunteer.

Unlike volunteers who often want to do projects that relate to their own skill sets, interns are willing to do almost anything to get the experience. This fact is pertinent because I've used my interns to help organize my volunteers into the focused tasks that all help the core cause of the organization.

One last word about interns: I have found them to be creative idealistic dreamers that invigorate employees in the organization, and even help with Donor Retention. Financial supporters of your organization will like the fact that you are “bringing in young blood.” Donors are with you because they have an emotional connection with your cause, but also because they are giving people. These individuals are predisposed to helping others, and they will appreciate the fact that you and your organization are helping these young people gain experience and make a little cash.

Your Board and your donors will see the wisdom and creativity of your decisions to start new programs that attracted interns, organize volunteers and engage donors.