

# Business Perspectives on Faculty Internships: Not Just for Students Anymore?

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**Purpose of the Study:** This exploratory research study examines business interest in using faculty internships, as well as perceived benefits and concerns, and builds upon literature showing faculty interest in the concept. For the purposes of this study, a faculty internship is defined as a faculty member taking a temporary placement within the field in which he or she teaches in order to gain firsthand experience that can be integrated into classroom learning.

**Method/Design and Sample:** Members of two Midwestern chapters of the Product Development and Management Association (PDMA) were surveyed online through the chapters' LinkedIn pages. Respondents were directed to a Qualtrics survey link. Forty-three surveys were deemed usable. The researchers categorized answers to the open-ended questions via content analysis, and themes were presented to the board of directors of a Midwest chamber of commerce for further qualitative insights.

**Results:** Respondents indicated interest in the concept of faculty internships, particularly in terms of knowledge exchanged between businesses and academe and its translation back into the classroom; however, there are concerns about the value faculty interns can provide to an organization versus consultants, as well as time and budget constraints. Gaining access to faculty experienced in evolving fields, such as marketing analytics and digital marketing, is of particular interest to businesses.

**Value to Marketing Educators:** Educators can use faculty internships to gain industry-specific experience or to become more familiar with current issues in marketing. Such knowledge can be incorporated into marketing curricula, benefiting students while also enhancing the instructor's curriculum vitae. Faculty will need to be prepared to explain what value they can provide to the organization sponsoring the internship.

**Keywords:** Faculty internships, faculty development, business consulting

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Many people are familiar with the concept of student internships, especially for college students. The idea behind them is for students to get real world experience and a chance to apply concepts learned in the classroom; also, it is often used to help build professional relationships. A faculty internship has many of the same purposes: to gain experience, apply concepts, and build relationships. Yet a faculty internship, ideally, can also help facilitate learning in the classroom by giving professors a chance to experience the current practices in their field and pass that knowledge along to students. This study investigates general awareness of and openness to using faculty interns within businesses.

Research on the use of faculty internships is scant, and much of what exists is anecdotal. The few studies that exist stressed the importance of internships as a form of faculty development. The educational advantages that faculty internships provide can affect multiple aspects of academia. With more up-to-date experience, the professor can help guide students on job placement (Beck, 2001). Experience gleaned from faculty internships can help professors who are using older textbooks update their knowledge base and pass

this information along to students (Dawkins, 2006). A study conducted in the UK lamented that professors' expertise is under-utilized. The professors are often viewed as a role model, mentor, advocate, guardian, and ambassador (Macfarlane, 2011). All of these roles are important, and faculty internships provide professors with an opportunity to use and maintain their industry expertise.

Sometimes it is easy for professors to get stuck in traditional teaching roles. Faculty internships enable professors to expand their knowledge and identify current, real-world applications to use in the classroom (Rapert, Kurz, & Smith, 2002). These opportunities can be especially useful for full-time faculty, since unlike ad hoc professors who may have substantial work experience, teaching is their main occupation, and on occasion, their only source of work experience. As a result, it is particularly important for full-time instructors to become current with developments in their field. For example, while most accounting professors have a background in industry, the relevancy of their experience is short lived. This leads to a gap between students' graduation skills and competencies that are

actually needed in their profession (Noga & Rhoades-Catanach, 2014).

A few studies focused on how faculty interns are actually used. Gibson (2001) identified possible strengths for both the faculty and employer, including the ability for interns to gain relevant and recent work experience, develop understanding of the student internship experience, and nurture college/business connections. Drawbacks included the difficulty of finding host sites, the imposition upon the host's time and resources, financial constraints for the intern, and lack of recognition of the internship as a form of scholarly activity. Lantos (1994) cited closing an often-widening gap between professors' recent and relevant experience. One field that routinely makes use of faculty internships is the hospitality industry. Harris and Zaho (2004) found growing value in the use of faculty internships for hospitality organizations, with acknowledgement of the impact it can have on future generations and real-world business issues.

Professors who have an interest in pursuing faculty internships may face factors that hold them back; yet one exploratory research study indicated substantial interest in the concept. Members of the Marketing Management Association were surveyed to determine their interest according to years of teaching and marketing experience, knowledge of companies sponsoring such programs, and perceived benefits and drawbacks (n=33). Faculty with less than 10 years of teaching experience expressed the most interest (mean 4.5 on a five-point scale), as well as those with less than five years of marketing experience. A small number of faculty with 9-12 years of marketing experience also expressed interest, perhaps as a means to stay current in the field. Four respondents had participated in an internship, but most respondents were unaware of companies that provided such programs. Private college faculty had slightly higher interest levels than their peers at public institutions (mean 4.2/5). The top perceived benefits were to gain experience and knowledge; corresponding drawbacks included faculty time and financial constraints, as well as the uncertainty of support, both financial and/or developmental, from their institutions. Faculty would need to have the internship be part of a sabbatical or paid leave (Lohman, Gerhardson, Thorsgard, Sorenson, & Grams, 2010). In recent years, there have been changes within the reward systems for innovative teaching and community involvement at some schools, which might provide encouragement to faculty contemplating an internship (June, 2013).

A noticeable trend among colleges is to rely on visiting, clinical, and other non-tenured faculty positions, which has made it harder for tenure-track faculty to achieve tenure and still be involved in additional personal development activities. The reduced number of tenured faculty means there is more responsibility placed on instructors with or seeking tenure. The added workload makes it harder for these professors to do outside work (June, 2012).

From a business perspective, there are benefits to using a faculty intern. Carnes and Gierlasinski (1999) described faculty interns as an "untapped labor pool," possessing skills that are in high demand. Such skills could be utilized by faculty interns to provide substantial help for family businesses (Filbeck, Skutch, & Dwyer, 1999). The exchange of practice and experience between the business and faculty members can benefit both parties. Knowledge gleaned from the industry experience can often be incorporated back into the classroom (Bost & Haddad, 1996).

Despite the benefits identified for all parties involved, there seems to be little use of business faculty interns. This rings especially true within the marketing field, although there is some limited use within the public relations and advertising fields. One notable example is the Advertising Education Foundation's *Visiting Professor Program* (VPP). According to AEF's website:

The VPP is a two-week fellowship for professors of advertising, marketing, communications and the liberal arts that exposes professors to the day-to-day operations of an advertising agency, a marketing or media company. Professors return to the classroom and teach their subject with more authority. Components of the program are an orientation followed by an eight-day internship. During the internship, professors are asked to give a Luncheon Talk on his/her area of expertise and how it relates to advertising. ([www.aef.com](http://www.aef.com), "Visiting Professor Program—2015 VPP Participants")

Faculty and internship sponsors work together to determine what outcomes each party is interested in achieving. While the program is billed as a "fellowship," its aims are similar to a faculty internship, and feedback solicited by AEF from participating faculty and businesses indicates strong satisfaction with the program.

## METHODOLOGY

Because of the limited amount of research on this topic, exploratory research methodology was deemed most appropriate for gathering information. Members of two Midwestern chapters of the Product Development and Management Association (PDMA) were approached online through their chapters' LinkedIn pages in November, 2014. PDMA "accelerates the contribution that innovation makes to the economic and professional growth of people, businesses and societies around the world," according to the organization's website. Its regional membership base of approximately 1,500 includes professionals employed in marketing and other related positions; this group was deemed to be representative of the marketing population the researchers were seeking.

Members were provided with an informed consent cover letter and a link to a Qualtrics online survey, which had been pretested as part of an earlier pilot study. The survey included 13 questions measuring awareness of and interest in using faculty interns;

perceived benefits and drawbacks; willingness to provide compensation, and perceived differences between faculty interns and consultants, followed by six demographic questions (Appendix A). Forty-three surveys were received. Respondents were allowed to skip questions, resulting in some questions having fewer than 43 responses. Because of the low response rate, all statistics reported were used for descriptive purposes only. Responses to open-ended questions were categorized using content analysis.

To provide more in-depth qualitative analysis of the themes identified through the PDMA study, the board of directors of a Midwest chamber of commerce were presented with the survey findings and asked to provide additional insights. A focus group format was held during the chamber's monthly board of directors meeting, with 14 people participating. Respondents were asked to review the survey findings a few days before the meeting was held. Board members included owners, presidents or upper-level managers of businesses representing the banking, health care, legal, grocery, brewing, education, graphics, marketing communications, real estate, restaurant, manufacturing, and retail sectors. Company sizes ranged from three-200 employees. Chamber of commerce management also participated in the focus group and provided commentary.

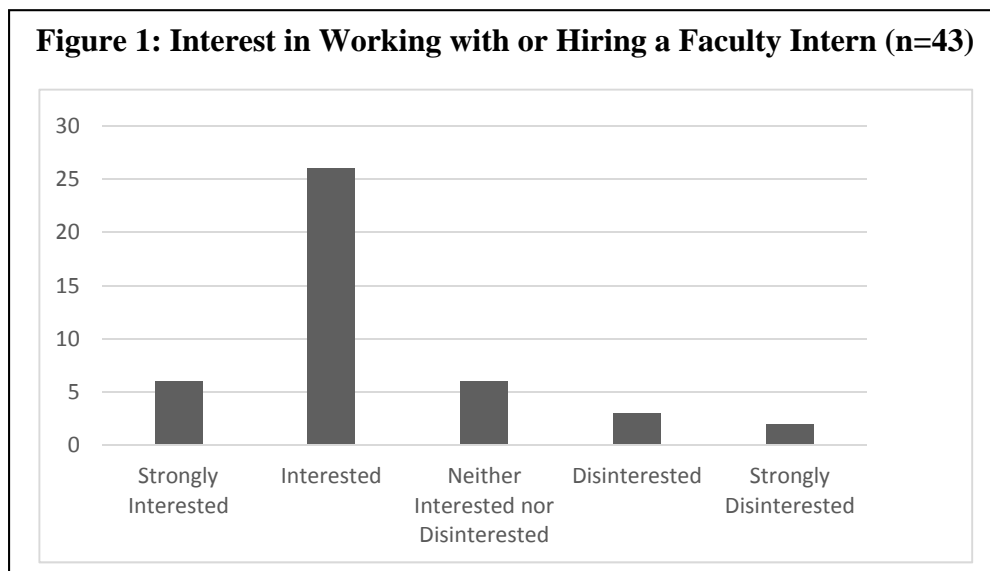
## PDMA RESULTS

### *Respondent Demographics*

Most respondents were male (32) and worked in marketing, although a few were employed in technology, engineering, health care, and other managerial positions. Years of experience ranged from under one year – 30 years, with a mean of 8.5 years. Both sole proprietorships and large corporations were represented in this study, along with mid-size businesses. Company sizes ranged from one to 160,000 employees, with a mean of 7,787 workers. The average size of the departments in which the respondents worked was 152 employees.

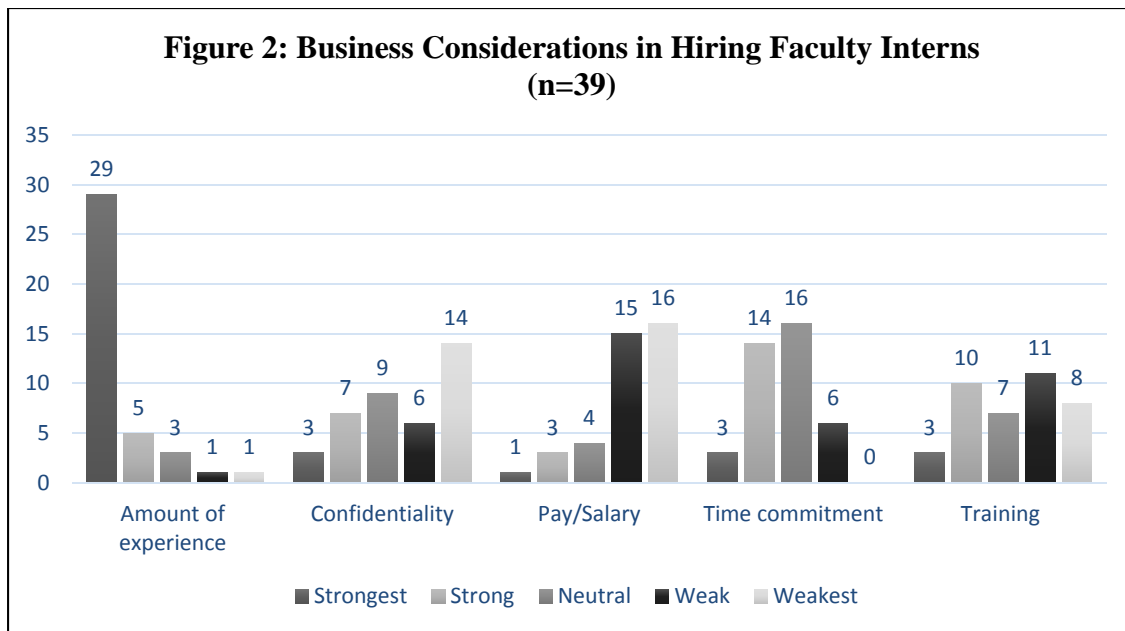
### *Survey Findings*

Ten participants reported previous awareness of the faculty internship concept, while 32 had no prior awareness; one was unsure (n=43). The majority of participants (32) indicated no awareness of their employers' use of faculty internship programs; four respondents had knowledge of such a program within their companies, with seven unsure. Most participants, however, expressed interest in the concept (Figure 1).



Among the various factors respondents would take into consideration in hiring faculty interns, the strongest consideration was faculty experience (Figure 2). Respondents generally indicated a willingness to pay for faculty expertise, with 25 participants willing to

consider compensation, 13 unsure, and only two ruling out the possibility (n=40). Responses to a follow-up question on how much they would consider paying ranged from minimum wage to \$10,000 for a summer internship (Appendix B).



Another variable examined was perceived differences between faculty interns and consultants in terms of adding expertise and expense for the

organization. Table 1 indicates that respondents believed interns cost less but lack as much expertise as consultants.

**Table 1: Added Value of Faculty Interns versus Consultants (n=40)**

	Consultant	Faculty Intern	No Difference
Expertise	30	3	7
Expense	5	27	8
Time Commitment (for business)	20	11	9

The researchers classified the open-ended responses regarding advantages to hiring faculty interns according to the following themes: providing insights/academic perspectives (19 comments); updating business knowledge of latest research and practices (10 comments); learning from each other (six comments); becoming familiar with college curricula/forging connections with colleges and universities (five comments); combining theory and practice (four comments); labor considerations (two comments), and identifying faculty with specific competencies (two comments). By far, the biggest advantage identified by respondents was gaining a different, academic perspective “untainted by the marketplace,” according to one answer. Respondents also assumed that faculty would be aware of recent research developments and would be able to synthesize that knowledge with awareness of business practices that would be gained through the internship.

Similarly, drawbacks to faculty interns were classified by the following themes: cost and time considerations (13 responses); understanding

business culture/work environment/profit motive versus academe (nine responses); lack of faculty intern industry/business experience (nine responses); temporary nature of position (seven responses); confidentiality issues (two responses); lack of work availability (two responses), and other considerations (three responses). Cost and time considerations were related to budgetary constraints in supporting an internship and time spent on familiarizing interns with the business. A considerable number of respondents believed that faculty interns would not only lack industry experience but business experience as well, and would not appreciate the need for business deadlines. The temporary nature of the internship, leading to “brain drain” as faculty returned to their teaching duties, was also noted.

Comments about differences between consultants and faculty interns were classified according to the following themes: industry knowledge/track record/specific purpose for hiring consultants over interns (12 comments); need for applied knowledge versus theoretical background of interns (six

comments); teaching priority of faculty/time limit of internships (six comments); learning nature of internships (six comments), and other differences (10 comments). Most respondents believed that consultants would be hired based on their backgrounds within the industry, business, or issue under consideration; however, two respondents believed that the depth of faculty knowledge would be greater than that of consultants. A couple of respondents noted the financial incentive for consultants to “string out” work.

## **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS**

Findings from the Midwest chamber of commerce focus group paralleled the PDMA content analysis findings. All but one of the board members were unaware of the concept, with that member indicating such a program had existed in his business in the past. Most respondents considered it to be mutually beneficial to the business and the academician, with acknowledgement that the faculty members, students, and colleges would stand to gain more direct benefit than the businesses. Participants identified specific advantages and drawbacks that echoed and expanded upon the PDMA data.

### ***Benefits***

Three major themes emerged from participant comments regarding the benefits of faculty internships: accessibility to human resources, providing a fresh perspective and expanding professorial knowledge. One of the major business advantages noted was the ability to create a network to a large talent pool of professors and students and a pipeline to hiring students in the future. From this perspective, the respondents considered their own personnel needs, along with concurrent practical implications for identifying qualified employees.

Participants also cited the benefit of having a different, academic perspective from professors and from students--a “fresh pair of eyes”--and suggested that employees who spend most of their careers working in one company/industry could run the risk of becoming myopic. A few respondents indicated their businesses were “amazed” at the insights provided by student interns, implying that faculty could potentially provide similar benefits. One board member suggested the possibility of a joint student/faculty internship, whereby a student and a faculty member would work together in solving a business issue.

Another common observation was the need for faculty to acquire business/industry experience in order to supplement knowledge students gained from course textbooks. One board member’s remark summarized this theme: “I wish some of my professors had been in the real world!” Faculty were, however, expected to enter the internship already possessing desirable theoretical/research knowledge, with the underlying assumption that it could be applied to the business and/or industry in which they were

working. Respondents indicated strong interest in sponsoring faculty interns with specific knowledge of Big Data, marketing analytics and digital marketing efforts, citing the advantage of maximizing ROI for marketing expenditures. Of particular value was the ability for faculty to interpret digital data statistically and provide marketing guidance to the business. A participant commented, “(We are) throwing money at the marketing of (our) business...every dollar spent has to be justified.”

### ***Drawbacks***

Participant comments expanded upon two interrelated drawbacks: differences between faculty and consultants, and possession of little business-related work experience by faculty. Opinions on the differences between consultants and faculty interns ranged from “equal footing” and being “beneficial in different ways” to favoring consultants for their industry-specific experience. A common perception was that faculty members had limited to no business experience and more knowledge based on theory, and therefore interns would have to show how their knowledge translated into the business world. Some respondents indicated that faculty interns would be more economical (one respondent suggested that consultants considered their own bottom line as well as that of their clients), but most indicated that there would be a considerable time cost in getting the intern up to speed on business operations, leading to a major drawback expressed by most respondents of losing the intern at the conclusion of the internship. One board member compared student internships to a “rent to buy” situation, in which businesses could decide whether to hire students after the internship had ended, whereas faculty interns would not be available for permanent employment unless they left their academic positions. Another comment epitomized this concern, describing a Catch-22 situation: “If faculty have no work experience, what can you bring us? (We) stop and train you about (our) business, and then you leave?”

### ***Logistical Considerations***

One respondent felt that working within a small business created “an intimate space for learning,” but suggested that big businesses might have an easier time hosting internships. Regardless of the size of the business, all participants agreed that faculty should have a plan to propose that would provide value to the business. Proposed timelines for faculty internships ranged from two or three months to one year, with strong agreement on the former arrangement, and all members agreed that some form of compensation, even if minimal, should be provided to the intern.

### ***Conclusion***

Despite the identified drawbacks, the chamber members generally concluded that internships should be pursued by businesses--“for the good of the world,” as one respondent noted, referring to the advantages accrued by the faculty member, and indirectly to

businesses, in preparing students for future employment. Such comments mirrored a human capital perspective, with businesses willing to consider involvement with faculty internships if they could pinpoint some sort of corresponding current and/or future benefit for the organization as well.

## DISCUSSION

The findings from this study show some awareness of and interest in faculty internships. In their 2010 findings, Lohman et al. found only four of the faculty respondents had been employed as faculty interns, yet findings from this study show that 11 business respondents had some awareness of faculty internships, and four knew of programs within their companies.

There is a role for faculty to play in business, providing a unique outside theoretical perspective as well as industry experience to organizations. Part of developing a successful faculty internship program is making sure it is set up correctly, much like student internships. Peacock (2005) gave examples of ideal conditions and evidence of how it can be of use in academe. While the non-monetary cost of faculty interns to an organization is acknowledged as high, respondents in this study overwhelming would consider paying their faculty interns, although the amount they would consider for payment varied greatly, from minimum wage to stipends to standard hourly fees for consultants. Most respondents indicated that compensation would depend upon the nature of the intern's duties. Faculty interns are viewed as being much more economical than consultants; however, consultants are believed to harbor much more expertise. Faculty members, by comparison, suffer from the "ivory tower" reputation among some members of the business community and are believed to possess little to no practical work experience in industry. Nonetheless, respondents appear to be interested in the concept, some strongly so. The perceived potential benefits varied but responses reiterated previous research findings about the value that faculty would carry back to the classroom. Businesses want to hire employees who are up to date on current trends and technology used in industry, and faculty help to provide that background for students through gaining knowledge themselves.

It may be difficult to implement faculty internship programs in the workplace while there are still reservations about its value. One PDMA respondent didn't see any possible benefits to having a faculty intern; on the other hand, another respondent couldn't identify any drawbacks. These conflicting answers illustrate the disparate perceptions of faculty interns. Concerns revolve around the time commitment needed to prepare faculty for their responsibilities, culture clashes between academe and business, and lack of industry work experience.

The last PDMA survey question asked respondents if they had any final thoughts or comments about the faculty internship concept. A few respondents said this

study increased their interest in the possibility of faculty internships; however, business objectives and procedures would take priority over the faculty member's academic goals, a theme reiterated by the chamber members as well (Appendix B).

There is evidence of convergent validity according to findings from faculty, marketing professionals and businesses that attitudes about faculty internships are for the most part favorable. Continued conversation between businesses and faculty on the value of faculty internship programs will benefit both parties, especially as professors strive harder to maintain relevancy within their institutions and their academic fields. Collegiate faculty development offices may be useful go-betweens, helping faculty to identify interested businesses and to develop proposals for providing valuable services while learning at the same time. The benefit to businesses of having access to a unique academic perspective could be highlighted as a key selling proposition.

## LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Survey findings are descriptive in nature and are limited to members of the Product Development and Management Association. The organization was flagged as a suitable sampling frame because of the number of members who are employed in the marketing field or who interact with marketing employees and concepts as part of their jobs. Other organizations may yield a different pattern of responses, particularly those whose membership base consists solely of marketing professionals. The chamber of commerce participants in this study represent the attitudes of businesses within one community; attitudes of other business executives may differ according to region, labor needs, and accessibility to higher education institutions. Another limitation of this study is its exploratory nature and small sample size.

Questions still remain on how a faculty intern can best fit within and benefit an organization. This study did not identify specific underlying factors that would determine whether businesses would be willing to implement faculty internship programs, such as budgetary constraints or work force reductions or increases. There may be a difference in responses if there is a clearer focus on what duties faculty interns would perform as part of an internship. Interest in utilizing faculty interns may also vary depending on the size of the business. Smaller businesses may identify a greater need for more additional help and insights than larger organizations. More research is also needed on how academicians can fit an internship into their already busy schedules and how they can incorporate business experiences into the classroom. Likewise, expanded research with marketing faculty could flesh out specific concerns already identified in the extant literature about how internship programs could be structured in order to provide maximum teaching benefits.

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## Appendix A: Sample Survey

For the purposes of this study, a faculty internship is defined as a faculty member taking a temporary placement within the field in which he or she teaches. For example, a marketing professor would accept a temporary position within a business' marketing department to gain practical experience and current insights.

Were you previously familiar with the concept of faculty interns?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Are you aware if there is a faculty internship program available within your organization?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Given the definition of faculty interns, how interested would you be in hiring or working with faculty interns in the future

- Strongly Interested
- Interested
- Neither Interested nor Disinterested
- Disinterested
- Strongly Disinterested

What benefits would you perceive in hiring a faculty intern in your organization?

What drawbacks would you perceive in hiring faculty interns?

Would you consider providing compensation to a faculty intern working in your organization?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you answered Yes to the previous question, how much compensation would you consider providing to a faculty intern working in your organization?

Please rank the following factors in your decision to hire a faculty intern. Please rank from 1-5, with 1 being your strongest consideration and 5 your weakest.

- Amount of experience
- Confidentiality
- Time commitment
- Pay/Salary
- Training

Are you aware of a process for hiring consultants within your organization?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

What are the perceived differences between a consultant and faculty internship?

Whom would you perceive adds more value to your organization, a faculty intern or a consultant, for:

	Faculty Interns	Consultant	No Difference
Expertise			
Expense			
Time-Commitment			

The following questions are for demographic purposes only. Your individual answers will not be identified.



With which gender do you most closely identify?

Male

Female

What is your position within your organization?

How long have you been in your current position?

In what department do you work?

How many employees are in your company (at your location)?

How many employees are in your department (at your location)?

Do you have any additional comments about faculty internships?

## Appendix B

### Select Verbatim Responses to Open-Ended Questions

<b>What benefits would you perceive in hiring a faculty intern in your organization?</b>
New insights to new techniques and current research ideas
Access to students and knowledge of academia as it pertains to integrating theory and application
Keeping current with what colleges are teaching, best practices, raising the overall level of the organization
Good cross fertilization of ideas and ability to take advantage of expert knowledge on the part of faculty
We both might learn something from each other
So they can teach and prepare their students with practical hands on applications.
Bring some academic savvy into the fast paced world of business. Also, give faculty a sense for what skills we need them to be teaching.
No benefits to our organization
To obtain new and fresh ideas; to get an academic perspective on a given situation; to build relationships with universities
We work with entrepreneurs of color, providing business consulting, financing and market opportunities. It would be tremendous to bring in an academic perception toward best business practices and determine if such teachings work in the real world of small business. So the benefit would be mutual - accessing expertise for our organization and providing 'proof of concept' for the faculty member!
Ability to teach intern unique marketing methods in our industry and learn latest marketing technique from intern.
They bring a different perspective and a level of maturity. Also, they may have insights into how other organizations and leading research in select topics
None. To be honest, I think faculty would make horrible interns. It would be a really good idea for the faculty (to get some experience), but they would probably return very little to the company because they lack any practical experience and there is no likelihood that the company would ever hire them afterward (since they would return to academia). This is a purely one-sided proposition, unless the internship is unpaid. I don't imagine faculty would go for an unpaid internship.
The benefit is the ability to knowledge transfer between the education & business organization, as well as organization culture aspect of the business environment. The outcome may be an expanded education framework that embedded actual business strategies.
Academic questioning of my answers - or free labor. Perhaps sounds market research
Forging a connection with local universities for future project collaboration or recruiting.
As a hiring manager, I need to hire people who are qualified to do a specific job--sometimes short term, sometimes permanently. If a faculty intern fit one of those roles, wonderful - but mostly the benefits would need to be for the employer. Unfortunately our business is ultimately the one that will take priority.
<b>What drawbacks would you perceive in hiring faculty interns?</b>
Not understand working environment as it relates to profit motive. Different reason for working than normal college environment.
Any academic political issues that may possibly arise?

Brain drain once they leave. Unfinished business after they leave. Unresolved or completed initiatives
Can't think of any
Not having enough work to keep them busy
Academic perspectives may not translate well into the reality of the organization.
Time taken away from other duties
Training costs, but a commitment to multiple summer internships might offset the cost impact. We have student interns, but they hardly are paid a professor's salary.
I would hope that the faculty interns could be hands-on and deliver to deadlines. Depending on the school or area of study, they may not have these core competencies. The business world is about the bottom line.
Time to bring them up to speed and gathering data/information
Cost, workspace for them and new concept for the organization.
Not a good fit with personality of the organization. Timing considerations. Taxes.
No knowledge of our business or markets
Getting budget for a temporary hire and justifying it.
Not being able to keep pace with timelines and deliverables
Lack of real world experience. Lack of a sense of urgency
Temporary budget to cover expense. Measuring ROI and proving value
I don't see any at the moment.
May be perceived as too academic and not real world.
Onboarding time, potential disruption, cost, reliability of output uncertain, indirect leakage of information or proprietary strategies via integration of learnings into curriculum, even if not strictly confidential.
The potential drawbacks may be 1. The business needs to commit the faculty intern timeline; this is a two-way commitment by all parties. 2. The faculty and business organization fit for the one-year commitment. 3. How do you approach business confidential information? 4. How do you measure the impact & value for all parties of the program? The answer will help gain buy in.

<b>What are the perceived differences between a consultant and faculty / internship?</b>
Consultant supposedly performs work for hire in area of expertise and works in the area continuously. Faculty internship first priority is teaching.
Applied vs. theoretical?
I would assume that faculty knowledge would be deeper.
Consultant has demonstrated track record to provide value. Faculty do not.
Profit motive of consultant
Consultants are there to take care of a specific problem, faculty internship can assist but it is learning for them also.
A consultant is a proven hands-on working professional with a history of references that can be contacted. A faculty internship may or may not have proven field experience, but more education and knowledge of different developing technologies.
Faculty should have a different viewpoint, untainted by the marketplace
Consultant is expected to be someone who brings unique knowledge and experience to the organization. Faculty internship could be similar if the faculty member brings special knowledge that can be applied in the business. If it's primarily a learning experience for the faculty member, then the differences between them and consultants are stark. Our organization would not likely support the latter situation.
The faculty internship would be more of a win-win relationship versus a strict pay for service one. The faculty internship may also allow us to leverage some of the university infrastructure.
A consultant is hired on a definitive scope of work with specific clients or project in a limited fashion. An intern is expected to take the work as it comes as part of our interactive and collaborative team to help meet the differing needs of our clients.
We have a standard sourcing process for hiring consultants and even structured agreement, contracts. I think it would be all new for faculty internship. One area of conflict at our company is that we required ownership of any intellectual property and sometimes consultant and maybe faculty who want to publish would have to forgo that to work for us.

Consultants come with real world experience and expertise. Proven across an industry or area of expertise. Faculty are perceived as having researched, taught, and are generally aware of the academic side of an industry or area of expertise.
A consultant saves me time and makes me money; a faculty intern takes my time and costs me money. A consultant is an expert; a faculty intern is a novice. A consultant is highly paid; a faculty intern is not paid. A consultant teaches; a faculty intern learns. A consultant is there only when I need them; I'm stuck with a faculty intern for one year.
Ability of faculty intern to contribute to business execution
Consultants are a mixed-bag, some good, some not - but at least I can cut them quickly if not producing. Would anticipate that a faculty internship would require more of a commitment and they may be less familiar - and perhaps even argue with - the need for clear and practical results.

<b>Do you have any additional comments about faculty internships?</b>
Sounds like a great idea.
Interesting concept. For it to work at our firm, the faculty member would need to be seen as a temporary consultant working on a specific project. They would need to be bringing value to the organization. Being paid to gain real world experience would not fly at our company.
I had not heard of faculty internships before and am fascinated to hear how professors/instructors fare in the implementation of their expertise.
It might be an interesting test. It would be helpful for the faculty to be able to explain the "unique" background he/she brings to the table. The company is willing to invest in trying new models for growth and innovation.
Regarding the perceived value question, I perceive consultants may bring broader application expertise, and faculty may bring latest science or evidence expertise and knowledge....so depending on the area one may be more valued by a company than the other.
...unless you have a specific project in mind that they can quickly ramp up on, I think it's a terrible idea for any business, but a great idea for the faculty person. It's a one-sided proposition. That being said, I think having faculty without work experience is an equally bad thing. So I like the idea of getting them experience, there just had to be more value in it for the organization offering the internship.
Make it simple. Talk straight and clearly about benefits, accountability and guarantees.