

Alkaloid's young talents program - Talent management approach

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Introduction

The attractiveness of an internship is that it is an exclusive experience that serves diverse purposes for dissimilar students. Internships are a significant role in formulating students to critically take part with the social world, particularly with achieving first-hand skill progress and knowledge not normally gained in a regular classroom (Sahrir et al., 2016). Graduates who leave colleges nearly always gain employment and must be prepared to endure and grow in progressively competitive regional, nationwide and worldwide jobs markets (Bostock, 2019). Consequently, improved internship programs will aid students in their capacity to integrate into the real world (Rosenberg et al., 2012). Internships offer students the chance to apply classroom knowledge in a practical context and students who complete internships are capable to return to the classroom and share their knowledge and involvements with their peers and add relevancy to university learning surroundings (Swift and Kent, 1999).

One of the important purposes of an internship is to guarantee a smooth transition from the student life to the work place. Students are given the chance to apply what they have been educated in traditional classroom settings to the real place of work and obtain a pragmatic view of a work challenges (Coco, 2000). Fascinatingly sufficient, the study of the role that internship programs may have for new graduates' career prospects and employability options has only recently started to become the focus of scientific inquiry (Chhinzer and Russo, 2018).

Students have the opportunity to gain valuable real-world experience, expand their network of contacts, earn money, and maybe develop a unique expertise for their thesis. Internships have also become a tool for graduates to gain job experience and demonstrate it to prospective

employers (Chillas et al., 2015). Accordingly, this paper explains the results and activities from the Alkaloid's young talents program which is a solid foundation as talent management approach in the company.

Employment in North Macedonia

Sustainable economic growth is an important factor for growing employment rate in Republic of North Macedonia which on the other hand can lessen the burden of the unemployment in the country (Lozanoska and Dzambaska, 2015).

Statistics demonstrate that youth employment faces a lot of challenges and has lower rates compared to other categories of the population unemployment rates are higher in the Western Balkan countries compared to the average of European countries. Moreover, the unemployment rates of the youth age category 15-24 years in west Balkan countries are higher compared to the average of European countries. Furthermore, employment of graduated youth faces many challenges such as local labor market demand, the divergence between education and job positions. Labor markets with high unemployment rates are an indicator of either labor demand and supply high mismatch rates or a bad fit between the education system output and labor market demand, or a combination of both (Mehmetaj and Alili, 2021).

Alkaloid's young talents program

Alkaloid has developed a structured approach towards planning and executing talent management. Starting with the phase of creating training plans and training needs together with the experts from the company and university professors. Following with careful assessing and selecting

best mentors from the company and training them to be skilled mentors. The next crucial part is the recruitment and selection process for interns, assessing their potential and their interest in order to have best match for the company needs and student aspirations. When the interns are selected, at the beginning of their internship, they receive the first training package within the company such as onboarding orientation program and soft skills trainings delivered by the HR team and other employees. In the first week, as part of the onboarding process, the interns and mentors are delivering the basic tasks and they are defining their final internship project that is done in the internship period in order to conduct and complete final presentation at the end of their internship in Alkaloid. This onboarding process for the interns is very important for them in order to have a solid foundation before the start of daily work. In the end, all interns are evaluated by their mentors with evaluation form to give first-hand assessment, where after graduation they can apply in Alkaloid and have opportunity to continue their career.

Findings and discussion

With this approach, Alkaloid have created internship program that until end the of 2021 gave opportunity for 152 students to be a part of Alkaloid's young talents program in the laboratory of research and development or quality control, regulatory affairs, pharmacovigilance, quality assurance, production facilities and other departments in the company. Moreover, 24 interns are coming from high school and the other 128 interns are coming from university. Furthermore, 25 interns were males and high 127 interns were females.

This program succeeded to attract and retain 61 of the interns in the company to continue their career and possibly be the future talent. Moreover, there are interns that still study and when they finish their degree can apply and also be a part of the company.

In 2021, 51% of the concluded employments of candidates with a university degree in the Pharmacy profit center in Alkaloid Skopje, were acquired from this program. Furthermore, this program continues in 2022 because it is strong pillar in its talent management system in the company. Moreover, this program is recommended as a good practice in the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje to be implemented by other companies and other faculties in order to give opportunity for internship for the students who seek practical knowledge.

Conclusion

This approach opens the gates of deeper collaboration in a public-private partnership, establishes the grounds in personal development solutions within the companies and gives deeper understanding on question how to approach towards gaining high level of students engagement, their motivation and dedication towards their own development and career goals. Moreover, it is inevitable to enable internships in pharma business because it is a win-win for all stakeholders in order students to focus their careers on their potentials and aspirations. Alkaloid's young talents program shows that companies investment in students who have desire to go on internship will be great benefit for the talent management in order to have their future talent in the company. Also, if the companies create similar programs such as this one, as a consequence the unemployment rate in the country could decrease.

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