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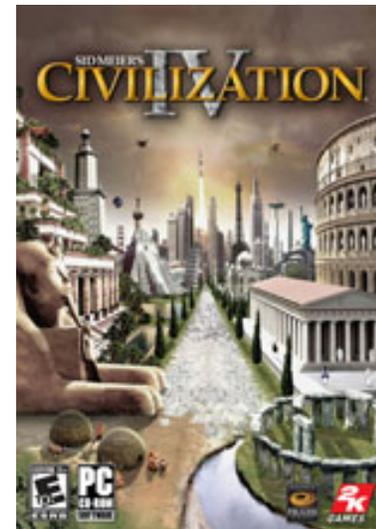
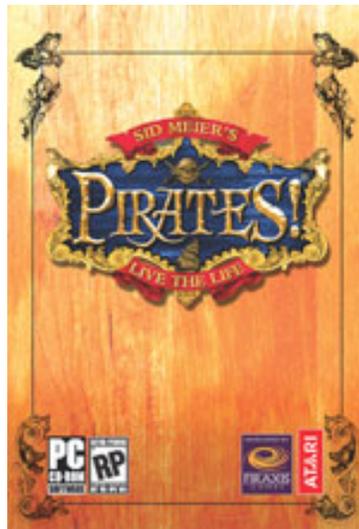
It's More than Making Coffee:
Interns - How to Grow
Your Team From the
Ground Up





Who we are:

- ⊕ **Greg Foertsch** – Senior Artist, Firaxis Games
- ⊕ **Chris Sulzbach** – Artist, Firaxis Games





What we are going to cover

- ④ Developing and maintaining successful internship programs from both the developer and the student's perspective.



What is an Internship?

- ④ [*in-turn-ship*] - any period of time during which a beginner acquires experience in an occupation, profession, or pursuit.
- ④ [*in-turn-ship*] - any official or formal program to provide practical experience for beginners in an occupation or profession.



What an Internship is NOT

- ⊕ It's **not** washing your car.
- ⊕ It's **not** picking up your laundry.
- ⊕ It's **not** just doing all the crappy work that is beneath you.



Examples of Successful Interns





Examples of Bad Interns





Types of Internships

- ⊕ Internships can be paid and unpaid and most colleges have specific guidelines for hour requirements and credits received.
- ⊕ Without pay, 120 hours are required for 3 credits.
- ⊕ 220 hours are required for 3 credits with pay.
- ⊕ The amount paid is up to you and can be based on experience level.
- ⊕ Firaxis typically pays \$10 an hour.



Firaxis Internship History

- ③ 8 years
- ③ Paid and unpaid positions
- ③ **18** Art Interns
- ③ **7** Programming Interns
- ③ **3** Design/Production Interns
- ③ **17** Total Hires = **65%** retention



Why have an Internship Program?

- ③ Inexpensive way to add content to your staff if you need extra help.
- ③ Enables your team to off load some of the less complex tasks.
- ③ Grow your own employees if you are located in a region with a limited talent pool.
- ③ Provides you with a 4-6 month interview when evaluating a potential new hire.
- ③ An opportunity to INVEST IN TALENT!



Evaluating whether or not you can commit to interns

- ⊕ Do you have the work?
- ⊕ Do you have the time?
- ⊕ Know when to pull the plug.



How to Find Potential Interns

- ③ Start with your own school (rely on recommendation of professors you trust).
- ③ Find schools with strong Art, CS and Design programs.
- ③ Offer to do speaking engagements and demos – not necessarily with ulterior motive (career days).
 - Teach?
 - Get involved with Steering Committees
- ③ Connect and advertise with the career placement programs.



What makes for a successful Internship Program?

Set Up

- ③ Have enough work.
- ③ Have a more senior person assigned to be a mentor to that intern.
- ③ Get them in the studio every day for the first few weeks if they will only be in 1 or 2 days during the semester.
- ③ Make sure they sign an NDA and that they understand what it means.



What makes for a successful Internship Program?

Implementation

- ③ Make them interview like any other potential employee – they need to understand that we are not as casual as we may look.
- ③ Don't compromise on talent.
- ③ Structure and grow the task complexity by setting goals that are appropriate to the skill level, but be sure to challenge them.
- ③ Don't bank on the work (they are supplemental).
- ③ Set mid-term and final evaluations.



What makes for a successful Internship Program?

Implementation (continued)

- ③ Set personal goals for the intern (especially if the work is not terribly exciting). Understand that they may have ideas about what they want to get out of the experience as well.
- ③ Treat them and their ideas with the same consideration and respect as any other employee and encourage them.
- ③ Have an open door policy (mentor relationship).
- ③ Respect their other commitments (i.e. School).



Potential Pitfalls

- ⊕ It is a time commitment.
- ⊕ Can't count on the work (at least not initially).
- ⊕ Requires a structured plan.
- ⊕ Can be bad for your reputation among potential new hires.



Potential Benefits

- ⊕ Could find a reliable employee.
- ⊕ Brings new energy to the team.
- ⊕ Inexpensive risk.
- ⊕ Seeds techniques and can help in attracting more interns.
- ⊕ Can be good for your reputation among potential new hires.
- ⊕ Great way to work people into your pipeline.



Why get an Internship?

- ③ It gets you an inside look at how games are made.
- ③ Sets you apart from other graduates.
- ③ Networking!
- ③ Helps other students that don't have an internship.
- ③ Confirms your belief that there's no better job than making games.



Which Internship is right for you?

- ③ What do you want to do?
Specialize
- ③ Search for a good company close to your school (or away for the summer).
- ③ Don't wait till May
- ③ Research the company you're applying to.
- ③ Find out how demanding it will be.
- ③ Check your career center.
They can hook you up with companies and previous interns who are alumni.



How to stand out from a crowd?

- ③ Professionalism!
You're not in yet...
- ③ Excellent work in your portfolio that shows your potential.
- ③ Ask a few questions.
- ③ Wear a tie to the interview.
- ③ Write thank you notes to everyone you interview with.



Paid or Unpaid?

- ⊕ Check with your advisor for class credit options.
- ⊕ Don't be afraid to ask about compensation but also don't focus on it.
- ⊕ Realize that if you are paid and you want college credit, you'll probably have to work more hours for those credits.



Balancing School and Work

- ③ SCHOOL COMES FIRST!!!!
The company will understand.
- ③ Consider what you're getting from the internship and what you're getting from school.
- ③ Realize that what you're learning at work will most likely apply to your schoolwork.



Balancing School and Work

- ⊕ Take time off for midterms and finals
Your portfolio must be competitive!
- ⊕ Put in enough days at the office to let them know you're serious, but don't skimp on schoolwork.
- ⊕ Make mom and dad proud by graduating and getting a good job right away.



Make it impossible for them to let you go.

- ④ Do excellent work quickly
- ④ Respond well to critiques
- ④ Accept responsibility.
- ④ Talk to everyone!
But don't be annoying
- ④ Know your role.
- ④ You're interviewing for the job the whole time!



Backup Plans

- ⊕ Schoolwork and portfolio is the most important.
You must stay competitive no matter what the company says.
- ⊕ If the company you intern for can't hire you, they're bound to know other companies they can recommend.
- ⊕ Don't burn any bridges!



Q and A



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Thanks for coming!

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