

# ROTATIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



#### Original Creators:

B. Braun Medical Inc.,  
Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment  
Board, Inc., and  
Lehigh Career & Technical Institute

#### Manufacturing Participants:

B. Braun Medical Inc.,  
Nestle Waters North America,  
Dynalene Inc.,  
ATAS International



#### Type of Activity:

Work-based Learning



#### Target Audience:

16-24 year olds in manufacturing  
education programs (the pilot  
targeted 17-18 year old high school  
students, essentially juniors and  
seniors who are educationally  
prepared; the program will be  
extended to adult students)



#### Dream It. Do It. Location:

Pennsylvania



#### Synopsis:

The Rotational Internship Program is an industry-driven collaborative model between employers, educators, trade organizations and local workforce investment boards that offers manufacturing students four six-week internships at multiple employers so they may experience a variety of manufacturing environments over a short period of time. High school and college students ages 16 to 24 who are enrolled in manufacturing education programs and possess basic science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills are encouraged to apply. The goal of the program is to change the perception of manufacturing by exposing young people to the wide variety of jobs that are available in manufacturing today, and to ultimately attract more young, qualified people to the field.



# B. BRAUN MEDICAL INC. ROTATIONAL INTERNSHIP STORY



After a visit to Germany to learn about its educational system, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett returned home inspired to introduce young people to specific areas of study at a much younger age than what's customary in the U.S. Ironically, this German skills model of education was launched by the Honorable Peter Ammon, a former German Ambassador to the U.S. Governor Corbett enlisted the help of B. Braun Medical, Inc.—a German-based medical device manufacturer that operates a plant in Allentown, PA—to come up with ideas to accomplish this without making major changes to Pennsylvania's educational system. Rex Boland, Vice President and General Manager at B. Braun's Allentown operations, with the support of Bruce Heugel, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer and Chris Donigan, Senior Vice President of Human Resources, developed the solution: a "rotational" internship program offered to students at the high school and college level that would expose them to many different manufacturing environments. The goal is to change the perception of manufacturing by letting young people experience multi-faceted manufacturing environments, and ultimately attract more people to the field.

With support from Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board and the Lehigh Career and Technical Institute (LCTI), the Rotational Internship Program was born, with B. Braun as one of several local manufacturers that now offer internships through the program. Students who qualify are offered four six-week internships, and get a broad view of manufacturing over a short period of time.

At the participating manufacturing companies, employees are paired up

with students to serve as mentors and ambassadors for the program. Students are provided with training at start-up to get a feel for the work before they hit the shop floor. The company says the program has been nothing but positive so far.

"I see mentors getting so excited about developing the next generation—having these kids fully engaged, asking questions, and getting assignments," said Lee Hippert, Manufacturing Maintenance Manager at B. Braun. "I sit down with the students and their mentors at the end of each internship and their interaction is so heartwarming. There's a connection you don't see in other venues. And you can tell our mentors really care about what the students think about our company, and what they think about manufacturing."

**"THESE STUDENTS  
ARE CHANGING THE  
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MANUFACTURING,"**

Jan Klevis, Director of Postsecondary & Workforce Education at LCTI, says every student that has gone through the program has been exposed to the career opportunities in manufacturing, and some students have even committed to it. And, feedback from participating manufacturers suggests that program is gaining popularity.

"These students are changing the dialogue about manufacturing," said

Klevis. "And their parents are learning that these jobs are available, and there is a future for every child, and the chance to earn college credit while in high school."

"Our students at Lehigh Career & Technical Institute enjoyed the program immensely. The students learned first-hand from their mentors the importance of coming to work on time every day and putting forth 100% effort," said Sandra J. Himes, Executive Director at Lehigh Career & Technical Institute.

Understanding many young people want a career with advancement opportunities, B. Braun is offering tuition reimbursement to employees who want to further their education and training.

"Some of the best engineers have started on the production floor," said Boland.

B. Braun intends to not only continue the Rotational Internship program, but expand it in the future.

"This program provides the basis of how we will get more kids into the programs that will feed into our plants," said Boland. "Long-term, we want to have these programs throughout the Valley in different fields, like general manufacturing, engineering, etc."

"The Lehigh Valley Rotational Internship Network is an industry-driven, proven and field-tested workforce development model developing a pipeline of technically skilled workers," stated Nancy Dischinat, Executive Director of the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, Inc.

# ROTATIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

**1** Form mission and vision for launching a Rotational Internship Program. The mission should define the purpose and primary objectives of the program. The vision defines what the program should accomplish in the future.

**2** Establish a leading organization to oversee the Rotational Internship Network. This could be a school, a workforce investment board, a regional manufacturers association or others. Ideally, this organization would have existing relationships with local employers and local educators.

**3** Identify schools that would provide students for the program. Schools having curricula that teach to industry credentials may serve as the best possible fit for this program. Technical high schools, career and technical schools, and community colleges are all institutions with proficient students.

**4** Create a pool of employers that would want to participate in the Rotational Internship Network. It may help to go through the local workforce investment boards, manufacturing associations, or chamber of commerce to locate employers.

**5** Once a school(s) and employer pool has been established, begin to hold meetings to understand the needs of the Rotational Internship Network. Things that need to be understood:

- What is the skill level of the students, both technical and soft? How does this align with potential tasks at their employers?
- What are the school's expectations of the employers? Does this program fit into an existing internship or co-op model? What are the employer's responsibilities if the student is earning credit? What type of evaluation forms or attendance forms are required?
- How should students prepare for the Rotational Internship Network?
- Are there labor requirements, board of education requirements, or age requirements that need to be considered? Companies may have age requirements for working on a manufacturing shop floor. Students who are prepared in a state-approved technical training program may be exempt from certain age requirements.

**6** Once these key questions have been answered, begin to design your Rotational Internship Network.

- How long will students spend at each employer?
- What are the qualifications for a student to be able to participate in the program?
  - i. Meet school requirements
  - ii. Recommendation of instructor
- How many students will be permitted into the program?
  - i. Determined by the number of participating employers and how many students each company can accommodate





**7** For those employers participating, it is possible that their employees have not previously managed students in an internship setting. It will be important to train mentors from these companies.

- School-to-Work Coordinators can provide mentor training
- What are the expectations of the mentors?

**8** Employers need to create training plans for the students they will host. School-to-Work Coordinators should develop the training plan with the employers. The training plan should encompass both the instructional program task competency list and competencies/duties that may be unique to each company. These plans should answer the following questions:

- What will they be doing on the job?
- How do the competencies relate to their instructional program?
- What competencies will they acquire from their work?

(Note – the training plan refers to the job site training plan, not prep in the classroom and lab.)

**9** Compensation

- How will they be compensated?
  - Will they receive a stipend/hourly pay?
- A staffing agency may be utilized as the employer of record

**10** Schools need to create a pool of students that meet the qualifications previously established. It will be necessary to receive parental permission for high school students.

**11** School-to-Work Coordinators should prepare students for the interview process including developing a resume and practicing interview skills.

[www.themanufacturinginstitute.org](http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org) [www.dreamitdoit.com](http://www.dreamitdoit.com)

**12** Interested and qualified students will then participate in an interview council comprised of participating employers that will allow employers to better understand their professionalism, technical capabilities, interest in learning, and expectations.

**13** Employers and educators select qualified students to participate in the Rotational Internship Network. Selected students should be notified with a predetermined schedule of their rotations and a set of expectations.

**14** School-to-Work Coordinators will visit the worksites

- Mentors will evaluate the students performance using a pre-determined rubric
- Attendance will be tracked

**15** A post-interview should be conducted with students by an independent entity to determine educational value, work readiness preparation, and to evaluate the process.

- Possibly request representatives from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) to conduct the post-interview
- Interview can be done in a group setting

**16** Employers should be surveyed to assess the success of the program and the company's satisfaction with the process.