

Recruitment in the Twenty-first Century: Using Technology to Market Your Program and Your Positions

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Recruitment in the Twenty-first Century: Using Technology to Market Your Program and Your Positions

University of Maryland College Park Dietetic Internship

Program Sponsors:

The University of Maryland, College Park
Department of Nutrition and Food Science
The Office of Professional Studies
The Office of Information Technology
University Dining Services



National Agricultural Library
Food and Nutrition Information Center
Food Safety Information Center

The Internship is part of a cooperative project between the National Agricultural Library (NAL), Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC), Food Safety Information Center (FSIC), and the University of Maryland Department of Nutrition and Food Science.

LEARNING OUTCOME:

To describe two Internet based tools that can market existing dietetics programs

ABSTRACT:

Finding persons who are the best fit for any given position remains a challenge for internships, and employers. Recruiting can only be effective if applicants are aware of the vacancies. Business settings have increasingly turned to the Internet to reach a wider geographic audience. Similar techniques might aid in dietetics recruitment.

To test this premise, a dietetic internship utilized two tools to try reaching geographically dispersed applicants. The first tool created was a Macromedia Flash Video. Students can view or download the video directly from the website. An announcement was sent to the dietetics educators' listserv with a request that undergraduates be made aware of this video.

A web counter tracked visitors. Unique new visitors more than doubled from the period September through January. Recorded visits as: September 414; October 653; November 854; December 762; January 994.

The second tool was the implementation of a series of "virtual open houses." This web casting provided out of state participants an overview of the internship program. Guided by a presenter, participants viewed a tour of the website, rotation links, and e-portfolios. Instant messaging provided an opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback. These tools resulted in a forty percent increase in applications.

The return on investment from using technology to conduct these meetings is high. While there is an investment developing the materials they can be reused and made available 24/7. Internet tools allow dietitians and internship programs the opportunity to market their programs and potentially increase their applicant pool.

THE PROGRAM



(Class of 2006-2007 with mentor Marsha Diamond, CDRD, Inc.)

The University of Maryland College Park Dietetic Internship provides a thorough training in general dietetics with an emphasis in Information Management and Communication.

Many learning experiences are planned for the intern to

broaden his/her scope of the dietetics field with an emphasis on the application of information technology.

Through supervised practice experiences at many off-site facilities, the intern develops a diverse range of skills, has an opportunity to meet many potential role models and to develop a wide network of professional contacts in the Baltimore-Washington corridor.



Further, these varied experiences will assist interns in developing critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, effective communication skills and collaborative, team-building skills.

The 43-week program consists of approximately 1100 supervised practice hours in clinical, community, food service management and information technology.

TECHNOLOGY TOOL 1: PROGRAM OVERVIEW IN FLASH



The first tool created was a Macromedia Flash Video. This video presentation provided a general overview of the internship program, giving prospective interns an idea of what kinds of projects to expect, who they would work with, and what skills they would develop during the program.

Links to the Flash files were provided from the internship Web site, where students could view or download the video directly from the website, at any time of day or night. An announcement was sent to the dietetics educators' listserv with a request that undergraduates be made aware of this video.

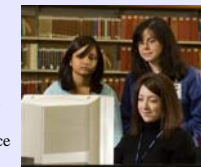


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TECHNOLOGY TOOL 2: VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE SERIES

The second tool was the implementation of a series of "virtual open houses." These Webcasts provided out of state participants an overview of the internship program. A Webcast uses streaming technology to distribute a single content source to many simultaneous viewers.



Guided by a presenter, participants viewed a tour of the internship Website, internship rotations and past student e-portfolios. A phone bridge allowed participants to speak directly to the internship director, current interns, graduates of the internship, and program preceptors. Instant messaging provided an opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback.

The use of these tools resulted in a forty percent increase in program applicants. Return on investment from using technology to conduct these meetings is high. While there is an investment developing the materials, they can be reused and made available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In addition, through this improved communication, internship applicants have a greater sense of the program's goals, rotations, and requirements prior to undergoing the application and computer matching process.



This in turn results in stronger applicants who are a better fit for the program, and more satisfied intern graduates.

Internet tools allow dietitians and internship programs the opportunity to market their programs and potentially increase their applicant pool.