



The Internship Institute | 215.870.9700  
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## THE PROVEN SUCCESS OF INTERNSHIP SEEDING

*The vitality of the economy is business and the vitality of business is talent*

### OVERVIEW

The Internship Institute is an impact-driven non-profit organization – 501(c)(3) - that closes the gaps between college education and gainful employment. Its flagship program, the Internship Seeding Initiative, provides participating businesses and fellow non-profits with everything needed to develop internship programs as easily as possible, to manage them as well as possible and to grow them as much as possible.



By methodically “planting” high-quality programs one-by-one, Internship Seeding increases the “opportunity supply” for college students in need of work experience vital to making them more employable and creating stepping stones to secure jobs in their chosen field.

In 2010, the Internship Seeding Initiative was awarded a \$375,000 federal grant from the Employment Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor as part the Workforce Investment Regional Economic Development (WIRED) funding designated for the 10 counties in Northeast Pennsylvania comprising the cities of Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Allentown, and Reading.



This regional grant targeted talent cultivation as the key driver of economic development strategies to build capacity by increasing retention of the college-educated workforce to fulfill skilled jobs in evolving business sectors. The Seeding Initiative also enlisted stakeholders creating collaborative synergies among higher education institutions, workforce agencies, economic development leaders and private industry to contribute value in pursuit of common goals and measureable outcomes.

### Outcomes: Creating Quality Internships and Opportunities

The program achieved total saturation of the region, including participation by all 30 institutions of higher education. The 67 participating employer host sites represented all 10 counties. Another 120 host sites received Seeding materials with instructions (to apply the *Blueprint for Internship Success* program management system, the *Internship eToolkit*, and a multimedia training package for supervisors, mentors and interns). All 50 students funded under the grant were recruited and placed.



At the two-year mark, a full 90% of the programs remained active, with more than 20% growth, and 85% continued to actively rely on the Seeding materials. Among student participants, 56% received job offers. Based on survey results, 70% of employer participants were “extremely satisfied,” 15% were “very satisfied,” 11% were “adequately satisfied, and 4% were “less than satisfied,” mainly related to administrative demands. Now with 6+ years of incubation, the success of Internship Seeding is evident.



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## INTERNSHIP SEEDING SUCCESS STORIES

*To assess the success of Internship Seeding, one needn't look further than to East Penn, where the program has grown from 2 to 25 interns in five years, has led to double-digit jobs and is now 'branching out' exponentially into other areas of the company.*

East Penn Manufacturing Co., Inc. is based in Lyon Station, PA near the city of Reading. In six storied decades, East Penn has grown from a one-room shop with a product line of five automotive batteries to one of the world's leading battery manufacturers with over 8,000 employees, 450 product designs, and hundreds of awards for manufacturing and environmental excellence.



As a participating beneficiary of the Internship Seeding Initiative, East Penn formalized their internship program from what had been done ad hoc, i.e., with interns related to company employees.

From its modest beginnings with two sponsored interns through the grant, East Penn now boasts a thriving internship program with more than 25 interns per year. Cheryl Spangler, Employment Manager and internship champion, explained how the company has grown the program by about 5 interns per year and will continue at least that pace as they 'branch out' into other departments.

Though Spangler couldn't verify an exact figure, she estimates that – to date – 10-12 interns have earned full-time employment as an outcome of the Internship Seeding Initiative. These include positions aligned with high-skilled STEM jobs as lab technicians, electrical engineers, process control engineers and other technicians.

When asked how many interns she'd like to have next year, she genuinely chuckled, "as many as the building will hold." East Penn is now ready to "branch out" into various other departments enterprise-wide, including marketing, accounting and distribution.

Ms. Spangler also said that, "While we feel we've got our program well in hand, even today, we still refer back to The Internship Institute's training materials and practices."

**ATTRIBUTION:** *The Internship Institute would like to thank East Penn Manufacturing for its participation and commitment to make its internship program a strategic priority as well as, especially, Cheryl Spangler for her continued dedication and hard work to make the program increasingly successful. These fruitful outcomes are only possible because they did their part.*



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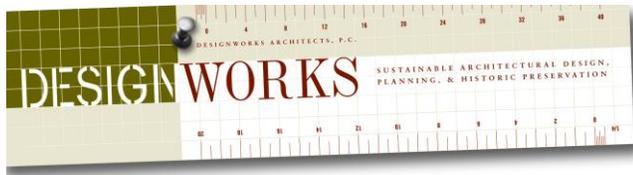
## Greater Reading Economic Partnership

In support of its work to attract and grow manufacturing jobs, the Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP) participated in the grant program. Deb Heffner, EDP, Economic Development Coordinator, explained, “The [Internship Seeding Initiative] helped us to develop a stronger internship program. We have maintained our internship program and hire two [paid] interns every year.” These interns assist with site location decisions, site selector relations, grant writing, event planning, public relations, and accounting.



**Deb Heffner, EDP**

“We’ve also hired two former interns to work for us,” says Heffner. “Even today, we still rely on the training materials provided by The Internship Institute, particularly by implementing the best practices into our internship hiring and monitoring procedures.” As for the original intern(s) who were paid through the WIRED grant, Heffner confirmed that they are employed full-time in their field of study.



Designworks Architects, PC is a small architectural firm formed in 1985 by William Vitale in the Penns Common Historic District in Reading, PA. Designworks has been committed to employing green architectural principles as integral to all of its services including: architectural design, sustainable design, historic restoration, interior design, adaptive reuse, urban planning, feasibility studies and consultations.



**Rosemary Frank-Vitale**

The firm’s co-owner, Rosemary Frank-Vitale found the Internship Seeding Initiative to be very beneficial, including hiring two interns full-time upon graduation. A proud mentor, she explained that, “It also allowed us to give a boost to the blossoming careers of these young people and help them refine their professional aspirations.” As for the two interns sponsored by the grant, she confirmed that one moved onto another architectural job after working for us for two years and another subsequently chose to study culinary arts and now works in a food service company.



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Headquartered in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Net Driven® is a specialized internet marketing, web design and consulting firm catering exclusively to the automotive retail industry. With nearly 70 employees, the company sought to formalize its program through participation in the Internship Seeding Initiative.

According to Patrick Sandone, president of Net Driven, “We were able to quickly take a fledgling program and fold it into our core business strategy. Taking part [in the Seeding Initiative] educated us about how to use interns and create a great experience on both sides. By formalizing our internship, we were able to take more risks to invest the time, energy and resources to do it right because we knew putting students to work was a sound investment and a successful pipeline strategy for new hires. We’ve since brought on about 18-20 former interns full-time, most of whom remain with the company.”



**Patrick Sandone, III**

Sandone explained that - following its participation in the Seeding Initiative - Net Driven expanded its internship program to recruit up to 10 students per year to work in a variety of positions, including: sales, internet marketing and software development. The company also partners with local colleges, such as University of Scranton, Penn State University and Marywood University, to recruit interns. While the grant sponsored the initial compensation, Net Driven continues to pay its interns.

“Part of that commitment to pay wages is philosophical,” Sandone says. “But we rely on our interns to do real work and we believe that commands real pay. Our interns helped us get things done that we couldn’t have achieved otherwise and made a significant impact on the business. It’s also important to convey how much we value their contributions to our company’s success and all the more given that we hope to hire them,” he touts.

As for the Seeding Initiative, Sandone acknowledges that the best practices and training remain fundamental to the program’s ongoing success. “It’s definitely made me an advocate. I’ve continued to discuss our program with other business owners and encourage them to consider how interns could help them achieve their goals.”

### **About Net Driven®**

Net Driven is a subsidiary of [Internet Brands Inc.](#) Founded in 2007 by Pat Sandone, a third-generation independent tire dealer, Net Driven provides web solutions to thousands of automotive businesses throughout North America. Working exclusively in the automotive industry and headquartered in Scranton, PA, they also have offices in Duluth, MN, and New York, NY. Net Driven was acquired by Internet Brands in 2015, and continues to grow their footprint in the industry.



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**Title:** Experience the Key to Success

**Source:** *The Bucks County Courier Times*

Published by John Anastasi - January 10, 2011



The Internship Seeding Initiative has worked well for EthosGen, a biomass-to-bioenergy company in Luzerne County, PA. Jim Abrams, its president, said the grant covered the cost of the training program for five interns. EthosGen liked the results so much that it has paid out-of-pocket to train another seven interns using it.

“I’m crazy busy,” said Abrams. “It’s vital for me to have people around me who work at the pace I do. Those tools helped them to learn to anticipate what’s next and ask themselves, “How can I help do more?”



**Jim Abrams**

## More on EthosGen

EthosGen’s mission is simple: Create a clear path to energy independence for industrial, commercial and military operations worldwide. The company creates and deploys utility-grade energy systems that deliver a reliable, secure and cost-effective power.

Whether it’s the conversion of waste heat into an economically beneficial and sustainable energy source or collaborating on a transformative solution with other industry pioneers, EthosGen’s technologies generate clean energy with immediate value and in a way that is geographically and economically accessible to all.

**NOTE:** *The results above have increased exponentially since 2011. Updated figures will be available shortly.*



Founded in 1997 and based in Pittston, PA, igourmet.com is North America's leading online gourmet food and gift retailer. Offering over 800 specialty cheeses, thousands of fine foods, and a complete line of gift baskets, the company has won numerous awards from highly regarded reviewers and has accumulated hundreds of thousands of loyal customers.

Lisa Griffiths, the Director of Sales & Marketing, explains that “Our company offers a non-stipend internship which poses difficulty for some students. The subsidized [WIRED grant] program offered by [The Internship Institute] made finding a qualified candidate a much easier process.” Though modest in size, igourmet.com continues to average about 6 interns per year, has hired 2 interns since participating in the Seeding Initiative and relies on other former interns as contract employees when needed.



**Lisa Griffiths**