



Best Practices: Matching Culture to What New Hires Want in an Employer

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Pariveda Solutions, an IT consulting firm headquartered in Dallas, Texas, builds the factors that are attractive to college graduates into its culture and uses its work in this area as a marketing tool to potential hires. The results have been impressive.

Over the last four years, Pariveda's internship program has achieved a 100 percent acceptance rate among all interns who have received offers for full-time positions and the firm's offer/acceptance rate from its college recruiting program has ranged between 85 and 95 percent.

"We believe identifying talent at the college level allows us to grow our consultants at a faster pace to become our next vice presidents," says Lori Dipprey, director of talent development and recruiting. "To accomplish this goal, it is crucial to identify the attributes that will attract the top college grad."

Pariveda found that today's graduates want regular feedback on their performances as well as the opportunity to advance in the company. The firm has conducted performance appraisals on a quarterly basis, allowing it to identify skill gaps and high performers, and provide constructive feedback that will ultimately help its employees grow as consultants. Currently, Pariveda is implementing a new system that moves to continuous feedback on a weekly basis.

"Frequency of feedback is important to our culture because it allows us to recognize those employees that are exceeding expectations and identify areas where we need more training," Dipprey explains. "The frequency of our performance appraisals also allows us to have the ideal promotion cycle, which attracts college recruits. They know that if they perform they will be rewarded with advancement in their career."

Employees also value training opportunities as a vehicle to grow. Dipprey points out that there are multiple avenues for Pariveda employees to get the training they desire: Some are mandatory and others are after-hours classes that the employees put together themselves on topics they wish to share with others.

"Current college graduates are looking for careers during which they have the ability to learn continuously, and they want to work for an employer that shares that same value," she says.

To further align its culture with the wants of new college hires and current employees, Pariveda also:

- Offers some scheduling flexibility to allow employees a better work-life balance.
- Locates its offices in areas where college students want to live and near affordable housing.

- Requires everyone in the company to be involved in community service. Community service hours are required at every level (as an employee advances, she or he is expected to log more community service hours).
- Encourages consultants to develop informal networks that focus on common interest areas (i.e. photography, a specific technology, travel, and others).

Pariveda recruiters spend a good deal of time on campus meeting with students and sharing its culture. The firm's recruiters not only conduct information sessions that talk about its culture, but they also address topics—such as the importance of networking—during classroom presentations.

“The current generation of college graduates needs to feel appreciated for the work they do, enjoy the people they work with, and be challenged,” Dipprey says. “All aspects of our culture feed on those needs and make Pariveda a rewarding place to work.”