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COMGROUP'S CGXPERIENCE OFFERS UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR TOMORROW'S LEADERS



The Communications Group, an Arkansas based PR agency, is making a meaningful and positive impact on the future of the public relations profession through its unique internship program, CGX, helping shape and mentor aspiring students.

Pictured (L-R): Claire Hammond, Summer Intern; Lora Mosley, Public Relations Specialist; Hannah Phillips, Public Relations & Client Services Specialist

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (July 29, 2024) – When 31% of hiring managers say they [avoid](#)¹ hiring Gen Zers, what's a job-seeking college student to do? How can the next generation of business professionals improve their chances of landing gainful employment? It turns out, the answer may be an old-fashioned, but still highly relevant higher education process known as the humble internship. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), paid [interns](#) receive almost two times more job offers than students without an internship on their resume. Participating in innovative internship programs, like the CGXperience created by [The Communications Group](#) (ComGroup), can prove to be a powerful advantage for Arkansas college students who are about to enter the labor market.

The internship concept may be suffering alongside Gen Zers from its own identity crisis, based on the misguided perception that interns are frequently only useful for making coffee runs, getting mail or producing photo copies. The CGX internship was created to be a fresh take on the entire internship experience that makes the process genuinely immersive and experiential. The future-facing CGX internship program puts a focus firmly on the soft skills needed to succeed in professional work environments, but that hiring managers often bemoan as lacking in Gen Z.

¹ Resume Builder, January 25, 2024

ComGroup launched its [CGXperience](#) in 2020, giving college students immersive learning and mentorship from [public relations professionals in an agency serving global clients](#). To commemorate National Intern Day and CGXperience's upcoming five-year anniversary, the agency is sharing its expertise in building an innovative, multi-faceted internship program that benefits interns *and* the organizations that will ultimately hire them.

ComGroup's dynamic internship program is a year-round, multi-tiered program that features three available levels, all of which are paid: semester internships, resident internships and micro-internships, built so that each element supports the other. The agency hires a paid PR intern for the fall, spring, and summer semesters. In 2023, the agency added a [resident](#) intern position, treating the intern as a longer-term position, allowing for more in-depth learning for students who want to gain more knowledge of PR and experience working in a professional environment. Also, in 2023, the agency established the micro-internship program. The micro-internship element of the program deploys a small team of interns to assist with more intense, shorter duration learning experiences such as onsite event management and event-driven social media campaigns. A team of CGX micro-interns from two different Arkansas colleges recently supported ComGroup's PR team during the national Broyles Awards program activities and televised live event. Another team of CGX micro-interns recently supported the agency's event team in a 4-day special event series for a national manufacturing client.

"ComGroup's CGXperience is not designed like any other internship program. We wanted to reimagine the traditional internship and really prepare college communications students for life as working professionals. We see it as an investment in the future of Arkansas's PR industry," said [Lora Mosley](#), ComGroup PR Specialist and Internship Coordinator. "Today's interns are tomorrow's leaders and ComGroup is playing a pivotal role in sharpening their skills through mentorship and immersive professional learning experiences, while helping feed the talent pipeline for employers."

Significant ROI

For the sponsoring business, the ROI of a great internship program can be significant. Eight of ten employers with internship programs report experiencing [high](#) returns on their investment. Mosley says this has been ComGroup's experience. Their agency benefits from a vetted talent pool and an increase in brand recognition among college students and professors. The agency has filled two full-time positions and one contractor role with CGXperience alumni. Since 2020, the agency has welcomed 16 interns from six Arkansas colleges and universities. Each intern is entrusted with real-world assignments and mentored from start to finish by the agency's award-winning PR team.

Investing in Next Gen Leadership

High-quality internship programs benefit the organization and the intern. Internship programs like the CGXperience prioritize fostering the next generation of leaders. The agency provides valuable and interactive learning experiences that help interns understand the inner workings of an industry or future workplace. And internships can have more immediate benefits for students, especially when the opportunity is paid or counts toward the individual's college credit.

Tips for Employers

The value an organization draws from an internship can take many forms, including a fresh perspective from interns, cost-effective labor and project assistance. Other benefits include opportunities to develop staff's supervisory, mentorship, and leadership skills, and developing a pool of new talent to help fill vacancies. Mosley says five key factors can help an employer build a successful internship program:

1. Create a strong recruitment process.
2. Establish standards for candidates, including areas of study and age.
3. Develop and maintain relationships with professors and internship alumni

4. Design the program to positively contribute to the organization's mission.
5. Make sure everyone in the organization is committed to the internship program.

A deeper dive: ComGroup is publishing a blog series this August, taking a deep dive into each of these topics with more practical tips and suggestions to help organizations enhance their internship program – whether they are just starting out or already established. Click [here](#) to read the first blog in this series for more.

To learn more about the CGXperience and ComGroup, follow the internship program on [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and visit [ComGroup.com](#).

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About The Communications Group

The Communications Group is an award-winning, Arkansas-based, marketing and public relations firm established in 1987. ComGroup is an integrated marketing and communications firm delivering value and solutions to clients in North America and Europe with data-driven strategic research and planning, integrated technology-driven implementation and responsive monitoring in agriculture, business-to-business, health care and outreach and education sectors. More at [ComGroup.com](#).