

# Endress+Hauser

Endress+Hauser 

[Endress+Hauser](#) has developed a comprehensive, tiered work-based learning strategy to attract and develop early-career talent. With about 1,400 employees across multiple U.S. locations, the company manufactures process instrumentation used in industrial operations such as oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, and food and beverage production.

Over the past two decades, the organization's internship and apprenticeship efforts have evolved from ad hoc placements into a coordinated workforce development function housed within human resources. The offerings now include:

- **Pre-apprenticeships for high school juniors and seniors** (10–12 participants per year)
- **Early-career apprenticeships** (two to three-year program for business and technical high school graduates, supporting eight apprentices per year to earn an associate's degree)
- **High school internships** (seniors working about 10 hours per week throughout the school year)
- **College internships** (a 12-week summer program)
- **College co-op** (a 16-week immersive experience)

The 12-week summer internship serves as the centerpiece to Endress+Hauser's work-based learning programs suite. Each intern is assigned multiple projects, often related to process optimization, design, automation, or business systems improvement, which is developed before the program begins. "Interns do real design work," Devina Fernandez, workforce development

partner and internship program leader, said. "They help us improve manufacturing processes, develop training tools, and even develop and test new product features." One intern built a set of Excel tools that reduced a key business process from a week to a single day; another used AI to streamline documentation workflows.

While earlier iterations of the program were primarily designed to give students exposure to the workplace, the focus has shifted to conversion and long-term talent development. "Our goal now is to find students earlier, prepare them for working with us, and identify those who we think will be the best fit," Fernandez explained.

Each intern is paired with a mentor who provides daily guidance, while the program lead facilitates professional development and coaching sessions throughout the summer. "Mentors shouldn't be in managerial roles," Fernandez noted. "A manager will choose someone on their team who is developing their leadership skills to be a mentor." Many mentors later move into team lead or managerial roles, a sign that the program benefits not just students, but emerging leaders across the organization.

The company's work-based learning efforts are built around three primary objectives:

## 1. Talent pipeline development and conversion

"Filling our talent pipeline is number one," said Fernandez. "This year was the first time we sent out full-time job offers before the interns left for the summer." The company now recruits early and makes offers before traditional career fair seasons begin, securing top candidates in advance.



## 2. Accelerated candidate readiness

Interns are encouraged to explore different parts of the business. Each participant is expected to reach out to several employees in other departments, learn about their work, and report back to the group. “We want them to be exposed to different areas and challenge what they think they’re interested in,” Fernandez explained. The company also emphasizes professional development. Each summer includes coaching sessions, an executive speaker series, and a leadership development intensive. “We want them to see what’s possible here and to understand what opportunities could be down the line,” Fernandez said.

## 3. Community development

In addition to technical projects, summer interns complete a group community-impact project. One cohort organized a goods drive and fundraising event to support a local domestic violence shelter. Others have coordinated STEM outreach for children’s programs. These experiences strengthen teamwork, communication, and civic engagement while connecting the company to its community.

## Enabling Conditions

Conditions within the company that supported effectiveness and sustainability include:

### 1. Clear processes and cross-functional buy-in

The company's human resources and workforce development teams have established consistent documentation, onboarding processes, and communication plans to ensure continuity. "Our teams know what to expect," Fernandez explained. "Every team has had an intern, managers are familiar with how the program works, and the culture has shifted in how we welcome a new class each year."

### 2. A culture that welcomes learning

The company intentionally fosters a culture in which interns feel empowered to contribute ideas and ask questions. "They want to make an impact," said Fernandez. "Giving them ownership of something real, and supporting them when they make mistakes, helps them learn faster and builds trust and loyalty."

“

**Interns do real design work ... they help us improve manufacturing processes, develop training tools, and even develop and test new product features.**

– **DEVINA FERNANDEZ,**  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNER AND  
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM LEADER, ENDRESS+HAUSER

## Core Program Activities

When Endress+Hauser created its summer internship program, the major considerations that led to the program's effectiveness included:

### 1. Structured mentorship and support

The program's impact depends on a strong mentorship model. "Having someone with the bandwidth to support interns is key," Fernandez said. "If they don't have anyone to ask questions to day to day, it's not a good experience." Mentors are selected for their technical knowledge and interpersonal skills, and they receive training before the summer begins. This structure not only benefits interns but also helps mentors build supervisory experience and confidence.

### 2. Real projects, real impact

Each project must have a defined purpose, business justification, and measurable outcome. Interns track their work through project management software, allowing program leaders to see progress and outcomes in real time. "Every project has to answer why it matters and what the outcome is," Fernandez said. "That makes the work meaningful for both the intern and the company."

### 3. Consistent recruitment and year-round planning

The company maintains a year-round recruitment and onboarding timeline, with most offers extended before the end of the calendar year for the following summer. "If you want to secure top talent, you're making offers by December," Fernandez noted. "We fill 80 to 90 percent of our spots before the new year."

## Understanding Business Value

The program has delivered measurable and intangible returns for both the business and its employees.

### 1. Pipeline and Conversion

The clearest return to the company is in conversion: multiple interns have transitioned to full-time hires, particularly in engineering and business operations. By cultivating relationships early and hiring directly from the intern pool, the company reduces recruitment costs and shortens time-to-competence for new hires.

### 2. Innovation and Adaptability

Individual projects regularly yield operational gains: shorter production times, streamlined processes, and new tools that increase efficiency. While the company has not yet aggregated all project metrics, most include data on time or cost savings. "Each project has its own measure of impact," Fernandez explained. "If we added them up, the total would be significant."

### 3. Leadership Development

The mentorship structure doubles as a leadership development tool. Employees who serve as mentors gain valuable experience managing, coaching, and communicating across generations. "We've seen mentors go on to become team leads and managers," said Fernandez. "They often point back to their first intern as the moment they realized they could lead."

### 4. Community and Industry Development

By engaging in service projects and cross-departmental collaboration, interns contribute to a culture of teamwork and innovation. They also strengthen the company's reputation as a desirable employer and community partner.

## Lessons Learned

Endress+Hauser's internship program demonstrates how thoughtful structure, meaningful work, and intentional mentorship can transform early-career experiences into sustainable talent pipelines. The program delivers results: improved efficiency, stronger leadership capacity, and a steady stream of future-ready employees, and other organizations can learn from their experiences:

- **Dedicated coordination makes the difference**

Having a centralized point of contact responsible for communicating with schools, managing schedules, and tracking student progress ensured consistency and kept supervisors and students engaged.

- **Supervisor preparation is essential**

Coaching mentors on how to work with students, especially those new to the workforce, improved productivity and student confidence.

- **Feedback loops strengthen the model**

Regular check-ins among students, mentors, and partners surfaced issues early on and led to quick adjustments and improvements.

- **Visible business benefits sustain commitment**

The program has resulted in real improvements to productivity, morale, and team culture. This is real evidence that work-based learning programs can pay off.

Fernandez summarized, "It's about giving interns something they can own, something real that benefits the company, and creating an environment where they can learn, contribute, and thrive."