

Daycos



[Daycos](#) has built a sustainable and community-centered internship program that reflects both its operational needs and civic values. Founded in the late 1970s, the company provides technology and financial outsourcing services to moving and logistics firms across the country. Headquartered in a rural Nebraska town of about 25,000 residents, it manages billions of dollars in transactions each year and employs about 60 full-time staff.

"We're an outsourcing firm," Brandon Day, CEO and owner of Daycos, explained. "Our customers hire us because we can do something better and less expensive than they can in-house. Having the best employees is key to that."

The company's location, away from major metropolitan centers, has long shaped its workforce approach. Early on, the family who founded Daycos relocated from Washington, D.C., to a small town in Nebraska, where they discovered both cost advantages and a deeply loyal workforce. Over time, the company has come to view its rural setting as a competitive asset.

Today, the firm's internship program plays a strategic role in workforce development and community engagement. Initially reluctant to host interns ("I used to refuse," Day admitted, "because by the time you get them trained, it's time for them to leave."), the company eventually reframed internships through the lens of its B Corporation status and purpose-driven mission. "We started thinking about our stakeholders not just as shareholders, but as employees, customers, and the community," he said. "We revisited this idea of internships, and we really changed our tune, not necessarily because we saw a benefit to our business stakeholder, but because we thought it was good for our community stakeholder."

The company's internship portfolio includes both traditional semester-long placements and year-long

positions through a regional program known as Growing Together, supported by the Aksarben Foundation. The program supports college seniors to match with local employers for full-time internships during their final year of study and facilitates local housing options for interns who need them.

The company typically hosts one or two students through the [Growing Together](#) program each year, alongside several others in shorter-term placements. Most interns work in IT and programming roles, though occasional placements occur in accounting, finance, or operations.

The company's approach to work-based learning is grounded in long-term, purpose-driven goals rather than short-term labor needs.

1. Strengthen the local talent pipeline

The company sees internships as a way to retain young professionals in rural areas. "We felt it was really important to show kids that there are places to work in our town where they can do cool things and work with great people," Day said. "They don't have to move to Omaha or Kansas City or Minneapolis to work someplace that'll treat them well and let them do cool stuff."

2. Enhance company culture

Early experiences revealed an unexpected benefit: interns enriched organizational culture. "Our employees loved having them around," Day recalled. "They brought fresh perspectives, and for some of our long-tenured staff, it was fun. They got to be mentors again."

3. Support community and business growth

Internships reflect the company's broader B Corp mission of creating shared value. "We view success not just by whether they stay with us, but by whether we help them launch their careers," Day said. "Even if they move on, that's still a success."

Enabling Conditions

Conditions within the company that supported effectiveness and sustainability include:

1. Culture first: Creating a positive, inclusive environment

Culture emerged as the single most important factor. “A strong, positive culture is key,” Day emphasized. “If you have a negative or challenging culture, it’s really hard for an intern to be successful in a short timeframe.” The firm’s team-based structure — flat, collaborative, and self-managed — allows interns to integrate quickly and learn alongside peers. “We don’t have team leads,” he explained. “Interns become members of the team from day one.”

2. Clear intent and shared purpose

Before relaunching its internship program, Daycos documented the program’s purpose and shared it internally. “We wrote down why we were doing this,” Day said. “When a new intern starts, the team reviews what we’re trying to accomplish. Otherwise, everyone has different motivations, and that causes confusion.”

This clarity helps maintain alignment across departments and ensures that interns are viewed as learners, not short-term labor. “We hire interns to give them the best experience possible,” he added. “That means you’re not going to stick them on a task that you can’t get anyone else to do.”

3. Partnerships with local institutions

Through Growing Together and advisory councils at nearby colleges, the company provides feedback on curriculum relevance and needed skills. “We tell them what technologies we’re using and what we’re seeing,” Day said. “It takes time, but we’ve seen progress.”

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Daycos is also an enthusiastic partner in the Growing Together initiative with the Aksarben Foundation, and expressed trust in the network of talented students involved in the program. Day commented, “We have hired a number of Growing Together participants who never interned with us.”

These partnerships not only align education with employer needs but also strengthen community ties, critical for small towns competing for talent.

Core Program Activities

When Daycos created its work-based learning program, the major considerations that lead to the program's effectiveness included:

1. Flexibility and fit

For small and mid-sized firms, flexibility is crucial. The company avoids rigid quotas or cycles for hiring interns, instead evaluating team capacity and project alignment each year. "There are a lot of factors we consider. What are the needs? What teams would this intern benefit from being on? And is that team in a spot where it has the capacity to properly onboard an intern and give them the right support? And other times, we weren't able to find anybody we thought would be a good fit, so we decided not to bring them on. We don't want to set anybody up for failure. So, you have to be flexible, knowing what's going on in your business and what the situation is," commented Day.

2. Long term thinking

Day urges other small business peers to resist short-term thinking. "Early on, I refused to do internships," he admitted. "I thought they took too much time away from our busy season. But if you think long term, you realize interns are a tremendous benefit to your culture and your people."

He now sees internships as essential to sustainable hiring. "Don't complain that you can't find people when you won't do the things that build your pipeline," he said. "That's a problem you should have addressed 18 months ago."

3. Continuous feedback and reflection

While the company doesn't use formal metrics, it conducts exit interviews with interns to gather feedback. Leaders review those responses and adjust program elements each year. "It's not data-driven," Day admitted, "but we always want to know if they had a good experience."

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Understanding Business Value

The company assesses business value in both tangible and intangible ways.

1. Conversion and Retention

Each year, the company usually hires at least one intern into a full-time position. “Most of our interns are in IT,” Day noted. “Several have become full-time employees and are now some of our rising stars.”

2. Innovation and Adaptability

Interns provide valuable feedback on processes and technology. “We’ve had some fabulous interns who have come in and say, ‘Why are you guys doing this? Why don’t you do this?’ And we say, ‘I don’t know. That’s a great question.’ That candid feedback is really helpful.”

Interns help maintain a dynamic, innovative culture. “For a company with long-term employees, bringing in new talent is key to future success,” Day reflected. “Even if it’s temporary, it keeps us learning.”

3. Community and Industry Development

Internships also reinforce the company’s B Corp mission and civic purpose. “It’s good for our business stakeholder and our employee stakeholder,” Day said. “But it’s also good for our community stakeholder. That’s why we do it.”

Lessons Learned

The firm’s experience offers clear takeaways and actionable steps for other small and mid-sized businesses seeking to implement or strengthen work-based learning programs:

- **Start with purpose**
Define why the program exists, whether for community engagement, pipeline development, or skill building, and communicate that purpose internally and intentionally.
- **Prioritize culture over capacity**
Interns thrive in positive environments; even strong processes can fail if culture is weak.
- **Think long term**
View internships as investments in the workforce ecosystem, not short-term productivity boosts.
- **Be flexible and selective**
Only host interns when you have meaningful work and adequate support available.

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The volume of students we can continue to recruit from our priority schools matters to us ... We want to keep providing opportunities to students who might otherwise have been overlooked.

- BRANDON DAY, DAYCOS CEO

- **Leverage partnerships**
Collaborate with local colleges, chambers, and regional initiatives to find, prepare, and retain talent.

Day commented, “If the Growing Together program went away tomorrow, that would be a hit to our strategic efforts. For us, internships aren’t just nice to have. They’re critical to our future success.”