



AVILAR
THE COMPETENCY COMPANY

AVILAR.COM

Hiring New College Graduates? Here's What to Expect

Avilar Technologies, Inc. | 6760 Alexander Bell Drive, Suite 105 | Columbia, MD 21046 | (888) 759-7053 | www.avilar.com

If you're in the midst of hiring or onboarding employees that are new college graduates, congratulations! You're building your future workforce. You already know for the vast majority of new graduates, there will be a skills gap between company expectations and university curricula. Since the majority of college grads are part of Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2014), your new employees will also bring with them the perspectives, preferences, and talents of this new generation.



What skills do your new employees have? Where are the gaps? How can you maximize your training, engagement and retention of this new generation? Here are several ways to foster a learning culture that embraces what your new college graduate employees have to offer.

ONE: Optimize Your Internship Program for Recruitment

Many companies and government organizations have built strong college internship programs. It's a way to get extra help over a summer or a semester – while shaping skills of the next wave of employees by supplementing classroom learning with work experience. It's common for companies to offer top performers a job upon graduation. What's less common is to continue the best features of the internship programs for your new employees.

Track the Learning.

Most internships are filled with structured and unstructured learning opportunities. Start treating your interns like employees by setting up a learner profile in your learning management system (LMS). At the end of their internship, they'll have a transcript to back up their work experience. And, for the interns who later join you as full-time

employees, you already have a training history to build from.

Provide opportunities for meaningful work.

Don't underestimate the skills and drive of interns. Ally Financial is one organization that learned the recruitment [value of creating a learning curriculum](#) that focuses on giving interns meaningful projects as well as feedback and guidance. "I wasn't just getting coffee. I was really doing meaningful work," explained one intern, who pointed to that experience as a reason she signed on as a full-time employee following graduation.

Encourage collaboration with peers.

Interns naturally seek out other interns as they move through their work experiences. When you hire new grads, create opportunities for group connections for these young professionals. The leap from college to the working world is a big one and can be eased by connecting with others who are navigating the same transitions.

Deliver access to company leaders.

Interns frequently enjoy brown bag lunches with company leaders who share information about the company history, career

opportunities and innovative projects the company is funding. Be sure all employees, not just interns, are welcomed and encouraged to attend brown bags. This new group of young professionals is especially drawn to company missions. Access to role models who exemplify the attributes they're drawn to helps reinforce this important connection.

TWO: Build a Training Program That Fits

Generation Z college grads are typically book smart and tech-savvy. As a generation, they are diverse, multi-tasking information processors. But they won't know as much about your organization or how to apply what they've learned to real-world work. As part of your onboarding process, emphasize the value of your learning program. Be sure your curricula offer the kind of training that young employees need – presented in a way that works for them.

Start with skills assessments.

You need to know what your new employees bring to the work environment – and what they need to learn to close skills gaps.

Build personal learning plans.

Young goal-oriented workers enjoy tracking their progress against goals. Use your LMS to build personal learning plans. Employees will

appreciate seeing how the training will help them connect the dots between academic studies and real-world skills.

Offer bite-sized learning.

As part of a blended learning program, include small, “bite-sized” chunks of digital learning that delivers just what employees need to know, when they need to know it. New grads are very comfortable with video and digital learning from YouTube and other sources of specific, short, “how to” instruction.

Foster multiple generation collaboration.

Generation Z is incredibly diverse when it comes to race, gender identity and culture. While a traditional diversity course may be lost on them, there may be a need to train young workers on how to get the most out of interacting with professionals from other generations. You'll want to foster a sense of collaboration and respect with older workers who may be less digitally connected, place a high value on a fixed work schedule and don't prioritize work/life balance the same way their Gen Z counterparts might.

THREE: Engage Them to Retain Them

If you successfully hire new college grads, your recruitment efforts worked. Be sure you're getting feedback from new hires about why

CAPACITY BUILDING



TRAINING



LEARN



KNOWLEDGE



SKILLS



COACHING



SUPPORT



DEVELOPMENT

they chose to join the company. Then engage your young employees by building on strategies that worked to get them on board.

Keep up community involvement.

Many young workers choose their employers for their community involvement more than the salary offered. If you have a strong engagement with charitable and community organizations, make that effort visible. Encourage workforce involvement and celebrate the workers who take part.

Provide frequent feedback.

Younger workers prefer, by far, frequent feedback on their performance, rather than an annual performance review. Remember, young professionals grew up on social media and texting. As this Forbes article reminds us, "[keep communication brief](#)" for new grads. Texting may be perfectly appropriate for much of your feedback, as long as managers meet face-to-face for longer meetings to outline the bigger picture, set clear expectations and answer questions.

Offer compelling benefits.

If you can, help your new college graduates pay off their student loans. With about [70 percent of college grads in debt](#), student loan assistance is fast-becoming a mainstream perk. Debt-averse recent grads are more focused on paying off loans than saving, making this benefit more appealing than a 401(k).

Encourage skill development.

In its [Class of 2017 Student Survey Report](#), the National Association of Colleges and Employers asked college grads who plan to enter the workforce what's most important when considering jobs. The opportunity to develop job-specific skills topped the list, followed closely by an opportunity to develop

applied skills. To engage and retain your future workforce, emphasize your culture of learning and the value of your LMS for employees at all stages of their career.

As you welcome your new college graduates to your workforce, enjoy the enthusiasm, fresh perspective and current knowledge they bring with them. If you foster a learning culture that embraces all that this new wave of workers has to offer, you can look forward to a bright future together.

Are you looking for ways to train, engage and retain your new college graduates? Do you need an LMS solution to support your effort? Learn more about the Avilar [WebMentor LMS](#). Or, [contact us](#) to get the conversation started.

About Avilar

Avilar – The Competency Company™ is a leader in workforce planning and development with web-based competency management and learning solutions for corporations, government, and non-profit organizations. Formed in 1997, Avilar was a pioneer with its award-winning WebMentor™ product line and has built itself on the basis of superior customer service and highly adaptable product design.

Avilar consultants are recognized as industry thought leaders and have decades of experience in implementation and analysis. Let Avilar help you transform your organization from ordinary to extraordinary.