



Dear Members & Friends of the Chamber,

As the incoming Executive Director of the Chamber, I am excited about 2015. Terri Stramba did an outstanding job over the last three years making sure that new members as well as long-standing ones got value for their investment as members of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce. I hope to continue that trend into the future.

I'm excited about the prospect of perhaps bringing back some organizations that the Chamber has had in the past such as the Downtown Merchant's Group. I would also like to expand our services for our manufacturing and industrial members. One step in the right direction for this is, I believe, taking part in National Manufacturing Day on Friday, October 2nd of this year. It's a great way to introduce local residents, school students and others to the opportunities in industry in our area.

I also plan to increase our educational offerings for our members. In 2014, we had a very successful QuickBooks class taught by a licensed QB trainer. We also had a GIS Mapping class led by TJ Keiran from Hanover Engineering. He is currently working with me to put together a GIS map of all our member businesses that will go live on our website later this year. I believe that stepping more firmly into the digital aspect of marketing our town, our businesses and our services is the key to improving our area both financially and in terms of livability.

In the coming year, I plan to offer between four and six classes on various topics that would be of interest to all of our members. If you have an idea for a class that you would like to attend – or an idea for a class you'd like to teach – please get in contact with me. I would love to have your input!

The New Year also brings us new opportunities for growth and cooperation within the community. I will be working closely with a variety of entities so that the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce can fulfill its role in our community in a way that best benefits our Members. In the coming months I will try to personally call or visit every member business so that I can put faces to names and learn more about all of you. In the meantime, please feel free to drop in at the Chamber office any time and introduce yourself.

What can the Chamber do for you? What can you bring to the Chamber? It's time to consider how we can work together to make this our most successful year ever!

Lori Hilliard

Executive Director



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Director Caroline Golmic Returns to Her Hometown

Caroline Golmic grew up in Ellwood City, PA, moved away for nine years, and recently returned to the area with her husband Scott. As a native “Ellwoodian” who has returned to her roots, Caroline has a unique perspective as the newest Director.

Caroline explains, “It took moving away to recognize and appreciate all that Ellwood City has to offer. Our downtown has transformed in the last decade. You can easily spend a whole Saturday afternoon visiting the different shops and restaurants. I love that we have parades and seasonal activities to offer the community. We are also lucky to have a beautiful park, stadium, high school and hospital all within a few miles’ radius. Ellwood City is a great place to raise a family and my husband and I are excited to be here. I’m excited about the direction in which Ellwood City is moving and as a member of the Chamber, I want to be a part of it.”

Caroline’s Background

Caroline has come full circle, growing up in Ewing Park and returning to live on the same street she grew up on as Caroline Oviol. She attended Lincoln High School, then graduated from Robert Morris University in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, majoring in Marketing. On graduation, she began working for Aflac and has been with them ever since. She notes that Aflac is an incredible company that allows businesses to offer affordable supplemental insurance for their employees at a group rate and no cost to the employers. She also works as a director for Brian Patten and Associates, an enrollment firm based in Cranberry Township.



Director Caroline Golmic, Aflac

Supporting the Chamber and the Community

“I have a huge heart and I love a challenge,” notes Caroline. When I see value in something and believe in the vision, I focus my time and efforts on helping the cause. Professionally, my career has been centered around building relationships with business owners and providing value not only to their business, but also their employees. I manage a team of 10+ and am always looking for ways to encourage, motivate, and assist in attaining high goals. I believe I am able to bring these same traits, both personally and professionally, to the Ellwood City Chamber of Commerce and assist in achieving the Chamber’s mission of creating a healthy local economy and a high quality of life for the Ellwood City Area Community.”

“I believe the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce can bring real value to the businesses of Ellwood City and the surrounding area. I hope to see community members share in the vision of the Chamber and team together to achieve common goals that will make Ellwood City a place where other young couples like my husband and myself will want to move and raise their families.”

The Values of Small Town Life

When asked why she returned to her hometown after nearly a decade elsewhere, Caroline said, “Before buying our home, my husband and I were visiting my family who live here in Ellwood. The six of us stopped in at National Grind and my husband was blown away that we all knew someone different at the shop. He mentioned that this could never happen at a Starbucks on McKnight Road. Right around the same time, we attended the 2013 Christmas Parade and loved how the whole town was either in the parade or at the parade. It wasn’t long after that we decided on Ellwood City and put a down payment on our home. I’m looking forward to my role as a Director while my husband and I put down roots for our family here in Ellwood City.”



Dennis Boariu is Life-Long Supporter of Ellwood City

Although new to the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors, Dennis Boariu has been active in the Ellwood City area in a variety of roles over the years. He has served in many local organizations, including the Ellwood City Fire Department, the Wolves Club and the Jaycees, where he is a Past Internal Vice President.

Dennis' Background

Dennis has worked for the Ellwood City Forge for over forty years and has been in the sales office there for more than thirty-six of those years. He has lived here for all of his 58 years, and as a 1974 graduate of Lincoln High School he has witnessed the changes Ellwood City has gone through over the last five decades.

Dennis is looking forward to bringing his many years of volunteer experience to the Chamber of Commerce. His enthusiasm is apparent when he says, "I spent three years in the Ellwood City Jaycees, one as internal Vice President; was involved for many years in the Amateur Baseball Association; was a member for 35 Years of the Ellwood City Volunteer Fire Dept., nine of those as Assistant Chief; and I have been with the Ellwood City Wolves Club Den II for the past 5 years and am currently on the Board of Directors. I would like to continue to give back to the community as I have been blessed to have a job that has provided for me and my family and a community that has made raising a family a true pleasure."

"I have been involved in our community most of my life and have been through the good times and bad. I believe that each person can make a difference in whatever they do if they take the time to apply themselves. I live my life both personally and professionally with a positive attitude. I think that we can accomplish a lot more by being kind and genuine."

Supporting the Chamber and the Community

"The Ellwood City Area Chamber has worked with the company that I work for, Ellwood City Forge, in many ways. We continue to work for and with the Chamber to try and bring new business into the community, while trying to help make inroads with current businesses to make Ellwood City a competitive and prosperous community. I'm looking forward to working closely with the businesses and local elected officials - in the Borough, in the school district and in the surrounding area - to maximize our collective resource. This will help us market Ellwood City as the positive place that it is, a place to establish your business as well as a wonderful place to raise a family. We have made some good progress thus far but I think that we have only touched the surface."

One of Dennis Boariu's examples of what makes Ellwood City special is the Ellwood City Volunteer Department's Mutual Aid Agreement with the surrounding townships (Wurtemberg-Perry, Franklin, Wayne and Chewton). He explains, "These departments respond to emergency situations no matter what time of the day or night it is, weekends, holiday, whenever they are called upon. The departments practice together, keep up to date on major purchases that benefit all of our communities, such as new firefighting or rescue apparatus. Our volunteer fire departments provide aid to the area residents and businesses at no additional cost to any of our municipalities."

Dennis sums up his philosophy in a few words, "People working together for the better of all. I think that the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce can be a part of that by working with elected officials, businesses, surrounding municipalities, local civic organizations and local residents. I'm thrilled to be a part of that."



Director Dennis Boariu, Ellwood City Forge

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*Survey Says....**

Does Chamber of Commerce membership have an impact on a company's reputation with customers and other businesses they interact with? According to a recent survey by The Schapiro Group, Inc. the answer is a resounding "Yes!"

- ◆ Seven out of ten consumers believe that being actively involved in the Chamber is an effective strategy for enhancing business' reputation and demonstrating the use of good business practices.
- ◆ If a company shows that it highly involved with the Chamber through committee work or a member on the Board of Directors, consumers are 12% more likely to believe the company's products or services are superior to those of competitors.
- ◆ When consumers know that a company is involved with the local Chamber, they are 19% more likely to think favorably of the company.
- ◆ If consumers know that a small, locally owned business is a Chamber member, they are 63% more likely to patronize the business in the future.
- ◆ There is a 44% increase in consumer favorability ratings for small businesses that are members of their local Chamber of Commerce.
- ◆ 63% of consumers are more likely to purchase goods and services from a business if they know they are a member of the local Chamber of Commerce.

** Survey statistics courtesy of The Schapiro Group (www.schapirogroup.com).*

The Many Benefits of Internships for Small Businesses

Small to medium sized businesses often consider using interns for specific projects or to handle temporary work backlogs. In many cases, they consider it and then discard the idea. The challenges of finding the right intern, training him or her and deciding on the scope of the work to be addressed can be stymying. But the benefits often far outweigh the difficulties, and the beginning of a new year is often the ideal time to find an internship program that is a good fit for your company.

If you've ever wondered whether an internship program is right for your business, consider these benefits:

It's a great way to find future employees. There's no better recruiting tool. Many colleges offer internships throughout the year, giving you access to a pool of talent to hire from whenever the need arises. It's much simpler to evaluate interns and choose the best ones to hire than it is to set up a recruiting process every time you have a job opening. Interns are thoroughly vetted by their school or providing agency before they're ever sent to you, so you eliminate a lot of background work.

You can increase your business' productivity. By using interns for short-term projects or overloads, you free up your permanent employees for the tasks that are most pressing. Avoiding overload and freeing up your permanent employees for the creative side of their jobs while using interns for the simpler tasks that can be time-consuming.

Interns are low cost, reliable labor. The salaries for most interns are substantially cheaper than those of part time or seasonal employees. In some cases you can even get unpaid interns through colleges or universities who will do the work for school credits toward graduation. If you decide not to hire them at the end of an internship, you don't have to pay a severance package or unemployment.

Your community profile is enhanced. By offering internships, you will enhance your standing in your community and with local educators. You will also get the satisfaction of helping local students achieve and strengthen their resumes.

Small businesses can tap into top talent. When hiring full time employees, many small businesses find they can't compete with the salaries and perks offered by larger companies. But interns are more interested in the learning process than the salary. Most of these students perceive more value in life experiences, hands-on projects, mentoring and the opportunity to truly contribute on a professional level.

Employee retention rates increase. According to a recent survey by the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers' 2009 Education Survey:
 67.7% of interns are offered fulltime positions.
 83.6% of these offers were accepted.
 35.3% of employers' fulltime, entry-level college hires came from their internship programs.



An intern can bring valuable skills and a fresh perspective to your organization or business.

Now is the time to be interviewing possible interns for your next project or work backlog so that you have access to the best possible candidates before they are snapped up. Contact your local colleges, universities, trade schools, vo-tech campuses and even high schools today and ask about what kinds of internship programs are available. You'll likely discover a future employee along the way.

6 Essential Elements of Any Internship Program

Internships represent a burgeoning market. According to Internships.com, 67% of 2013 graduates completed at least one internship during college, and a separate study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) found that approximately 90 percent of student interns said they'd accept an offer for a full-time job from their internship employer.

If you're looking for enthusiastic, low-cost labor, internships can provide your small business with many benefits. After all, internships don't just help you meet your immediate work needs, they can also help you test drive talent and assess potential future employees. Internships are also great for your brand and demonstrate that you're giving back to the community and its students.

If you're serious about hiring interns, then it's time to implement an internship program – one that ensures you attract the right talent for your needs, keeps them busy, drives development and covers all your legal bases. Here are six essential tips for doing just that.

Paid or Unpaid Internships

Let's start with the money.

If you're serious about your internship program, then it's a good idea to compensate your intern(s). What's the going rate? Ask around and research current trends based on your expectations of the intern and their duties. As a guideline, the [average hourly rate](#) for bachelor's degree level interns is \$16.35. Remember that your state's minimum wage requirement [also applies to paid interns](#).

Unpaid internships are also an option, but the U.S. Department of Labor puts very firm limits on the work that can be performed in these situations. You can read more about these restrictions [here](#). In a nutshell, here's what you need to know about what an unpaid intern can and can't do:

- **Unpaid interns can't do any work that contributes to your business' operations.** This includes any tasks that help you run your business, like documenting inventory, filing papers, answering emails, etc.
- **Unpaid interns can shadow other employees and perform duties that don't have a business need.** *For example, a bakery may allow an apprentice/intern to decorate a tray of cookies that will not be sold to customers. Because the task was only a training exercise for the apprentice/intern and the bakery did not receive any benefit from that work, the bakery would not have to pay that student worker for that time.*

Understand What You're Getting Into

As you approach the process of hiring an intern, it's important to understand how an internship is different than a full-time, part-time or even volunteer-based position.

Primarily, an internship is a learning experience for the intern. As such, the experience should complement the student's field of study, be structured as a mentoring relationship (you'll need to appoint a dedicated supervisor to assume this role) and has distinct learning goals throughout the course of the program. Keep these considerations in mind as you craft your program, which leads to our next point.

Define Your Needs

Certainly your student intern will have needs and goals, but as the hiring company, you'll have some too. Take a look at your business and its needs and capabilities in light of how you can an intern can mutually benefit from your program:

- How will you pay or otherwise compensate an intern?
- How can an intern help you with your business goals?
- Do you have enough work to support an intern? Think about short-term and long-term assignments.
- Do you have enough work for multiple interns?

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- Is everyone bought into the idea (because they need to be)?
 - What's the best time of year to hire an intern and for how long?
 - Who will supervise and mentor your intern? Can they carve out enough time to take on the task?
 - What ramp-up and ongoing training can you provide?
- Do you have available office space and other resources?

Don't Ignore Labor Laws

Spend some time familiarizing yourself with employment laws in your state. If you have legal counsel, talk to them as well. You want to make sure you and your intern are clear on worker's compensation issues, workplace safety, harassment and discrimination laws, benefits, etc. Your legal counsel can also help you put together a contract of employment for your intern(s).

Put Together Your Program

Aside from compensation, it's important to clearly define your program. This will not only help attract and nurture the right talent, but it'll ensure that the program proves to be a success.

For example:

- Outline what the learning objectives of the role will be. If you're hiring a marketing intern, perhaps one of the key objectives will be providing the intern with a basic knowledge of email marketing best practices.
 - Then list out daily responsibilities. Remember, students are used to being given clear direction and a task list will also ensure you have all your needs covered.
 - Add in any short- or long-term projects or assignments that you need help with.
- Finally, be clear on how you'll evaluate performance.

Don't forget the basics too – work hours, business ethics, code of conduct, new hire orientation. Everything you do for a regular new hire should also apply to an intern.

Recruiting

Once again, don't skip the basics. Put together a formal job description and include the specifics about the role, responsibilities and learning opportunities.

In addition to posting the position on your website and usual recruitment channels, take advantage of specific intern-recruitment sites like Internships.com, AfterCollege.com, CareerRookie.com, Youth.jobs and MonsterYouthJobs.com. Each of these organizations also participates in the government's [Youth Jobs+](http://YouthJobs.gov) program, an initiative designed to bring together elected officials, local businesses, non-profit organizations and faith institutions to create pathways to employment for young Americans.

You can also reach out to your local college and/or school career service office or even your own alma mater. Many operate internship programs (in return for credits, but not always). For more information, check out the many resources for employers on these sites:

Internships.com – Includes guides on recruiting, hiring, and running an internship program, as well as sample internship job descriptions.
AfterCollege.com – Includes information on promoting your internship program, getting more from on-campus recruiting events, and even scholarship sponsorships.

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Please Welcome the Chamber's Newest Members!

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Email: snaffawizzle@gmail.com

Telephone: 724-698-8013

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P.O. Box 142
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Email: romigh.mike@gmail.com

Telephone: 724-923-9221

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Isn't it time YOU joined the Chamber of Commerce?

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