

BOOK REVIEW

Johnson, K. W. (2021). *Business and Management Internships. Improving Employability through Experiential Learning*. Routledge.

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Regardless of what field of life we work in, the economic decisions made in any industry affect our lives. Therefore, it is particularly important to train the professionals of the future to a high standard, since practice-oriented business and economic vocational training is the basis of a prosperous economy. Professionals operating in a constantly changing economic environment expect that graduates entering the business world are already ready for the labor market challenges of the industry. However, employers often encounter the fact that the existence of theoretical knowledge is not directly proportional to the existence of practical knowledge. Here, the responsibility of economic and business training comes back to prepare the businessmen of the future not only theoretically but also practically for making wise decisions and handling challenging situations (All Business Schools, 2017; Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, 2017).

The author of the book titled Business and Management Internships is Kawana W. Johnson, who is a dedicated supporter of knowledge based on practical experience. Several years of experience – gained as director of Internships & Career Services at Florida State University College and as a teacher in the internship courses – provides the basis of the book, which aims to improve the employability of young people. Based on the author's experiences, empirical research and systematic review of the literature, the most effective way to achieve this goal is to incorporate practical education as intensively as possible into the students' daily lives whereas experience-based learning, continuous review, updating and modernization of the theoretical material, adapted to the specifics of our time should be in focus. He also mentions as a non-negligible fact that, based on the Pew Research Center's survey, according to the most common generational classification, the working environment and working methods of Generation Z (Mannheim, 2000) are quite different from previous generations due to the impact of globalization (Dimmock, 2019). Today's labor market is diverse and open (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020) Understanding the characteristics of the generational workforce gives us greater insight into why skill gaps between generations are widening and the author also highlights methods how we can help identify and address these issues.

The book is 102 pages long, including appendices. It is divided into 6 chapters. The first three show the historical development of business education and its potential, and include quizzes and/or short tips and activities so that users of the book understand the true purpose of the

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practical activities. Chapters 4 and 5 are written rather for professionals and contain methodological recommendations, throughout the construction of a well-structured and administered system can be seen. Hereby we can track individual career paths and increase the embeddedness of our networks, both on the employer side and on the potential student side. In terms of their structure, the individual chapters begin with motivational quotes selected by the author and a brief summary, thereby providing an insight into the content of each chapter. Then, the ideas synthesized in the summary are set up in a logical order with the explanatory content of the given chapter, supported by subsections and literature. This is followed by the “conclusions” subsection, then by a short quiz that helps deepen the suggestions, tips and definitions, with solutions at the end. The author closes the given chapter with a list of related references.

The detailed content of each chapter is as follows:

Chapter 1 presents the history of business education through two subsections. The subsection titles are Early Years and Conclusions. Analysis of the Early Years discusses the main stages of the development of the field, the development of business education from the founding of the first American business school, Wharton through reports defining the development of business and management practices, such as the Gordon-Howell and Porter McKibbin reports (Gordon & Howell, 1959; Economist, 2009). Furthermore, the author presents the organizations that have been accrediting business schools since 1919 based on systematically predetermined standards, constantly updated to adapt them to changes in the business environment. Furthermore, the institutions and organizations that evaluate and classify American business schools are also presented in the chapter. It is important to note that it is very useful to know the standards of these organizations, as the author puts it, since based on these, the quality model that employers expect from future salespeople can be assessed.

Chapter 2 consists of five subsections. In these subsections, the author draws attention to the importance of experiential learning and presents the importance of experiential learning through Kolb’s learning model (Kolb & Kolb, 2008; Kolb, 2015; Kolb & Kolb, 2017). At the same time, it is supported by related high-quality research materials that with the knowledge acquired through experiential learning, students become more aware of the employer’s expectations and they can also give themselves feedback to consider whether the interest in the given position satisfies them both personally and professionally. The subchapter “Benefits and Limitations” presents the mostly positive and less negative aspects of practical learning. In the same place, well-known representatives of contemporary literature all agree that practical education should be an integral part of business education, as this increases not only the quality of the business environment, but also the ability of the student involved in the practice in such valuable areas that can serve their individual development. Consequently, practical education becomes experience-based education. Studies by Kumar and Bhandarker (2017) also confirm that Generation Y sees a perspective in experience-based education. The subsection “International and Virtual Internships” draws attention to the flexibility and accessibility of practice-oriented professional training for everyone. While the subsection entitled “Internships from a theoretical perspective” reflects on those constructivist learning theories, which, consciously incorporated into professional practice, according to its type, we can achieve greater effectiveness in the life of the student’s individual development. This chapter also provides tips and methodological bases for the learning methods of mastering the work during professional practice.

Chapter 3 is titled “The Skills Gap” or the Failure of Public Education. This chapter consists of four subsections. “Excellence is not a gift, but a skill that takes practice”, the “Skills Gap



Defined” subsection begins with this quote from Plato, then continues with a story about Weinhenmayer, the first blind man to reach the summit of Mount Everest. In this chapter, the author writes about how students’ knowledge could be more marketable. According to his experience, students overrepresent their own abilities after leaving the student status, but this ability still does not meet the expectations of employers. According to the author’s experience, students overrepresent their own abilities after leaving the student status, but this ability still does not meet the expectations of employers. If the employee’s skills do not meet the demands of the employer, then a kind of “gap” appears between the two parties, which negatively affects the relationship between the employee and the manager, and can influence the effective execution of the tasks entrusted to the employee. In the chapter, the author refers to Cappelli’s (2015) study, which often attributes the lack of skills to the failure of the public education system, also Blaszczynski and Green’s (2012) and Tulgan’s (2015, 2018) studies, who indicate the lack of “soft skills” as an area to be improved in the development of the individual, which is a combination of interpersonal and social skills such as communication, cooperation, problem solving, listening, flexibility and humility. These non-technical competencies are related to the individual’s personality, attitude and ability to interact effectively with others and contribute significantly to the individual’s successful work. The author also mentions a survey conducted by the Wall Street Journal, referring to the fact that these skills are more important than technical skills, and mastering their application is essential for easy integration into the work environment. In the third chapter, we also get an answer to the generational effect and based on the already mentioned research, the author also addresses the skills identified as helping employment and which can be the key in the future, employers of the future are looking for.

The fourth chapter was titled: “Ideas and Strategies for a Successful Internship Program”. Over nineteen pages, this chapter examines in nine subsections those successful strategic models that can promote the employability of students. This is the first of the six chapters of the book, which is specifically addressed to representatives of the profession, as the recommendations contained in it are very practical. In this chapter, the author provides methodological and technical advice for making contact, managing it, building a network, and maintaining all these. Furthermore, it proposes the use of free information communication tools for professionals, taking into account institutions with tighter budgets, to systematize data. At the same time, the chapter collects practice-oriented, resource-efficient and easy to apply activities that all career offices can easily integrate into their toolkit.

Chapter 5: Internship Courses in a Changing Environment. The nine sub-chapters of the fifth chapter deal with the maintenance of internship programs and the support of the trainee’s commitment. In the subsections, after the presentation of the topic, the author discusses online and offline internship programs and the difficult situation faced by businesses providing internships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, the role of the career office was primarily to support employers in transferring their existing programs to the online space. The fifth chapter is therefore about sharing strategies that strengthen businesses in the online space and focuses on sharing non-traditional experience between the employer, the student and the institution, but at the same time it is useful for all participants. It motivates the reader by presenting a practical example, through a system built in its own career office. It encourages professionals to create modules and courses within them, so that the acquisition of internship experience consists of stations and is better structured, where professionals develop eight identified and defined key competencies that serve to make someone a successful workforce.



The main goal of designing the modules is to be relevant, clear and concise, not to burden the young person, but rather to focus on the value and understanding of the task, while reflecting on their experiences in real time. In addition to the design of the modules, Kawana's "handbook" also provides tips for an evaluation system, which records progress and the development of the process.

All the sample documents and evaluation sheets related to the methodological recommendation presented in the fourth and fifth chapters can be found in the Appendices to provide professionals with help and usable basis for carrying out their daily activities and in creating a structured operation.

Chapter 6 is "The Future of Business Education". Due to its title, this chapter, which consists of five subsections, can be characterized by reflection. The author discusses the future of business education and employment prospects, as well as the novel system of professional practices transformed by COVID-19 and draws attention to the constantly changing business environment that is shown through the phenomenon (Vault, 2020). At the same time, she states that the three most important questions of business education are still (1) who teaches, (2) what they teach, and (3) how they do it. The author states that further research is needed for future business education to recognize the importance of experiential learning, and to exploit how professional internships can be incorporated into education even more effectively, since both students and employers recognize the usefulness of this method. Institutions should therefore create programs that serve the needs of both parties, and the key to this is properly developed professional practice.

Overall, the book covers three key areas, which fills a gap in terms of its subject matter. One of them is an easy-to-digest methodological "guide" for young people, which summarizes the starting points with how entrants can strengthen, prepare or embed themselves in the labor market. The second aspect is the inclusive approach that supports professionals, beginning with information on communication practices and methodology, mapping of students and places of employment, involvement, development and retention. The author tries to give practical examples on all situations that appear in real life.

The third aspect, that may be the most different from Hungarian business education, presents us a practical model describing the structured credit system for gaining experience of American business schools. It can provide a good basis and example for career offices to find a way and set up an operational model.

The book supports gaining practical experience in business and business management on a professional basis as a constantly renewing field, adapting to the opportunities provided by technology and the learning methods of generations. It fully meets the needs of the changing business education environment. In terms of its structure, the book is well structured and serves the learning of teaching well, both for students who want to improve and for professionals as well.

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