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Dear IT Council Member Employers and Partners,

Thanks to each and every one of you for your efforts with the Capital Area IT Council—because of you we’re helping build our current and future IT workforce.

In an effort to continue the tremendous momentum that has already been generated through the IT Council programs that have been introduced—and to take full advantage of the college students who are currently looking for experiential opportunities or who will soon be entering the workforce, I would like to propose something I’m calling “50 Over 50.”

I would like to reach out to all IT Council member employers, as well as other companies in the Capital Area, to place 50 college students into internship or other experiential opportunities over the next 50 days. For most of these students, graduation or summer break is only a few months away, and they are actively seeking out these sorts of opportunities with local IT companies and other “end users.” Recognizing that many of you already have established programs in place and have found new and creative ways to successfully assimilate this talent into your workforce development strategy—I propose taking it a step further by asking everyone to participate with a concerted region-wide effort to retain as many of these individuals as possible.

72% of the companies that responded to our “employer workforce development” survey reported that only 1/5 of their new IT hires complete some sort of experiential opportunity prior to coming on board—however, 51% of those same respondents report that at least 4/5’s of their new hires typically require additional on-the-job training to perform essential tasks.

Internships and other experiential opportunities provide valuable on-the-job experience which helps students reinforce the information they are learning in the classroom to ensure their educational experience is as relevant as possible.

In terms of challenges related to recruiting new college graduates, 38% of respondents pointed to difficulties finding CS and IT students with the specific skills they need, with another 25% of respondents saying that it’s difficult to compete with companies outside of the region for these graduates.

Internships also allow you, the employer, to play an increased role in the students' education by providing them with access to cutting edge technologies that can't always be replicated in the classroom. It also exposes the student to your corporate culture and creates loyalty—increasing the likelihood that you will be able to retain these individuals after graduation.

37% of respondents report that more on-the-job experiences will have the greatest impact on their ability to recruit more CS and IT students, with 24% of respondents reporting that getting access to students earlier on in their degree or certificate programs would also be helpful.

Internships and other experiential opportunities provide the perfect solution for how to proactively engage the next generation IT professional.

Over the past few months I have emailed you hundreds of leads from the various career events that I have attended at Western Michigan University, Michigan State University, etc.—and we're in the process of preparing similar lists from the career events at Michigan Tech, MSU Summer Employment and Internship Fair, MSU Engineering Expo, etc. In addition, more events are coming up--which means that even more leads will be generated. If you haven't taken full advantage of these lists to identify qualified candidates, I encourage you to do so now. And if you need me to re-send the information to you—just let me know.

Also, we have several other resources that you can utilize when developing an internship/co-op program at your company. (Please see summaries about the MSU Career Services Network Internship/Co-op seminar and Internship Institute on-line assessment.) The IT Council will continue to align its efforts with faculty, career services staff, academic advisors, and economic development organizations working toward this same end—supporting IT Council member employers and attracting even more companies that share our vision.

If you have an internship program, tell us about it so we can promote it to the students we connect with at the various career events. Email me descriptions of your programs and/or positions to display at our IT Council booth. If you don't have an internship program, take advantage of this opportunity to start one.

Finally, as you have successes bringing students on for internships or other experiential opportunities, let us know so we can measure the impact of our efforts.

Thank you in advance for your support, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Chris Knapp
Executive Director
Capital Area IT Council

“IT Tips” News: Congrats Tria Design and Marketing on 5-year Anniversary!

March marks the 5-year anniversary of the merger that first created Tria Design and Marketing. Paradise Graphic Design and Abbi Creative joined forces in 2003 to form Tria Design, and 2 years later Point & Click Graphics officially put the “tri” in “Tria” when they became a third partner. Congratulations on 5 great years and here's to your continued success.

If your company would like to share its “good news” stories, use our “IT Tips” media sheet available on the Capital Area IT Council web site (www.capitalareaitcouncil.org)--this has

been an extremely effective program for promoting the diverse companies and organizations that make up our local IT industry.

Notice: MSU Career Services Network Internship/Co-op Seminar

MSU Career Services Network has offered to facilitate a free seminar for IT Council member employers about how to set up an internship or co-op program at your company. The seminar will be held on Tuesday, March 11 from 2-5 pm at CAMW!, located at 2110 S. Cedar St. in Lansing. The seminar will be part “how to” and part sharing of best practices with area IT employers who have successfully established these sorts of programs within their own organizations. Seminar participants will gain valuable insight including an overview of experiential education, candidate evaluation/selection, mentor/peer advising, and much, much more.

For more information or to register, please contact Chris Knapp at 517-492-5592 or cknapp@camw.net.

Free Assessment Tool: Making Internship Work

How valuable could an internship program be to your company or organization? Equally important is how feasible will it be for you to manage it effectively? These are the questions at the core of the Internship Institute’s (www.internshipinstitute.org) Intern Program Value and Feasibility Assessment. This is an exclusive [and free] service of The Internship Institute.

The Internship Institute is a non-profit that aims to effect positive change in experiential and work-based learning. This innovative organization champions career experience as an essential remedy to close the gap between classroom learning and workplace ability.

Complete a free assessment by clicking on the link below...
<http://www.internshipinstitute.org/freeassess.asp>

Register Now: 2008 CAMW! Spring Job Expo

Capital Area Michigan Works! is accepting registrations for its Spring Job Expo 2008 on March 18. Preferred booth space will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. We hope you'll be able to join us for another successful expo! To register or for more information, please contact Teri Sand at 517-492-5516 or tsand@camw.net.

Attention Employers: LCC Technology Career Event

Lansing Community College and the Capital Area IT Council are partnering to host a “Technology Career Event” on Tuesday, March 25 from 2-6 pm. We will have tables set-up on the 2nd Floor of the Gannon Building for IT Council member employers to exhibit—allowing you to connect with hundreds of LCC students in the following areas: Computer Information Technology; Art, Design and Multi-media; Photographic Imaging; Media Technology; and Marketing and Management (including E-commerce). IT Council member employers are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to connect with LCC technology students and promote employment and/or experiential opportunities with their organizations. (I’m attaching a flyer that was prepared by a LCC Graphic Design student to show you an example of the talent we’re hoping you will connect with.) Space is limited so please contact Chris Knapp at 517-492-5592 or cknapp@camw.net if you are interested in exhibiting.

First Notice: RSVPs Needed for March 27 IT Council Membership Meeting

This is a reminder that our next membership meeting will be on Thursday, March 27 from 11:30am-1pm at the LCC/MTEC (West Campus)—located at 5708 Cornerstone Drive in Lansing. The March meeting will feature a presentation by Kirk Riley, Executive Director of ITEC Lansing--an extraordinary new partnership between the City of Lansing, Michigan State University, the Prima Civitas Foundation and several of our region's leading technology companies. The ITEC Lansing project will have a profound impact on the technological literacy of Lansing youth and their families and enhance our ability to create the workforce of the future. Kirk will discuss how the former Holmes Street school will be transformed over the next few months into a technology resource for the community and how you, the local IT industry, will be able to leverage the technology and programs that will be housed in the center.

Please RSVP by contacting Chris Knapp at 517-492-5592 or cknapp@camw.net

Announcing: CACC Programming, Database & Website Development Technology Showcase

The Capital Area Career Center (CACC) *Programming, Database & Website Development* class is presenting its first *Technology Showcase* on **Tuesday, April 29 from 4-7 pm at the Capital Area Career Center**—located at 611 Hagadorn Road in Mason.

The overall purpose of the *Technology Showcase* is for students to present and display the results of their hard work during the 2007-2008 school year. Students will present projects in business programming, game programming and website development. For more information, please see invite letter (attached) or contact Gwen Taylor at 517-244-1320 or gtaylor@inghamisd.org.