

CASE STUDY

A STRONGER WORKFORCE

Founded in 1962, Target is an upscale discount retailer that provides high-quality, on-trend merchandise at attractive prices in more than 1,800 stores nationwide and from Target.com - one of the most visited retail websites in America. Providing a “one-stop shopping experience,” Target’s commitment to technological innovation is building a company that thrives – for both its customers and its team members.

Committed to a diverse and inclusive environment, Target has expanded its definition of team member beyond that of a college graduate. In its seventh year of partnership with Genesys Works, Target has provided almost 160 internships to students in their senior year of high school. By providing meaningful internship opportunities for Genesys Works interns at their headquarters in Minneapolis, Target is playing an active role in creating a talented and diverse future workforce in the Twin Cities community.

“I believe Target’s involvement with Genesys Works is helping to develop a stronger technology workforce for the entire Twin Cities region,” CIO and Chief Digital Officer Mike McNamara said. “Our teams really invest in and love working with the Genesys Works interns. We’ve got the interns engaged on multi-million dollar projects and operations, and we find the interns consistently meet and exceed our expectations and deliver brilliant work.”

In 2017, 35 high school seniors were placed in Target internships, a few of which tackled projects - such as the Starbucks Challenge and the Swagger Challenge - inside Target’s innovative Dojo. The Dojo is a dedicated space in which subject matter experts take up residence for an extended time. This is the home base for automation engineers, advanced Scrum leaders, OpenStack engineers, Chef experts, Kafka engineers, etc. Teams looking to leverage these experts to build their own expertise can colocate within the Dojo to have easy access to these resources.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Recently promoted to Senior Engineering Manager, Larye Pohlman has been at Target for more than 12 years. He also supervises Genesys Works interns. “It’s important to invest



Maggie Tran (left) Class of 2017 Target Intern, Blaine High School
Larye Pohlman (right) Target Senior Engineering Manager & Genesys Works Supervisor

time into the interns. It’s great experience for them, and they become so productive that it’s worth the investment,” said Larye.

In 2016, Genesys Works interns participated in the Starbucks Challenge, a unique project where these students conducted a coding challenge where they built a website to show what features a Target store had available to Target guests - such as having a Starbucks - and the impact. The students then presented their findings to their supervisors and other engineers in the Dojo.

Another project that has improved productivity for Target is the Swagger Challenge. Swagger is a tool used to document APIs (Application Program Interface). According to Maggie Tran, Genesys Works intern, it is important to document these APIs in order to provide developers with a more efficient and streamlined way of learning about the API and the ability to test it out on the site.

“Our work involved editing the Swagger specs descriptions, summaries, and fixing typos or errors we found,” said

OVER

CASE STUDY **TARGET**

Maggie. “The biggest impact of the project is it makes workflow easier for developers who want to use the APIs; they don’t have to contact the API owners and wait for responses, instead they can just start developing.”

Maggie graduated from Blaine High School in May 2017 and continued to intern at Target throughout the summer before starting at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities in the fall. According to her supervisor, Larye, she excelled in her internship.

“Maggie is very much a leader; she directed other students,” said Larye. “She broke down terms, booked conference rooms; she took on tasks without being asked.”

PROVEN VALUE BEYOND PRODUCTIVITY

While Genesys Works interns gain valuable skills and experience in their internships, Target managers also benefit by gaining people-management skills, helping to grow leaders within the company.

Larye Pohlman was hand-selected by Sean Masterman to take over his supervisor position. Before officially becoming a supervisor, Larye had interacted with students on a regular basis.

“I have a passion for making sure that the interns are successful” said Larye. “I’m trying to push the envelope to get the interns to be software developers. At Target, we want Genesys Works to succeed for the whole city, not just for us.”

Genesys Works is certainly working for Target according to Dan Hernandez, director at Target responsible for headquarters team members’ technical support.

“It’s easy to come up with examples of intern value,” said Dan. “Genesys Works students also came up with a process to eliminate conference room incidences, which reduced the rate by 50%. If there is an issue with equipment during the first 15 minutes, people tend to cancel their meeting. There’s huge savings in potential lost time.”

Dan knows that his team of supervisors build relationships with their Genesys Works interns that goes well beyond the basic employer-employee relationship. They often remain in contact with their interns through college.

Gozong Lor was a Target intern during high school. She was one such intern who stayed in touch with her supervisors. As Gozong was preparing to graduate from college, a Target recruiter met with her on a number of occasions to get to know her. She is currently an engineer at Target, and part of the Target Leadership Program (TLP), where she is working on product design for the web team.

Read more about Gozong in the Alumni Spotlight >>



Larye Pohlman trains Genesys Works students during the technical component of their summer training.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Gozong Lor started her internship conducting administrative tasks, but with help from her supervisor and co-workers, she quickly advanced to programming web pages for the retail giant. Her internship experience sparked her interest in pursuing a degree in technology. She went on to graduate from Macalester College with a computer science degree.

Upon graduation, Target offered Gozong a full-time position as a software engineer. Today, she is living out her dream of “creating social good through technology.” Gozong credits her strong relationships with her Target mentors and Genesys Works’ staff – a gift she plans on paying forward as she mentors future Genesys Works students through her role at Target.