Employer Panel

Monday, March 10, 2025

10:32 AM

Charlie is leading the conversation

Adam Markon - Ambrook

* Covid start up, remote first
* NEU grad, from CCIS / Khoury - Cs and Business, SWE
* Started at Hubspot
* In Denver

Anish Neelimathara - Emoney Advisor

* 8 years as SWE manager
* In industry for close to 30 years now

Mike O'Callaghan - director of talent strategy at eMoney

* Co-op to exec leadership
* 8 years there (25 year company)
* Goal is to get people comfortable talking about money
* HQ in Philly, work in over 40 states

Meghan Boyd

* KMW Tech - Boston Based, 10 people-ish
* In business since 2010, not start up
* Consulting and professional services – she is a project manager
* Specialize in search engine and AI
* Library Sciences degree! Works with engineers everyday

Q1: Could you speak to transition period from student to employee, and how do you help your students/co-op make transition

* Meghan - sharing the nonnegotiables about being on time and logging time - comes down to good communication - NOT expected to know everything on day 1!! Lots of check ins, comm, etc
* Mike - won award for onboarding in 2024 - very built out at eMoney - integrate with culture for part, then a layer about how the team operates (daily stand ups, etc) - structure as best can from A-Z perspective
* Anish - most ideal - if really likes co-op, may want them to continue in part time role and stay in touch with team and process
* Adam - first year bringing on co-op at Ambrook, Have mentor on team when starting, onboarding buddy - plan is to onboard same way for co-op and full time
* Takeaway - COME READY TO WORK, and come ready to ask questions to get acclimated

Q2: can you talk about goal setting as someone transitions - what are common examples that you (for yourself) and co-op students might set

* Adam - biggest goal should be to learn new stuff - took a few different roles to learn what was exciting to him - goal setting around how you want to grow/change/become a new engineer this year
* Mike - prioritize investing in co-op program - wants to build bench of talent with co-ops and then convert to junior level employee - can co-ops demonstrate that they have full time employee potential - intellectual curiosity, willingness to learn, coachability, how they interact with team, do they meet deadlines, be able to make an impact!! Want co-ops to push back, improve a process
* Anish - range of assignments depends on skills they come in with - could resolve bugs, could do side projects, or could be working to deliver on sprints in SWE each week - they will be interacting with every member of their assigned team
* Meghan - goal is to have work on customer projects (not always, sometimes odd timing) - try to give each co-op an end to end internal project, and to try to get folks to go through whole project (R&D, set up repos, tickets, work with people, final documentation, final presentation) - can be hard to get that sort of experience in school - balance of figuring things out on own and when to ask for help

Q3: Communication - with teams, managers - we as advisors really emphasize the need to ask questions and advocate for selves - can be a learning curve - can you speak to the role you see effective communication play, and any methods or things your company really looks for:

* Meghan - part of it is making yourself available to have time to raise those issues; KMW pairs co-ops with developer as a mentor, but also meeting with Meghan as project manager a few times a week in case things need to be brought up; good communication is SO important - we know you are still students and biggest mistake you can make is pretending or hiding the things you can't do, and would be a bigger failure as it can downstream affect projects - do not be afraid to speak up when unsure
* Anish - actively listening is huge too
* Adam - communicate early and often!! Only way you learn certain resources exist is by asking about it- and as start up does not have luxury of moving slow - more intentional communication will pay dividends into future

Q4: Flip side of good communication - any examples of difficult conversations you've had to had with students while interns or co-ops - any examples of difficult and how do you make them not punitive and instead make growth focused

* Adam - one time had to let a co-op student go was DUE to lack of communication - very few updates, a project was not getting progress and only providing 10000 ft view - student was super struggling, but happened 2 projects in a row and there was no way to turn into an effective learning experience and managers were inquiring but were told there were no questions - willing to go extra mile to help WHEN they know!!! Only way to get that support is to ask
* Anish - have not had any difficult convos with co-ops, likely because they are tightly integrated with team - daily and hourly basis for remote convos
* Meghan - if having good communication with co-op, can see something going off course and can get back on track - just because it is remote work does not meet you can travel anywhere, work from your pool - may not be in office but need to have a productive working space

Q5: remote tips to succeed

* Meghan: reach out to people you may not work with for a 15 minute meeting to intro yourself, there are fewer casual touchpoints - schedule a few casual touchpoints to get to know your colleagues
* Mike - time management has become much more important - can't just drop by someone's desk - prepare for the occasional distraction - run your day or your day runs you! Also relationship building is important - they do a random coffee program which simulates the water cooler moments
* Anish - chat and teams channels at different levels and on different topics - encourage co-ops to participate in all of those channels - get yourself out there in a remote environment
* Adam - 1:1s set up with those on in business line every 6 weeks - a great social connection and way to catch up on non work items - practically - have an actual office space to sit and focus, treat remote work like going into the office, easy to be in house and not treat it like work, get mindset into work mindset to be effective and get focused

Kyle: curious on how co-op recommending an improvement or change or new path

* Meghan: depends a little, sometimes design sessions, also team meetings - good way is to ask for a design session and also hear the thoughts of others on a session; some longer standing folks are not as up with newer tech/trends
  + Revisit at the end - make sure your idea gets greenlit and prioritized within your work
* Anish: bring up to a buddy, bring up in team setting (sync up, sprint, etc), or bring to 1:1 with manager and see if something can be done
* Adam: function of company size, start up - might be posting idea in slack channel and then getting a greenlight after posting a technical note in slack for something; new perspectives are awesome

Rahul: what aspect of remote work do you love the most

* Meghan - not a huge fan of being remote
* Anish - loves remote work, does not have to walk between meetings so it is an easier transition and finds it to be efficient, might miss water cooler interactions, but more efficient, quick outreach
* Mike - lots of flexibility, no commute or traffic
* Adam - has tough time focusing at office and gets easily distracted

David: asking Adam what made him want to go into start ups and what is culture like

* Adam - wanted smaller than HubSpot but was not specifically looking for start up when he found this role; impact may be smaller, internal v external motivations, what gets him out of bed is seeing his work in hands of customer - had a mutual friend at NEU in NYC who got him in touch with the company; loves that things move quickly - does climate planning software for farmers - rapid iteration and go to market - he does 45 hour weeks and prioritizes work life balance, Jaclyn coworker does 60 hour weeks and hosts a collab event space for other companies funded by same VC

Jordyn: hiring process - what qualities do you look for in a future co-op, and do you find that being remote makes you look for different qualities

* Meghan: does not look for different qualities; specific skills look for in job description - summarize: willingness to learn, also personally likes to see some sort of personal project unrelated to school or work (shows initiative) - telling her about something beyond academic projects helps stand out
* Mike: hard skills are table stakes that get ticket to interview, but what you stand out from after are those other skills - can tell difference between someone just telling a narrative AND someone who has a story to tell (linking personality to why you are good at job) and has passion for the job