

## MAGAZINE INDUSTRY PAID INTERNSHIP STUDY

Feasibility Study Final Report

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### Executive Summary

#### Research Objectives

*How will magazines continue to attract new, diverse, skilled talent? And in this tough job market, how will young people with the skills and desire find a way to build careers in magazine publishing?*

Magazines Canada, with funding from the Ontario Media Development Corporation, carried out a research study to ask the industry how—working together—we can bridge this market gap.

Through phone interviews with a range of key stakeholders and an online survey sent to Magazines Canada members, this feasibility study on an industry paid internship program was designed to:

- Understand the sector's current experience with paid internships and assess the needs, gaps and opportunities among publishers, interns and educational partners.
- Understand requirements and identify benefits of a paid internship program; test response to potential funding and program models.
- Measure the degree of interest of magazine publishers and students/prospective interns in a paid internship program.
- Provide recommendations based on the research findings.

#### Publisher Perspective

*“Creating opportunities for new talent to enter the market is crucial to the diversity and survival of our industry.”*

- Multi-title Publisher, BC

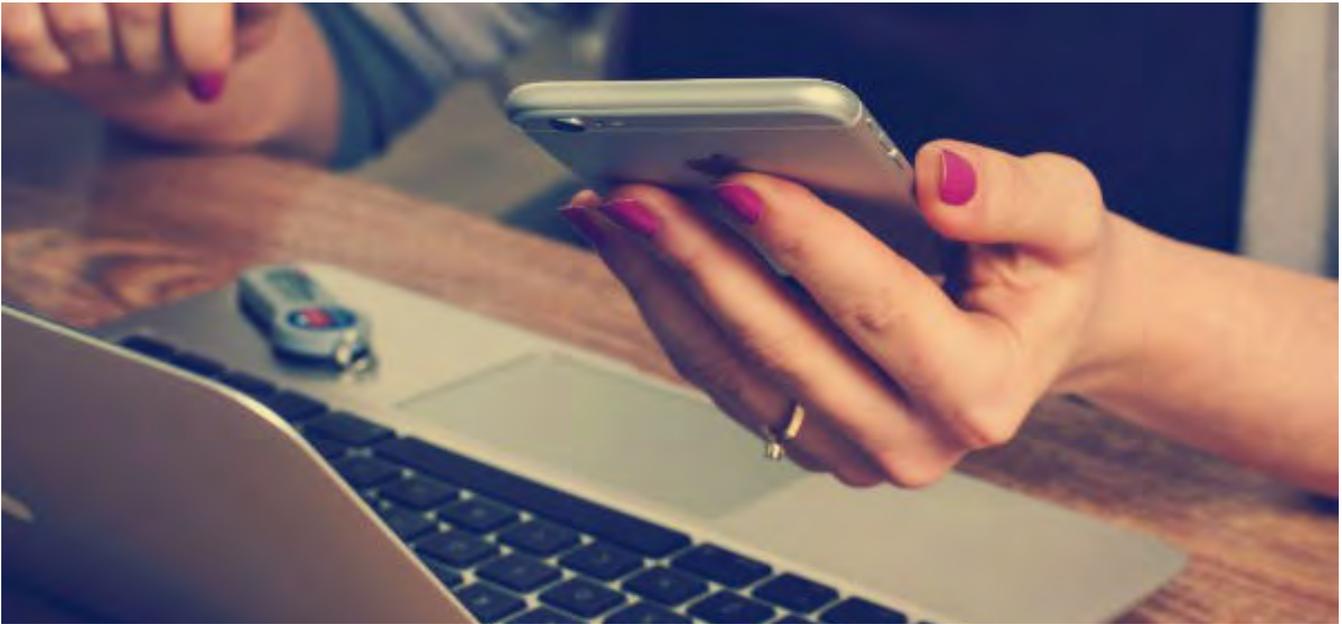
*“It's important to pay your interns. Unpaid internships are archaic and don't do our industry any favours.”*

- Multi-title Publisher, AB



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## Research Methodology

The research was carried out in three stages between December 2016 and March 2017.

### 1. Environmental Scan

The study began with an analysis of existing paid internship models and best practices in various industries and sectors, including publishing, arts and cultural organizations, industry associations, foundations and private sector companies.

### 2. Qualitative Research

To gather market insights and inform the questions for the online survey, the researcher conducted 22 one-on-one stakeholder phone interviews with the following:

- Three organizations with existing paid internship programs.
- 11 magazine publishers (three cultural, four business-to-business, four consumer.)
- Five interns (one current student and graduates/former interns from 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015.)
- Three post-secondary educational institutions.

*(See Appendix C for a list of stakeholders consulted.)*

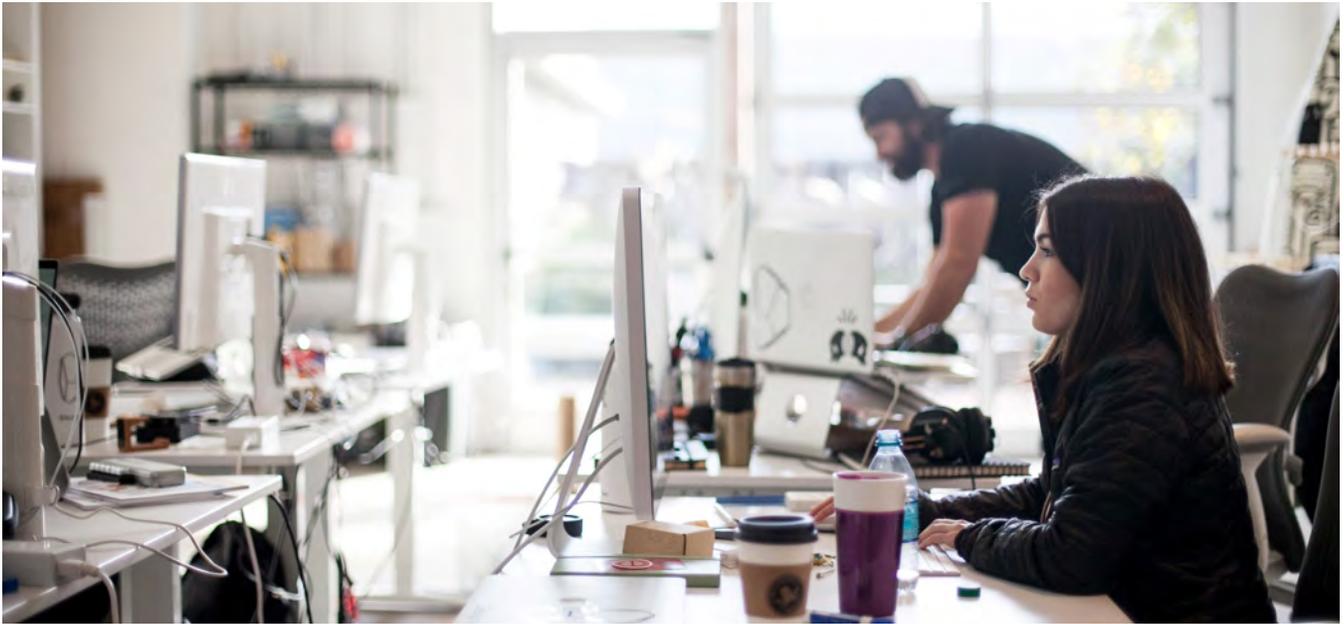
### 3. Quantitative Survey

Magazines Canada member contacts were emailed individually and invited to participate in an online survey open between February 12 to March 3, 2017. The survey received 86 total responses out of 283 survey invitations to deliverable email addresses—representing a statistically valid sample with a 95% confidence level and a  $\pm 10\%$  margin of error.

Because companies may publish more than one member title and multiple member titles may be represented by a single contact in the Magazines Canada database, the survey asked whether their organization published more than one title and, if so, how many were Magazines Canada members. With this information (and by removing one instance of multiple responses from the same company) we were able to determine that the 86 responses represented 161 individual member titles as follows: 65 business-to-business titles (40%); 54 consumer titles (34%); 42 cultural titles (26%)

The survey results shown in this report are raw data from the 86 responses in the total sample and have not been adjusted in cases where a single response represents more than one member magazine.

Of the 79 responses indicating province of operation, 44 were in Ontario (56%); 14 in British Columbia (18%); 11 in Alberta (14%); and 3 or fewer from each of Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Yukon and New Brunswick.



## Key Findings

### **There's strong publisher interest in an industry paid intern program.**

When asked to rate their degree of interest in participating in a magazine industry paid intern program, a combined 89% of respondents indicated that they were either very interested (59%) or somewhat interested (30%.) Final comments were enthusiastic: urging action, offering thanks for undertaking this initiative, asking for updates about future developments, and even volunteering to assist.

### **Publishers see paid internships as beneficial to interns, their organizations, and the industry.**

When asked their opinion on the value, if any, of an industry paid intern program, almost two-thirds of respondents strongly agreed that it would create a way into the industry, offering interns training and employment in a difficult job market. Over half of respondents strongly agreed that it would help the industry develop a more diverse talent pool. And over one-third strongly agreed that interns provided a source of digital expertise and innovation.

### **Internships lead to employment and investment in human capital.**

Internships provide young people with specific job skills as well as workplace readiness training, helping

them develop “soft skills” like communication, collaboration, problem solving and agility.

Publishers see interns as their first source for new hires. 64% of respondents answered yes when asked if they had hired an intern in the past. A subsequent question asked the respondent to enter the number of interns their magazine or company has hired over the past 5 years—the cumulative impact was 184 new jobs.

### **The main barrier to paid internships: cost.**

Publishers who said they hadn't had a paid intern in the past two years (69%) said that it was primarily because they can't afford it. For lean publishing operations, other issues have affected this decision, including the lack of physical space, the limited return on their investment of time and people resources to recruit, hire, train and manage short term internships, and difficulty finding qualified interns with the right combination of skills and genuine interest in the magazine. Some publisher comments referred to the challenges of having a paid intern in a virtual office, or a magazine run by part-time staff or volunteers.

Despite these limitations, 39% of respondents who hadn't had paid interns accepted unpaid student interns as part of their educational work placement, and made the commitment to enhance this experiential learning opportunity through on-the-job training, mentoring and industry connections.

## Key Findings

### **When there's funding support, publishers will invest in paid interns.**

In the survey, 31% of respondents answered yes when asked if they had paid interns in the past two years. Almost all said they had some form of funding—specific grants or donations, or from programs run by government, government agencies, and charitable or non-profit organizations.

Though the sample size was too small to cross-tabulate by province (with the results of any comparison being unreliable), there is some suggestion in the numbers that publishers based in Alberta or British Columbia are more likely to have paid interns than those based in Ontario. A significant number of write-in comments noted that specific respondents had taken part in paid internship initiatives offered by Magazines BC and the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association.

### **The preferred program model: maximum autonomy, flexibility and inclusive eligibility criteria.**

Given the number of micro and small businesses represented in the survey, it's no surprise that respondents preferred a grant funding model over co-funding—primarily because they were concerned about having the financial resources to cover their 50% share of co-funded costs. They also strongly supported a program that would allow them to find and hire their own interns, based on the premise that magazines know their specific needs and are best suited to managing the process.

Respondents opted for flexibility in the timing of intern starts (year round) and duration of internships (at least three to six months) and wanted as broad a definition of intern eligibility as possible to allow for more diversity, quality and choice—including current students in post-secondary programs, graduates within the past five years, mature career changers or any individual with a high school diploma, demonstrated interest, aptitude and transferable skills.

### **Bridging the gap: key issues to address.**

- **Lack of human resources capacity.**  
Of those respondents who said yes to having paid interns in the past two years, 93% indicated that committing the time and resources to recruit, hire, train and manage interns was, to various degrees, difficult.
- **Job market information gap.**  
40% of respondents with paid interns found it moderately to very difficult to find interns with the right skills and interest in their magazines. On the other hand, 30% of respondents found it not at all difficult. Through survey comments and in the initial phone interviews, a number of business-to-business and regional publishers expressed their frustrations at sourcing qualified interns. The mismatch in supply and demand may be due to differing degrees of brand recognition, as well as a general lack of awareness (among educational institutions, students, and the broader job market) of the wide range of niche magazines and the variety of job training opportunities they represent.
- **The need for a more diverse talent pool.**  
Publishers are looking for a variety of voices, experiences and backgrounds in interns. Similarly, post-secondary institutions are themselves working to increase diversity and inclusion in their programs. What actions can publishers, educators and Magazines Canada take to create a more diverse group of applicants?

## Recommendations for further actions

The research findings point to key opportunities for taking action through greater collaboration within the industry and partnerships with educators and funders.

### 1. Work to design and secure resources for a pilot program.

Magazines Canada members have a strong interest in providing job training through paid internships, but the biggest barrier is the financial risk to these micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Mitigating publisher financial risk through funding will create more opportunities for paid internships, and help realize benefits to job seekers, publishers and the magazine sector.

How to determine the resources required for a national industry program?

There are 400 Magazines Canada member magazines across Canada. Factors to consider in assessing program costs include varying provincial minimum wage rates, publisher capacity for a co-funding contribution, length of internship and whether the magazine has the structure to support a full-time or part-time intern. A sliding scale for funding based on an individual publisher means test may be optimal but adds another layer of administration to a program that publishers would prefer to see streamlined.

To reduce some of the complexity, the funding model recommendation is to provide more funding (75%-100%) for cultural magazines in recognition of their constrained financial resources while sharing the cost (50% co-funding) with consumer and business-to-business magazines.

### 2. Test a simple program model.

The research found that publishers wanted the autonomy to recruit and hire their own interns and had significant doubts about the benefits of Magazines Canada serving as an intermediary in the recruiting process. The recommendation is to test a program based, in part, on the initiative set up by the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association (AMPA), where publishers apply in advance for funding and then undertake their own recruiting and hiring. In line with the research findings, it's recommended that the test program allow for year round start dates, three month terms, and a broad criteria for internship eligibility.

In order to move ahead with a simplified pilot program, this report recommends introducing a phase one test with a small number of Ontario-based business-to-business magazines—a segment that appears to have a significant gap in intern supply and demand as well as challenges finding qualified applicants for available job openings.

A pilot with 15 participating Ontario business-to-business magazines, where each hires an intern for a three month period in 2018 with a 50% co-funding model shared between the publisher and Magazines Canada, represents a total pilot program cost of \$96,000 for wages and benefits, and would require additional people resources from Magazines Canada to develop, implement and assess the pilot.

*Potential timelines for pilot implementation:*

*Next 6 months:* share report findings with stakeholders, secure financial resources to fund the pilot program, develop pilot program guidelines and materials, communicate and promote the pilot to members.

*October-November:* applications for co-funding accepted, assessed and participating magazines notified.

*January-December 2018:* pilot program active. Magazines Canada works with educational partners and other stakeholders to help drive awareness of the paid internship opportunities.

### **3. Help build publisher HR capacity through training and resources.**

The demand on staff time and resources to hire, recruit, train and supervise interns was cited by publishers as the most difficult part of an internship program. Magazines Canada can help address this issue by providing support for publishers through training and resources, such as creating a best practices handbook for publishers, offering webinars and conference workshops, and providing publishers with ready-made templates for job descriptions, interview questions and performance reviews, along with tips for promoting internship postings to a broader audience.

### **4. Build partnerships with post-secondary institutions in order to:**

- Raise awareness with students and educators of the variety of magazines (business-to-business, cultural and consumer in different geographic regions) as well as the breadth of internship opportunities (going beyond editorial content creation to the demand for skills related to graphic design, digital platform development, social media, marketing and communications, sales, audience development, and event management.)
- Provide post-secondary programs with real-life feedback on industry needs and skills requirements.
- Collaborate with design-focused post-secondary creative incubators and centres for multimedia innovation to work with students with advanced digital skills (in areas such as UI, UX, AI, and AR) on R&D projects that would explore new ways for magazines to develop content, tell engaging stories and connect with audiences through emerging technologies.

### **5. Drive awareness through marketing and communications to increase the diversity of the talent pool.**

Leverage the collective audience reach of Magazines Canada members in order to raise awareness of magazine career opportunities and on-the-job training provided by paid internships.

## **Conclusion**

Publishers have a strong interest in an industry paid internship program and recognize its potential benefits to interns, publishers and the industry as a whole. Survey findings show that past magazine internships have provided a pathway to employment, and so more paid work placements would represent a larger economic benefit as well.

Magazines Canada is well-positioned to bring stakeholders together to develop a program that will help mitigate financial risk as well as empower and support publishers with resources, marketing and new educational partnerships to help them in their efforts to attract, recruit, train and mentor new diverse talent.

Given recent high profile reports calling for more investment in paid work placement opportunities—such as those from the Ontario Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Panel and the Business Council of Canada’s Higher Education Roundtable—the timing is right to move ahead with developing and testing a magazine industry paid internship program.



The top benefit to publishers? Interns “offered new perspectives, ideas and energy.”

## Research Findings

### 1. Publishers have the will but not the means.

Of the survey’s 86 total respondents, 69% have *not* had a paid intern in the past two years. The reason?

- 58% of those who said they had not had a paid intern indicated that they would like to but weren’t able to afford it.
- Many took on unpaid student educational work placements as an alternative. (39%)
- Other obstacles included:
  - Lack of physical space. (25%)
  - Investment required in time and people resources. (21%)
  - Difficulty finding interns with the right skills and interest in the magazine. (21%)
  - Difficulty finding qualified interns in the geographic area. (16%)

Write-in comments referred to the overall challenge of bringing a paid intern into a lean organization run by a decentralized team, part-time staff, or volunteers. (Q7, n=57, multiple answers allowed.)

### Publisher Perspective

*“We cannot afford to pay entry level interns. We work hard to nurture interns from school programs, providing mentoring and specific learning opportunities as well as introductions at industry events. Our magazine has become sought after as a place where interns are well respected and often hired. The benefit is mutual as the schools frequently send us their best performers”*

- Consumer magazine, ON

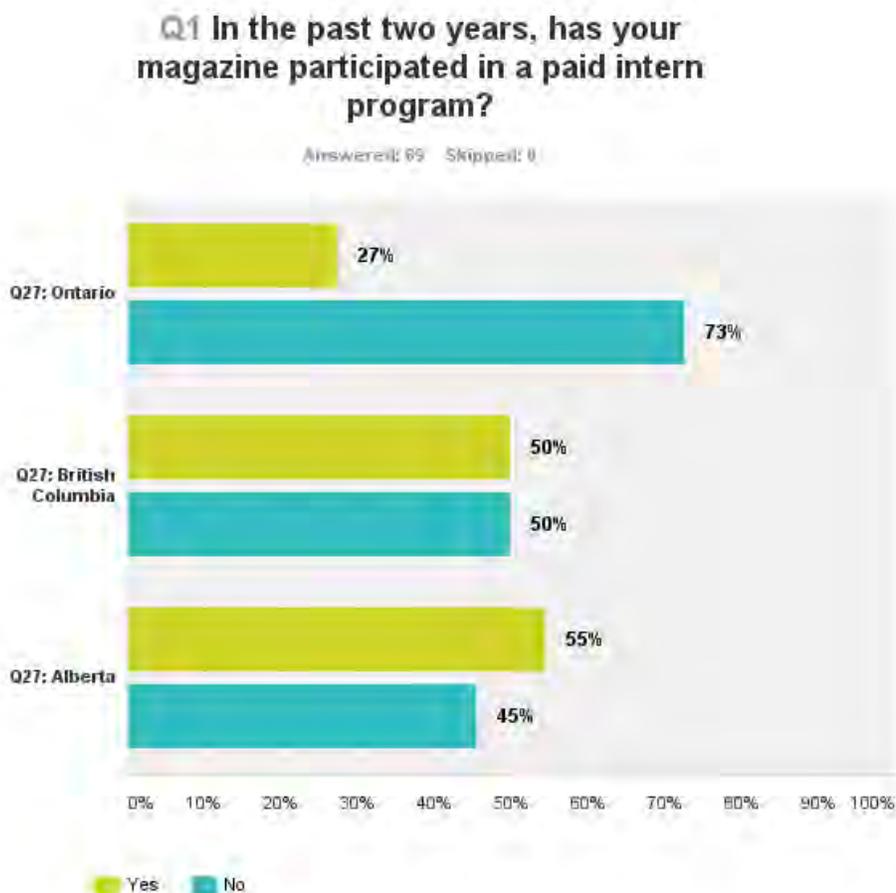
## 2. Paid internships are rarely self-funded.

Of the remaining 31% of survey respondents who answered yes and had participated in a paid intern program in the past two years, almost all said that they had received some form of funding—from donations, or through government, agency, charitable or non-profit organizations. (Q2, n=27, multiple answers allowed.)

- 44% participated in a student work placement offered as an educational requirement and paid the student for work done during the placement.
- 37% set up their own paid intern program with funding. (A number of comments noted that they took part in paid internship initiatives offered by Magazines BC or the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association.)
- 33% participated in a government or agency-funded youth employment program.
- 26% participated in a charitable or non-profit organization-funded employment program.
- 22% set up their own self-funded paid intern program.

## Snapshot: Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia

Overall, there was little difference in the rate of paid internship participation based on the type of magazine (cultural, consumer or business-to-business.) The small sample size leaves a wide margin of error, but a cross-tabulation of responses by province may suggest the possibility that publishers of all types are more likely to have paid interns if they're based in Alberta or British Columbia, perhaps due to the availability of funding through the provincial magazine associations. (Q27, n=69)



### 3. Paid interns are seen as beneficial to an organization.

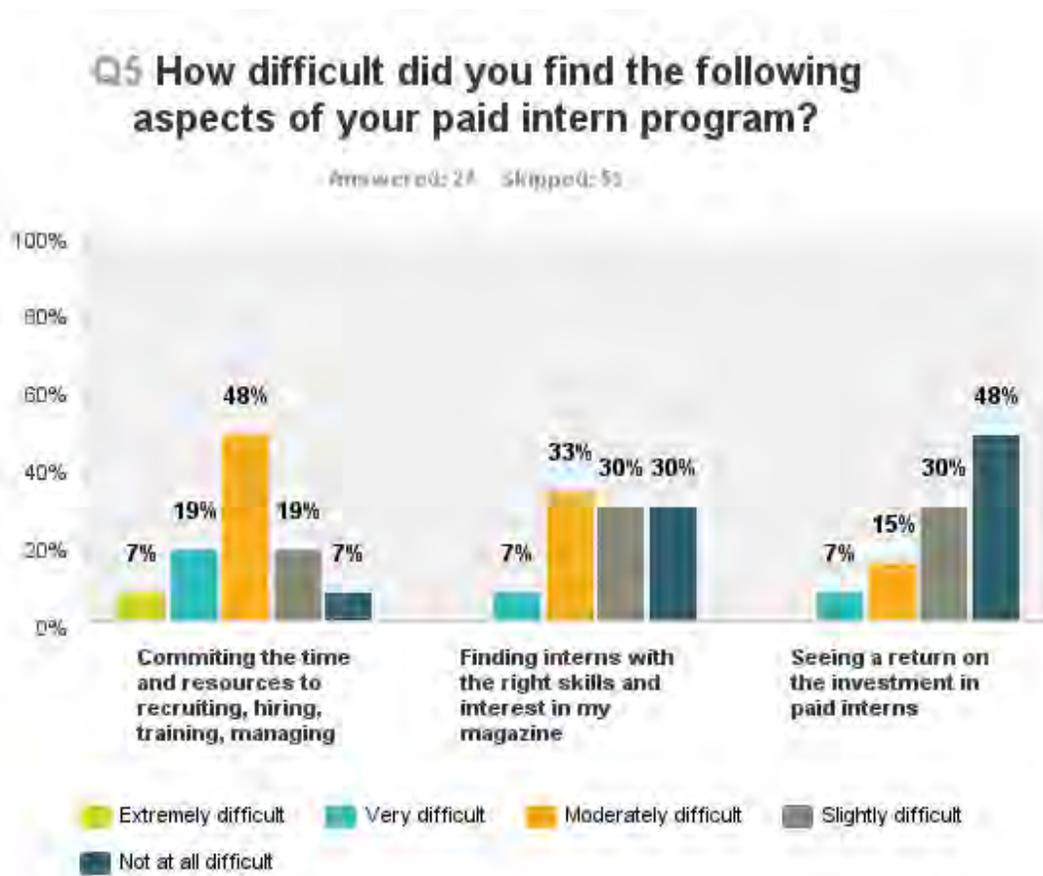
Publishers who had paid interns overwhelmingly valued their contributions. Only one respondent said that there was no direct benefit to having a paid intern. (n=27, multiple answers allowed.)

According to respondents, paid interns:

- Offered new perspectives, ideas and energy. (85%)
- Assisted staff with additional help during busy periods. (85%)
- Created a talent pool to draw on for job openings or freelance commissions. (74%)
- Provided additional help to complete essential day-to-day tasks. (70%)
- Brought new digital and social media skills to the magazine. (67%)
- Allowed us to do special projects which we would otherwise be unable to do. (59%)

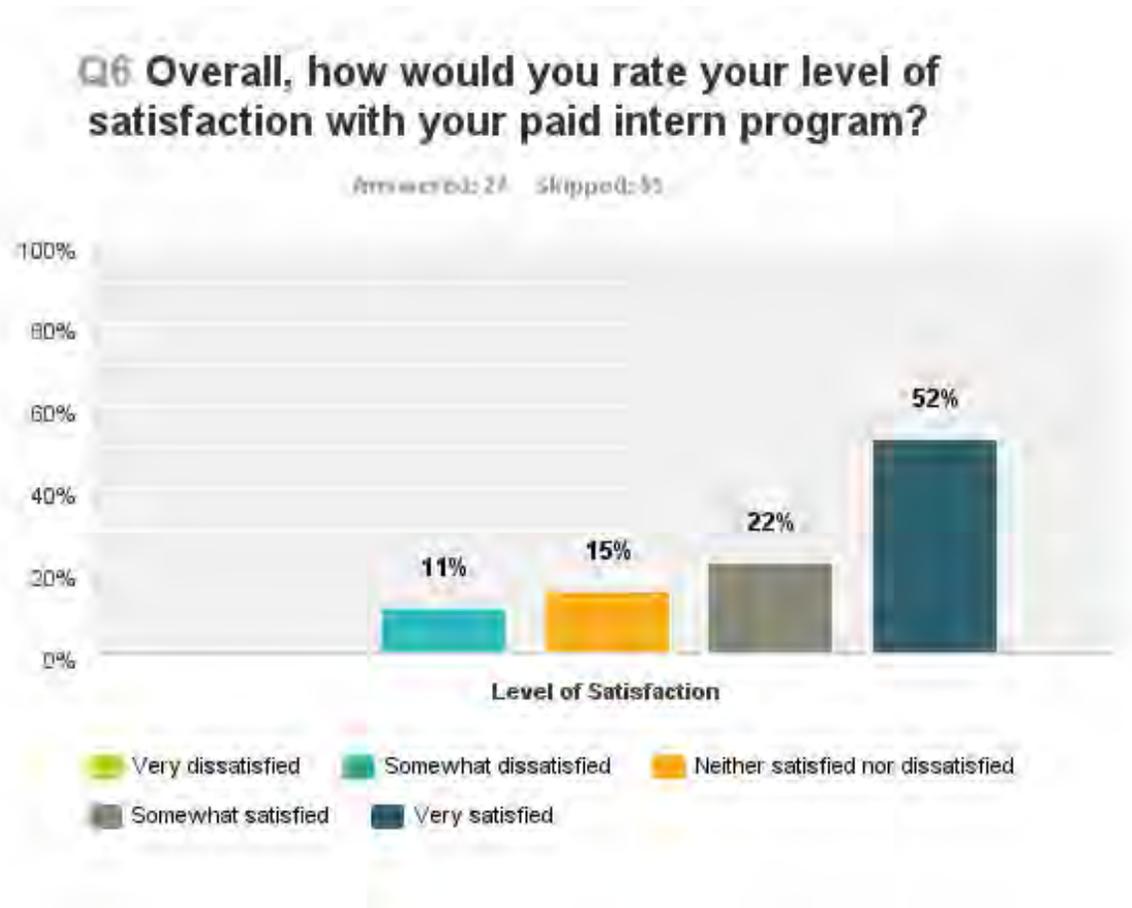
### 4. The ongoing challenge of human resources capacity.

Of the 81 survey respondents who told us the number of employees in their organization (Q20), 59% had 1-5 employees and 26% had 6-25 employees. Given the number of micro and small businesses represented by the survey sample, it makes sense that the biggest “pain point” for the subset participating in paid internships was committing the time and resources to recruiting, hiring, training and managing interns. Of note: 52% had at least some degree of difficulty seeing a return on that investment. (Q5, n=27)



## 5. Publishers were generally satisfied with their paid internships.

A small number were somewhat dissatisfied or neutral, but 74% of respondents with paid interns were either somewhat (22%) or very satisfied (52%) overall. (Q6, n=27)



## 6. Internships can lead to employment.

Publishers turn to their current or former interns as a source for new hires. When the entire sample was asked if they had ever hired a previous intern, 64% of respondents said yes. (Q8, n=83)

## 7. The hiring numbers make a cumulative impact.

When asked to estimate the number of former interns their organization has hired over the past 5 years, 51 respondents entered a number. Individual answers ranged from one up to 20. Combined, they represent 184 hires. (Q9, n=51, no duplication from one instance of multiple respondents from the same company.)

- 68% were temporary (contract)
- 62% were full-time positions
- 47% were freelance commissions to contributors

(Q10, n=53)

## Publisher Perspective

*“For this to be win-win, intern programs must be standardized so the interns all receive a meaningful experience and leave with an overwhelmingly positive opinion of our industry. Hiring companies should ask themselves two questions: “What experience would I want for my own kids?” and “What do I want these kids to say about my company when they leave?” It needs to be about them, not us.”*

*- Multi-title business-to-business publisher*



**Publishers strongly agreed: the value is in creating a pathway for training and employment.**

## Program Concept Testing

### 8. Publishers value an industry program.

When the entire survey sample was given the chance to agree that they “don’t see any real value” in an industry paid internship program, only one respondent strongly agreed. 73% strongly disagreed with the statement. (Q11, n=81)

Respondents strongly agreed with these statements of potential benefits:

- Creates a path for training/employment in a tough job market. (64%)
- Develops a more diverse talent pool. (53%)
- Provides a source of digital expertise and innovation. (35%)
- Offers the magazine industry an advantage when competing for talent with other sectors. (35%)

Other value to the industry (write-in comments):

*“Supports publishers with HR capacity and financial assistance to grow the magazine profession.” - Multi-title business-to-business publisher*

*“Introduces people with job skills to niche subject matter.” - Business-to-business publisher*

*“Allows us to both train students in areas that are not being met by schools and highlight gaps in education programs.” - Multi-title business-to-business publisher*

## 9. Publishers prefer a grant funding model.

The survey asked the respondents to rate the degree of desirability of two program funding models:

*A co-funding model, where the participating magazine and Magazines Canada each share 50% of a paid intern's employment costs (minimum wage, benefits and other eligible expenditures) for the term of the internship.*

*A grant model, where the participating magazine applies to Magazines Canada for a grant to cover 100% of a paid intern's employment costs (minimum wage, benefits and other eligible expenditures) for the term of the internship.*

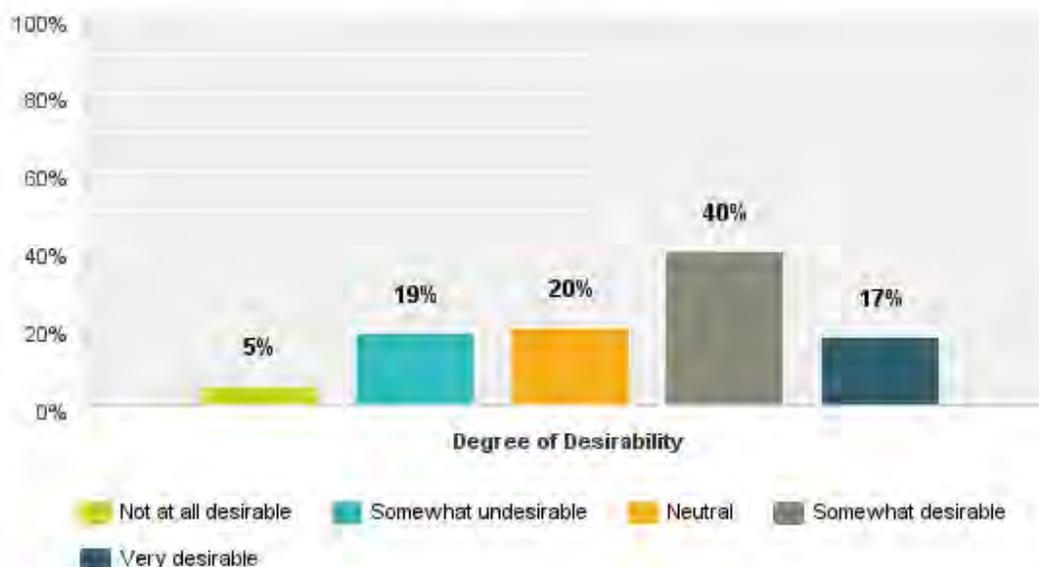
**Whether cultural, b-to-b or consumer, single title or multi-title, the publisher preference was for a grant model over a co-funding model—primarily because of concerns about the cost.**

Only 17% of respondents found the co-funding model very desirable compared to 65% for the grant model. (Q12 and Q13, n=81)

- When asked, “Why did you choose this rating?” two-thirds of the comments related to the co-funding model were publishers expressing uncertainty over having the financial resources to cover their 50% contribution.
- One publisher would “prioritize programs that fund 100% of the internship—like Canada Summer Jobs program and OSAP-funded co-op positions through universities” over a co-funded program.
- Others commented that they are used to 75%-100% funding models in other programs.
- One publisher commented: “Co-funding helps by putting some financial vested interest on the publication to ensure the intern is learning a skill, not just doing routine office work.”

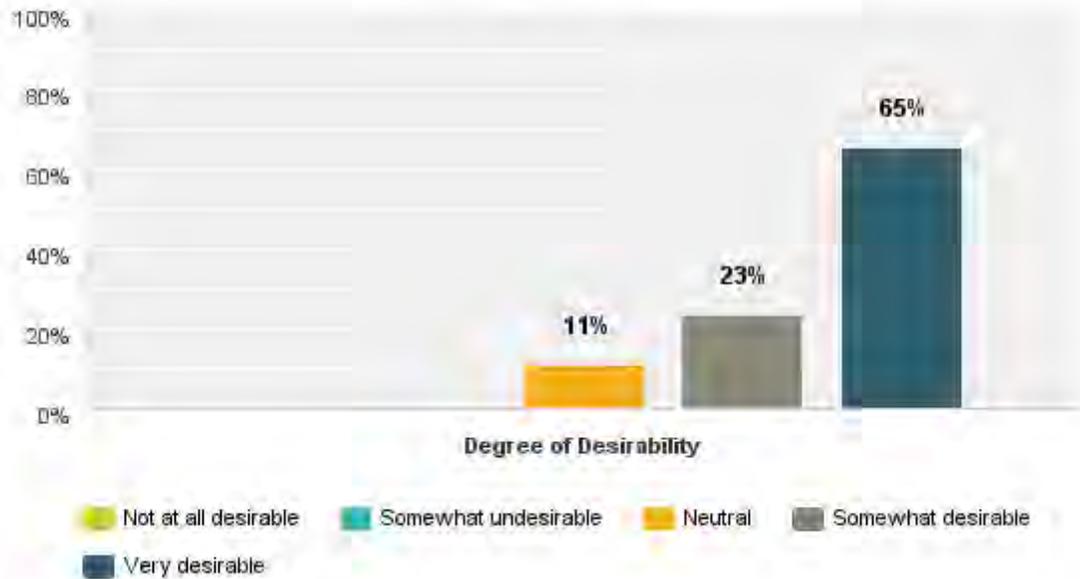
### Q12 Please select the rating that best describes how desirable this co-funding model would be for your magazine.

Answered: 81 Skipped: 5



**Q13 Please select the rating that best describes how desirable this grant model would be for your magazine.**

Answers: 81 Skipped: 5



**10. But there are concerns about the administrative requirements and potential limited availability of a grant model.**

*“This solves the problem of the participating magazine not being able to afford 50% of the employment cost—but I’m guessing this would also limit the availability of internships to just a few, when there could be more.”*

*“I wasn’t 100% about this option, since I’d be worried the grant process would be time consuming as well, between applying for the grant and then reporting on the work done. This, on top of the training and overseeing time that would be spent with the intern.”*

*“This model is fine as long as we maintain control over who we accept—culture is very important to our company.”*

*“100% would be lovely since the magazine would not have the expense, but how many internships would be available and which magazines would receive them? Maybe a program that offers graduated support might be better. One that looks at the magazine’s finances or size and large, well-funded mags receive 50% support while smaller mags with less resources receive 100% support.”*

## 11. Publishers prefer the autonomy of direct recruiting of interns.

The survey asked the respondents to rate the degree of desirability of two program models:

### Concept 1 (Question 14)

*Magazines would apply to the paid intern program for funding and then would be responsible for finding and hiring their own interns.*

### Concept 2 (Question 15)

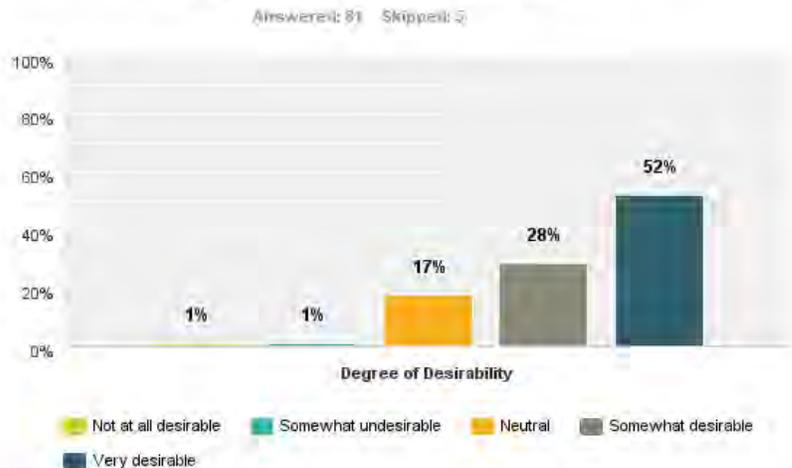
*Both magazines and interns apply to the program, with Magazines Canada providing a centralized "job board" service featuring magazine internship postings and intern applications. Magazines would contact intern applicants and then be responsible for hiring their own intern.*

### Concept 1 was the overwhelming favourite with respondents.

While the cross-tabulated answers sliced the data into sample sizes too small to be statistically valid, there appeared to be a directional preference for Concept 1 regardless of magazine type, number of employees, size of population centre or province.

More than half (52%) of respondents found Concept 1 very desirable compared to 31% for Concept 2. Concept 2 elicited a stronger negative reaction—while only two respondents (2%) found Concept 1 objectionable, 12 respondents (14%) rated Concept 2 undesirable to some degree. (Q14 and Q15, n=81)

### Q14 Please select the rating that best describes how desirable this program model would be for your magazine.



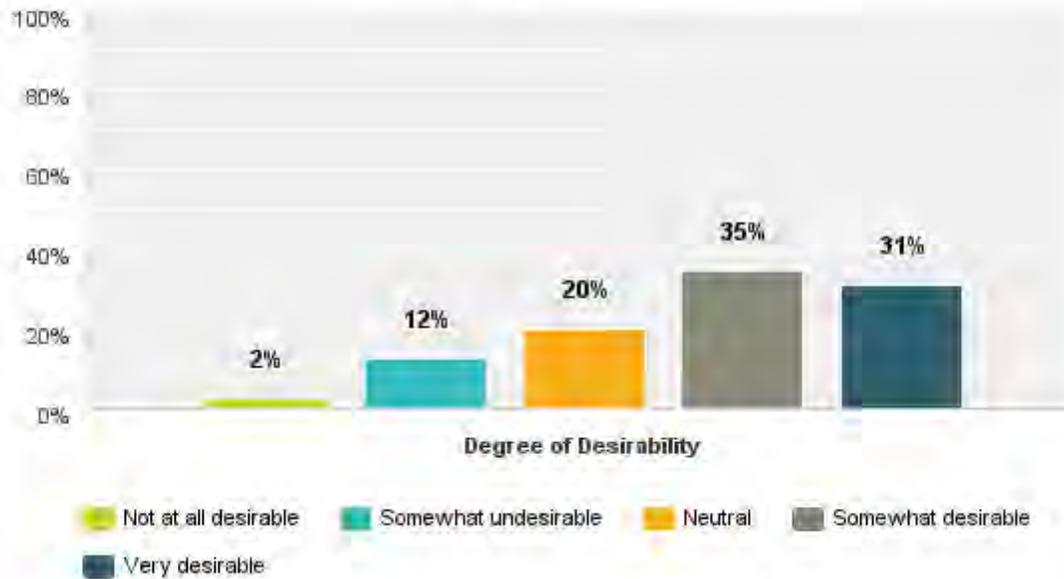
Most comments (18 out of 26) stated that publishers know their specific needs and are best suited to manage the recruiting and hiring process. Three publishers said that they need help in finding suitable interns. One commented that Concept 1, though desirable, won't necessarily promote diversity of intern applicants in the same way as the collective approach of an industry job board described in Concept 2.

## 12. Few publishers see the benefits of a centralized job board.

Almost half of the comments (15 out of 32) were negative about this option. Another 6 comments were somewhat supportive but qualified by concerns. A little more than a third of the comments (11) had positive things to say about this centralized approach to recruiting. (see Q15 question chart on the next page.)

**Q15 Please select the rating that best describes how desirable this program model would be for your magazine.**

Answered: 81 Skipped: 5



*“Seems overly and unnecessarily complicated, and not as likely to draw applicants who want to work at our magazine specifically, but rather are just looking for any job at any magazine.”*

*“Not likely to attract the candidates we need. Perhaps better for Magazines Canada to create a best practices handbook that includes tips for advertising internships, and job descriptions etc. I don’t think recreating a job board (when there are many) is necessary. In fact it’s a bad use of your \$.”*

*“Cumbersome. Not very useful for those of us outside of the main urban centres.”*

*“How many people are going to apply for Canadian Manure in Simcoe or Canadian Auto Recycler in Peterborough, when they are posted next to Chatelaine or Cottage Life...As a b2b publisher we have to sell ourselves a LOT harder than the consumer brands.”*

*“We have some concerns with promoting our job posting (as a regional cultural magazine) in direct competition with larger organizations in more central locations.”*

On the other hand...

*“One could draw from a larger pool of interns than just the ones you know personally, or in your local milieu.”*

*“I like that this option puts the drive and commitment in the power of both the potential employer and the employee.”*

*“Many publishers lack the infrastructure/capacity to stay on top of what programs offer internships, when they are offered, etc. If someone could connect students, programs, individuals with the timing, time span and skill set, that would be a huge problem solver.”*

## Publisher Perspective

*"I think it would be good to keep [eligibility] open so the publisher could decide where they need help and what type of individual would be most suitable."*

- Consumer magazine, 1-5 employees

*"NO SPECIFIC LIMITATIONS, just make it merit-based (a good fit); let's not always aim everything at youth (sorry if that goes against popular opinion.)"*

- Cultural magazine, ON

*"Everybody in the pool!"*

- Multi-title business-to-business publisher, ON



The ideal length of an internship may be partly influenced by the magazine's frequency.

## Other Program Requirements

### 13. Publishers prefer open eligibility criteria.

When asked who should be eligible to apply for a paid internship in this program, respondents favoured a broad approach to allow for diversity of applicants as well as to respond to publishers' different requirements. (Q16, n=79, multiple answers allowed.)

Eligibility preferences:

- Recent graduates (within the past 2 years) of a post-secondary institution. (91%)
- Students currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution. (84%)
- Graduates (within the past 5 years) of a post-secondary institution. (66%)
- Individuals with a career history interested in changing careers. (46%)
- Individuals with a high school diploma and demonstrated interest, aptitude and transferable skills. (44%)

*"From my perspective, I see no reason to limit, unless the funding source(s) requires it. Bigger pool means better quality applicants meeting various—potentially quirky—requirements of niche titles that need interns most."*

- Consumer magazine, ON

## 14. Longer terms allow training through a publication cycle.

The survey asked the respondents to indicate their ideal length of a paid internship. 46% chose 6 months, followed by 34% indicating 3-4 months. 20% of respondents chose 1 year. (Q17, n=80)

The sample size is too small to cross-tabulate answers with magazine frequency. But earlier telephone interviews with publishers revealed that the desired internship length is connected to the publication frequency and the length of a magazine production cycle. It also allows the intern time to “learn the ropes” and begin to make a meaningful contribution to the organization as a return on the publisher’s investment in training.

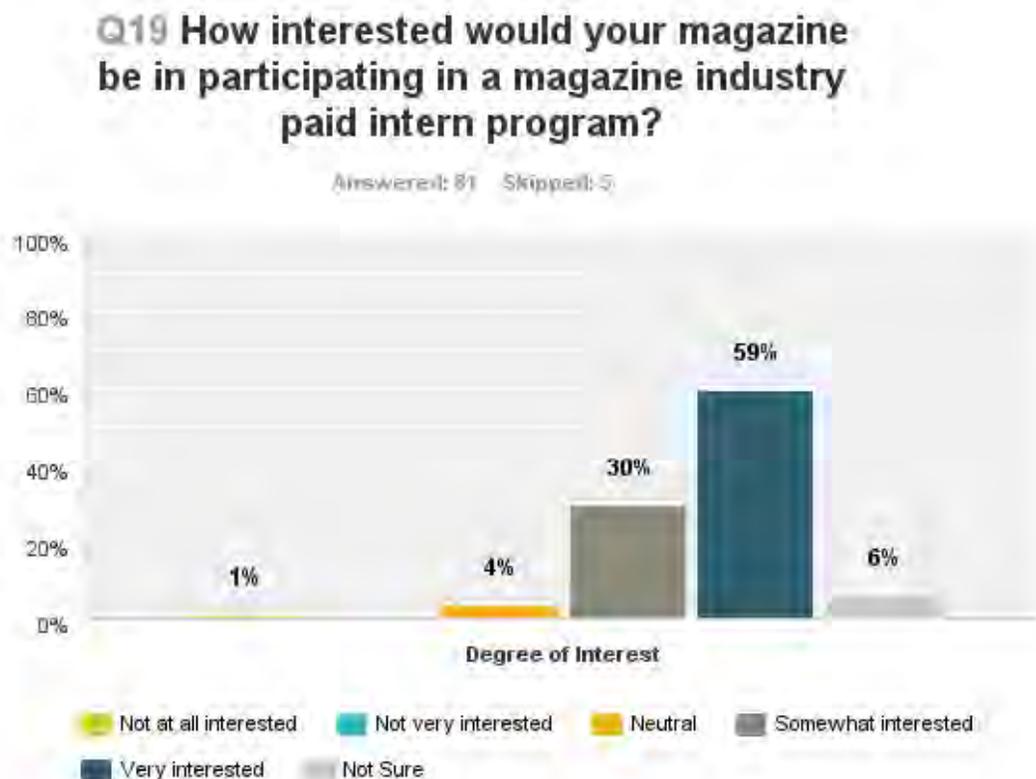
## 15. Publishers prefer year round start dates.

For maximum flexibility, respondents overwhelmingly chose year round start dates (80%) versus seasonal (15%) or summer only (5%). (Q18, n=79)

Anecdotally, earlier telephone interviews with publishers elicited comments that educational work placements in the spring, while timed to meet the requirements of the academic term, are too brief and often take place during slower periods within the magazine’s publishing schedule. Year round start dates are more responsive to the business cycle.

## 16. Strong publisher interest in an industry paid intern program.

Based on the exploration of the potential program through the survey, 89% of respondents are either somewhat (30%) or very interested (59%)—a clear indication of support for the potential program. (Q19, n=81)



## Publisher Perspective

*“Let’s do this! Happy to volunteer as a mentor, director, intake reviewer, coach....”*

*“Big fan of our BC intern programme. Love it when our interns get jobs (which they usually do) after their time with us. Have hired 2 of them ourselves.”*

*“This is needed in our industry. I look forward to hearing about the survey results and future developments on this program.”*

*“Thank you for pursuing this. I think there is a major opportunity here.”*



Magazines Canada has a more prominent role to play in connecting with schools.

## Recommendations

The research findings point to key opportunities for taking action through greater collaboration within the industry and partnerships with educators and funders.

### 1. Seek resources for an initial pilot program.

Magazines Canada members have a strong interest in providing job training through paid internships, but the biggest barrier is the financial risk to these micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Mitigating this risk through funding will create more opportunities for paid internships, and help realize benefits to job seekers, publishers and the magazine sector.

Timing is everything, and the recommendation to increase funding for more work placement opportunities in the magazine sector is aligned with recent high profile reports from both the Ontario Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Panel and the Business Council of Canada’s Higher Education Roundtable.

How to determine the resources required for an industry program?

Factors to consider include varying provincial minimum wage rates, publisher capacity for a co-funding contribution and whether the magazine has the structure to support a full-time or part-time intern. A sliding scale for funding based on a publisher means test may be optimal but adds another layer of administration to a program that publishers would prefer to see streamlined. Another approach would be to provide more funding

(from 75%-100%) for cultural magazines in recognition of their specific challenges with financial resources while offering consumer and business-to-business magazines 50% co-funding.

**Proposed pilot program**

In order to move ahead relatively quickly with a simplified pilot program, this report recommends introducing a phase one test with a small number of Ontario-based business-to-business magazines—a segment that appears to have a significant gap in intern supply and demand as well as challenges finding qualified applicants for available job openings.

By focusing on one province and a specific magazine segment for the first phase, Magazines Canada will be able to identify key learnings and measurable results to help scale the program, and then share these findings with a wide range of partners, including provincial magazine associations like the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association (AMPA) and Magazines BC, as part of a next phase of developing a national program for all Magazines Canada members that complements the existing paid internship programs offered by provincial magazine associations.

**Table: Projected Funding Levels per Internship for Ontario-only pilot program:**

(Ontario minimum wage at \$11.60 per hour as of Oct. 1, 2017 + 15% benefits calculation)

Funding Level	Funder contribution 3 month full-time internship	Publisher contribution 3 month full-time internship
100%	\$6,403	\$0
75%	\$4,802	\$1,601
50%	\$3,202	\$3,201

**Proposed pilot parameters:**

*Scope:* 15 participating business-to-business magazines, each committing to one three month full-time internship

*Co-funding level:* shared at 50%

*Resources required:* \$96,000 wage costs and investment in people resources, as follows:

Magazines Canada contribution

- \$48,030 estimated for wages/benefits 50% co-funding. (15 x \$3,202)
- Investment in people resources to develop and implement the pilot program.

Contribution from participating magazine publishers

- \$48,030 estimated for wages/benefits 50% co-funding. (15 x \$3201, or \$1,607/month x 3 months)
- Investment in people resources to recruit, hire, train, mentor and manage a paid intern for 3 months and then report results back to Magazines Canada.

## 2. Develop a simple program model for the pilot.

The research found that publishers wanted the autonomy to recruit and hire their own interns and had significant doubts about the benefits of Magazines Canada serving as an intermediary in the recruiting process. Comments used descriptions like “unnecessarily complicated” or “cumbersome.”

It's recommended that the test program be based, in part, on the initiative set up by the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association (AMPA), where publishers apply in advance for funding and then undertake their own recruiting and hiring. On an admin level, the AMPA program requires that the publisher submit a copy of the intern's first pay cheque as proof of internship, and AMPA vets the intern to ensure he or she meets AMPA's specific program eligibility requirement that the intern be a recent graduate. The intern and publisher supervisor are also required to submit simple reports at the end of the internship. AMPA has set up a 50% co-funding model, and sends the portion of the funder contribution to the publisher at the end of the internship, once reports have been received.

In line with the research findings, it's recommended that the pilot program allow for year round start dates, three month terms, and a broad criteria for internship eligibility.

*Timelines for pilot implementation:*

*Next 6 months:* share report findings with stakeholders, secure financial resources to fund the pilot program, develop pilot program guidelines and materials, communicate and promote to Magazines Canada members.

*October-November:* applications for co-funding accepted, assessed and participating magazines notified.

*January-December 2018:* pilot program active. Magazines Canada works with educational partners and other stakeholders to help drive awareness of the paid internship opportunities.

## 3. Help build publisher HR capacity through training and resources.

The demand on staff time and resources to hire, recruit, train and supervise interns was cited by publishers as the most difficult part of an internship program. Without serving as an intermediary in the process, Magazines Canada can help address this issue by providing support for publishers through training and resources. One write-in comment suggested that Magazines Canada could create a best practices handbook for publishers. Along with training opportunities through Magazines Canada webinars and conference workshops, additional resources could offer publisher ready-made templates for job descriptions, interview questions and performance reviews, along with tips for promoting internship postings to a broader audience.

## 4. Build partnerships with post-secondary institutions.

Both publishers and educational program directors expressed the desire for closer collaboration in conversations held as part of the initial phone interview research. In building these partnerships, Magazines Canada can help promote an awareness and understanding of the variety of magazines and career opportunities with the sector, as well as explore new ways to foster innovation.

### **Addressing the information gap: raise awareness with students and educators.**

Aside from magazine publishers occasionally serving on industry advisory boards at the college or polytechnic level, there's no formal relationship with post-secondary institutions with relevant study programs. When asked to describe how students found work placements, the program administrators interviewed said it ranged from the informal “who you or the student know” to students choosing from a pre-established list of organizations with placements set up by the program's coordinator.

One former intern interviewed said that his Master of Journalism program at Carleton University focused exclusively on newspaper or digital news internships and magazines weren't mentioned as an option.

Another example of the gap: an Ontario business-to-business publisher, after realizing that the past 5 out of 7 new hires to his company were Carleton Journalism grads, approached the university to establish a relationship but "it didn't go anywhere."

In conversations with educational program directors at Centennial, Sheridan and Western, however, each invited further discussion on ways Magazines Canada could work more closely with them to develop more opportunities for experiential learning.



Idea: Promote magazine opportunities at post-secondary career fairs.

A more pro-active role by Magazines Canada would promote magazines in general and benefit the more vertical business-to-business titles in particular. It would also broaden the educator and student understanding of functional roles available within a magazine internship—going beyond editorial content creation to the demand for skills related to graphic design, digital platform development, social media, marketing and communications, sales, audience development, and event management.

### **Provide post-secondary program feedback.**

Further collaboration would help provide educational programs with real-world feedback on skills gaps and industry needs.

If internships allow publishers to "train students in areas that are not being met by schools and highlight gaps in education programs", as one publisher commented, then these insights could be shared with educators to help enhance their programs. Working together, it would be possible to go so far as to develop an experiential learning framework to create an industry-certified standard for our internship training experience—one that both complements and completes a student's course of study.

### **Creative Incubator: collaboration to explore new ways to showcase cross-platform content.**

The associate dean of Design, Illustration and Photography at Sheridan College (an award-winning former magazine art director) was excited at the prospect of a creative collaboration with publishers, facilitated by Magazines Canada. A designated creative campus, Sheridan is committed to helping students reach their creative potential. As part of an innovation project, a partnership could explore new approaches to magazine interactivity or digital storytelling and tap into student strengths in UI, UX, AI, AR, video, animation, photography and illustration. The invitation stands to connect with Sheridan to explore the possibilities and continue the conversation.

## 5. Drive awareness through marketing and communications.

### **Increasing diversity and quality of the talent pool.**

While this is a larger societal issue, there are steps Magazines Canada can take to assist magazines in broadening the diversity and quality of the talent pool.

One of the biggest barriers to the diversity of applicants is overcome by offering paid internships, making it a more viable choice for those not subsidized by their parents or partners. (This is the primary way that interns interviewed said they were able to afford an unpaid student work placement.)

The other barrier is general awareness of the variety of magazines in the industry and the wide range of opportunities available. With the selling of any product, the buying cycle starts at the top of the “marketing funnel” with awareness generation through various tactics.

The industry works together collaboratively to promote magazine readership and purchase to consumers. Why not leverage this broad audience reach to also promote careers in magazine publishing? Print and digital advertising and social media campaigns that can be readily shared and promoted to member audiences would help raise general awareness. And public relations efforts to gain “earned media” would also serve this end.

## Conclusion

Publishers have a strong interest in an industry paid internship program and recognize its potential benefits to interns, publishers and the industry as a whole. Survey findings show that past magazine internships have provided a pathway to employment, and so more paid work placements would represent a larger economic benefit as well.

Magazines Canada is well-positioned to bring stakeholders together to develop a program that will help mitigate financial risk as well as empower and support publishers with resources, marketing and new educational partnerships to help them in their efforts to attract, recruit, train and mentor new diverse talent.

Given recent high profile reports calling for more investment in paid work placement opportunities—such as those from the Ontario Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Panel and the Business Council of Canada’s Higher Education Roundtable—the timing is right to move ahead with developing and testing a magazine industry paid internship program.



## Appendix A: Acknowledgements



**Ontario**

Ontario Media Development  
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Société de développement  
de l'industrie des médias  
de l'Ontario

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## Appendix B: Researcher Biography

If asked to respond to this industry survey at various points in her career, consultant and researcher **Sharon McAuley** would have checked a number of boxes to identify “type of magazine”, having worked in all three magazine categories—as the Group Publisher of consumer titles (*Toronto Life*, *Where Canada*, *Ottawa Magazine*), cultural titles (*Quill & Quire*) and business-to-business titles (*Investment Executive*, *Finance et Investissement*)—for both medium-sized and large companies. Although her career is based in Toronto (large, urban centre), she was born and raised in Northern Ontario in Sault Ste. Marie (population 73,368.)

As an industry consultant, Sharon specializes in helping magazines achieve their goals through new business development, driving revenue through sales and marketing strategy, audience development and operations management. Over the course of her career, she has worked with over 50 Canadian magazines as a Magazines Canada Travelling Consultant. Contact her directly at [sharonmcauley119@gmail.com](mailto:sharonmcauley119@gmail.com).



## Appendix C: Summary of Stakeholders Consulted

Phone interviews took place between December 16, 2016 and February 22, 2017.

### Associations and NGOs

- Alberta Magazine Publishers Association
- Independent Publishers Association of Ontario
- Journalists for Human Rights

### Publishers

- Actual Media
- Annex Business Media
- Brick Magazine
- Broken Pencil Magazine
- House and Home Media
- Law and Style Media
- Observer Publications
- On The Bay Magazine
- Rogers Communications
- Red Maple Foundation
- Your Workplace

### Post-secondary Programs

- Centennial College Book, Magazine and Electronic Publishing
- Sheridan College Design, Illustration & Photography
- Western University, Master of Media in Journalism and Communications

### Students and Former Interns

- Current student, Centennial College Book, Magazine and Electronic Publishing
- Graduate 2015, Centennial College Book, Magazine and Electronic Publishing
- Graduate 2014, Carleton University Master of Journalism
- Graduate 2013, Simon Fraser University Master of Publishing
- Graduate 2012, Centennial College Book, Magazine and Electronic Publishing