

Area: Human Resources Management

Subjects: Internship vs. working contract

Title: Let's bet for better

Part 1

Mr. K. has just finished his postgraduate studies in journalism. He has already worked on various projects as a freelancer for national newspapers. Now Mr. K. is preparing his self-employment as journalist and public relations consultant. Now he needs someone to design his website and assist him with new media devices.

From his own experience Mr. K. knows that many graduates of graphic design don't find a job even though their education is on a very professional level. So he decides to employ a recently graduated designer (Linda S.) as an intern for the duration of half a year. Mr. K. tells Linda that he's just starting up his own business and therefore won't be able to pay the intern. Due to the tense situation on the job market for designers, Linda agrees and hopes for a permanent and paid occupation as soon as Mr. K's agency is successfully growing.

1. What do you think of the situation?
2. Is there any (economic/ethical) conflict potential?

(Discussion in groups + debate)

Part 2

After a few months the new agency has already some important clients. Mr. K. is very happy about Linda's efforts. She assists him in all aspects of media related office tasks. After the six months of Linda's internship are over, Mr. K. could make a contract with Linda, offering her a paid job. But instead of doing so, Mr. K. considers on taking another of the many unemployed graduates as an unpaid intern, because paying a full-time employee would cost him a lot of money. Mr. K. prefers to invest in his start-up company instead of spending money on wages. In addition to this, his experiences with Linda have shown him that young graduates are well trained and highly motivated. Mr. K. does not know if Linda is willing to assist him for another six months without salary, but if she is not, he plans to employ another young graduate.

3. What do you think of Mr. K.'s plans?

Part 3

In order to have some personal security concerning her future working conditions, Linda has asked Mr. K. for several times to have a meeting and discuss her contract. Every time before it comes to a discussion Mr. K. suddenly talks about an unexpected problem or meeting with a client and that is why Linda doesn't get a chance to articulate her needs.

One week before the end of her intern contract, Linda is finishing a design project for an important client to whom she has created a trustful relationship. Once again she tries to get Mr. K. attention: "we really must talk about my future".

Meanwhile, the managing director of Mr. K. client, Mr. D., realized that Linda is ending her internship and would like to continue working with her.

4. Which are the ethical aspects to consider in this situation from the point of view of:

- Mr. K.
- Linda
- Mr. D.

Task 1: Role play – in 2 pairs of 2 persons (Mr. K. and Linda / Linda and Mr. D.) volunteers should reproduce the ethical behaviour in managing this situation (in front of the group).

Task 2: Discussion in the all group + debate

Collect and systematize the arguments from the role plays and from other members of the training group.