

BUSINESS CASE STUDY

PINNACOL

INDUSTRY: Worker's compensation insurance for employees

STAFF: 650 Employees

LOCATION: Denver, Colorado

ABOUT: Pinnacol Assurance is Colorado's leading workers' compensation insurer. For more than a century the company has been providing coverage with personalized service and compassionate care.



THE CAREERWISE DIFFERENCE

DEEP SUPPORT

Tapy had some nervousness about how he would make the CareerWise program work, acknowledging that there were many unknowns. But CareerWise's deep support and involvement have taken the questions out of the equation. "CareerWise is helping us create a program that benefits everyone, hits the mission of our workforce development and ensures an optimal return on our investment."

BUSINESS-ORIENTED

CareerWise's program benefits students and industry—with a keen eye to making sure it works for Colorado business. Likewise, Pinnacol's involvement is not altruistic. CEO Kalin admires the apprentices for being smart, motivated, curious and energetic, and he enthusiastically supports them. But at the end of the day, "This is a business decision that is the right format, at the right time."

INDUSTRY VALUE-ADD

CareerWise is uniquely building its program to scale so that all of Colorado industry benefits—a strategy Tapy aligns with. Tapy predicts a value-add outside the company's walls as the apprentice model grows to scale: "There will be a much better-prepared workforce in the state. If multiple companies produce high-caliber talent, the whole industry benefits."

EXPLORING A NEW KIND OF APPRENTICESHIP

Pinnacol Assurance had been actively seeking ways to reinvigorate its talent acquisition strategy. During a trip to Switzerland to see first-hand the country's youth apprentice model, Pinnacol's CEO was challenged to think differently about his hiring approaches. Soon after, the company was the first to join CareerWise Colorado—and today, Pinnacol hosts CareerWise's largest cohort of high-school apprentices. Pinnacol considers its investment a competitive advantage and is in it for the long haul.

APPRENTICE CONTRIBUTIONS

Pinnacol's apprentices support 23 work teams—primarily in claims, underwriting, customer service and information technology—and already sees a return on its investment through the apprentices' support of daily operations.

"They are taking on roles and responsibilities that free up full-time, salaried staff to focus on the more technical aspects of their jobs," said Mark Tapy, Pinnacol's program manager. He estimates that from a strictly hourly standpoint, the company recoups about 80 percent of wages paid for the work produced.

“ It dramatically broadens the notion of what an apprenticeship is. It becomes not only a pathway to a great middle-class job, but is a launching pad that can take young people in any number of directions, whether it's a job or higher education. ”

PHIL KALIN

PINNACOL | PRESIDENT & CEO

BUSINESS CASE STUDY

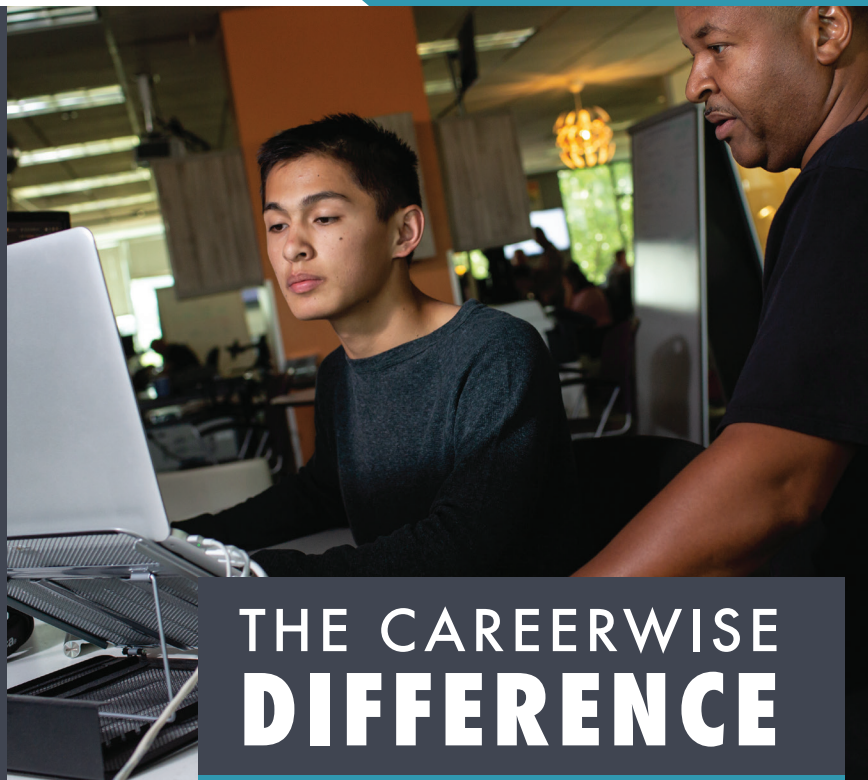
HOMEADVISOR

INDUSTRY: Digital Marketplace for home services

STAFF: 2,000 Employees

LOCATION: Golden, Colorado

ABOUT: HomeAdvisor® is a digital marketplace evolving the way homeowners connect with service professionals to complete home projects. With HomeAdvisor's on-demand platform, homeowners can find and vet local, prescreened home service professionals; view average home project costs; and instantly book appointments online or through the company's mobile app.



THE CAREERWISE DIFFERENCE

EXPLORING A NEW KIND OF APPRENTICESHIP

HomeAdvisor's CEO, Chris Terrill, believes there should be multiple paths for developing well-rounded, educated adults—and that unfortunately, college doesn't necessarily prepare students for the dynamic and ever-changing needs of businesses. In 2016, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper invited Terrill to explore Switzerland's successful apprenticeship model. He was eager to see what was so special about the Swiss approach and how it might benefit Colorado businesses. He found the evidence he needed. "It was a pragmatic, smart program with proven results," he said.

As a pilot partner, in 2017 HomeAdvisor hired four CareerWise Colorado apprentices to fill roles on the human resources, IT and software development teams, where they are building transferable skills they can take to the marketplace.

APPRENTICE CONTRIBUTIONS

HomeAdvisor's apprentices bring in a new set of eyes and perspectives, according to Tanya Jones, HomeAdvisor's recruiting director. Because the younger generation are "technology natives," they are more adaptable and can learn in modern environments quickly—bringing unexpected efficiencies to her team's processes.

STRUCTURE

Compared to traditional, three-month internship programs, CareerWise's apprenticeship structure actively involves the students in their learning—offering hard and soft skills they can use while holding apprentices to the same expectations as adults.

CONNECTION

The program does youth a great service by enabling them to put their skills and talents to work for themselves and the company—and by believing the young apprentices are capable. "You have these inherently smart kids who weren't connecting with high school and weren't thinking about college before. Now they're connecting the dots."

SCALING UP

CareerWise is leveraging partnerships with industry to develop an effective apprentice model and take it to scale by testing it, modifying and making it work. Partners like Terrill help shape that vision, demonstrating its value to other leaders: "Like me, CEOs must see the benefit to believe it."

“We were six weeks ahead of our plans and had to find other things for them to do.”

CHRIS TERRILL

HOMEADVISOR | CEO

BUSINESS CASE STUDY

PROSTAR

INDUSTRY: Geospatial intelligence software

STAFF: 15 Employees

LOCATION: Grand Junction, Colorado

ABOUT: ProStar GeoCorp. offers integrated, enterprise-wide geospatial software, providing organizations with the ability to provide real-time visualization of asset lifecycle data, including from geographic information systems, computer-aided design and land applications.



THE CAREERWISE DIFFERENCE

EXPLORING A NEW KIND OF APPRENTICESHIP

ProStar Geocorp's environment is technical, where knowledge and understanding of software, cloud computing and asset management are critically important. And while the company's vice president of operations, David McGee, had historically brought in computer-science-focused college students as short-term interns, the opportunity to hire high schoolers was a new concept. But McGee was intrigued to try it out when he heard about CareerWise's program and approach. "Many young people are raised on technology, and I figured that someone who is eager, wants to try hard, and has the skill set to work with a technical company can be groomed and taught," he said. And in summer 2017, ProStar hired William.

APPRENTICE CONTRIBUTIONS

While McGee could envision the potential contributions of a high school student who had certain technical skills and a positive attitude, he did not expect just how quickly ProStar's apprentice, William, would assimilate to the workplace. He came ready to learn and has had a significant impact.

Joining ProStar with no formal training or education, after only seven months, William was testing software functionality, writing test cases and developing client documentation. His work represents approximately a 20 percent cost savings compared to what ProStar would normally pay an hourly-equivalent staff member on the quality assurance team.

SUPPORT & STRUCTURE

Given ProStar's previous experience hosting college interns, the company was equipped with the processes to take on an apprentice. However, the structure and support CareerWise delivers have been essential to ProStar's success—from delivering a comprehensive onboarding process to advising ProStar on the creation of an internal support system featuring both a supervisor and a mentor.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

In contrast to shorter-term intern or workforce center programs, CareerWise's three-year program affords ProStar the time to develop the apprentice's skill sets in ways that deliver direct, immediate value to the company. "I can invest a lot in our CareerWise apprentice knowing he will be here for three years," said McGee.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Having a CareerWise modern youth apprentice gives ProStar a competitive advantage as a smaller technology startup. Paying an apprentice's wage helps keep costs low—an important aspect of the company's operations as it tries to grow and compete in its industry.

“He's already exceeded the break-even point, about four months ahead of schedule.”

DAVID MCGEE

PROSTAR | VP OF OPERATIONS

BUSINESS CASE STUDY

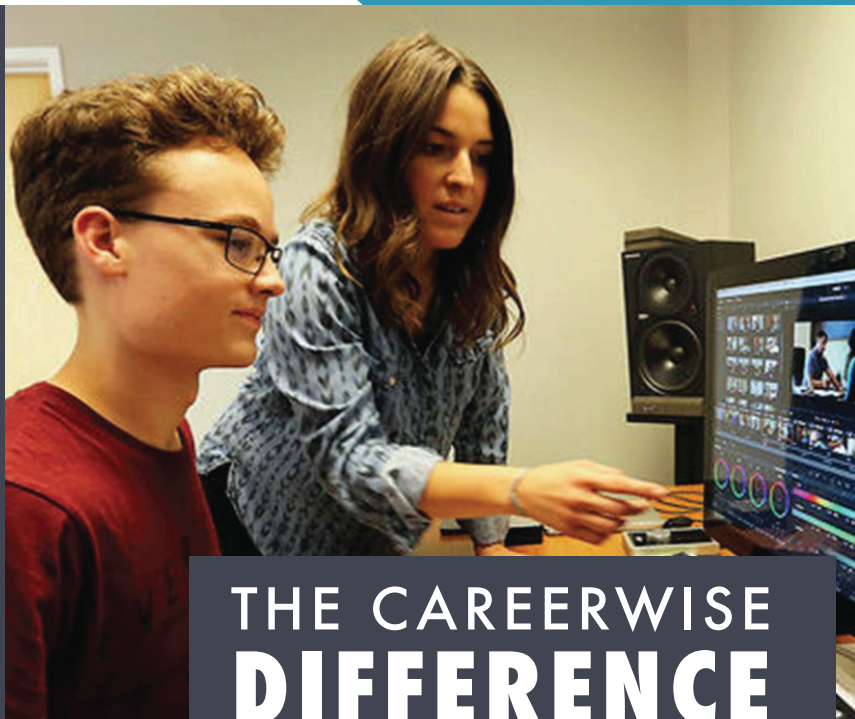
HOPTOCOPTER

INDUSTRY: Video production

STAFF: 9 Full-Time Employees

LOCATION: Grand Junction, Colorado

ABOUT: Hoptocopter™ Films is a Colorado video production company specializing in cinematic corporate films. Its team of entrepreneurs, storytellers, and creatives have a passion for creating functional films its clients are proud of.



THE CAREERWISE DIFFERENCE

CREDIBILITY & RELIABILITY

CareerWise's modern youth-apprenticeship model provides competency training plans that are crafted in cooperation with business to ensure the skills being developed are immediately applicable to industry. This lends the credibility and reliability Schaeffer feels are necessary for success and ensure meaningful and valuable production. "The student is accountable for the workload."

DEPTH OF RESOURCES

CareerWise offers businesses guidance on developing the apprentice program, hiring processes and creating a viable career path—making apprenticeship attractive to Schaeffer. His small company wouldn't have the resources to create such an initiative alone.

LONGEVITY

The program's longevity allows a relationship to be built over a period of years. By training an apprentice in its preferred methods of doing business, Hoptocopter reaps the rewards of a young person's skills and productivity now, while developing a pipeline for the company's future workforce.

EXPLORING A NEW KIND OF APPRENTICESHIP

Hoptocopter has a history of mentoring people interested in breaking into the film industry. However, the small video production house is often challenged to find individuals with the right technical capabilities and personality fit. Because hiring interns and college graduates has not always proven to be fruitful, bringing a high school apprentice on board seemed out of the question. The company's doubts were lifted when it partnered with CareerWise Colorado and hired 17-year-old Nate, Hoptocopter's modern youth apprentice.

APPRENTICE CONTRIBUTIONS

Nate fits in with the team in every way and "absolutely" provides a return on Hoptocopter's investment. Supporting two full-time editors, he takes video editing projects from start to finish. The result is that Nate is producing quality films—outputting two to five videos per month—and handling large portions of work that allows other staff members to focus on other tasks.

"I don't want our team members to be at max capacity all the time. Nate helps us avoid that," said Seth Schaeffer, president at Hoptocopter. And the economics of the arrangement make it operationally feasible: Hoptocopter's financial commitment to Nate is very manageable compared to the amount of work Nate gets done.

“Some people see apprenticeship as a gift to the young people. This is not an act of benevolence; it's not philanthropy. It's an investment in our workforce and one that has clear value to us.”

SETH SCHAEFFER
HOPTOCOPTER | PRESIDENT

BUSINESS CASE STUDY

EKS&H

INDUSTRY: Professional Services

STAFF: 700 Employees

LOCATION: Denver, Colorado

ABOUT: EKS&H is a nationally recognized professional services firm that provides audit, tax, technology and business consulting services. The firm's commitment to client service has resulted in sustained growth since its beginning in 1978.



THE CAREERWISE DIFFERENCE

COMPETITIVE EDGE

Hosting CareerWise's apprenticeship program gives EKS&H a competitive edge by helping it modernize its recruitment process and develop a new talent acquisition and retention channel. "A lot of firms are targeting college graduates. But by hiring high schoolers who know they are interested in accounting as a career, we can fill our pipeline sooner," Kelley said.

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

CareerWise's program delivers multiple benefits that factor into non-monetary ROI for EKS&H—such as the development of innovative training and onboarding techniques, improvements to internal processes, increase in service to clients, and training and mentoring experiences for the staff.

WIN-WIN SITUATION

EKS&H knew it wanted to provide apprentices a challenging opportunity, while still running the business and serving clients. But EKS&H had hesitations about hiring high schoolers, and uncertainties about whether it was equipped to effectively educate that age group. CareerWise's structure and support enabled EKS&H to train apprentices in its preferred methods and lead to productivity, while offering apprentices rewarding experiences from which they could grow. "It's huge for them and for us," said Kelley.

EXPLORING A NEW KIND OF APPRENTICESHIP

EKS&H's business culture is driven by a desire to constantly challenge its approach to doing things, and regularly seeks new ways to lead, grow and evolve. The CEO visited Switzerland to learn about CareerWise Colorado's new modern youth-apprenticeship model and, seeing the program in action, was inspired to put the concept to work at EKS&H as an innovative talent development strategy. In 2017, EKS&H joined CareerWise as a pilot partner, hiring four high school apprentices who have been active contributors to the EKS&H team.

APPRENTICE CONTRIBUTIONS

Filling roles in EKS&H's transactional and outsourced accounting groups, the apprentices have demonstrated what they are capable of accomplishing. Because their work is billable, EKS&H realizes returns immediately—and in the long run, the company anticipates seeing financial returns that balance out the company's investment in training and mentoring.

The apprentices' contributions to both the bottom line and the culture are catching the attention of other staff who have expressed interest in leveraging the high schoolers' talents for other functions. Now, the company sees opportunities to expand their involvement to areas such as administration, audits, IT and other groups.

“The apprenticeship program seemed like a strong investment to help us avoid becoming stagnant.”

REBECCA KELLEY

EKS&H | PARTNER

BUSINESS CASE STUDY

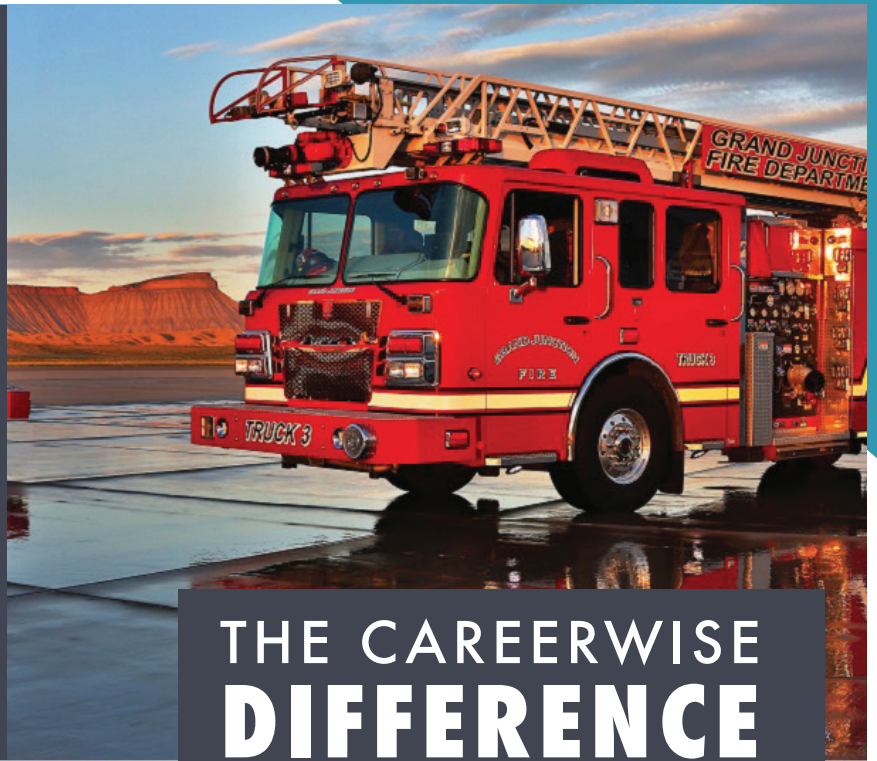
GRAND JUNCTION FIRE DEPARTMENT

INDUSTRY: City Government

STAFF: 125 Employees

LOCATION: Grand Junction, Colorado

ABOUT: Grand Junction Fire Department's vision is to be a role model for its visitors, the community and the firefighting profession. Its public education program's mission is to reduce the burden of fire and other hazards in the community by providing and advocating education and training.



THE CAREERWISE DIFFERENCE

EXPLORING A NEW KIND OF APPRENTICESHIP

As a city government organization, the Grand Junction Fire Department (GJFD) prioritizes public safety first, using community outreach to help educate residents. Historically, GJFD has used college interns to conduct community outreach, but when it came across CareerWise Colorado's apprenticeship program, it jumped on the chance to try youth apprenticeship as a creative solution for doing more with less while simultaneously investing in the community and boosting its level of service.

APPRENTICE CONTRIBUTIONS

Savanna, GJFD's apprentice, is in the CareerWise Business Operations pathway. She develops marketing plans and educational materials, manages events and organizes the accreditation program. While important, these are projects that, during a normal workday dense with short deadlines and limited resources, could fall off the priority list for the department.

“Normally we end up having to say ‘no’ to lots of good ideas that would help us achieve our goals. Having Savanna allows us to say ‘yes’ to more of them. That is really exciting.”

THOMPSON-ELLIS
GRAND JUNCTION FIRE DEPT.

SUSTAINED EFFORT

Mentoring and teaching apprentices is time- and energy-intensive on the front end. However, because the apprenticeship is a sustained effort, Thompson-Ellis said Savanna now works independently, self-manages most of her projects and is familiar with the tools. “We can see the fruits of our labor. You get back what you put in.”

THE RIGHT HIRE

GJFD underwent an extensive process to get the right person for the job, interviewing several candidates who were not the ideal fit. Knowing there was no pressure from CareerWise to do the program without the right hire was a bonus. CareerWise supported GJFD's choices along the way—including the hiring of Savanna, who proved to be the right choice in terms of intellect, personality, drive and innovation.

ADDED VALUE

GJFD knew there was a tremendous opportunity to add value and productivity to its organization through the CareerWise apprenticeship. But Thompson-Ellis and her team didn't expect how much of an asset Savanna would be in helping to fulfill GJFD's vision to protect people and property. And: “The fire department is really family-oriented, and she is part of our family now.”

