

ving for the attention of about 65 employers. Given the ratio of 25 applicants for every employer, the typical contact with an applicant is probably shallow. In response, some employers instead (or also) devote their resources to information sessions geared toward a smaller group of specially qualified candidates. During these sessions, the organization presents information about itself, including its culture, work environment, and career opportunities. Small gifts and brochures are also typically given out. One recent research study showed that applicants who were favorably impressed by an organization's information session were significantly more likely to pursue employment with the organization. Other studies show that job fairs that allow for interpersonal interactions between job seekers and organization representatives are seen as especially informative by job seekers. Thus, both applicants and employers find information sessions a valuable alternative, or complement, to job fairs.<sup>64</sup>

Increasingly, job fairs are being held online, with preestablished time limits. One online recruiting site held a job fair that included 240 participating companies. In these virtual job fairs, recruiters link up with candidates through chat rooms.

### **Co-ops and Internships**

A large number of educational institutions, including many high schools and nearly all technical colleges and universities, require some or all of their students to get work experience as part of their degree programs. Co-ops and internships are two potential ways that employers can recruit applicants. Under a co-op arrangement, the student works with an employer on an alternating quarter basis. In one quarter the student works full time, and in the next quarter the student attends school full time. Under an internship arrangement, the student has a continuous period of employment with an employer for a specified period of time. These approaches allow an organization to not only obtain services from a part-time employee for a short period of time but also assess the person for a full-time position after graduation. One manager experienced in working with interns commented, "Working with them is one of the best talent-search opportunities available to managers."<sup>65</sup> In turn, interns have better employment opportunities as a result of their experiences.

Internships and co-op assignments can take a variety of forms. One type of assignment is to have the student perform a part of the business that occurs periodically. For example, some amusement parks that operate only in the summer in northern climates may have a large number of employees who need to be hired and trained in the spring. A student with a background in HR could perform these hiring and training duties. Increasingly, colleges and universities are giving students college credit for—in some cases, even instituting a requirement for—working as part of their professional degree.<sup>66</sup> A student in social work, for example, might be required to work in a welfare office for a summer. Occasionally, some internships and co-op assignments do not provide these meaningful experiences that build on the qualifications of the student. Research shows that school-to-work programs often do not provide high utility to organizations in terms of benefit-cost ratios. Thus, organiza-