



H-E-B

Creating Opportunities and Promoting Advancement

“Our ideal scenario at H-E-B is to hire a 16-year-old for a job as a sacker or checker; then we encourage that young person to do a summer internship where they rotate through a number of departments. Through formal programs and informal influence, we encourage them to go on to college. If they pursue a degree in a related field, they can apply for financial support for their education. They can continue to work while in school, participating in internal training programs including SORM. Highly successful college graduates can continue in our internal SORL, the training ground for the future leaders of the company.”

Brooke Brownlow
Vice President of HR
H-E-B

For nearly a decade, H.E. Butt Grocery Company (H-E-B) has been instrumental in supporting the development of youth by exposing them to careers in the grocery retail industry and supporting their growth and mobility within the company.

Recognizing generational differences in the process by which youth are transitioned into adulthood and how talent is groomed and recruited to work at the company, H-E-B instituted several programs that engage youth in learning and providing essential skills and job training.

The company’s commitment to young people extends well beyond that of a single program. Instead, it has developed an integrated lattice of programs, including job shadow and career awareness programs, tuition reimbursement programs, scholarship assistance programs, skill enhancement programs, internship programs, the School of Retail Management (SORM), and the School of Retail Leadership (SORL).

Each of these programs is designed to address varying needs of individuals at each stage of development, skill level and education. H-E-B’s commitment to providing youth exposure to careers and youth development begins before the

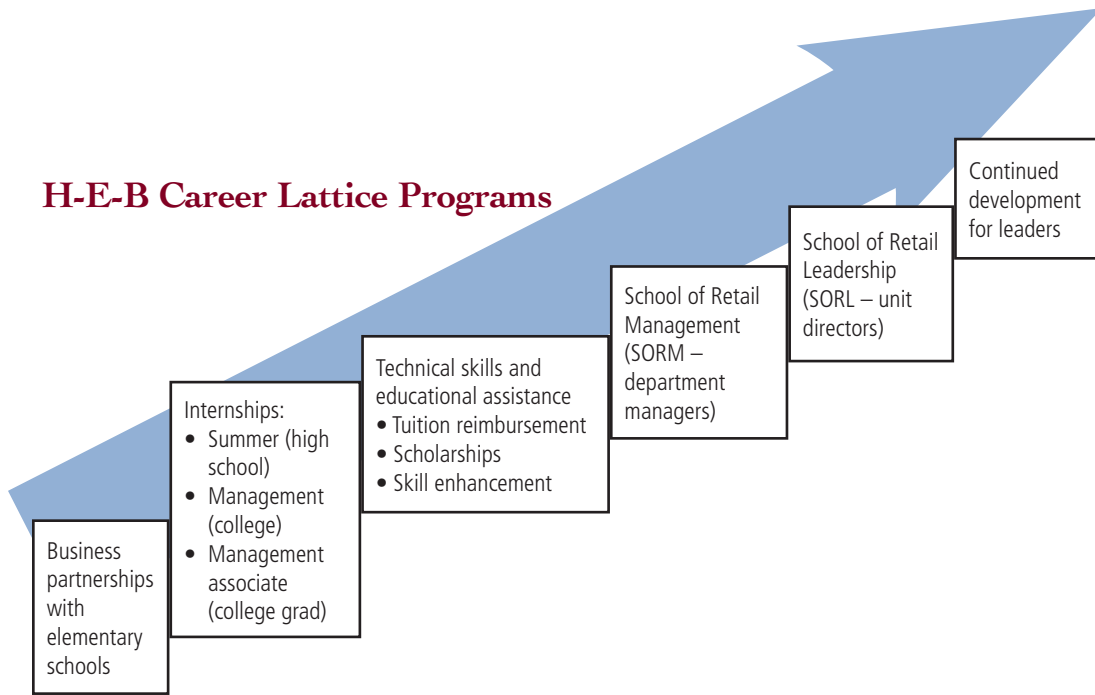
employment age (through its job shadow and career awareness programs) and continues into adulthood (through employment opportunities, internship programs and career development programs).

H-E-B leadership believes that introducing youth to career opportunities at the company is an important strategy for identifying good talent. Once individuals are hired, they have a myriad of opportunities for training and education so that they continue to develop and pursue careers within the company. H-E-B connects the lattice of programs to attract, retain and promote employee growth to its overall success as a company.

H-E-B has a vested interest in promoting and supporting the career lattice programs. The programs meet the corporate needs of H-E-B by fostering new talent while providing youth with opportunities and support to grow into promising careers.

In supporting employees’ efforts to pursue higher education and enhancement of skills, H-E-B employs a more highly skilled and trained workforce. H-E-B efforts to support employee growth also lead to higher retention of employees. By encouraging and supporting internal growth of new talent, H-E-B also is meeting its leadership needs. Ultimately, a

H-E-B Career Lattice Programs



stable and well-trained workforce results in a financial return on investment.

There are strong reasons for young people to get involved. Youth involved in the career lattice programs are exposed to a range of interesting opportunities. They also can receive financial support to pursue further education and enhance their job-related skills. H-E-B augments formal education with on-the-job training and skill reinforcement, which ensures youth are engaged in their education and have the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in the real world. In addition to the support, H-E-B facilitates the pursuit of higher education by providing financial assistance to employees through its scholarship programs. The varying levels of upwardly mobile employment opportunities within H-E-B also encourage youth to pursue careers and grow within the company.

H-E-B strives to develop retail stores that meet the specific and unique needs of each community. As a result of the complex business they operate, executives understand that they cannot rely solely on external hires

and are committed to the growth of internal talent. The commitment from the owner of H-E-B and its senior executives ensures the success of career lattice programs.

Senior H-E-B executives have made the investment in internal talent a high priority for the company. Therefore, they make large investments of their time and resources to the talent development programs. Senior management is intellectually invested, has an intricate knowledge of applicants to the various programs and closely reviews the profiles of selected candidates. According to the people who run these programs, the commitment of senior executives is one of the keys to the success of integrated training and development initiatives at H-E-B.

As a result of their commitment to the growth of internal talent and the success of the career lattice programs, executives support the continued evaluation and improvement of each program. In addition to the commitment of staff time, executives also commit large amounts of financial resources to the program.

About Corporate Voices for Working Families

Corporate Voices for Working Families is the leading national business membership organization representing the private sector on public and corporate policy issues involving working families. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, we improve the lives of working families by developing and advancing innovative policies that reflect collaboration among the private sector, government and other stakeholders.

Find Out More

This case study is part of the comprehensive research report *The Ill-Prepared U.S. Workforce: Exploring the Challenges of Employer-Provided Workforce Readiness Training*. This research study and publications, other research studies and toolkits on a host of workforce readiness, flexibility, family economic stability, and work and family balance issues are available on the Corporate Voices Web site at www.corporatevoices.org.

About H-E-B

www.heb.com

H-E-B, with sales of more than \$15 billion, operates more than 300 stores in Texas and Mexico. Known for its innovation and community service, H-E-B celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2005. Recognized for its fresh food, quality products, convenient services, and a commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability, H-E-B strives to provide the best customer experience at everyday low prices. Based in San Antonio, H-E-B employs more than 70,000 partners and serves millions of customers in more than 150 communities.

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