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MassTech Intern Partnership Supports Mass. 3D Printer Manufacturer

Somerville-based Formlabs Hired Former Intern to Enhance Electrical Engineering Capability

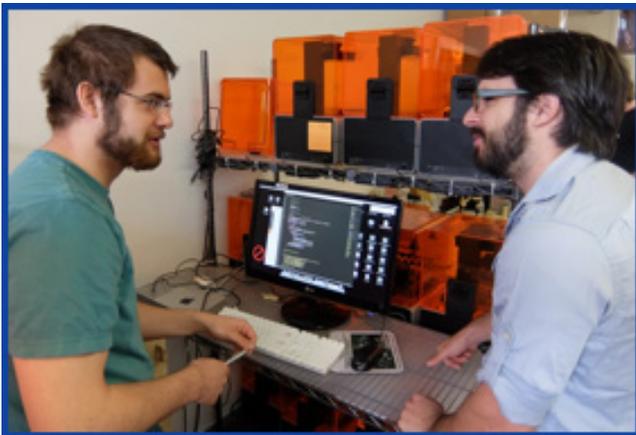
Hardware startup Formlabs, makers of the Form 1+ affordable high-resolution 3D printer, hired former MIT student Dmitri Megretski following his summer 2013 internship with the company, an opportunity that was supported by the MassTech Internship Partnership. The program allowed Formlabs to support the Electrical Engineering student as an intern during the early stages of product development and later bring him on as a fulltime employee during their recent expansion to a new 15,000 square-foot production facility in Somerville.

Formlabs is a shining example of a Massachusetts startup that the Intern Partnership is designed to support, as they're one of the top-grossing tech projects on the crowd-funding site Kickstarter.com, with nearly \$3 million in contributions, and the winner of the 'Best of Innovations' prize at the international CES Design and Engineering Awards program in 2014. Even with a strong track record of success, the company uniquely understands the role that internships play in driving their company's growth.



"Participating in this program is a no brainer, and hiring interns is a low risk proposition where you can try out the dynamic [between the intern and the company], expand your network, and potentially hire talent," stated Scott Johnston, Lead Electrical Engineer at Formlabs. "Dmitri is a success story of an exceptional intern that transitioned into a fulltime role. This is something we want to repeat at Formlabs."

At the onset of his internship, Megretski became an integral part of the R&D team while the company was between lead Electrical Engineers. As the interim engineer, Megretski discovered a design error before the production of a unit, which allowed the manufacturer to make changes to the final specifications, a highlight of his internship at Formlabs.



Dmitri Megretski (left) and Steven Thomas (right) discuss an engineering change.

"I was able to have a last minute ECO [Engineering Change Order] make it into the final product," says Megretski. "A benefit of working in a startup is that your ideas have a voice, regardless of seniority".

This type of noteworthy input underscores the value of interns to the startup community.

"Interns have been core to Formlabs," notes Sam Jacoby, Formlabs Marketing, "they bring in an influx of new ideas and interest every summer".

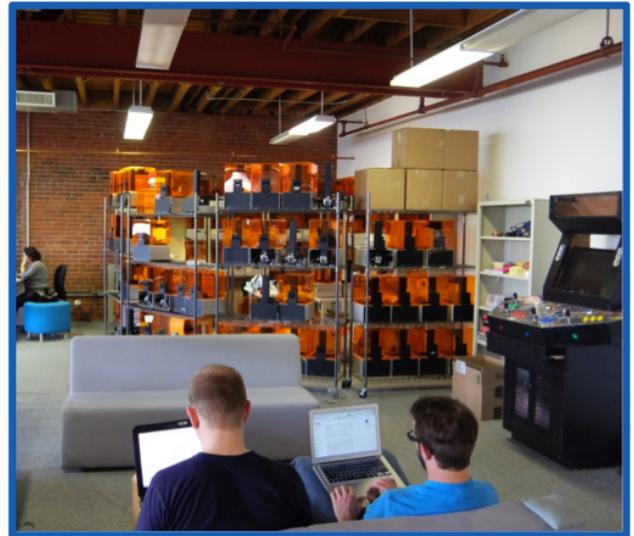
Megretski got his first taste of the startup world during his senior year when he interned at Loci Controls, another Intern Partnership company, and while working part-time in Fluid Interfaces group at the MIT Media Lab. These practical experiences led to a paid internship position with Formlabs which was directly supported by a 50/50 matching grant from the Intern Partnership. As a former intern and now employee with an innovative tech company, Megretski voices support both for the Intern Partnership and for the benefits of a paid role.



I would encourage other students to apply to this program. The reimbursement is an incentive for the employer and you get paid,” says Megretski. “If the company thinks you are adding value they should compensate you.”

Formlabs is the maker of the Form 1+ 3D printer. The machine prints small objects, jewelry, and parts by way of stereolithography, an ultraviolet laser used to cure liquid plastic resin, and requires engineers and designers with the skills to bring this 3D printer to mass market.

Cutting-edge startups like Formlabs choose to be based in Massachusetts due to the Commonwealth’s rich base of homegrown and university-level talent. In fact, science and engineering occupations make up 6.5% of Massachusetts jobs, more than any other tech state, and the Commonwealth confers more postsecondary degrees per capita than any other Leading Technology State, according to the [*2014 Index of the Massachusetts Innovation Economy*](#).



“We need people with skills that span the spectrum, and the State is a fantastic place to be in terms of talent, communities, and other companies in the area that are the best and at the cutting edge of their fields,” says Jacoby. “Massachusetts has the opportunity to establish itself as the leader in hardware, because of its winning combination of educational institutions and local industry diversity.”

Formlabs now has 75 employees in Somerville, up from 12 employees in 2016. The company intends to expand as its research and development efforts and customer support services grow. In the last five years, local hardware startups have clustered in Boston’s Downtown Crossing neighborhood, but have begun expanding out across the city and the region at large.

Johnston, Formlabs lead Electrical Engineer, highlighted why Massachusetts is a great place to grow a company and to grow a career in the hardware field.

“Massachusetts has all the resources for hardware businesses – experienced professionals, talented students, and manufacturing organizations all within a small area – that make it easy to get the job done,” he said.

For more information about Formlabs, visit their webpage at www.formlabs.com.

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