

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT



YA Coordinators **NEED** to examine **WHAT** employers want and need in order to participate in YA
AND **HOW** to effectively recruit and sustain their involvement

Five Steps for Engaging Employers

- Step One:** Identify employer interests and payoff
- Step Two:** Be ready for a YES. Articulate an employer participation menu
- Step Three:** Identify an employer-friendly message and messengers
- Step Four:** Provide proactive, professional support
- Step Five:** Solicit and listen to employer feedback; Re-engage mentors

When “engaging” employers WATCH for differences in four areas in particular:

1. Organizational Culture

A business cares about the services and products it provides and its bottom line. If it doesn't, it won't survive. An employer's mission and major focus is rarely youth.

2. Operational Procedure

Budget cycles and planning cycles, fiscal years, how authorization or permission is given, roles and responsibilities- all affect day-to-day activity. A few key insights into the inner workings of a potential employer can greatly advance your relationship.

3. Communication Patterns

In a world of cell phones, email, and instant messaging, there are still major differences in how and when people in different organizations communicate. Teachers and youth workers spend their time in classes where phones or email are an interruption. To employers accustomed to return calls or emails within hours, they might seem hard to get a hold of.

4. Scheduling Time

Make the best use of people's time by clearly communicating about calendar years and weekly schedules. Meet their calling or scheduling preferences as much as possible.

WI Youth Apprenticeship

Employer Interests

Why employers get involved:

1. Strengthen link between learning and work- teaching future job applicants the right things
2. Increase pool of qualified candidates for current and future workforce needs
3. Support employees as parents
4. Improve relationships in the community as a result of working in partnerships
5. Give back to the community
6. Increase corporate name recognition
7. Add customers
8. Gain a reputation for being socially responsible
9. Increase employee loyalty, morale, and job satisfaction
10. Enhance recruitment and retention
11. Develop staff skills
12. Communicate a corporate message to the community

ASK First

- What do YOU need to see to make your participation worthwhile?
- What does your facility need that we might be able to help with?
- What would make this work for you personally and professionally?
- Do you have any hesitations or concerns about getting involved?

Translate the interest into a tangible action you can take to deliver an actual payoff for the employer.

EXAMPLE:

An employer tells you that she participates in your effort so that the community knows more about her business and what it offers.

Interests:

Community relations, marketing

Possible Payoff:

Mention the company's participation in your newsletter or web site
Newspaper article, editorial piece or ad thanking partners
Mention and thank you at a local Chamber meeting
Mention and thank you at a high profile community event
Invitation to networking lunch or meeting with community leaders

WI Youth Apprenticeship

Employer Issues

What we hear: "We can't hire anyone under 18 years of age..."

- Because of liability.
- Because of confidentiality.
- Because that is our corporate policy.
- Because of costs and time to train them.
- Because of the paperwork.

Translate the issue into a positive response or point you can work on to deliver a payoff for the employer.

Possible Hesitations/Concerns

Liability

- See APPs A and B
- Not an additional liability as long as follow Child Labor Laws
- Hired under "Student Learner" status

Confidentiality

- Students have been working in YA in Health Services, IT, Banking & Insurance for years with access to confidential information
- A staff issue, not just a student issue

Corporate Policy

- Research the facility's mission, management structure, and recruitment/retention efforts
- Meet with HR and Individual Department Management face to face
- Create a Presentation with student, employer, school testimonials
- Create a YA Employer Reference List that potential employers can contact for more information
- Develop a marketing group plan and presentation across consortiums that address regional needs- use data to support occupational growth trends (<http://worknet.wisconsin.gov>)
- Attend Chamber and Health Association events to promote programs
- Show cost/benefit analysis for the facility
- Promote YA through positive PR in the community with recognition for service to youth and publicity
- SHARE your SUCCESSES! Communicate with other consortiums through a sharing blog or wiki space

Costs

- Mentor time is needed, however, can be used to build skills for employees as trainers
- Hourly pay rate less than that of skilled worker
- Skilled employee that can continue to work after YA program is complete
- Create partnerships with local WIA, DWD, and technical college/university groups
- Be creative to obtain funding and grants for initiatives

Paperwork

- Downplay the paperwork
- Only ETA, BID in some cases
- Only the Skills Checklist is used to document program
- One reference set of curriculum needed to be kept at facility site with mentor